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**Toward a new world dharma: reconceptulaizing citizenship, community and the sacred in the global age.**

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# TOWARD A NEW WORLD DHARMA:
## RECONCEPTUALIZING CITIZENSHIP, COMMUNITY AND THE SACRED IN THE GLOBAL AGE

By

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# Summary

This dissertation addresses the problem of how, in a global future, humanity is to comprehend the singularity of the place, the biosphere it calls home. Will communities, nations, and the earth itself, for example, be regarded as 'one' place in which many live, or as the product of many separate, but linked compositional elements? The 'many in the One', or the "One in the many"? From the perspective of International Relations, in a global future will 'integration' at the individual level necessarily imply 'homogenization' at larger intercultural levels? Might the conditions of existence in a global future be understood rather as the universalization of certain key values and practices that respect the diversity of distinct regional differences? What spiritual or ethical ideas will serve as a unifying meta-narrative in a global age? These are questions of keen interest to those whose lives are touched in some way by the growing convergence of cultures, especially by the stream of classical East and South Asian wisdom paths now flowing into the West.

For such individuals, and for those whose understanding of the world is tempered by the findings of contemporary dynamic systems theory and its groundings in Western cognitive science, the coordinates of these steadily arising mutualities may be observed as the manner in which, for example, Taoism, Hinduism and Buddhism respectively recognize the concept of 'from the beginning interdependence'—*pratitya samutpada,* or dependent origination, and that which China's ancient animists understood as *Tao.* Similarly, contemporary Western scientists such as David Suzuki now expound the idea of ecological 'innerconnectivity' that leads organically to the Gaia Hypothesis, viewing Earth itself as a self-regulating planetary biological system—as a sentient being.[1] This is summarized from a contemporary position by the Vietnamese Zen Buddhist master Thich Nhat Hanh as 'Interbeing' (1995: 11; 1996: 37; Pagels, 1995: xx).

Conceptually, interbeing or interdependence has profound ramifications in terms of the social, cultural and political dimensions of authority. As a scientifically verifiable condition of existence increasingly compatible to both Asian and Western world-views, it

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[1] Suzuki, David (2003), "Human Activities Give Rise to New Diseases," *Common Ground,* August, 2003: 7.

shapes a method by which the societies of Western liberal democratic traditions and Asia's Confucian and Sanskrit-inflected worlds alike may respond to the deeper challenges of a global future. In terms of citizenship, as American author Maxine Hong-Kingston suggests, there is a seed of border-crossing opportunity; a possibility in which both Asian and Western cultures can 'heal the wounds of history' in moving toward a shared, global future in the 21st century.[2]

Yet globalization as an idea has already encountered widespread international resistance. Given that a truly global age has not yet properly emerged, in what capacities might 'healing' opportunities develop within the narrow, ethically amoral, investor-driven economic interpretations of reality which, so far, have defined 'globalization'?[3] How, this thesis inquires, may a 'global future' be comprehended as a new, or renewed world-view; one that embodies contemporary intercultural and ecological realities of diversity, complexity and interconnectedness?

New ages of awareness require new epistemologies and historiographies. In forging ideas of interconnectedness with the more worldly concept of 'commonwealth', this thesis questions and examines what the fuller meanings of a global future may be, arguing that any new civilizational paradigm must engage the challenge it poses to such concepts as ethics, progress, rule of law, self-reliance, and sustainable economic development. Amplifying the idea of interdependence as 'commonwealth', it considers contemporary and classical ideas of what individual citizenship itself has meant. Indeed, since Aristotle, the very idea of citizenship has been understood as an ethical linkage between the individual and *polis*, between human community and physical place: the universal is found in the local.[4]

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[2] Hong Kingston, Maxine (1998), *Hawai'i One Summer.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

[3] Identified by George Soros (1998) in "World Capitalist Crisis" as, "…characterized not only by free trade but more specifically by the free movement of capital. The system is very favourable to financial capital which is free to pick and choose where to go, and it has led to the rapid growth of global financial markets. It can be envisaged as a gigantic circulatory system, sucking up capital into the financial markets and institutions at the center and then pumping it out to the periphery either directly in the form of credits and portfolio investments, or indirectly through multinational corporations" (p. 4).

[4] Aristotle (1970), *Politics* . Trans. T.A. Sinclair. London: Penguin.

Borrowing from Futures Studies in International Relations, this thesis seeks to critique and construct what R.S. Slaughter identifies as "a pattern of interpretation",[5] or a mandala of consciousness representing the unity between individual, larger community and ecological place—between the local and universal, between physical and metaphysical.  In this enterprise one is not far from the approach of the Master, Confucius, who seeks similar order in Book III.8 of the *Lun Yu*, or Analects.[6]  For purposes of clarity, and because an explicit vocabulary is useful in leading toward common expectations, the thesis identifies this pattern of interpretation as an expression of 'literacy of place.'  Heuristically, it is the cultivation of such literacy of place that forms the knowledge base from which one can begin examining interdependency and 'commonwealth' as renewing *seeds* in the articulation of what Foucault identifies as an *episteme*.[7]  Conceptually, this episteme will be a form of *new world dharma* for the global age.

## *II.*  Citizenship and a New World Dharma

Individually or communally, the idea of citizenship is analogous with benefits and obligations.[8]  How citizenship and the notions of community and participatory civil society might best define themselves in an ecologically sustainable global future are, as psychologist Sam Keen relates, key elements in rectifying the contemporary crisis of

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[5] Slaughter, R.A. (2002), "Beyond the Mundane: reconciling breath and depth in futures inquiry." *Futures.*  August, v34 i6 p 493(15).  Retrieved 1/30/2004.  Bond University Academic Library, Infotrac: http://web4.infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/818/308/45995159w4/purl

[6] Confucius (1979), *The Analects*, trans. D.C. Lau. London: Penguin.

[7] Foucault, Michel (1972), *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Trans. Alan Sheriden. London: Tavistock.

[8] John Ralston Saul (2001) articulates, "the Athenian idea of citizenship—flawed and limited though it was—put public service, civic education, democracy and restraint ahead of wealth, economics, self-interest and emotion (325).

meaning and purpose that is both the detritus of the Industrial Age, and an identifying signature of post-modernist intellectual inquiry (1994: xvi, 4; see also Kung, 1994:9-10).

By borrowing from the interdisciplinary realms of literature, cultural anthropology, ecological and sociological inquiry, and from ethics and political discourse, this thesis aims to construct further route-maps beyond the 'new paradigm'—an ambiguous term often employed to describe new expressions of a more sustainable, wholistically-envisioned, interdependent future. It critiques ideas such as citizenship, sacredness and bioregional identity in light of various intercultural models. And in identifying the still-evolving path of engaged living practice that this thesis looks to articulate, as a boundary-extending term of reference it formally names this practice a *new world dharma*. Originating in the Sanskrit, *dharma* is a manifold term implying law or living in accordance with principles of justice. In Buddhism, these principles have been identified by The Buddhas. Also implied is the capacity of natural phenomena to preach these principles—for example, falling blossoms may enlighten an observer to the nature of 'impermanence' (1998, *Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism*).

Why a *new world dharma*? As Slaughter explains, "It has become clear that our ability to understand the world 'out there' crucially depends on an underlying world of reference that is 'in here'" (p. 18). This is attested to by growing interest in the role of cultural aesthetics within international relations, and by the UNESCO draft convention on cultural diversity signed by 137 nations in June, 2005.[9] Epistemological futures work, Slaughter argues, represents the deeper loam of this form of inquiry (ibid). If the future is to be one in which the crisis of meaning and purpose is addressed through a globally, or planetary-minded citizenship, it must therefore be one in which humanity, science, technology, creativity, and nature can coexist in a home-place severely compromised by inexorable global environmental degradation. This alone compels the emergence of a new ecologically-attuned consciousness.

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[9] *Millenium: Journal of International Studies,* has recently hosted a conference at the London School of Economics (October, 2005), specifically addressing "International Politics, Representation and 'the Sublime'. Additionally, the UNESCO draft convention on cultural diversity held in Paris was signed by 137 nations on June 3, 2005. A statement by the government of France declares that the convention, "recognizes the specific nature of culture, its contribution to development and to social cohesion; it confirms the sovereign right of states to adopt and implement cultural policies; it makes the protection and promotion of cultural diversity a major area of international cooperation policies" (www.ambafrance-us.org/news/briefing/us060605.asp)

Presently, much of North American environmental thought is inspired by renewed appreciation of traditional Native Animism and Buddhist practice. The chief popularizers in America of Buddhism especially were literary auto-didacts. They took inspiration from Chinese T'ang dynasty and Japanese medieval poets, and from viewing classical Sino-Japanese scroll landscape paintings of the Sung and Ming periods. Some journeyed to Asia and became Zen Buddhist practitioners; others followed various martial traditions in Japan; while yet others ventured to India, returning with information and skills from various Hindu and yogic devotional streams.[10]

From the late 1970s onward, a steady migration to the West of master adepts from 'the Three Chinas' also encouraged Taoism's taking root in the West,[11] and frequently through introduction to the latter, Western interest was also awakened to the works and teachings of 'the Master', Confucius. Often, as is the case in cross-pollination among species, hybridization has since taken place and continues to do so in the West—a reflection of East and South Asian history where China's *sanjiao gui*, or 'three-in-one' spiritual amalgam of Taoism-Confucianism-Buddhism has flourished; and similarly throughout the Sanskrit world with Hinduism's capacity to absorb and co-exist alongside bewildering numbers of spiritual concepts and deities in something generally like peaceable fashion.

Compounding these contemporary encounters of Asian and Western world-views is the growing appreciation in North America of its original Animist, Shamanic heritage. Internationally, a form of ecumenical 'World-Beat' has also emerged through multicultural and environmental NGO activities particularly, and this exposure to indigenous peoples and their localized eco-spiritual groundings worldwide has added a further dimensional

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[10] Post-WW II Western sojourners in Asia included Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, and Robert Aitken Roshi, who studied Zen Buddhism in Japan. John Stevens and George Leonard also studied Aikido there. Bill Porter and Mike O'Connor studied Buddhism and Taoism in Taiwan and China. Allen Ginsberg studied Hindi devotional traditions in Benares: all returned, wrote extensively of their experiences, and have since been followed by two generations of successors. See also Kenneth Rexroth, "The Influence of Classical Japanese Poetry on Modern American Poetry"; in *World Outside the Window*. New York: NDP, 1987, pp. 267-274.

[11] Taoist master Chen Man-Ching left Taiwan for New York in 1964 and introduced North America to Tai Chi Chuan. The eminent Taoist healer Mantak Chia moved to New York from Thailand in 1979 and has since brought awareness of Nei Kung/Nei Tsang *chi* transmission to the West. Similarly, Tai Chi master and traditional Chinese physician Ng Ching-Por left Hong Kong for Vancouver in 1978 and through the medium of television brought wide exposure to traditional Taoist traditions.

flavour to the melding of practice lineages currently taking place.  As Western population groups respond to the wholistic world-views brought to light by the world beat/*new world dharma* phenomenon, it is unsurprising that a significant renewal of interest in historic Euro-Celtic consciousness with its own pantheistic grounding is also underway.  Indeed, the Celtic renaissance of these peoples and their culture that was until recently still repressed is emblematic of the entire contemporary search for meaning and purpose in the Western mind.

What makes the evolution of this *new world dharma* distinct—this mingling and strengthening of faith and humanist traditions—is the underlying activist nature of its birthing.  An inspection of the constituent make-up of the 1999 Seattle anti-WTO coalition reveals that many of the aforementioned groups and traditions were, and continue to be, front and centre participants (Aaronson, 2001; Broadbent, 2000: 374).  And if one notes the current boom of Buddhism in the West, the encounter of Buddhism with Christianity's 'faith in action' spirit and concern for social justice assumes greater importance.  The Buddhist Peace Fellowship, for example, which represents a bridging of activist elements from a broad range of Buddhist practice has its ethos in the virtue of *karuna,* or compassion, yet is fuelled by a drive that derives arguably from Christianity's engaged commitment to 'overcoming' obstacles.[12]

This then shapes the perceptual grain of the evolving *new world dharma*.  It offers concrete practices in how one is to live in a changing world, and provides inspiration in motivating both individuals and communities toward the social activism needed to shape political discourse and the public policy-making necessary to preserve the earth as a sacred entity.

Constructing a model of practice for the present intercultural moment and for its deepening future is a form of intellectual exogamy.  It requires thinking from outside one's own tradition.  The reward is an opportunity to rewrite narratives addressing cultural development in a global future that includes wider adaptation of diverse philosophical perspectives and a more profound awareness of the natural world—to redefine existing concepts of citizenship for a more enlightened age.  In this way it becomes possible to truly

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[12] The author is grateful to Robert Aitken-Roshi for his elucidation of this evolutionary interfaith development during interviews and conversations, 1996-present.

heal the old wounds of humanity's shared history, and to transcend the lesser intellectual, social and political virtues of a 'homogenized' global future in favour of a *universalized* palette of human values for our global common-wealth.

## Acknowledgments

Note: in translating Chinese terms, pinyin has been used throughout the dissertation wherever possible, however Wade-Giles is also employed regarding such Buddhist and Taoist terms that have entered conventional use.

(Epigraph)

Some individuals are sent out in adolescence to see if they can get a power vision all by themselves.  They go out and come back with a song which is their own, which gives them a name, and power; some begin to feel like a 'singer.'  There are those who use songs for hunting, and those who use a song for keeping themselves awake at night when they are riding around in slow circles taking care of the cows; people who use songs when they haul up the nets on the beach.  And when we get together we have drinking songs and all kinds of communal pleasure gathering group music.  There are war songs, and particular specialized powerful healing songs that are brought back by those individuals (shamans) who make a special point of going back into solitude for more songs:  which will enable them to heal.  There are also some who master and transmit the complex of songs and chants that contain creation-myth lore and whatever ancient or cosmic gossip that a whole People sees itself through.  In the Occident we have such a line, starting with Homer and going through Virgil, Dante, Milton, Blake, Goethe, and Joyce.  They were workers who took on the ambitious chore of trying to absorb all the myth/history lore of their times, and of their own past traditions, and put it into order as a new piece of writing and let it be a map or model of world and mind for everyone to steer by.

Gary Snyder, "Poetry, Community & Climax"

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# Chapter 1.

# Towards A New World Dharma

*What is a man,*
*If his chief good and market of his time*
*Be but to sleep and feed?  A beast no more.*
*Sure he that made us with such large discourse,*
*Looking before and after, gave us not*
*That capability and godlike reason*
*To fust in us unused.*

Shakespeare
*Hamlet,* Act IV, Scene iv

As a term in popular discourse, 'globalization' remains an ambiguous idea.  If most educated individuals are familiar with the term, relatively few appear able to articulate a shared understanding of what it actually means.  For some, it serves as an economic metaphor, a convenient short-hand for the deep structure of an old mercantilist trading system given a new face for the times (Ralston Saul, 2005).  For others, it suggests a growing internationalization of certain Western and American cultural values, typically neo-liberal in tenor.

Similarly, 'the global age' has come to suggest an era in which the transfusion of such key values have been realized planetary-wide.  These would include the widespread embrace of the information economy, electronic communications as means of bridging distances between different peoples, and patterns of availability and consumption of consumer products.  More idealistic notions of a global age include the transnational acceptance of particular racial, gender, ecological, sexual, or socio-economic values and practices.  Inherent in this understanding too, is the idea of a basic shared courtesy and respect for cultural differences among peoples and nations.

Constituting some of the basic qualifying considerations for a global age would be a horizontal comfort and security with rule of law, ethics, the idea of scientific progress, and concepts of truly sustainable economic development.  Chiefly through the advance of

digital electronic communications technology, the 21$^{st}$ century is widely regarded as one in which the ideas of a global age will be achieved.

Yet in the early part of the 21$^{st}$ century, when economic globalization through deregulation, privatization, and an explosive growth in the development of multinational corporations has been well underway for the past 30 years (Wigod, 2005: F19), the path toward this ideal planetary age has been systematically shattered in New York, Bali, Iraq, the Levant, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, by ideological and religious confrontations and by carnage of the most ancient and savage human pedigree.

If globalization therefore is to be more than a relentless series of cultural upheavals during the coming century, it must succeed in overcoming a barrage of regressive cultural and perceptual barriers.  This will require new thinking concerning the nature of humanity's own meaning and purpose in a geopolitically and spiritually uncertain era (Snyder, 1980: 117, 126; 1990: 94; Gorbachev, 1995: 17-25; Keen, 1994; Simes, 2004: 94-95).  This thesis contends that with the propulsion of impersonalizing Western digital technology, the rise and consequences of China as a global force, and continuing antagonism between the West and important lineages of Islam, the defining characteristics of 21$^{st}$ century thought will necessarily be those compatible with core humanist traditions drawn from the deep civilizational wells of both the West and Asia.

Pivotal new ages of awareness require new epistemologies and historiographies. Arnold Toynbee, Vico, and a variety of historians have shown at other critical moments in civilization that such large undertakings oblige thinking in terms of broad areas.  As human civilization embarks uncertainly forward into the 21$^{st}$ century, a growing body of literary discourse indicates this thinking is already in progress (Elias, 1994).  Yet, despite popular media rhetoric focusing chiefly upon either the 'global village' idea of Marshall McLuhan, or the street-theatre and rage of anti-globalization protests that greeted every major international financial institutional summit at the turn of the century, especially the World Trade Organization, in political and socio-economic terms a legitimately 'global' age has not fully emerged, nor can it until it has been satisfactorily identified and defined.

To articulate these explanations, this thesis argue that what is needed is fact a new form of language—not a new tongue or *lingua franca,* but a mode of expressing language using vivid signifiers.  As a comparison, one may think of the similar way in which Miles Davis,

a classically-trained jazz virtuoso, found it necessary in 1959 to adopt new 'modes' of musical expression as a way of breaking through such creative barriers as the banalities of Cold War culture, widespread artistic heroin addiction, the intellectual severities of 'Bebop', and the aridity of tin-pan alley populism.  The result, his recorded collection *Kind Of Blue,* would prove revolutionary, a synthesis simultaneously classical and modern, dynamic and passive, spontaneous yet disciplined (see Evans, 1959; Papavasiliou, 2000: 4).  Among Afro-Americans especially it could be received as a form of spiritual expression.

As this thesis demonstrates, in shaping a new language or discourse by which the deeper structure and meanings of a global age can be satisfactorily addressed, the cognitive praxis must necessarily be rooted in vigorous ecological inquiry (see Suzuki, 2003: 301-303; Snyder, 1980: 124-26, 161-62; 1995: 247; Keen, 214-15).  Responding to steady quality of living diminishments within the environmental mandala in which individual lives are constructed, and in acknowledgement of the accrued ancestral wisdom of cultures around the world—of unvarnished 'global' human culture—this version of language, or literary discourse, must also certainly encompass a hybridized form of thought, a type of multiculturally-attuned, ecological linguistics.  Borrowing the term from American poet, Dominican friar, and typographer William Everson, for brevity of reference the dissertation proposes to name the form of discourse in question a *literary ecology* for the global age.  The term 'ecology' itself deserves clarification.  M.I.T. culture theorist William Irwin Thompson (1985: 35) explains:

> An ecology is a form of life in which opposites coexist.  *Eco* means
> 'home,' and logos means 'word'; ecology is thus the home word that
> enables us to return to earth in a homeward direction and know it truly
> for the first time .

In a preliminary sense, this idea of a literary ecology of what is still the future remains a possibility in the conditional tense.  Whether as 'literary ecology', 'ecological linguistics', or as simple 'literacy of place', scholarly intuition suggests, however, that what is involved is a border-crossing opportunity.  For as the accumulating ecological, political, and

spiritual crises of our age multiply, how may humanity acquire a better, shared means of understanding the fuller ecological implications of *who* we are collectively, globally, until sharper, cross-cultural recognition arrives into the importance of *how* we live, and *where* we live, biologically and regionally? This is precisely the zone of reference that under the influence of classical Asian ideas of self, place, community and spirituality, an evolving school of North American arts and letters is exploring and defining as the literature of a new, or renewed version of civilization for a global, planetary age. This school and the dharma, or wisdom path, it points toward is examined through close readings of key texts throughout this dissertation.

The redeeming prospect of a new global epoch in human civilization offers an irresistible attraction and is not without parallel. During the 15th century reign of the Catholic kings, the impetus of Western technological history shifted inexorably from Mediterranean and Central Europe to the Atlantic, and would ultimately bridge the Renaissance with the Euro-American industrial age.

Invoking this same idea of civilizational metamorphosis, at certain previous moments history itself shifted again. As William Irwin Thompson (1985) has outlined, from the original riverine civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, Western history became suddenly Mediterranean: first Greek, then Roman, both irresistibly 'modern', with all attendant privileges and obligations. Concomitantly, separate civilizations could flourish and transform themselves in India, China, Africa and Meso-America, but through the voyages of the great navigators of the 15th century and their royal sponsors such as Phillip II of Spain, the world would effectively become one world (see Thompson, 1985; Braudel, 2001).

The lens of historical time acts as a filter, but with knowledge and patience common threads can be detected and traced in constructing larger patterns and archetypes. Historians have long constructed vanished civilizations from shards of the past. The future, understandably, is less reliable. Nevertheless, by borrowing from the interdisciplinary realms of literature, cultural anthropology, ecological and sociological inquiry, and from ethics and political discourse, it can be conjectured what shards of the future are available to us. Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) struggled with this form of speculative equation in his *Dialogues* (1985) and interviews, and in his 1970 conference address "Immortality"

(1994: 17-25), asserts, "Beyond our physical death will remain the memory of us, and beyond the memory of us will remain our acts, our works, our attitudes, all this wonderful part of universal history…" In this same philosophical spirit, J.W. Dunne theorizes in his rediscovered classic, *An Experiment With Time* (1927), that from such shards can be shaped meaningful cultural archetypes—symbols from the future. But more specifically, if the idea of civilization itself is to retain sustainability in terms of bringing meaning and purpose to the daily lives of citizens, these 'memories of the future' must suggest how citizenship and the notions of community and participatory civil society will change in defining themselves for our common wealth in the 21st century.

On evidence (Wagar, 1989; Hardison, 1989), such a quest requires first looking to tradition; to beliefs, customs and ideas inherited from the past that remain vital in the present, and which can be conjectured into the foreseeable future. Within the realm where ideas join action, especially in Asian contexts where faith is involved too, such traditions are known as wisdom paths. Throughout the chapters that follow, such paths will be examined in both their native contexts and in terms of the benefits they may offer toward the new, or renewed, hybridized East-West paths of moral, ethical, and spiritual engagement that this thesis contends will be necessary for sustainable, peaceable human interactivity in a truly global age.

As the twentieth century neared its close, enlightened thinkers from many disciplines alluded in one form or another to the need of a new, necessary way of viewing daily life and its critical components of citizenship and community (see Capra, 2002; Jackson, 1996; Berry, 1988; see also: Ferguson, 1980; Thompson, 1985). For lack of a clearly defined term and, as a convenience, this re-envisioning of the process of living, thinking and organizing has been frequently and ambiguously referred to as a 'new age' or "new paradigm" (Capra, 1989: 3-4). Alas, the term 'new age' became trivialized, too often associated with flakey, pseudo-spiritual consumer gadgetry. And as an identifying signature the concept of a new paradigm is helpful, but lacks specificity.[13] It is the

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[13] For purposes of clarity the term 'paradigm', which first appeared in the 15th century meaning "an example or pattern", is understood within the context of his thesis as being indicative of "a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline…Applications of the term in other contexts show that it can sometimes be used to mean 'the prevailing view of things' " (The

identification of this hybridized path of engagement as a living practice that shapes the dimensions of this study, which in the boundary extending spirit of Gary Snyder and Andrew Schelling this thesis for clarity of reference formally names as the *new world dharma.*[14]

In *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions*, the Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Kung (1994) declares that in an epoch shaped by technology, world politics, and an international economy, civilization requires a shared world ethic, one that means "a fundamental consensus concerning binding values, irrevocable standards, and personal attitudes" ( p. 7). Without these, he asserts, the result can be only chaos or dictatorship: "There can be no global order without a global ethic" (ibid). Derived from his experience with The Council of the Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago in 1993, Kung's understanding is rooted in ecumenical religious traditions. As he explains, "a global ethic…represents the minimum of what the religions of the world already have in common now in the ethical sphere" (8-9). In essence, while its view of existence is spiritual, though not necessarily of any institutional religion, it is anchored by an ethic of responsibility that can be embraced by both the religious and non-religious, believers and non-believers. Hence, the idea of a *new world dharma* for the global future of the 21st century.

It is here that the dissertation begins.

## *II.* <u>**Tradition as Wisdom Path**</u>

From the 1960s onward there has been a significant growth of interest within Western societies toward wisdom paths from southern and eastern Asia (Watts, 1999; Aitken and

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American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th Ed. Houghton Mifflin Co.), at: http://dictionary.reference.com

[14] In *Wild Form, Savage Mind*, Andrew Schelling (2003) formally proposes the appellation "Jataka Mind" to identify resurgent cross-species "contract[s] of kinship" between eco-activists and larger natural systems. In a personal letter, Gary Snyder (l986) proposes a literature of the "new world" of western North America and Asia."

Steindl-Rast, 1996; Ferguson, 1980; Fields et al, 1984; Garabedian and Coombs 1969). Yoga, insight meditation, the martial arts, and religious practices from Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism have proven exceedingly attractive to Western seekers. Yet, when Westerners consciously choose to step beyond the informational boundaries of their own cultural resources, it represents a leap in search of meaning. Why then commit to this form of searching?

As Toronto philosopher Thomas Langan (1992: 1) recollects of Nietzsche, it reduces essentially to the one act: "Save yourself by giving yourself grace" (1982, trans. Hollingdale: 48). What, Langan inquires, is given through this process of acquiring grace? His conclusion is enlightening: "Traditions hand us concrete possibility" (ibid, 2):

> It is a gift, a vast fund of possible expressions. The wisdoms of the past,
> all kinds, distill experience, insight, and reflection. All genuine creativity,
> all worthwhile opening of the future, even in physics, is rooted in the best
> the past has to offer, even when the new corrects the old.

The present derives from personal and collective experience, and from perceptions of the past. The future springs from this variously constructed past-present continuum, at least as predicated on Western linear concepts of time. Langan relates that "affirmations of indebtedness to the past frighten many contemporaries" though, "because they have suffered ideological constraints imposed by others, the religious, moral, and political dogma that violate freedom in the name of tradition" (ibid, 2). Here post-modernism's contentious deconstructions founded upon a strong focus on gender, race and sexual orientation may be regarded as exhibit A,[15] a view shared by Toronto's Robert Fulford,

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[15] Regarding this phenomenon of "P.C.", or "politically correct" thought, the most succinct description remains that of Graham Good in his *Humanism Betrayed: Theory, Ideology and Culture in the Contemporary University* (2001) wherein he defines the "New Sectarianism" of "gender, race and sexual orientation" which struck North American intellectual life like Byron's "wolf on the foal" during its most frenzied period in the early 1990s. Professor Good develops the source of what he terms the "carceral vision" in the writings of Geertz, Greenblatt and Foucault and, as an antidote, offers the liberal vision of Northrop Frye. In a demonstration of the power politics associated with "P.C." in North American academic life, publication of Good's book was itself held up itself for over three years. Popularization of the term began with Dinesh DeSouza and his controversial essay, "Illiberal Education", in the *Atlantic Monthly,* (267, No. 3 [March,

the doyen of Canada's cultural critics, who has argued forcefully for a decade that post-modernism endeavours to place Western values on trial based upon an assumed "moral authority of victimhood."[16]

Such wrangling over culture is a de facto admission of its importance. Moral discourse aside, however, as traditional institutions such as self-sufficiency are replaced with import-export-driven market economies, and as traditional communalist approaches toward justice are replaced with narrow individualistic-focused opinions, and when public discourse in the arts and humanities is constrained and even censored by narrow ideological perspectives, unsurprisingly cultural discourse itself is reduced inexorably to political discourse as ethics and aesthetics are reduced to mere legalities—a trend Fulford describes as "a powerful [contemporary] current toward mediocrity" (ibid; see also Visser, 2001: 1-3).

If the triumph of post-modernism rests purely on who is able to project their version of the facts most forcibly and loudly, even if not most rationally, the inevitable social disharmony and ethical/moral ambiguity that must result is disturbing. Langan turns to tradition again for guidance, finding political breakthroughs in eternal verities. Clarifying how truths are "transmitted from antiquity," Langan writes how, "Truths taken up are reformed and renewed by being projected into the future as intelligible possibility through a creative act" (ibid, 2). Theory and meditation transform themselves into action, into creative expressions of authenticity, in which their cultivation becomes a path of self-development. Illustrations of modern community problem-solving inspired by such ideas

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1991], 51-79). Further illumination regarding "P.C." intolerance can be found in Peter Emberley (*Zero Tolerance,* 1996). I am grateful to constitutional law specialist Iain Benson of St. Pe de Bigorre, Hautes Pyrenees, France for his assistance with my inquiries in this new area of cultural intolerance.

[16] Given during Fulford's 25th Anniversary of the Arts One Program Lecture, at University of British Columbia, Sept. 26., 1992. Such Canadian examples as the vituperative, ideologically-driven attacks upon the character and work of eminent Canadian public intellectuals, June Callwood and Robert Bringhurst, are moot. At the forefront of national cultural life, the pair suffered calumny through cavalier accusations of racism and cultural appropriation. (For background discussion, see: Kevin McNeilly, "Cutting Both Ways: Robert Bringhurst and Haida Literature", in *Canadian Literature*, No. 167, Winter, 2000; Adele Freedman, "White Woman's Burden,", *Saturday Night*, Vol. 108, No. 3, April, 1993, pp. 40-44.) Repeated across North America throughout the decade of the 1990s with the specific intent of shaming, creating fear, and blacklisting, this politically opportunistic attack strategy has been referred to as 'the New McCarthyism.'

from the past would include, for example, the social action programs prepared by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his non-violent civil rights program, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement, and Saul Alinsky with his campaigns on behalf of community participatory democracy in the inner cities.[17]

"Critical appropriation of the needs and possibilities handed down by traditions, both implicit and explicit, takes place on four levels corresponding to different foci," Langan continues: *personal*—from life experience, biogenetic inheritance, temperament; *local*—community, regional, national, civic, ethnic; *civilizational*—industrialized, urban high-technology, "developed"; *planetary*—emerging world system based on spread of occidental technology (ibid, 7). By analyzing what pertinent insights tradition has to offer concerning existential, structural, or environmental issues within these four spheres of existence, it may be conjectured—and a critique advanced—regarding how new or renewed approaches to overcoming obstacles to community and cultural harmony can be addressed. Tradition then, provides a theoretical embarkation point.

As a civilization, however, the contemporary West has lost contact with much of its traditions, its sense of history and naturalness within the ecological meanings of the world. Gary Snyder notes this in his essay, "The Etiquette of Freedom", which on publication in 1990 became a cornerstone of 'new paradigm' thought:

> It seems that a short way back in the history of occidental ideas there
> was a fork in the trail. The line of thought that is signified by the names
> of Descartes, Newton, and Hobbes (saying that life in a primary society
> is 'nasty, brutish, and short'—all of them city-dwellers) was a profound
> rejection of the organic world. For a reproductive universe they substituted
> a model of sterile mechanism and an economy of "production" (18).

While acknowledging memory, from the 17th century's "age of reason" onward, empiricist rationality has been the modus operandi of Western intellectual life. "The odd thing," as Canadian philosopher John Ralston Saul (2001: 215) notes ironically, "…is that we are the civilization that knows more about most things than any other ever has. There should be

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[17] See Andrew Jamison & Ron Eyerman, *Seeds of the Sixties* (1994).

no contradiction between knowledge and memory.  New knowledge should clarify and enrich our sense of contact…Yet somehow this knowledge does not help us to remember as it should."

It does not help us remember because the terms of reference have shifted relevant to the values once represented by traditional memory, and presumptions regarding the idea of knowledge itself have shifted.  Consider Ireland with its dolmens, megaliths, Stone Age tombs, pre- and Celtic Christian *Sheela-na-gig* Goddess shrines, holy wells, Little People, magic trees, Viking ruins, medieval scriptoria.  Each is a historical artifact or symbol; yet, inexplicably and more powerfully, each is sacred to mystery—in effect, a shrine imbued in the eternal present with the intuitive power of dream and memory from the past.  This is the *knowledge* of tradition, what, for example, the poet Allen Ginsberg could understand as the fuller bardic inhabitation of language, of its hallowed tradition of 'sacred', versus 'professionalized' memory (Carolan, 2001: 20).  Yet, to the unaware, in terms of reason, such shrines to what is ultimately no more than sacred memory itself are now the untidy bric-a-brac of history, abstractions of an historical memory for those in a rising post-Christian civilization who are without comfort in mystery.

In the absence of the sacred, and increasingly of religious tradition, Western culture since Descartes and Bacon has witnessed an inexorable shift in the basis of canonical faith, transferring its allegiance to the science of rational, observable truths, and prompting John Ralston Saul to remind us of Canadian nationalist philosopher George Grant's lament (1995: 10-11) that, "Reason goes so deep into the modern consciousness that any other account is very difficult for a modern man to understand at all."   This deep-rootedness is by now so entrenched it constitutes what in the terminology of Jurgen Habermas can be seen as a "colonization by functional reasoning" of the Occidental world view (Ralston Saul, 2001: 304-05).

Reason may be viewed as a form of pure utilitarianism in which predictability replaces intuition and sacred mystery.  "We have always wanted the comfort of clarity and permanent systems," contends Ralston Saul, arguing that the West is "obsessed by utilitarianism" (ibid, 310).  This view finds support in the landmark bi-cultural study, *Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture,*

(Roger Ames and David Hall, 1995: 6-8), which in discussing Plato on *The Laws* notes how the Greeks had no truck with cosmic disorder. Indeed, it is precisely in this context that the Occidental worldview stands antithetical to the Hindu-Buddho-Taoist approaches of South and East Asia that have for a century now found increasing favour among Western seekers. In an unconventional assertion of lineage, Ralston Saul traces the seed of Western yearnings for predictability directly to Plato whom he regards as "busy trying to reduce reason to self-interest and utility with one hand, while demeaning the voices of uncertainty…with the other" (ibid, 310). Considering Socrates' proposal in Book IV of *The Republic*, that, "We'll call the part of the soul with which it *calculates* (italics original)*, the rational part*" (Plato, 1992: Hackett, trans. Bk IV 115), he sees Plato imprinting the notion of uncertainty squarely upon the poets and artists whose creative, rather than mechanical function is inextricably bound up with the forms of intuitive knowledge that Gary Snyder tellingly names "wild mind" (Carolan, 1996).

This same creative impulse—what in Irish culture's residual Celtic paganism is known as *deiseal,* or moving with the order of nature rather than with rigid notions of "logic and theory" (Monaghan, 2003: 13)—is similarly recognized within the Zen Buddhist worldview as "the wisdom of insecurity" (Watts, 1997). The spontaneity and elements of personal liberation inherent within this traditional East Asian approach to daily living are the heart of the attraction Eastern wisdom paths offer those seeking alternatives to the rationalistic trajectories of Occidental culture.

When skepticism of the daily civic system within which one lives becomes institutionalized—as evidenced by the meagre 30-60% voter turnouts frequenting many public elections in North America (Lautens, 2004); and when doubt regarding the traditional faith institutions governing the non-material aspects of that system becomes endemic (Walsh, 1998), it is unsurprising that many will look beyond for a reconciliation of direction and purpose in an uncertain world. From the biblical Hebrews' embrace of the Golden Calf, or the adoption of the Persian faith in Mithras by late imperial Rome's besieged legions, to the search of late-nineteenth century Europeans for a 'theosophical' alternative to lapsing Christianity, at crisis moments in history the movement toward new, often foreign avatars is a perennial salvationist human tradition. Accordingly, from the period of the West's sociological upheavals of the 1960s, occidentals with greater freedom

and mobility have in increasing numbers turned away from both the perceived trivialization of popular consumer culture and military-industrial adventurism of their own societies, toward the ancient traditions of East and South Asia in search of spiritual alternatives. In itself this is not new. Rather, it follows an old cultural pattern. University of Chicago Indologist Sheldon Pollock (2003: 304) has observed how during the period of Europe's colonial expansion, "as the economic and social dislocations of early modernity produced ever sharper self-estrangement in Europe, India came to be constituted as the repository of Europe's vanishing spirituality." Indian scholar Pankaj Mishra (2003) locates the phenomenon more pointedly to German Romanticism of the 1830s, and the followers of Novalis especially, who, "looked toward India for spiritual relief from a Europe they saw as embracing the bourgeois religion of progress and losing, in the process, its soul" (36).

As a survey of contemporary Asian-Pacific literatures reveals, with the material advancement of East Asian societies in recent decades, an equivalent shift in gaze is detectable interculturally throughout the region. Leo Ou-fan Lee (1989: 454) has written of how a "craze for things Western seems to permeate the mentality of an entire generation of young Chinese intellectuals." However awkwardly, a deeper exchange of social, economic, political and ultimately cultural values is inescapable. Transcending old barriers of ethnicity, politics and ideology, this appetite for cultural otherness points unambiguously toward a stage of humanity which Gary Snyder (Helm, 1983: 17) describes as both 'local' *and* 'cosmopolitan'—one that is local in its homeplace community affiliation, while remaining responsive to innovative thought flows from culturally diverse external or intercultural origins. One thinks for example, of the contemporary phenomenon of "world beat" music in which traditional Irish music finds thousands of enthusiasts in Japan (Gallowglass, 2004), or Cuban 'Buena Vista Club Musica' finds an international audience after American musician Ry Cooder records a speculative venture in Havana's elegantly decaying colonial downtown. From a humanist position, the success of the entire globalization project rests on further amplifying this cross-pollination of national vernaculars; for without it, as proponents of 'alternative' forms of globalization argue, there can be no human-centered ownership of the project (Ward, 2004). And without this

essential core value in their vision and governance, there can be only further acts of agitation in the protest community.

Accordingly, in the 'possibilities machine',[18] represented by all that is meant by tradition, the concrete idea of security in a global world may itself be contingent on rediscovering wisdom paths 'transmitted from antiquity' and on the expressions of authenticity they lead toward, including not only investor rights and regulations but respect and protection for society's social and ecological interests as well.  In this sense, the practicalities of life, community, and international problem-solving alike are equally affected by mysteries of the spirit and politics.  These mysteries are two solitudes, however, and the distinction between them is explained in the following sub-chapter.

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[18] A term coined by social philosopher Henri Lefebvre.  Discussed by Heinz Paetzold in "The Philosophical Notion of the City," in *The City Cultures Reader (*2000), p. 216-17.

### III.  *Tout commence en mystique et finit en politique*
*'Everything begins in mystery and ends in politics'*
Charles Peguy, *Notre Jeunesse*, 1910

From a classical Buddhist perspective all things begin in the mind, and by extension our experience of the world is our experience of our own mind.  As dissatisfaction deepens with the influence on North American society especially of the celebrity-focused, sex and violence-oriented entertainment industry, of which televised images of military adventurism are now also an integral part,[19] identifying appropriate strategies that help return one to stillness of mind is a fundamental undertaking.  Typically, this consists of discovering new or renewed virtues that lead to sustained personal happiness, or to better harmony among those with whom one associates.  However, as Morris Wolfe (1992: 7) maintains:

> If you live in a society where comparatively few derive real satisfaction
> from their work, where $130 billion a year is spent on ads that endlessly
> insist 'You're not good enough,' and where popular culture tells beautiful
> lies about the possibility of human happiness, it's not surprising that a lot
> of men and women have problems with self-esteem.  Nor is it surprising
> that a huge self-esteem industry has grown up to serve them.

"Consumer society," Wolfe continues, citing former *Esquire* ethics columnist Laurence Shames' *The Hunger For More: Searching For Values In An Age of Greed* (1989), "tends to withhold **'**such basic gratifications as a sense of purpose, of community, of simply being comfortable in one's own skin, and to offer in place of those things [a] whole glittering panoply of stuff that [can] be purchased.'  (par. 2, in Wolfe)   Wolfe maintains the self-

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[19] In a scathing response to the January 2004 national U.S. football Super Bowl half-time entertainment program in which singer Janet Jackson bared her breast before a televised audience estimated in the hundreds of millions, Phyllis Schalfly wrote, "CBS-TV proved again that it is determined to offend our moral sensibilities and trash our culture…The radical Muslims who criticize our culture as degraded and demoralizing have new proof for their charges. Who is going to answer them?" http://www.townhall.com/columnists/phyllisschlafly/ps20040209.shtml

esteem issue has become, as Gloria Steinem has professed, "both personal and political" (ibid, 7):

Every social-justice movement, she says—black, feminist, native, gay—begins with individuals saying, 'I—we—deserve better than this.' Steven Biko, Steinem reminds us, was murdered for preaching self-esteem to black South Africans. Traditional notions of self-esteem have been turned on their head, however. Wolfe charges that unlike George Orwell's prediction in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* where an ominous future totalitarian "Big Brother would be watching us", events have reversed themselves. Now, he says, "It's turned out to be far more subtle than that. We watch Big Brother" (ibid, 8). Recent communications studies support Wolfe's contention, reporting that television viewing per capita among Americans averages greater than four hours daily (Vespe, 2002). And where Orwell feared the development of an official media "Newspeak", a language calculated "not to extend but to *diminish* the range of thought", Wolfe concurs that with the evolution of politically correct "mediaspeak", North American society has inevitably spawned its own idiosyncratic variation (Wolfe, 8).

When a diminished sense of self is further diminished by a shrinking language of reference through which discontent may be registered, how then is one to address the challenges presented by a new global ethos in-progress? In an inversion of the 18th century and early Victorian periods' commitment to the ideals of 'Improvement', in the 21st century one's very conditions of existence are reduced, compartmentalized, and made vulnerable to corporate purveyors of idealized personal images and newspeak. With its lengthy border contiguous to the United States, Canadian society is a case in point. As Alberta historian Norman Knowles (2000: 21) asserts, "Its receptivity to successful American consumer advertising allowed its economic and political landscape to become dominated by the same assumptions of progress, materialism, and individualism that had so assiduously enveloped the meaning of American life". When British and Commonwealth cultural influences diminished before the imported culture of conspicuous consumption, "these developments fundamentally transformed the nature of Canadian society" (ibid., 21).

Within this surging tide of corporate commodification, spirituality too, is in danger of becoming as compartmentalized as self-identity or mass-market induced cravings for

designer brand apparel and other non-essentials. Ron Dart (2001: 5) summarizes the situation eloquently: "If to be civilized is to be civic minded and civil, then much of the modern and postmodern mood and temper lacks a civilized soul." Quixotically, the economically well-developed world's concern with the accumulation of consumer comfort goods is emblematic of the least commendable aspects of globalization. Often as not, Northern acquisitiveness comes at the expense of others in the South, depriving them of their social and economic independence. As research conducted by William Rees and Mathis Wackernagel has established (Bolt, 2000: 14), the seven hectares of arable land and aquatic regions required to support average consumption patterns of persons in the West are rapidly outstripping the world's available total of approximately one and a half hectares of land and half-hectare of aquatic resources. Applied globally, Western patterns "leave us two earths short of the three needed" (ibid, 14).[20] Living in a 'global village', an idea discussed in the chapter which follows, this becomes a matter of extreme concern regarding the appropriate allocation of precious resources.

Viewed in this light, the phenomenon of globalization is larger than economics or the convergence of cultures. To crystallize the matter, it is a moral issue and the question irredeemably is one of how change may occur to avoid Peguy's admonition regarding the slippery slide of mystery or spirituality—of the good it represents—into the politics of anger.

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[20] At first glance, Ress' and Wackernagel's study appears to echo Thomas Malthus' late 18th century contention that population growth will outstrip food production. This is not the case: their argument calls for re-examination of consumption patterns in Western societies that, on global application, have become unsustainable. Malthus' arguments are discussed in James Huzel's *The Popularization of Malthus in Early 19th Century England: Martineau, Cobbett and the Pauper Press* (London: Ashgate, 2006). The thesis author thanks Prof. Huzel for his clarification of Malthus' ideas regarding population growth and food supply.

# Chapter 2.

# Conceptual Origins of the Global Village Idea

*The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village.*
Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy,* 1962: p.31.

As American author, journalist and social archivist Tom Wolfe (2000: 67) observes in *Hooking Up*, the digital electronic age is "fast rendering national boundaries and city limits and other old geographical notions obsolete. Likewise, regional markets, labor pools, and industries. The world [is] now unified…online. There remains[s] only one 'region,' and its name [is] the Digital Universe."

Is this 'the global age'? Arguably not, although in a metaphysical sense it is emblematic. The seeds of the key term itself owe much to Canadian professor of English, and Director of the former Centre for Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto, Marshall McLuhan, and his consummately Sixties-era idea of 'the Global Village.' One can understand McLuhan's notion simply as one in which the world is linked through the sophistication of modern communications media. What McLuhan intuited is that the swiftness of electronic communication acts as a global 'central nervous system' in abolishing customary notions of time and speed, thereby making age-old differences of distance and geography redundant. In a more discursive sense, as Dennis Duffy (1969: 13) suggests, one may also comprehend it—probably more insightfully—as a term reflecting a shift from the folklore and moral postures of the industrial age to the interpersonal communications dynamics of an age of interconnectivity.

In McLuhan's most memorable work, *The Medium Is The Massage* (1967), he summarized his revolutionary view of the impact that modern communications technology was exerting upon a rapidly transforming new technologically-oriented society:

A medium works on you much like a chiropractor or some other masseur
and really works you over and doesn't leave any part of you unaffected; it
is a surround that is a process…it is a process and does things to you. The

medium is what happens to you and that is the message.

'A surround that is a process' bears close approximation to the nature of Tao or the Buddhist recognition of the idea of 'interdependency'—of interpenetrating biological processes which underscore the notion of a global age.  Discussing conceptual origins of the global age idea, Tom Wolfe's understanding in Hooking Up reaches beyond McLuhan's concept of a global community with its manifold layers of interpersonal linkages and economic interlacings.  In a deeper macro, or more wholistic sense he conceives of an interrelated human community that is itself the focal point of a series of *convergences,* and in this Wolfe acknowledges the originating genius of the idea as Jesuit mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

A French hero of the Great War, as Wolfe (2000: 69) has it, between battles Teilhard, "Began writing the treatise with which he hoped to unify all of science and all of religion, all of matter and all of spirit, heralding God's plan to turn all the world, from inert rock to humankind, into a single sublime Holy Spirit."  Citing Teilhard, Wolfe (ibid) relates how

> 'With the evolution of Man, a new law of Nature has come into force—
> that of convergence.'  Biological evolution has created step one,
> 'expansive convergence.' Now, in the twentieth century, by means of
> technology, God was creating 'compressive convergence.'  Thanks to
> technology, 'the hitherto scattered' species *Homo sapiens* was being
> united by a single 'nervous system for humanity,' a 'living membrane,'
> a single 'stupendous thinking machine,' a unified consciousness that
> would cover the earth like 'a thinking skin,' a 'noosphere,' to use
> Teilhard's favourite neologism.

What technological breakthroughs according to the farsighted Teilhard would be responsible for bringing all this to pass?  As Wolfe records: "'Radio, television, the telephone, and "those astonishing electronic computers, pulsating with signals at the rate of hundreds of thousands a second'" (ibid, 69-71).  Soon thereafter, McLuhan would add that

these same forms of media, "all affect us differently because each is…received through different combinations of senses" (Watson, 2003: 17).

Wolfe notes that Teilhard's studies came during a reactionary, conservative period of church history from the l920s onward.  He was unable to publish without his superiors' approval and after a lifetime of visionary struggle died in melancholy circumstances in New York city in 1955.  "One can think whatever one wants to about Teilhard's theology," Wolfe concludes (2000: 69-71):

> but no one can deny his stunning prescience…television was in its infancy…computers were huge, hellishly expensive, made-to-order machines as big as a suburban living room and bristling with vacuum tubes that gave off an unbearable heat…the microchip and the microprocessor had not yet been invented…Half a century ago, only Teilhard foresaw what is now known as the Internet.

The focus of countless alternative study groups and renowned for his message that "the future is in the hands of those who can give tomorrow's generations valid reasons to live and hope," Teilhard's thought had survived as a formative gravitational force in progressive culture (Ferguson, 1980: 43).  Popularized in part by former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, his books still remain both 'underground' and commercial bestsellers.  Yet during his own lifetime Teilhard's manuscripts circulated as a kind of ecclesiastical *samizdat,* notably at St. Michael's, a Roman Catholic college at the University of Toronto.  It was here that Marshall McLuhan, a teaching fellow in English literature and himself a convert to Catholicism, began paying attention to numerous publications from Teilhard that began to emerge via the Paris secretary to whom Teilhard's papers were bequeathed, including *The Phenomenon of Man*—much of which was written in Beijing in the 1930s (Wolfe, 2000: 9).

Irrespective of possible lineage transmissions, whether the Jesuit paleontologist Teilhard's inquiries evolve from the legacy of Matteo Ricci and the 16th century Jesuits in China—themselves links between East and West in helping shape a new European world view understood as the Enlightenment—the parallels are there.  Where Ricci extrapolated

from Confucian ideals in his reports to Europe on imperial Chinese society, similarly it is difficult to overlook Teilhard's foundational idea that the mind, as Marilyn Ferguson paraphrased in l980, "has been undergoing successive reorganizations throughout the history of evolution until it has reached a crucial point—the discovery of its own evolution" (43; see also Richard Dawkins, in Heminway, 2001).[21]  This bears a striking parallel with Mahayana Buddhism's Yogacara, or "Mind Only" School.[22]  Perceptual links between the latter and the influential 18th century philosophers George Berkeley and David Hume have also been drawn by Roy C. Amore (in Oxtoby, 2002: 249), and it is unlikely with his theological training that Teilhard was ignorant of the pair.  "For them,"

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[21] Studies in consciousness suggest that human evolutionary change is more neurophysiologically, rather than biologically oriented.  In *Evolution: The Mind's Big Bang* (videodocumentary, John Heminway, 2001), Oxford scholar Richard Dawkins and Michel Lorblanchet of the Centre Nationale de la Researche Scientifiques in Paris explain in interviews that breakthrough manifestations in the foundations of intelligence and of the human imagination are rooted in changes involving the neurological wiring of the brain.  Specific historical moments involving an upward spiral of social complexity such as new modes of social relationships and technologies beget new forms of social intelligence—of consciousness (defined by psychologists as 'awareness of our awareness' [Ornstein, 1992]—that researcher Heminway argues, "may be of vital strategic advantage".  Contending that 'memes'—the ideas, habits, trends, prejudices, and so on, that replicate from mind to mind, generation to generation in cultures, Dawkins posits, "If units of culture replicate themselves in something like the same way as DNA molecules replicate themselves, then we have the possibility of a completely new kind of Darwinism" (*Big Bang*).

Once the domain of 'New Age' inquiry, studies in consciousness are now affiliated with, among others, kinesiology.  This new field of science evolved during the 1970s, initially as an adjunct of sports medicine and body mechanics.  As David Hawkins (2002) discusses in *Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behaviour,* in examining how the laws of motion work to produce effects in the body, kinesiologists were led into the whole area of body-mind innerconnectivity, chaos/non-linear dynamics, and process functions—the field area underlying what this thesis terms 'the new world dharma.'  Hawkins, who works and researches in the U.S. with Nobel Prize-winning body-scientist Linus Pauling, premises the source of humanity's "leaps of awareness" (54) to "that basis of all consciousness [what he terms "Presence"], which has traditionally been called divinity" (ibid).  Of interest is that the term 'Presence' (Tibetan: *Kundun*), is also the customary term of reference for the Dalai Lama among his followers.

[22] Daniel Cozort and Craig Preston provide critical insight into the most important points of difference between the major Himalayan schools in *Buddhist Philosophy* (2003).  The *Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamika* path is discussed pp. 228-233.  See also William S. Waldron's *The Buddhist Unconscious* (2003), which illuminates parallels between Buddhist psychology and Western cognitive science.

Amore comments, "the universe exists only in the mind of the perceiver; it is but a fabrication of consciousness."[23]

Unaccountably, McLuhan's enormous intellectual debt to Teilhard in framing the 'global village' idea is still routinely overshadowed by the influence exerted upon him by his Canadian economist mentor, Harold Innis. Dennis Duffy (1969: 15) asserts that in Innis, McLuhan found "a systematic explanation of the relationship between communications media and the societies surrounding them…it became possible to examine a culture not only through its economic, moral and social systems but through its communications media."

Another profound link between McLuhan and Teilhard—and with the very evolution of the global age idea—is that of faith. As Roman Catholics, the very notion of culture for both these men is unalterably grounded in community. Wolfe surmises correctly that the irreligious mood of the early 1960s was more receptive to another type of intellectual approach. Accordingly, while devout himself, McLuhan:

> presented his theory in entirely secular terms, arguing that a new,
> dominant medium such as television altered human consciousness
> by literally changing what he called the central nervous system's
> 'sensory balance'… McLuhan regarded television as not a visual but
> an "aural and tactile" medium that was thrusting the new television
> generation back into what he termed a "tribal" frame of mind" (Wolfe,
>  2000: 73).

What McLuhan (1962: 8) explicitly believed was that the electronic age was reconfiguring "the entire human family into a single global tribe." Presented in this anthropological, neo-pagan fashion, receptivity was virtually guaranteed. Within only a few years Gary Snyder (1969; see also Hoskyns, 1997: 131-147) would be publishing his

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[23] In *Working Toward Enlightenment* (Boston: Weiser, 1993), Master Nan Huai-Chan (1993: 68) discusses *The Surangama Sutra* which is important to the understanding of Zen. He observes, "[the] Buddha says, that from the point of view of the whole universe, even empty space is not something that exists forever…'You must realize that empty space is born in your minds, like a bit of cloud in the sky.' Empty space is a construct of illusory thought…a phenomenon that is subordinate to the true nature of Mind-Only."

influential essay "Why Tribe", and the young legions who flocked to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury revolutionary cultural experiment of the 1960s would adopt and export 'tribe' as a social and political *raison d'etre*. For many, it would become even more, serving as the cardinal direction point for pioneering technological inquiries and for new and renewed forms of spiritual practice (Markoff, 2005). Like much of the Sixties' social, political and spiritual agenda that has since become mainstreamed, "Tielhard's and McLuhan's faith in the power of electronic technology to alter the human mind and unite all souls in a seamless Christian web, the All-in-One," (Wolfe, 2000: 74) has become less conspicuously visible. Ironically, Wolfe observes that "Thousands of dot-com dreamers are now busy amplifying the [global internet] message without the faintest idea where it came from" (ibid). They do, however, recognize contemporary exemplars of the visionary types who bequeathed it as a possibility and desired outcome—perhaps most notably the Dalai Lama, early internet-pioneer David Bowie, or software developer celebrities Steve Jobs of Apple Corporation, and Bill Gates and Paul Allen of Microsoft.[24] Others from the developmental history of 'global community thought' enumerated by Marilyn Ferguson include Christian mystics such as Meister Eckhart and Emanuel Swedenborg, the poet-engraver William Blake, the New England Transcendentalists, philosopher William James, Swiss psychologist and Western pioneer in *I Ching* and mandala exploration Carl Jung, philosopher-mathematician Alfred North Whitehead, and Teilhard de Chardin (Ferguson, 1980: 50; see also Snyder, 1995: 43).

As Marshall McLuhan understood, in the end all are unified. With instant electronic transference of information, an integrated world in which all are linked and interrelated becomes not simply possible, but *is*. Interestingly, East Asia has long understood the condition of *what is* as Tao (Loy Ching Yuen and Carolan, 2003: iv, 31-38). The make-up of this conceptualization is uniquely Chinese: it serves as both noun and verb, thing and process. Tao is spacious, at once both full and empty. Neither negative, nor positive, but inherently both. It is then, both consciousness and a way, or path. In his masterwork

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[24] Jobs, Gates, and Paul Allen in particular were quick to comprehend McLuhan's message that "the production and consumption of information is the main business of our time" (cited in Dave Watson [2003], "The Message Is There's A New Marshall In Town." *Georgia Straight*. Vol. 37, No. 1869; Oct. 16, p. 17). California's technological mecca, Silicon Valley, has since produced East-West inspired software brand-names such as Novell's Zenworks information system.

*Understanding Media* (1965), McLuhan's vision of the direction humanity is evolving toward civilizationally comes very near Taoist mind with his prophetic existential question for a global age:

> The immediate prospect for fragmented Western [humanity] encountering the electric implosion within his own culture is [a] steady and rapid transformation into…total interdependence with the rest of human society… Might not the current translation of our entire lives into the spiritual form of information make of the entire globe, and of the human family, a single consciousness?  (in Ferguson, 1980: 55)

By overcoming the West's archetypal intellectual pattern of objectivizing phenomena, McLuhan's progressive Western, Christian, technological thought manifests a distinctively new awareness, or worldview strikingly like that of East and South Asia's classical Taoist, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, and of much traditional animist thought (Halifax,1990: 23-29).  As humanity enters a new period of history in which the rise of China is of enormous magnitude and questions arise whether its "Confucian-Daoist, rather than Judeo-Christian cultural norms will prove best suited to overseeing a global knowledge economy" (Little, 2005), it is timely to regard consciousness as a worthy subject of reflection.  Indeed, as a scholar of literature and man of faith, McLuhan would posit it as the diamond-point of an ultimately global moment in human history.  Customarily the purview of religion, ritual and poetry, today consciousness is as much a field of inquiry in neuroscience—the study of the brain and the central nervous system—as in poetry or explorations of the human spirit. Increasingly, it draws valuable intercultural research contributions from thinkers across a broad band, and, insights into its deeper nature now arrive from such divergent intellectual disciplines as physics, bio-medicine, visual art and literature, and classical Himalayan religious psychology.

In what is in many ways becoming an age of 'post-institutional' religion, the evolving *new world dharma*—informed by all the above—suggests itself as an epistemology for a new global consciousness.  Few recent thinkers have been as influential in shaping this as Fritjof Capra, whose revolutionary ideas will now be considered.

## II. Rethinking Ideas of Sacredness and Space

*There now only remains the inquiry as to whether material things exist*

Descartes, *Meditation VI*

In his pathbreaking interdisciplinary, intercultural work *The Tao of Physics*, Austrian physicist and author Fritjof Capra (1975: 10) labours to establish that a "consistent view of the world is beginning to emerge from modern physics which is harmonious with ancient Eastern wisdom." Observing that the nature of the world of particle level physics is one of interrelatedness in which particles can be created from energy, then vanish to energy once more—a state that religious mystics and Buddhism's *Heart Sutra* understand as "form is emptiness, emptiness is form"—Capra is able to assert on verifiable evidence that:

> In modern physics, the universe is thus experienced as a dynamic,
> inseparable whole which always includes the observer in an essential
> way. In this experience, the traditional concepts of space and time,
> of isolated objects, and of cause and effect, lose their meaning. Such
> an experience, however, is very similar to that of the Eastern mystics.
> The similarity becomes apparent in quantum and relativity theory, and
> becomes even stronger in the 'quantum-relativistic' models of subatomic
> physics where both these theories combine to produce the most striking
> parallels to Eastern mysticism (ibid, 86).

In subsequent discussions addressing Mahayana Buddhism's *Avatamsaka*, or Flower Wreath Sutra, known in Chinese as the *Hua-yen ching* (Wong 1998: 14) Capra observes that its central theme is:

> the unity and interrelation of all things and events; a conception
> which is not only the very essence of the Eastern world view, but
> also one of the basic elements of the world view emerging from

modern physics (ibid, 106).

In this view, matter is seen as 'interconnections', and from this can be extrapolated the basic oneness of the universe.  In his further works including *Hidden Connections* (2002)*, The Web of Life* (1996)*, Uncommon Wisdom* (1988), and *The Turning Point* (1982)*,* Capra advances his range of enquiry, developing from interests in uncertainty and chaos theory into the larger sphere of dynamic systems, or complexity theory.  Encompassing approaches from physics, adaptive biology, and deep ecology, dynamic systems theory describes the mathematics of a deeper system of order using non-linear equations.  As Capra explains, systems theory describes control systems—networks—of self-generating processes that are connected in non-linear fashion, and from which random data or 'chaos' emerges through 'cognition'—"the process of knowing"—into self-organizing patterns (*Connections*, 2002: 9, 29).  The special dynamics of this web-like process in which networks, "continually create, or recreate, themselves by transforming or replacing their components…[thereby undergoing] continual structural changes while preserving their web-like patterns of organization" (ibid, 9), has been termed 'Autopoiesis' by Chilean cognitive science researchers Humberto Maturana and  Francisco Varela (1991).  An evolution of earlier cybernetic theory, autopoiesis, Capra explains, provides "a clear and powerful criterion for distinguishing between living and nonliving systems" (Capra, 9).

'Cybernetics', the larger "science of systems of control and communications in animals and machines" (OED, 1979) that Capra, Maturana and Varela call to societal attention emerged during the 1940s.  It originated as an interdisciplinary inquiry when a group of distinguished scholars from the fields of both the social and hard sciences were gathered by Warren McCulloch, a University of Illinois professor of psychiatry and philosophy, to a series of meetings in New York known as the Macy Conferences (Capra, 1996: 53).  Among others, they included Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, and Norbert Wiener.  Their discussions led to an appreciation of the human mind as a computer-like machine in which the brain processes perceptual data from the individual's exterior world in the form of symbols.  These abstract symbols are manipulated to achieve conclusions upon which actions can be based (ibid, 53; Francis, 2000: 6).

With the conceptual advance of cognitive science, it becomes possible within the systems view of life, as Capra (2002: 29) articulates:

> …to abandon the Cartesian view of mind as a thing, and to realize that mind and consciousness are not things but processes.  In biology, this novel concept of the mind was developed during the 1960s by Gregory Bateson, who used the term 'mental process', and independently by Humberto Maturana…In the 1970s, Maturana and Francisco Varela expanded Maturana's initial work into a full theory, which has become known as the Santiago Theory of Cognition.

Juxtaposed to the Santiago Theory, the previous Cartesian mechanistic view came as a legacy of the 16th century's 'Age of Reason', when a lineage of thinkers including Copernicus, Francis Bacon, Galileo, the chemist Robert Boyle, pioneering physician William Harvey, and others, sought intellectual release from the residual bonds of medieval superstition (Webb 1959: 112-117).  In seeking a new language of science, physics and even philosophy, their determination was that natural knowledge—nature—"must be understood as the manifestation of mathematically precise natural laws" (Descartes, cited in Hampshire, 1956: 13; 60-64; Webb, 1959: 118-127).  This mechanistic vision of nature, or reality, emphasizes distinctions between the 'mind' of the observer, and the 'things' or 'matter' being observed, reaching its acme with the empirical meditations of Rene Descartes and the celestial-gravitational physics of Isaac Newton.  Their dualistic view emphasizes the examination of space, motion, and the physical laws of nature; yet, certain of its own religious convictions congruent with the age, this dualism essentially disregards ideas of spirit and soul, or the experience of primal existential mystery within its conspectus.  Arguably, this line of analytical reasoning has continued until recent times (Capra, 2002: 29; 38-39).

As much as superstition, the 16th century intellectual revolt was also against the hegemony of Aristotle whose ideas had become sanctified by the weight of time and the Roman church.  Following the martyrdoms and travails of Giordano Bruno, Galileo and other scientific adventurers, the cultural edifice of Aristotelian thought had come to be

regarded as an intellectual tyranny (Webb, 119), especially its "conception of nature as a system or hierarchy of natural kinds, distinguished by essential qualitative differences" (Hampshire, 12). This 2000-year old Aristotelian vision would be challenged and defeated by the "mathematical scrutiny" of Newton, and rested upon a perception of "ethereal heavens [with] their own unending circular motions, totally unworldly and separate from our world of earth, air, fire and water" (Gingrich, 2003: 22).

Clarifying the nature of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century's own scientific revolt, Capra explains that cybernetics and its offspring, dynamic systems theory, "looks at the world in terms of relationships and integration" (1989: 3-4). From such observational insight, patterns can be created. In systems theory the patterns of systems themselves "are integrated wholes whose properties do not allow them to be reduced to smaller units" (ibid, 3-4). Biological processes within the body and its organs, for example the working of the brain or liver are "living systems", and as Capra writes, "social systems, such as a family or a community…and ecosystems" demonstrate the same self-organizing "aspects of wholeness" even as they incorporate "a variety of organisms and inanimate matter in mutual interaction" (ibid, 4). From precisely this perceptual method arises the Gaia Hypothesis founded by James Lovelock and expanded upon in conjunction with Lynn Margulis, in which planet Earth is understood as a self-organizing pattern of interrelated natural biological systems; as a sentient being.[25]

Accordingly:

> …although we can discern individual parts in any system, the nature
> of the whole is always different from the mere sum of its parts…the
> systems approach does not concentrate on basic building blocks but
> rather on basic principles of organization…it provides the outlines
> of an answer to this age-old question, an answer that for the first

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[25] I am grateful to biologist-educator Peter Francis for explanatory background regarding cybernetics. Capra himself recommends *The Tree of Knowledge,* Maturana and Varela (1988). In the 'Gaia Hypothesis' Lovelock (1979) asserts that:
> "the physical and chemical condition of the surface of the Earth, of the atmosphere, and of the oceans has been and is actively made fit and comfortable by the presence of life itself. This is in contrast to the conventional wisdom which held that life adapted to planetary conditions as they evolved their separate ways" (*Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, p. 152)

time in modern science presents a unified view of life, mind, and
matter…systems theory provides the ideal language for unifying
many fields of study that have become isolated and fragmented
(Capra, 4).

Capra contends that from a systems perspective, the major problem areas of our time
are interrelated.  The ongoing degradation of the global environment, the fundamental
dilemma of unabated poverty in the developing world, and a continuing international arms
race with its inevitable threat of further nuclear proliferation, are but core contributing
factors to a host of existential perils that include "world population growth, deforestation,
the greenhouse warming, depletion of the ozone layer, pollution and contamination of air,
spoil, and water" (ibid, 1; see Kung, 1994: 11-14).  The interrelatedness of these problems
is familiar and looks like the dragon chasing its own tail: poverty breeds population
growth; developing world debt fuels tropical deforestation and species extinction;
cumulative destruction of the biosphere motivates territorial aggression and an over-heated
arms race.

Capra's views are echoed by Arundhati Roy (1999).  In a scathing rebuke of India's
military nuclearization policy entitled "The End of Imagination", Roy emphasizes how,
increasingly, economically-stressed developing states such as Pakistan, India and Iran
direct scarce financial resources toward acquiring further nuclear arms rather than toward
infrastructure improvements in safe-water delivery, or local health and educational
initiatives, in a self-perpetuating cycle of diminishment (19-33; also Capra 1989: 1).[26]
Roy's bitter conclusion is that perhaps it is simply "easier to make a bomb than to educate
four hundred million people" (ibid, 33).

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[26] Longer discussions of the cycle of diminishments are found in "The New Architecture of Global
Security and Paths To Building A Civic Society" by former Ethiopian ambassador to the U.N.,
Kassa Kebede (1995); and by Ved Mehta (1996), "The Politics of Sanitation" (*Washington
Quarterly*, Vol 19: 4), pp. 149-174.  NGOs Oxfam and Global Policy Forum, a U.N.- monitoring
group, offer a concise report (2004), "Guns or Growth? Assessing the Impact of Arms Sales on
Sustainable Development": http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/develop/2004/06oxfamarms.htm.
The *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (2000) addresses the specific issues of military
spending, war and developing world poverty (II. Peace, security and disarmament; III.
Development and poverty eradication): see
http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm

Maintaining that the way we regard this whole problematic cycle is a "crisis of perception", Capra regards these issues as "different facets of one single crisis" (ibid, 2). Curiously, Canadian poet and essayist Robert Bringhurst (1986: 103) remarks upon an antithetical model familiar to observers of the North's economically developed world, one of unquestioning belief in endless prosperity:

> Those of us raised in colonial North America have been taught
> not an ecology of living facts, but a vision of endless progress,
> endless development, endless gain—and a vision also of social
> justice and personal liberty.  These visions have been linked
> in the presumption that the world of endless development is a
> universal world, one that has room within it for everything.
> But a world with room for nothing *outside* itself, room for nothing
> beyond its control, is a world in which liberty and prosperity
> are hollow, and one in which justice is severed from both its
> origins and its ends.

Either situation is ecologically untenable, and the demands of a post-September 11, 2001 world underscore the urgency of questioning both models.  While acknowledging the insufficiency of both popular and political dialogue, as well as concrete action on these subjects, Capra's belief is that they will remain inconclusively addressed until introduced to political dialogue through grass-roots activism.  Like Kassa Kebede (1995), Capra agrees that the towering environmental, economic, and political issues of the age cannot be addressed in isolation, but that in the manner of a cooperative litigation they must be approached both severally and individually.

In *The Hidden Connections* (2002), Capra demonstrates how through the leadership of NGOs, social justice movements and alternative development networks have begun synthesizing "the key ideas about alternatives to the current form of economic globalization" (195).  As an example, the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) which is comprised of more than sixty organizations in twenty-five countries, including Friends of the Earth, the Third World Network, the Sierra Club, the Institute for Policy

Studies, Public Citizen, Rainforest Action Network and others, has produced a protocol, *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World Is Possible* (2002, www.bkconnection.com/static/ifg.asp). Among its recommendations as alternatives to corporate globalization models are those proposed by Capra (2002: 195), including:

> A shift from governments serving corporations to governments serving people and communities; the creation of new rules and structures that favour the local and follow the principle of subsidiarity ('Whenever power can reside at the local level, it should reside there'); the respect of cultural integrity and diversity; a strong emphasis on food security (local self-reliance in food production) and food safety (the right to healthy and safe food); as well as core labour, social and other human rights.

As a grassroots response, the IFG's *"Alternatives"* represents a new perspective for discussion and negotiation of various other approaches to international economic development. Inimical to the Bretton Woods trinity of the IMF, WTO and World Bank, in Capra's way of thinking, it arises as a new paradigm.

Although the IFG may be seen in many ways as an offspring of the Seattle Coalition of 1999, new paradigms seldom surge into existence *sui generis.* Instead, they emerge from convergences of creative, intellectual and political energies. David Hawkins (2002) explains that this was the case during the 1970s, when advances in previously unrelated scientific fields began converging unexpectedly (41-42). Clinical research on the physiology of the nervous system was paralleled by technological breakthroughs in computer design, while developments in mathematics, physics and quantum mechanics, led to a sudden new ability to work with "millions of calculations in milliseconds…[that] fostered a revolutionary perspective on natural phenomena" (Hawkins, ibid, citing Peat 1988; see also Markoff, 2005). Consequently, a new way of looking upon the world arrived as a possibility in the Western mind—Chaos theory, innerconnectivity, networks of interdependence. From a humanist's position therefore, as a response to the late-twentieth

century's 'globalization from above' imperative, the creation of grassroots social justice and economic-reform networks such as the IFG, seems either inevitable or necessary.

Whatever the case, significant cultural transformations are already in progress. Capra's recommendation for a more secure future rests on encouraging transformation from within the leadership protocols of Western corporate and educational leaders:

> The technologies and business practices of the corporate community which are generally unhealthy if not downright destructive, are [still] firmly supported by the scientific establishment—the scientific advisors to our governments, the grant-giving foundations, and so on. But this is not a conspiracy…It comes from the fact that the judgments and activities of the corporate and academic communities, as well as those of our political leaders, are based on the same outdated world view…whose limitations are now producing the multiple facets of our global crisis (1989: 2).

As a physicist, Capra summarizes the still constrictive old world paradigm as a mechanistic hybrid of "Cartesian philosophy and Newtonian physics" (ibid, 3) That perception—a universe composed of elementary building blocks working on mechanical principles—corresponds also, he suggests, to an understanding of the human body itself "as a machine, which is still the conceptual basis of the theory and practice of our medical science" (ibid). Illustrative of this engineering metaphor one may consider the western medical practitioner's traditional approach: observation of patient, diagnosis, appropriate response or intervention to diagnosis, followed by observation of results. Juxtaposing this view is the practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine whose the approach is an on-going wholistic observation of bodily process with its own sense of appropriate response—an 'other world' paradigm; not inherently superior, but no less valid and often equally effective. Capra notes it is the old world paradigm that still "urges the view of life in society as a competitive struggle for existence (inherited from the social Darwinists)… and the belief in unlimited material progress to be achieved through economic and technological growth" (ibid, 3-4).

Capra contrasts this older vision—a quintessentially European view corresponding with the 17th and 18th centuries' commitment to 'the Age of Improvement', to the idea of 'progress'[27]—with that of an emerging new paradigm for the global future. Borrowing terminology from Arne Naess, originator of the term 'deep ecology', Capra draws a line between the polarized views of what ecology itself might mean.[28] 'Shallow' ecology reflects the traditional Western techno-economic bias favouring nature as a resource bank to be exploited for profit. The new paradigm's 'deep' ecology recognizes the essential interrelatedness of all nature's component elements. Within its conspectus, "humans are just one particular strand in the web of life," rather than its central focus. Capra explains it as a wholistic world view emphasizing the whole rather the parts (ibid, 3).

Where the fading 'modern' scientific paradigm rested on a metaphor of humanity observing, if not (through the intercession of the divine) actively manipulating the control panel of a complex mechano set, the new paradigm is of the individual "connected to the cosmos as a whole" (ibid, 3). Unifying this new holistic/scientific comprehension of the web of life is recognition of a particular mode of consciousness. "Ultimately," Capra suggests, "deep ecological awareness is spiritual or religious awareness." If this sounds consistent with pre-Enlightenment views of the Great Chain of the Being; to Pythagorean devotion to the music of the spheres; to traditional Chinese understanding of the Great Tao; to the Confucian 'Heaven-Humanity-Earth triad (discussed in thesis chapter 10); or to animist cosmology, it is because the new paradigm *is* consistent with these perennial

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[27] See Rosita Dellios, "Studying the Future: Who, How & Why". Unpublished lecture, Bond University, Qld., Australia (http://www.bond.edu.au/hss/subjects/Outlines/INTR13-306.pdf ).

[28] See www.unitedearth.com.au/deepecology.html: it notes, "Norwegian philosopher Naess coined the phrase 'deep ecology' in his 1973 article "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary," to express a vision of the world in which we protect the environment as a part of ourselves, never in opposition to humanity. Another explanation cited in this web-site is by Samuel A. Trumbore: "Deep ecology departs from the anthropocentric world view and looks at things from a planetary or eco-centric view point. Rather than taking the shallow approach looking at pollution as a control, placement and dispersion problem to limit human toxicity, the deep ecologist questions the production of any toxic waste at all and evaluates its effect on the total biosphere." Joanna Macy's extensively-linked web-site adds that Naess' intended the term, "to contrast with environmentalism for purely human interests. Deep ecology is both a school of thought (Naess's ecosophy and Henryk Skolimowski's ecophilosophy) and a movement (the deep, long range ecology movement, described early on by Bill Devall and George Sessions). www.joannamacy.net/html/deep.html. Retrieved March 25, 2005.

philosophical expressions of what American scholar Joseph Campbell (1976: 477), in his reflections on Japan's wisdom path of Shinto, describes as "the recognition and evocation of an awe that inspires gratitude to the source and nature of being".

To again borrow a phrase from Gary Snyder, this is 'the Big Watershed' view of the universe. From a Buddho-Taoist-Shamanic perspective, rethinking cogent ideas of sacredness and space this way renews 'right-minded'[29] attitudes toward nature from humanity's archaic past, synthesizing them with a scientifically verifiable approach to living in a contemporary-oriented, environmentally conscious manner. If the universal is found in the local, the historical and archaic too is found in the present. Snyder recapitulates these convergences in his essay, "A Village Council of All Beings". The deep ecology school, defined as "the scientific study of relationships, energy transfers, mutualities, connections, and cause and effect networks within natural systems" (75), may be likened to a:

> …Euro-American global economic development as anthropology used to be to colonialism—that is to say, a kind of counter-science generated by the abuses of the development culture…the word *ecological* (italics original) has also come to mean something like "environmentally conscious (1995: 75).

Significantly, the 'environmental consciousness' Snyder describes is homologous to the reciprocal relationship Capra sees implicit between individual and the cosmos when 'connected as a whole.' Indeed, it the proposition of this thesis that the epistemological grounding of the evolving *new world dharma* can be ascribed in large measure to their rethinking of traditional Western ideas of sacredness and space, and to which this thesis

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[29] "Right Mindfulness" is the fifth factor within the Eightfold Path leading to Righteous Life within Buddhism. The three aspects of the Eightfold Path *(Sila*-Morality; *Samadhi*-Mental Culture; *Panna*-wisdom) are contained within the Fourth of the Buddha's Four Nobel Truths (the Noble Truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*, or suffering). See K. Sri Dhammananda (1993), What *Buddhists Believe,* pp. 74-85.

will now turn toward in its consideration of the "anti-anthropocentric critique"[30] of American poet, essayist, deep ecologist, and feisty generational sage, Gary Snyder.

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[30] Susan Kalter employs this phrase in "The Path to Endless: Gary Snyder in the Mid-1990s," (1999).

# Chapter 3.

## Ecosystems, Mandalas and Watersheds:
### The Dharma Citizenship of Gary Snyder

*I pledge allegiance to the soil*

*of Turtle Island...*

Gary Snyder, "For All"

When Islamic and postcolonial studies specialist Ziauddin Sardar states that Futures Studies "must work in opposition to the dominant politics and culture of our time, [and] resist and critique science and technology [and] globalisation" (2002, in Slaughter, 17), unknowingly he depicts the life and work of American poet, essayist and self-described 'mahayana anthropologist', Gary Snyder.

Informed by East-West poetics, land and wilderness sustainability issues, cross-cultural anthropology, Mahayana Buddhism, his own long years of familiarity with 'the bush' and high mountain places, as well as a lifetime of scholarship that has earned him membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Snyder's contributions lay at the emotional, philosophical and activist heart of contemporary Western environmental discourse. Snyder's principles have been developed and articulated over forty-five years in a series of modern literary classics that include the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Turtle Island* (1974), *Earth House Hold* (1969)*, Ax Handles* (1983), his pre-eminent translations of Han Shan's *Cold Mountain Poems* (1965), and *The Practice of the Wild* (1990). Engaging themes of transformation and responsible planetary ecological stewardship, his works point consistently to an essential, life-sustaining relationship that must exist between 'place' and individual and community psyche. In "Four Changes", an essay written in 1969 and published five years later, Snyder describes the mystical nature of this relationship:

> At the heart of things is some kind of serene and ecstatic process which is
> beyond qualities and beyond birth-and-death (102).

Of this psychic awareness, or 'interrelatedness', he has written that, "If humans are to remain on earth, they must transform the five-millennia-long urbanizing civilization tradition into a new ecologically-sensitive, harmony-oriented, wild-minded, scientific-spiritual culture" (1995: 41). And as root prescriptions for the overarching global crisis of the age, he has offered as remedies the distinctive ideas of an "etiquette of freedom" and a "practice of the wild" (1990: 3-34).

Developing these protocols out of what he terms a "Turtle Island view" of the intrinsic value of nature" (1995: 246; 1975)—a phrase referring to traditional widely-held North American aboriginal depictions of the continent, in which "[humanity] and all of nature are represented by a single continuum of life, strong and virile, emerging from unrecorded ages to the present" (Pickett, 1975: 274)—any paradigm for a truly healthy culture, Snyder argues, must begin with surmounting narrow conceits of personal identity and finding a commitment to place, as in, for example, to Turtle Island, or Arizona's Painted Desert, British Columbia's west coast temperate rainforest, or North Beach in San Francisco. For this reason, critics from the period of his 1975 Pulitzer Prize laureate onward have regarded Snyder as holding himself accountable, "not to laws, but to a higher authority, the earth" (Pickett, 275; also Cotter, 1975: 486).

From the humanistic position the Turtle Island view binds man, not to man, but to his environment, to the wholeness of individual being. *Ipso facto*, responsibility to self is also concern for the earth which is humanity's physical and spiritual home. Yet, as a former logger in the U.S. Pacific Northwest's conifer rainforest, Snyder also manifests a sensible concern for the need to harvest, as well as conserve, the environment's natural fruits. In "Why Log Truck Drivers Rise Earlier Than Zen Students", a poetic homage to the dignity of labour in the resource extraction industries, one sees the perfect illustration of this philosophy: it is necessary for the logger, for a community, to cut and chop, Snyder implies, but it is vital that it be done mindfully and with integrity. As Betty Pickett contends, what Snyder cannot accept is the unfeeling despoliation of all that is Turtle Island (276). In the poem's concluding line, "there is no other life", she sees the poet's affirmation that even in reducing the extent of the natural state there is a rightness, for the men who do the harvesting—rising earlier than students of Zen Buddhism who might typically presume for themselves the high moral ground in ecological discourse—do so as

"whole, contented, unified beings" (ibid), and as such are themselves bona fide citizens of Turtle Island, and planetary citizens of Mother Earth.

The Native American mythological origins of Snyder's Turtle Island view expand further, however.  As he comments:

> The twentieth-century syncretism of the 'Turtle Island view' gathers ideas from Buddhism and Taoism and from the lively details of world-wide animism and paganism.  There is no imposition of ideas of progress or order on the natural world—Buddhism teaches impermanence, suffering, compassion, and wisdom.  Buddhist teachings go on to say that the true source of compassion and ethical behaviour is paradoxically none other than one's own realization of the insubstantial and ephemeral nature of everything.  Much of animism and paganism celebrates the actual, with its inevitable pain and death, and affirms the beauty of the process.  Add contemporary ecosystem theory and environmental history to this, and you get a sense of what's at work (1995: 246).

Extending his analysis further, and borrowing from deep ecology to remake the shopworn literary concept of 'sense of place' into something fresh and vital, Snyder refers to the sensibility of fully 'inhabiting' a place spiritually, economically, and compassionately as a 'bioregional consciousness' (ibid, 246-47); one that is equally powerful in embracing urban, suburban or rural living environments.  Bioregionalism, he explains in "The Rediscovery of Turtle Island":

> calls for commitment to this continent *place by place,* in terms of bio-geographical regions and watersheds.  It calls us to see our country in terms of its landforms, plant life, weather patterns, and seasonal changes—its whole natural history before the net of political jurisdictions was cast over it.  People are challenged to become 'reinhabitory'—that is, to become people who are learning to live and think 'as if' they were totally engaged with their place for the long future.  This doesn't mean

some return to a primitive lifestyle or utopian provincialism; it simply
implies an engagement with community and a search for the sustainable
sophisticated mix of economic practices that would enable people to live
regionally, and yet learn from and contribute to a planetary society (ibid,
246-7).[31]

 Here, Snyder returns to watershed imagery by explaining that while a watershed flows
'through' each of these places, it also includes them.

   "That's why I talk about watersheds, he explains in an interview (Carolan, 1995: 24):
Symbolically and literally they're the mandalas of our lives.  They provide the very idea of
the watershed's social enlargement, and quietly present an entry into the spiritual realm
that nobody has to think of, or recognize as being spiritual.  But there it is.  The watershed
is our only local Buddha mandala: one that gives us all, human and non-human, a territory
to interact in.  That is the beginning of *dharma* citizenship: not membership in a social or
national sphere, but in a larger community citizenship.  In other words, a s*angha*; a local
dharma community.  All of that potentially is in there, like Dogen when he says, 'When
you find your place, practice begins.' "

   Thirteenth century master Dogen Zenji is a classical Asian voice that Snyder has
discussed frequently through the years.  Snyder himself trained as a lay Zen monk for ten
years at Daitokuji temple in Kyoto, Japan.  He observes of Dogen:

      There are several levels of meaning in what Dogen says. There's the literal
      meaning, as in when you settle down somewhere.  This means finding the

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[31] Naropa University scholar Andrew Schelling (2005) notes that the term 'bioregion' first
appeared formally in the American Heritage Dictionary in 1991.  In an interview with the author of
this thesis ("Face To Face with Jim Koller", *Beat Scene*, Coventry, U.K., Summer 2005), American
author, publisher and original San Francisco 'Digger', Jim Koller, recounts the actual origins of the
idea of Bioregionalism.  During the early 1970s, former Digger luminaries Peter Berg and Peter
Coyote met in Pennsylvania and examined the growing U.S. ecological movement to see how it
could be taken deeper.   On returning to San Francisco, Berg founded the Planet Drum Foundation.
When the idea entered public discourse in the U.S., Koller as publisher of *Coyote's Journal* tied
poetics to the bioregional idea, and with fellow poet-publisher Gary Lawless and Berg began
introducing the bioregional ethos to Europe.  Through the work of Guiseppe Moretti,
bioregionalism became well-established in Italy where it found fertile ground.  The annual
Bioregional Festival takes place there in Gobbio each September.

right teaching, the right temple, the right village. Then you can get serious about your practice. Underneath, there's another level of implication: you have to understand that there are such things as places. That's where Americans have yet to get to. They don't understand that there are 'places'. So I quote Dogen and people say, 'What do you mean, you have to find your place? Anywhere is okay for dharma practice because it's spiritual.' Well, yes, but not just *any* place. It has to be a place that you've found yourself. It's never abstract, always concrete (ibid, 24).

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Snyder has explained how one of the models he uses to present his ideas is that of an ecosystem. "An ecosystem is a kind of mandala in which there are multiple relations that are all-powerful and instructive," he notes in "A Village Council of All Beings" (*Space*, 1995: 74-81). In this address presented to the Ladakh Ecological Development Group's conference called "Rethinking Progress" in Leh, northern India in 1992, he relates

Each figure in the mandala—a little mouse or bird (or little god or demon figure)—has an important position and a role to play. Although ecosystems can be described as hierarchical in terms of energy flow, from the standpoint of the whole all of its members are equal (ibid, 76).

This is the core teaching of equanimity and interdependence. In the mandala visualization, the small as well as central figures are all essential. As Snyder states elsewhere, "the whole thing [the mandala *thangka* image] is an educational tool for understanding—that's where the ecosystem analogy comes in. Every creature, even the little worms and insects, has value. Everything is valuable—that's the measure of the system" (in Carolan: 23).

For Snyder, value also translates as responsibility. Within his approach to committing to a place is the acceptance of responsible stewardship. It is through this engaged sense of effort and practice—participating in what he salutes as "the tiresome but tangible work of school boards, county supervisors, local foresters, local politics"—all the manifestations of contemporary community and regional activism—that individuals find their real

community, their real culture. "Ultimately, values go back to our real interactions with others," he emphasizes. "That's where we live, in our communities" (ibid, 23-24).

'Living in place' then, is a process that redefines one's personal stake in the community, for in the larger Buddhist sense, community includes all the beings—the 'ten thousand things'[32] of everyday existence. Joan Halifax, a former research assistant to Joseph Campbell, and teaching Director of the Upaya Zen Buddhist Centre in Santa Fe, notes additionally how, "in contemporary Buddhism the term *Sangha* refers to the community that practices the Way together" (1990: 25). Individually, one's job as citizen member is to develop community networks that extend beyond the obvious political divisions of age, class, race, gender and employment—boundaries that keep us apart, and which Snyder believes are reinforced through the media (interview, 1995). With the growing importance of community coalition-building, however, Snyder explains that he has found it expedient to narrow his ideas concerning bioregionalism, or his notion of a practice of the wild, down to a shared neighbourhood level, arguing that urban dwellers too, can and must learn as U.S. agricultural conservationist Wes Jackson says, to "become native to this place" (1996: 87-103).

It is here also that he sees convergences arising between local political activism, social justice issues, and east Asia's traditional Buddhist and Taoist wisdom paths that find increasingly wide acceptance in Western culture. As a poet who from 1958 onward [33] has also been accorded a leading international lay spiritual teacher's role, for Snyder the convergences occur within an encounter that embraces the Zen Buddhist idea of 'waking up' to one's individual place.[34] Having experienced this *satori,* or Zen-style awakening, commitment to the key principle of upholding creative stewardship for its protection and continuance becomes an inherent spiritual obligation within the consciousness of 'wild

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[32] Lao-tzu in the first epistle of the *Tao Te Ching—"The Tao that can be named is not the eternal Tao"*, intimates that "the Tao that is named is the mother of the ten thousand things", or the totality of everyday existence.

[33] Since the publication in 1958 of Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums,* which depicts him in the role of Japhy Ryder, Snyder has been a de facto patriarch in the flowering of Buddhism in North America and the West. He takes pains to reiterate, however, that Kerouac's folksy backwoods-dharma hero is "Japhy Ryder, not Gary Snyder" (Hollyhock workshop, 1985).

[34] Snyder has said that "Zen is about three things: finding out who we are as individuals, what place we are to live in, and what work we are to do there (Hollyhock).

mind'. By way of clarification, Snyder confirms that 'wild' in this context does not mean "chaotic, excessive or crazy":

> It means self-organizing. It means elegantly self-disciplined, self-regulating, self-maintained. That's what wilderness is. Nobody has to do the management plan for it. So I say to people, let's trust in the self-disciplined elegance of wild mind. Practically speaking, a life that is vowed to simplicity, appropriate boldness, good humour, gratitude, unstinting work and play, and lots of walking, brings us close to the actually existing world and its wholeness (interview, 24; re. self-organizing systems, see next chapter).

Unsurprisingly, for a poet, the practices of waking up, stewardship, and cultivating the path of the spirit find a nexus point in language. This is Gary Snyder's 'wild medicine'. From the beginning, his way of carving out a place of individual freedom in the wall of American culture has been founded in a bedrock of insight practice. And in this omitting of the personal in favour of the path, he exemplifies the basics of the Zen tradition in which he trained. As illustration, he reports:

> the practice of meditation must have a little to do with getting beyond 'wild mind' in language. Spending quality time with your own mind is humbling and, like travel, broadening. You find that there's no one in charge, and are reminded that no thought lasts for long" (ibid, 24-25).

In this, Snyder's East-West ethical orientation is complemented by an older, deeper appreciation of the anthropomorphic richness of the local Native American cultural lore—the rainforest mythological totems of eagle, bear, raven and killer whale that continue to survive as important elements of regional consciousness in school and community insignias throughout the Pacific Northwest region of Washington State where Snyder grew up; and in British Columbia, and Alaska. An anthropologist in his early training, before transferring into Asian language and literature studies at Berkeley University in the mid-

1950s, Snyder wrote a senior B.A. thesis discussing in Haida aboriginal mythology.[35] Since that time, his etiquette of freedom and responsibility crosses ancient cultural—tribal—and even inter-species boundaries. The result has been a recognition that:

> the encounter between shamanism and Buddhism has something to offer us. Both traditions are based in the experience of direct practice realization, of direct knowing, of communion, of understanding through experience, of seeing through the eyes of compassion (Halifax, 34).

In *Danger On Peaks* (2004), his first collection of poetry in more than twenty years that also rests on Japanese *haibun*, or prose/poem journal-style entry technique, Snyder recounts his own moment of direct awakening to the experience of seeing compassionately. Beginning with a section recalling boyhood mountaineering adventures around Mount St. Helens, the site of one of the 20th century's great explosions in southern Washington State, Snyder combines natural images of the outdoors familiar to anyone raised on family camping journeys. Then, in a poem entitled "Atomic Dawn", he recollects how on descending from his first major climb up the peak, he learned at age 15 of the first atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Horrified by news photos of the destruction, the youthful Snyder appealed to the mountain's huge spirit for help, and he recalls vowing, "By the purity and beauty and permanence of Mt. St. Helens, I will fight against this cruel destructive power and those who would seek to use it, for all my life" (9).

This is what he has done. But there is always the unpredictable. In another poem, "Pearly Everlasting", he recounts, "If you ask for help it comes/But not in any way you'd ever know" (19). In sharing his acquired knowledge of 'wild mind', throughout his career Snyder has not hesitated in introducing non-Native American readers to traditional Native myths. Virtually single-handedly he brought the antic, irrational Native tales involving the

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[35] *He Who Hunted Birds in his Father's Village, Dimensions of a Haida Myth (Grey Fox, 1979).* See David H. French, "Gary Snyder and Reed College", in *Dimensions Of a Life*, Jon Halper, ed., 1991.

trickster figure of 'Coyote' to popular consciousness.[36]   *Danger On Peaks* offers a typical example:

> *Doctor Coyote when he had a problem*
> *Took a dump.  On the grass, asked his turds where they lay*
> *What to do?  They gave him good advice.*
>
> *He'd say "that's just what I thought too"*
> *And do it.         And go his way.*

("Doctor Coyote When He Had a Problem", p. 59)

Snyder clarifies the importance of this cross-pollinating influence in "Reinhabitation", an essential essay from his 1995 collection *A Place In Space: Ethics, Aesthetics and Watersheds:*

> Here in the twentieth century we find Occidentals and Orientals studying each other's wisdom, and a few people on both sides studying what came before both—before they forked off…Sometime in the last twenty years the best brains in the Occident discovered to their amazement that we live in an environment.  This discovery has been forced upon us by the realization that we are approaching the limits of something…We are again, now,  in the position of our Mesolithic forbears…learning how to live by the sun and the green at that spot. We once more know that we live in a system that is enclosed in a certain way, that has its own kinds of limits, and that we are interdependent with it.  (187-188).

This demystifying cross-cultural lens into the interdependency that is important for Snyder points yet further beyond the human toward the *mana,* or living holiness of humanity's precious home-place, Mother Earth.  A Mela-Polynesian term brought to English in the

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[36] See "The Incredible Survival of Coyote" (1995: 148-162; "Three Deer, One Coyote Running In The Snow" (No Nature, 1992: 293); "Blue Mountains Constantly Walking" (1990: 111-113).  The perennial Native American bear myth is discussed in depth in "The Woman who Married A Bear" (1990: 155-174).

late 19th century by R.H. Codrington,[37] *mana* shares an intimacy of natural awareness with an equivalent Lakota Sioux cosmological term from the Great Plains that in recent decades has gained widespread currency among Native North Americans:

> All life is *wakan*.  So also is everything which exhibits power, whether in action, as in the winds and drifting clouds or in passive endurance, as the boulder by the wayside.  For even the commonest sticks and stones have a spiritual essence which must be reverenced as a manifestation of the all-pervading mysterious power that fills the universe (Leflesche, in Halifax, 24).

Buddhism's transcendent appreciation of this *super*natural phenomenon, Snyder relates, reaches its clearest expression in the Avatamsaka Sutra, where its:

> Jewelled-net-interprenetration-ecological-systems-emptiness-consciousness tells us no self-realization without the Whole Self, and the whole self is the whole thing…Thus, knowing who we are and knowing where we are, are intimately linked (*Place,* 189).

Knowing who we are and where we are implies having, as Snyder says, "a direct sense of relation to the land" (ibid, 185).  With its overtones to the archaic human past, this literacy of place embodies in the fullest psychic sense, "a spirit of what it [is] to be *there*" (ibid)—or as Slaughter infers, both 'in here' and 'out there' in the same moment.  In the Taoist perceptual view, this is consonant with the elemental visualization of that from which all things, temporal and eternal, emanate: with the essential nature of *what is*.  Within this accord of self, place, and spirit, individual self becomes subsumed by place, as place and self are themselves sublime embodiments of the Tao.

Similarly, in the archetypal Confucian understanding of this process, when heaven and the individual heart are unified (Chinese: *tian ren heyi*), earth and humanity are also one

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[37] See Halifax, 23-24; also Ronald Wright (1986), *On Fiji Islands,* 44.

(Tu, 2004: 1-3).  Or as Mencius, heir to the wisdom of Confucius, styles it with elegant economy in the foundational work that bears his name (Bk 7, A: 182):

> For an individual to give full realization to his heart is for him to understand his own nature, and a man who knows his own nature will know Heaven.  By retaining his heart and nurturing his nature, he is serving Heaven.

Implicit in Mencius' appraisal of the attunement of both 'self and sphere' is the spiritual mucilage of what he terms the "flood-like *chi.*" This ambiguous concept, he acknowledges, may be:

> Difficult to explain.  [It] is a chi which is, in the highest degree, vast and and unyielding.  Nourish it with integrity and place no obstacle in its path and it will fill the space between Heaven and Earth.  It is a chi which unites rightness and the Way (ibid, 77).

The flood-like chi, of course, is an imagistic representation of what in current interfaith discourse can be understood as enlightened, compassionate mind.  Approximations between this and Buddhist ideals are clear (see interview, Sakaki-Carolan, 2004: 141); however, in the context of Snyder's emotional appeal such values that are carried forward by institutionalized religion are a refinement.  Unless they are grounded in the community itself they will not last.  Perhaps in this mode of thinking to have a lay spirituality is a precondition of a refined or more specialized spirituality.  Otherwise, one is left with a cultural void and nobody to share information with.

Like the character of Japhy Ryder in *The Dharma Bums* depicts, Snyder left to study Buddhist culture in Japan in l956—a time when Allen Ginsberg recalls the young poet was already advising audiences about the hazards of clear-cut logging and the unnecessary slaughter of whales.[38]    During a ten-year residence in Japan Snyder cultivated an

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[38] *In Allen Ginsberg and Friends* (1997).  Video documentary.  Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities and Sciences.

intensive Zen Buddhist practice in Kyoto monasteries.  Returning to North America he began incorporating into his writing the knowledge gained from his experiences abroad, and in 1969 published *Earth House Hold*.  This now-classic document from the American culture wars of the Sixties with its provocative-for-the-time sub-title, "Technical Notes & Queries To Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries", is memorable for its inclusion of what has become one of the most enduring epigraphs of the entire field of East-West Studies.  Specifically, in an essay entitled "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution", he declares:

> The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East
> has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both (92).

  Championing social changes, both of the 'in here' and 'out there' nature urged by Slaughter and Sardar that bring greater freedom, choice and mobility into individual life, Snyder since returning to homestead in the foothills of California's Sierra Nevada range, has stood steadfastly against the "Hungry Ghost" culture of modern North American life life with its "enormous bellies, insatiable appetites, and tiny mouths" *(Place*, 1985: 208).  What he has fashioned from his experience has been the Turtle Island view, and its influence upon Western environmental and ecosystems thought, as the Shambhala Buddhist network proclaims, has been to "help shape the ideals of a generation" (1992).  Gretel Erlich calls his work, "an exquisite, far-sighted articulation of what freedom, wildness, goodness, and grace mean, using the lessons of the planet to teach us how to live" (1990).  Ironically, Snyder's work was initially dismissed by the U.S. east coast academic establishment and he was tagged as an exponent of the 'bear-shit on the trail' school of poetry—a name he recollects that was originally coined humorously by poet Kenneth Rexroth (e-letter, 2005).

  Gary Snyder's conceptualization of dharma citizenship rooted in ecosystems, mandalas and watersheds, brings many streams together.  Anchoring this citizenship itself is a notion of dharma that is big enough to breath comfortably through a variety of sustaining wisdom practices.  As he relates:

The emphasis on human rights that is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the concern for all beings expressed in Buddhism, and the compassionate political savvy of Confucianism…[all] contribute to it (1995: 208).

In a joyous, ultimately democratic reminder that, "We are all indigenous…all members present at the assembly" (in Carolan, 1996: 26), Snyder stakes his legitimacy as an heir to the uniquely American revolutionary trend manifested in turn by such literary and wilderness sages as John Henry Thoreau (*Walden*) and the New England Transcendentalists, Walt Whitman (*Leaves of Grass*), Ezra Pound (*Cathay,* et al), John Muir, William Carlos Williams, and Kenneth Rexroth.

"Ultimately," Snyder affirms, "values go back to our real community, to our real culture, our real interactions with others.  That's where we live, in our families and in our communities" (interview, 1995).

These are the cognate forms of what an arch-modernist like T.S. Eliot could envision as a tradition of "much wider significance" ("Tradition", 38), a tradition that by its unity one is obliged to recognize as "the really new" (ibid, 38), and that contributes quintessentially to the proposition of a *new world dharma.*  How though, does one reconcile the ostensibly contending forces of tradition and 'the new' in a manageable, practical fashion when, as Eliot insists, "the difference between the present [new] and the [traditional] past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show" (ibid, 39).

For Eliot, very arguably the chief arbiter of poetry and literary aesthetics in English during the 20th century, as well as of a new modernism in literary criticism:

What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career…the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality (ibid, 40).

For Snyder, depersonalization has been the meat and bread of his career for more than forty-five years. Having adopted a fine Sino-Japanese poetic aesthetic reaching from the Tang dynasty with its erasure of "the defined subject position of the poem in favour of a malleable one" (Kalter, 20), and having embraced the anti-anthropocentric philosophical stance in which the reader frequently is unlikely to "meet a subject pronoun" (ibid, 21) until deep into the unfolding texture of his work, the integrity of his style seems a logical extension of the consciousness which informs it.

The judicious word is 'style'. In echo of the postmodernist explication of text, Wylie Sypher (1960: 50) assumes a genuine style is one containing:

> …an expression of a prevailing, dominant, or authentically contemporary view of the world by those artists who have most successfully intuited the quality of human experience peculiar to their day and who are able to phrase this experience in forms deeply congenial to the thought, science, and technology which are a part of that experience.

This serves as the foundational ethical-aesthetic interlace that is characteristic of Snyder's poetry and essays—for their 'mojo', or magic consistent with the creative labour that Eliot regards as involving:

> …in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensible…the historical sense involves perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity (Tradition, 38).

The 'Beat' school of American poetics and aesthetics that swept Snyder, Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg (*Howl*), and their colleagues to public attention was informed by Buddhism (Tonkinson ix), and in popularizing this traditional Asian wisdom path for the West, Snyder and his *confreres* nurtured a hybridized 'East-West' expression honouring the sacredness of daily existence—what Buddhism understands as 'everyday sacraments.'[39] In his late work, Snyder travels further, extending this compassionate vision to include the victims of early-21st century terrorist brutality.

Observing that Mt. St. Helens' eruption in 1980 would be followed later by other dreadful explosions in Afghanistan and New York in 2001, in the concluding section of Danger On Peaks entitled "After Bamiyan" (101), Snyder honours the human victims in New York and the Bamiyan Valley's ancient Gandharan Buddhist statuary destroyed by the Taliban, writing: "The men and women who / died at the World Trade Center/together with the / Buddhas of Bamiyan / Take Refuge in the dust."

It is here that one recalls how like the medieval Benedictines with their mantra *Laborare est orare*—'our work and prayer are one'—Snyder's work has always been a kind of sutra, or prayer. This can also include a hard boot where appropriate, in this case to a fashionably self-absorbed journalist whom Snyder rebuked following the Bamiyan world heritage site destruction[40] (102):

> A person who should know better wrote, "Many credulous and sentimental Westerners, I suspect, were upset by the destruction of the Afghan Buddha figures because they believe that so-called Eastern religion is more tender-hearted and less dogmatic…Is nothing sacred? Only respect for human life and cultures, which requires no divine sanction and no priesthood to inculcate it. The foolish veneration of holy

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[39] Shuan McNiff, Dean of Endicott College, and a distinguished elder in the field of creative art therapy discusses this idea in "Everyday Sacraments," (1996), *Shambhala Sun, March* 51-55.

[40] At a reading and talk in Bellingham, Washington, in Nov. 2004, Snyder identified the figure in question as Christopher Hitchens.

places and holy texts remains a principal obstacle to that simple realization"…

Snyder's response to such unctuous provocation is blunt:

> This is another case of 'blame the victim', I answered. "Buddhism is not on trial here. The Bamiyan statues are part of human life and culture, they are works of art, being destroyed by idolators of the book. Is there anything 'credulous' in respecting the art and religious culture of the past? Counting on the tender-heartedness of (most) Buddhists, you can feel safe in trashing the Bamiyan figures as though the Taliban wasn't doing a good enough job. I doubt you would have the nerve to call for launching a missile at the Ka'aba. There are people who would put a hit on you and you know it" (ibid).

Amid the *samsara* of confusing and amoral times, Snyder's straight-talk from the heart has come to be recognized as an oracular path. Detailing the responsibilities of a true planetary citizen—socially pluralistic, ecologically wholistic in vision and action—through its synthesis of Western and Asian ideas, a third generation of seekers is now being inspired to communal action based on respect for the sanctity of nature it inspires. Honouring community and commitment to place, from this path has also arisen, as Snyder articulates, a reconceptualized sense of citizenship, true *dharma* citizenship, proclaiming that:

> Such a non-nationalistic idea of community [and citizenship], in which commitment to pure place is paramount, cannot be ethnic or racist. Here is perhaps the most delicious turn that comes out of thinking about politics from the standpoint of place: anyone of any race, language, religion, or origin is welcome, as long as they live well on the land…this sort of future is available to whoever makes the choice, regardless of background. It need not require that a person drop his or her Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, animist, atheist, or Muslim beliefs but simply add to that faith or

philosophy a sincere nod in the direction of the deep value of the natural
world and the subjecthood of nonhuman beings (1995: 234).

A contemporary antidote for "idolatry of the book"? Perhaps. Tim Costello (2002) argues that it is precisely this form of "politics with a soul" (p. 9) that speaks to the deep impulse of Green spirituality among many in the West who are currently searching for new expressions of the sacred. Recognizing that our ideas of place and community are implicit forms of social commentary, Costello intimates that in an era of post-institutional religion such ideas may also serve as tangible forms of sanctuary—as new expressions of the perennial human need for an inner serenity based, inevitably, on intangibles.

"Many young people are searching for a fusion of their deepest and truest private aspirations with public meaning" (ibid), he explains:

> They know that the public secular institutions of government, media, unions and educational institutions like our universities are running on empty because they have little language of interconnectedness or priority for spiritual values (ibid).

This is where Gary Snyder's language and commitment offer redress. In the face of a natural world that is crumbling environmentally, he returns praise and reverence for the gift of such simple joys as teaching children, gardening, and the rewards of individual and communal labour (see "Ax Handles" [AX], "Rainbow Body" [NN], "Removing the Plate of the Pump…" [AX]).[41] For it is through such practices that the individual once again becomes 'reinhabitory' of his or her place and community in the ancient ways. This then is the zeitgeist of the *new world dharma,* what Costello perceives as the spiritual appreciation of the "organic interconnections" (9) between the "natural and human worlds" (ibid), in which:

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[41] AX – *Ax Handles* (1983); NN – *No Nature* (1992).

The daily disciplines of meditation, recycling, using public transport, and greening one's neighbourhood are parallels to the rhythms of prayer, Bible reading, witness and love of neighbour in Christian teaching (ibid).

Snyder does not disagree. In an essay entitled "Poetry and the Primitive" (1969) he relates, "We all know what primitive cultures don't have. What they *do* have is this knowledge of connection and responsibility" (121). This responsibility is seen in the lives of the Australian aborigines, of whom Snyder, who has spent time among them, observes how they:

… live in a world of ongoing recurrence—comradeship with the landscape and continual exchanges of being and form and position; every person, animals, forces, all are related via a web of reincarnation—or rather, they are "interborn." It may well be that rebirth (or interbirth, for we actually mutually creating each other and all things while living) is the objective fact of existence which we have not yet brought into conscious knowledge and practice (129).

To conclude, bringing greater awareness of how benefits may be reaped from the wisdom of 'interbeing' lies at the heart of the citizenship Gary Snyder offers to the global age. At its root is a non-denominational renewal of reverence for the authentic, interconnected sacredness of creation. Enlightened Christian ministers like Tim Costello understand this equally as "the intricate, indivisible work woven by a God who is indeed green" (p. 9). Encouraging this, and other interfaith and secular humanist examples that may be brought forward by additional thinkers, is the work of the *new world dharma*. How it can be understood as an actual 'greening of the Self' is next discussed.

# Chapter 4.

# The Systems View: Health, Peace, and 'Greening of the Self'

> *Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society...it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for supersedence of the old society by the new*
>
> Mao Zedong, "On Contradiction", 1937

In an address to the Stanford University Law School, former President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel stated that one of the most basic human experiences he could think of, and that might also serve as a unifying force for all humanity in terms of communal health and peace, is "transcendence in the broadest sense of the word" (1995: 28). Classically, transcendence involves waking up, and aesthetics and action are part of the experience.

In Taoist terms, waking up and persevering at the cultivation of self-awareness is expressed through mindfulness (*Tao Te Ching,* XV), and in contemporary Buddhist parlance, Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh has made "mindfulness in every step" an adjunct of engaged Buddhist practice in the West (Carolan, 2003; see also Ghosanada, 1992: 47, 81). Interpreting the concept in western terms, Havel views mindfulness for the intellectual as foreseeing "like Cassandra various threats, horrors and catastrophes" (1995, 28). Similarly, the role of the political leader is to "Listen to all the warning voices, take stock of the dangers and at the same time think intensively about ways to confront or avert them."

Fritjof Capra (1989: 5) warns that political leadership falters, when it falls in lock-step with the reductionist view of militarists who:

define peace as the absence of war…Politicians and military men tend to
perceive all problems of defense as problems of technology.  The idea that
social and psychological considerations could also be relevant is mostly
not entertained…They still seem to think that we can increase our own
security by making others feel insecure…the new thinking about peace
must necessarily be global. In the nuclear age, the entire concept of
national security has become outdated.   There can only be global
security."

The parallels with public statements on peace and international security issues by both
Havel and the Dalai Lama (Carolan, 2001), with whose thoughts Capra has been associated
in recent years, are striking.

Comparing peacemaking to preventative health, Capra suggests:

A systemic approach to peace consists in finding nonviolent forms of
conflict resolution.  This means, first of all, developing a systemic view of
the network of economic, social, and political patterns out of which
conflicts arise.  Once these patterns have been understood, a wide range of
methods may be used to resolve the conflicts (1989: 6).

Asking why "the real issues of our time" are "excluded from the political dialogue", Capra
concludes that "the major problems of today are global, systemic problems that require a
systemic approach to be understood and resolved" (ibid).  But Capra expresses little faith
in the majority of existing political figures, finding them incapable of sustaining the kind
of dialogue needed to address large issues in a new way.  Actual experience within the
prevailing North American "first past the post" political systems may corroborate his
view.[42]   Subsequently, because the major issues are interdependent, Capra concludes they:

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[42] The author of this thesis served as an elected municipal councillor in North Vancouver, Canada,
1996-99. First-past-the-post refers to the longstanding British-influenced system in which a simple
majority of parliamentary-style seats is sufficient to govern.  Without continental European-style
'proportional representation' in governance, due to demographic variations in the size of
constituencies—urban and rural, for instance, or those based upon historical accords and treaties—

merely [shift] around in a complex web of social and ecological relations. One year it's inflation, then it's drugs and crime, then Love Canal, then the greenhouse effect…it's really always the same old problem in different guises; the same old crisis of perception (ibid, 6).

For Capra, the fundamental issue is that the only long-term solutions are sustainable solutions.  Using Lester Brown's definition, Capra borrows from the latter's *State of the World 88* declaration,[43] citing: "A sustainable society is one that satisfies its needs without diminishing the prospects of future generations" (ibid, 7). It is notable here that Brown's annual state of the world report for 1997 was followed up with "Progress Toward A Sustainable Society" (www.worldwatch.org/press/1997/01/11).  In the realm of practical application of sustainability theory to actual community building, few better examples can be found than Anthony Perzel's film documentary *In A Sacred Way, We Build* (2005), which documents the integration of leading-edge green construction technologies with traditional aboriginal community planning in the project design and construction of an innovative multi-family housing project for Seabird Island First Nation people at Agassiz, British Columbia.  The impressive results demonstrate the viability of this new paradigm.

Comparing the new scientific paradigm with the old as that of a shift from "self-assertion to integration," Capra maintains the new model re-establishes a state of "healthy balance", that within it one sees also a shift from "rational to the intuitive, from analysis to synthesis, from reductionism to holism, from linear to nonlinear thinking."  On the values scale he observes a further shift from "competition to cooperation, from expansion to conservation, from quantity to quality, from domination to partnership."  These, he

frequently total overall minority-voter supported parties are able to take power.  Those not supporting the first past the post, or  the second place party which forms the opposition, are effectively un-represented in the actual reins of government.   Introducing innovative policies to the official public agenda can become an enormous burden. eg. In Canada, despite the 1969 Royal Commission on the Non-Medical Use of Drugs chaired by Gerald LeDain, and with both Senate and significant majority public support, the decriminalization of cannabis, for example, has for 35 years since the first government of Pierre Trudeau remained an unresolved political football.

[43] The Worldwatch Institute founded by Lester Brown in 1974, publishes an annual interdisciplinary research report, with global focus, on the interactions among key environmental, social, and economic trends.  Its work "revolves around the transition to an environmentally sustainable and socially just society—and how to achieve it" (www.worldwatch.org).

concludes, represent a sensibility less hierarchic than that customarily favoured by men, and one that is essentially feminine (ibid, 7).

What Capra sees emerging as globalization deepens is a less hierarchic, more systemically-integrated organizational model suitable for cross-national, multicultural societies in a network-based future. Ironically, the activist groups he points to as emblems of the new values he espouses—"grassroots movements [including] the ecology movement, the peace movement, the feminist movement, the holistic health and human potential movements, various spiritual movements, numerous citizens' movements and initiatives, Third World and ethnic liberation movements" (ibid, 8)—became at the turn of the century front and centre of the "Globalization From Below" international coalition prominent in anti-WTO activities throughout the world (Aaronson, 2001).

In many ways, the model Capra proposes represents *a reshaped nature of citizenship itself* as communities world-wide engage in expanding the boundaries of civil society. In *Globalization On Trial: The Human Condition and the Information Civilization,* the Islamic scholar and political scientist Farhang Rajahee (2001), specifically discusses how this expansion of civil society might be affected with the proposal of a new form of 'dynamic civilization', one that represents a constructive, positivist view of the globalization project. Commenting that "mainstream theories rely entirely on the philosophical presuppositions of the Westphalian age—exclusive national interest and the primacy of *raison d'Etat* […placing the needs of the nation above the privileges of its most important groups]" (ibid, 8), he regards the development of revolutionary information technologies which are propelling globalization, as likely to lead humanity toward:

> …'one civilization—many civilizations', a world in which many assumptions are shared, but each has a variety of manifestations. Although this new world will envelop the whole of humanity, it will also allow diverse cultures to strike their own balance with and within it. The interaction of the various components of this global civilization will require a sophisticated understanding, tolerance, and above all the common celebration of the future…Unlike the industrial civilization, which more or less relied on the Western narrative of modernity, this one

allows for a 'multinarrative', giving rise to one civilization within which many can flourish (ibid, 9).

But achieving and implementing an innovative organizational system Vaclav Havel argues (1990) in his seminal essay on human rights, "The Power of the Powerless", begins with "some longing for humanity's rightful dignity, for moral integrity, for free expression of being and a sense of transcendence over the world of existences" (cited in Loury, 1994: 6). Dissidence and activism are its inevitable prerequisites. In brief, there must be a willingness to speak out against what John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* calls the "enslaving of our souls" (1985; see also Loury, 6). Mill contends, and Havel concurs with his view, that this enslavement takes the form of trivialization; of an easy human slide into conformity and acceptance, encouraged by "the tyranny of prevailing opinion and feeling" (Mill, 44). For this reason, Mill continues to be hailed as a champion of participatory democracy from the bottom up and of democratizing power within political institutions (Broadbent, 1994: 379-80).

In consumer societies dominated by advertising media of the nature described by Morris Wolfe in chapter 1(iii) of this thesis, and that McLuhan saw steadily eroding the primacy of the individual in modern society (Kappelman, 2001), Mill's and Havel's advisement is a necessary proclamation. With its antidote of 'waking up' attention to the yoke of conformity that binds the modern individual to unrepaying forms of social and self-identity—for "some longing for humanity's rightful dignity", his version of 'transcendence' brings renewed contemporary relevance to the traditional mindfulness practices of Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism in particular. Implicit here is the understanding that traditional Occidental forms of *prayer* are fundamentally different in practice from East and South Asian forms of *meditation.*

In the context of late 20th century science, 'waking up' for Joanna Macy, a general systems theory researcher in New South Wales, Australia, and at the Institute for Integral Studies in San Francisco, as well as a student of Sri Lanka's *Sarvodaya* Buddhist sangha

self-help movement,[44] rests upon the contention that "the self is a metaphor (1996: 177). Becoming aware, she argues, means that:

> The self is the metaphoric construct of identity and agency, the hypothetical piece of turf on which we construct our strategies for survival, the notion around which we focus our instincts for self-preservation, our needs for self-approval, and the boundaries of our self-interest…It is being replaced by wider constructs of identity and self-interest—by what you might call the ecological self or the eco-self, co-extensive with other beings and the life of our planet.  It is what I will call 'the greening of the self' (ibid, 172).

Macy cites Robert Bellah's work *Habits of the Heart* as a text that elucidates "*why* there has to be a greening of the self" (ibid, 173).  Bellah, she points out, singles the Romantic movement of the late 18th and 19th centuries as the source of much of "the cramp that our society has gotten itself into with its rampant, indeed pathological, individualism" (ibid, 173).  Here, it may be helpful to digress for a brief examination of the Romantic phenomenon.


## *II.*  <u>**The Romantic Aesthetic and Individualism**</u>

The watershed epoch of the Romantic Movement (roughly 1789-1832), was inspired by chiefly the ideals of the French-Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau whose thought, notably *The Social Contract* with its idea that governance must be founded upon 'the general will' of the people, would provide inspiration for the French Revolution (Greer and Lewis, 1992: 475-77).  A mélange of moral and spiritual insights combined with emotional passion and a general sense of permissiveness (ibid, 477), Rousseau's ideas

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[44] See "Sarvodaya Means Everybody Wakes Up", in Mindfulness and Meaningful Work: Explorations in Right Livelihood (1994), p. 148-166.

began to circulate, aided in part by the English poet William Wordsworth, who through his travels experienced, and documented, the revolutionary idealism he witnessed first-hand in France. Similarly, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a German law student at Strasbourg, would transport these 'romantic' ideas home to the duchy of Saxe-Weimar (ibid, 477).

In England, Wordsworth and his colleague Samuel Taylor Coleridge became influential among a school of English poets who launched an ardent intellectual reaction against the unprecedented economic and social shifts of the early industrial age. Witnessing their traditional agriculturally-based society giving way to the of the industrial age,[45] these poets—who would emerge as the dominant literary figures of their time—railed against the growing dehumanization of the masses caused by unregulated 'robber baron' capitalism. Among memorable works of this period are those of the poet laureate, Robert Southey ("Song of the Stitch"), Lord Byron (notable for his protests in the House of Lords against capital punishment used against the Luddite uprisings in Yorkshire), Percy Bysshe Shelley ("England in 1819", "To Sidmouth and Castlereagh", and "Song: Men of England"), William Blake ("The Chimney Sweep"), Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (*Frankenstein*), and others (Abrams et al, 1974). Perhaps summoning all the best fire and ardent ambition of the era, William Wordsworth's legendary testament *The Prelude* (1799) declares,

> *France standing on top of the golden hours*
> *And human nature seeming born again…*
> *[So that] the whole Earth*
> *The beauty wore of promise …*
> *Upon our side, us who were strong in love!*
> *Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,*
> *But to be young was very Heaven!*

The greatest Romantic literature is that which celebrates and glorifies the natural—the outer, external world under siege from unfeeling industrial change, and this is evidenced in the emotive 'Lake District' nature writing of the Romantics, to which Wordworth and Coleridge are most often linked (Abrams, 9). Yet, significantly, what separates this Romantic aesthetic from previous literature in English is its reversal of traditional subject lens: the narrative subject is effectively relocated from "outer world", to the "the fluid

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[45] Disraeli would later call this new polarization 'the Two Nations.' See "The Romantic Period", in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol.2, 3rd ed., 1-19.

feelings of the writer himself" (ibid, 6)—to within the individual consciousness. In homage to this radical new appreciation of the imaginative act of creative thought, Coleridge goes so far as to propose the view that poetry expresses the individual mind and imagination in a manner as to approximate, " 'a dim analogue' of God's own creative activity" (Abrams, citing Coleridge, p. 6). In this fashion, the individual's position in the cosmos is a newly established centrality, and the evolution of literature as 'activism' is confirmed. Remarking on this development Sir Stephen Spender observes:

> Romanticism [is] basically existentialist: the feeling that there was no order or significance given in nature or metaphysics outside human individuality and therefore they had to create their values for themselves. [It resolves as] an idea of shaking a fist at the universe, making one's own world, standing up to defend and die for it (1986: 244).

Regarded strictly as a creative gesture in an era when 'the divine hand' of God was still a near-universal belief, Romantic individualism posed no particular social or political threat; for, clearly, the European world-view had been in transformational mode since Copernicus (1473-1543)[46] proposed his idea of the heliocentric universe 200 years previous (Hampshire, 1956: 12). But when married to buccaneer capitalism during the industrial age, the cult of individualism would lead inexorably to the amoral nightmares of social Darwinism with its cult-like faith in 'the survival of the fittest.' Charles Darwin's radical ideas in *On The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859 would compel action and reaction: positively from Herbert Spencer, who extended Darwinism to the utility and function of institutions and human customs (Greer and Lewis, 526-529), and whose reasoning would be embraced during the race for colonies; negatively from Karl Marx, who upon reading it "declared that it furnished a 'basis in natural science for the class struggle in history'" (ibid). Essentially, social Darwinism:

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[46] Galileo and Johan Kepler should not be overlooked for the gravity of their contributions to astronomical and scientific thought, and are customarily regarded alongside Copernicus as chief innovators in this discipline.

…approved a no-holds-barred struggle of 'all against all,' in the manner of the jungle.  And the idea readily passed from one of battle among individuals to one of battle among races and nations.  Darwin's theory strengthened the convictions of slave-owners, racists, militarists, and extreme nationalists (ibid, 529).

As a dissident cultural strain, while rebelling against formalized education the Romantics flavour their work with a deep appreciation for Greek and Roman classical and sylvan imagery that would in turn inspire such immortal Romantic works in the language as John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode to a Nightingale", and "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles for the First Time"; Wordsworth's "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways", and "Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"; and Shelley's "Ozymandias." And while their poetry and essays are underpinned by the thirst for political and social reform, their oeuvre plainly reveals that the Romantics placed utmost trust in what Taoists intuit as 'the wisdom of the heart" (Loy, 1997: 43-46)—in a reverence for simplicity, the ordinary, and the emotional.  As Allen Ginsberg explains (in Carolan, 2001: 19):

Wordsworth sets out in the *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* what he was attempting to do.  How does it go?—'Fitting to metrical arrangement the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation'?

This Romantic sensibility is given a contemporary gloss by Ginsberg with his renowned statement on 'Aesthetic Mindfulness', wherein he describes, "Writing our own mind. Writing down what we see when we see it, what we feel when we feel it" (in Carolan, 19-20).  Centered upon passion, spontaneity, the vernacular, and compassion for suffering humanity and natural world alike, this radical, ultimately democratic departure from neoclassical European and Western aesthetic ideals—by the Romantics and Ginsberg's own Beat Generation respectively—reflects the changing *zeitgeist* of their times.

Historically, Romantic individualism would give way to the mercantilist social, sexual, and economic hypocrisies of the Victorian Age that novelists Charles Dickens, George Elliot, and dramatist Oscar Wilde would unmask and skewer *In Bleak House, Hard Times,*

*Middlemarch,* and *A Woman Of No Importance,* among other reform-minded works. In their own time, the consumer culture which the Beats and their Abstract Expressionist painting colleagues arose in reaction against, would lead progressively toward the deeper cultural inanities of an America symbolized by 'choice',[47] in which children—young girls especially—are targeted for the specialized 'personal inadequacy' marketing discussed by Wolfe in chapter 1(iii).

On the constructive side of the ledger, in a manner similar to that of the Romantic critique upon the industrial ruination of England's natural landscape, the 'countercultural' critique of the dissenting Beat literature of the U.S. 1950s led inexorably toward the emergence of the 'ecological', later renamed Environmental movement (Jamison and Eyerman, 1995). In a parallel development, with its "deep religiosity…desire to be gone, out of this world…ecstatic, saved, as if the visions of the cloistral saints of Chartres and Clairvaux were back with us again" (Kerouac, cited in Turner, 1996: 23), America's Beat Romantics of the Cold War:

> …saw themselves as liberating Americans from soulless uniformity—
> generating an interest in mysticism, ecology, indigenous cultures, freedom
> of expression, altered states of consciousness and alternative sexual
> lifestyles (Turner, 24).

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[47] With its ring of 'individualism', the phrase "It's about choice" has become associated with 'Big-Box' U.S. retail marketing chains, most notably Wal-mart. With massive bulk purchasing power, Big Box retailers are able to offer deep discounts from regular local retail pricing. From a community perspective, Big Box retailers are frequently regarded as a manifestation of predatory globalization. By selling goods invariably manufactured inexpensively abroad, they are viewed as costing North America jobs, and as executioners of local 'mom and pop'-owned retailers who are unable to compete and stay in business. Thus the phrase "It's about choice" has popularly come to have a double meaning: A) very cheap prices, and B) the collapse of traditional local retail communities following 'vacuum-cleaner' industrial marketing that sucks dollars out of local economies for a distant corporate headquarters. Thus, ironically, consumerist representations of 'individual choice' come to spell the death of traditional communities. Once the general bailiwick of suburban and more rural communities, the bitter development-zoning battles associated with Big-Box retailers have now entered major metropolitan areas and are viewed with alarm (*The Province*, "Community groups against Broadway Depot").

Yet if the negative capabilities of social Darwinism can be attributed to the rise of Romantic individualism, the Beat movement has also been attacked by critics (Turner, 24) who target its dissenting social critique for:

> The start of the rot which has led ultimately to crack [cocaine], AIDS, sexual promiscuity, family breakdown, religious cults, rising crime, pornography and disrespect for authority.

Whether in 1827, or 1957, as Ginsberg—universally acknowledged as the 'den mother' of the Beat writer group—expresses, "Let's remember: the social restrictions on speaking out in public are enormous" (in Carolan, 2001: 64).

## *III.* <u>Returning to the Source</u>

As an antidote to the excesses of romantic individualism, Joanna Macy cites Bellah's call for "a moral ecology." This idea equates with "moral connectedness or interdependence" (1996, 173). In a practical exposition of how this can be expressed in daily life, Macy discusses "shedding these old constructs of self, like an old skin or a confining shell," with John Seed, director of the Rainforest Information Centre in New South Wales, Australia. In response to Macy's question of how he deals with the despair of struggling to save the tropical rainforests, Seed replies:

> I try to remember that it's not me, John Seed, trying to protect the rainforest. Rather I'm part of the rainforest protecting myself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into human thinking (ibid, 173).

This is the meaning Macy associates through her idea of 'greening the self'. "It is a shift," she says, "that Seed himself calls a 'spiritual change', generating a sense of profound interconnectedness with all life" (ibid, 173).

As an early contributor through her books, and at seminars, workshops, and collegial discussions along the west coast of North America, Macy has been at the forefront in developing the systems view which Capra, William Irwin Thompson and others, have continued to advance.  In this regard, she has forwarded the unique idea of "the cybernetics of the self", suggesting that:

> The findings of twentieth-century science undermine the notion of a separate self distinct from the world it observes and acts upon.  Einstein showed that the self's perceptions are shaped by its changing position in relation to other phenomena.  And Heisenberg, in his uncertainty principle, demonstrated that the very act of observation changes what is observed (ibid, 176).

Accordingly, Macy contends that in echo of the discoveries reported by Capra from the edge of research physics (2002; 1975), and Benoit Mandelbrot in fractal mathematics (1982)—that geometric shapes exist in nature of 'fractional', thus, 'interpenetrating' dimension—humanity must not only reconsider older assumptions from its science, but from its longstanding psychological assumptions of self as well:

> …as open, self-organizing systems, our very breathing, acting, and thinking arise in interaction with our shared world through the currents of matter, energy, and information that move through us and sustain us.  In the web of relationships that sustain these activities there is no clear line demarcating a separate, continuous self.  As postmodern systems theorists say, 'There is no categorical 'I' set over against categorical 'you' or 'it' (1996, 176).

Encompassed within the contemporary systems view of interconnected 'green' or 'eco-self', Macy sees the present parallel flowering of "non-dualistic spiritualities."  Happy to acknowledge the relevance of religious faith and to allow it a continuing role, instead of shutting it out, she says:

I am speaking from my own experience with Buddhism, but it is also happening in other faith-systems and religions, such as 'creation spirituality in Christianity. These developments are impinging on the self in ways that are undermining it, or helping it to break out of its boundaries and old definitions. Instead of ego-self, we witness the emergence of eco-self! (ibid, 174).

And so the ancient values of the East, rooted, as Macy reminds, in *pratitya samutpada*—dependent origination, or "the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of the interdependence of things"(Seeker's Glossary, 1988: 150) that is shared in close proximity among followers of the Hindu and Taoist paths—begin to make accommodation with the renewal and redefinition of contemporary values in the West. Religion, we are reminded, exists as:

the core principles perceived to be at the root of phenomenal reality, and at the heart of human fulfillment…provide[s] the context within which life's purposes and activities are found meaningful and good. This, in terms of Buddhist culture, is close to the concept of Dharma. The term means both the teachings of the Buddha and the central content of these teachings, which is *the law of reality or the way life works* [emphasis added] (1989: 18).

Macy compares this perceptual diagnosis with the West's traditional Christian understanding of 'grace.' Accordingly, perhaps the concept of what grace is, or the way in which it can be expressed in words, might be expanded as befits its acknowledgment within *a new world dharma.* Macy suggests that, "by using systems language we can talk about it as synergy" (1996: 181); and this may be helpful, but it surely lacks a sense of mystery and a connection with the numinal that for people of faith symbolizes everything sublime within the very meaning of 'grace' itself—originally a term from Latin meaning sense of "favour", and that is closely linked to "gratefulness": or in a poetic sense, 'in gratitude to the favour of heaven', with whatever broad suggestions this idea may echo

from classical China's 'mandate of Heaven" (*tian ming*), or 'achieving the unity of Heaven and heart, and of Heaven-earth-humanity' (Mote, 1971: 53, 55; Loy, 31-34; Chuang-tzu: 1996, trans. Watson, 31).

The creation of new forms of self-identity through integrational thinking still has obstacles to overcome. Mainstreaming unconventional ideas into popular circulation requires time: the most successful North American branch of the Green Party, for example, is able to consider receiving 4-6% of the vote in a national Canadian election as a significant breakthrough.[48] But many of the principal social and ecological ideas of the 1960s found wide, popular acceptance within less than a generation, witnessed, again, by the rise of the feminist, environmental, anti-nuclear, alternative sexuality movements. Subsequently, if the remarkable Western turn toward Buddhism and a broad conspectus of Asian health and wisdom practices forms a basis for assessment, the transformation toward a more inclusive, wholistic definition of the self is moving apace.

It should not come as news that with the absolute faith of modernity in the doctrine of material progress as a source of happiness, that science and technology have assumed the mantle long held by religion. But the crisis of meaning and purpose that has settled on Western culture, particularly in North America, has demonstrated how profit, worldly possessions, and control over nature has also led, as former U.S. Secretary of State Zbigniew Brzezinski (1994) chastised, to the "erosion of moral criteria in defining personal conduct with the emphasis on material goods" (1). It has led unceasingly, too, toward the kinds of growing economic and educational disparities between North and South that the Brundtland Commission[49] sought to address.

In the imagining of a new global age, surely the next step in defining an equivalent state of consciousness—*a new world dharma*—is rediscovery of the ancient wealth that lies beyond profit and technology. If Joanna Macy's contention is valid—as this thesis believes—that, "the self is the metaphoric construct of identity and agency"; then as

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[48] See CBC News, < http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2004/06/29/canada/greens_news_040628 > Canada's public broadcast network, June 29, 2004: The party's strongest support came from the western provinces of Alberta, where it captured six per cent of the popular vote, and from British Columbia.

[49] See next chapter.

Thomas Langan argues (see chapter one, "Tradition As Wisdom Path"), it is in through the spiritual, creative roots of traditional knowledge that modern seers and shamans like Gary Snyder, Wes Jackson, Wendell Berry and Joan Halifax are reawakening North America; or through the systems view of health and peace which Capra extrapolates from new Western science, that the transcendence Havel and Macy both seek may be reintegrated into the contemporary Western soul.

   In East Asian parlance, transcendence as an integral aspect of social and political practices is most commonly understood through the fundamental gestures of Confucianism.  It is toward consideration of the *Da Xie*, or *Tai He*—the Great Harmony of the Confucian tradition—as well as what it may have to offer in terms of an amplified moral and epistemological grounding for the systems view of a global future,[50] that this thesis gradually turns toward and examines in depth in chapter ten.

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[50] Background in Tu Weiming (2004), preface to *Toward a Global Community, xii*, and chapter 1: "The Ecological Turn In New Confucian Humanism: Implications For China and The World", p. 1-17.  Also, in Loy Ching-Yuen (1997), *The Supreme Way*, chapter 4.

# Chapter 5.

# The Nature of Global Transformation

The poetry of Allen Ginsberg (1984), Diane di Prima (1996; 1995), Nanao Sakaki (1987; 1997), or Bei Tao (2000), as well as the ecological inquiries of Gary Snyder (1995; 1990), Andrew Schelling (2003, 1995), or Kim Chi-ha (1998), demonstrates that in exchanges between Western and Asian thought during the past several decades, intellectual cross-pollination between the two has become well advanced.  In similar fashion, phenomenal growth between East and West in trade and travel, in migrating populations, and in the transference of ideas between western science and eastern spirituality has occurred with accelerated speed (see Winchester 1991; Fallows 1990).

In *Pacific Shift,* a work that points toward a global future, William Irwin Thompson (1985) articulates the fuller implications of this East/West exchange of cultural ideas.  The book's four essays offer a provocative thesis into the nature and scope of a planetary civilization in the global age.

In his work, Thompson proposes that human civilization in general, and Western in particular, is in a transformational process of historic magnitude.  This is symbolized, he argues, by the ways in which the 'Atlantic-era' ideas of the industrial culture of Europe and the eastern United States are giving way to a new informing source: to an energetic, electronic and Pacific Rim-oriented mode of living and of cultural thinking.  Based on the flowering of microelectronic and aerospace technologies upon which the personal computer communications revolution relies, a more Pacific-oriented civilizational impulse Thompson proposes, will represent a renewal of the intellectual and material prosperity of the classical Mediterranean world.

Ironically, with the Microsoft-era now a global phenomenon, Thompson's book also serves to illustrate the very technological leap he regards as emblematic of the "Pacific Age"—a term that arose during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, 1980-88.  Indeed, this historical epoch would be made redundant within less than ten years by the arrival of popularly available, low-cost consumer electronic devices, referred to simply as

'computers.' With indecent haste, the Pacific Age was eclipsed by the greater impact of the Global Age.

While Thompson views Microsoft and Boeing-oriented technologies as the foundational underpinning of this new era, the validity of his foundational arguments should not be misconstrued as a defense of technocracy; nor as a planetary deed of sale made in favour of industrial science. In "The Four Cultural Ecologies of the West" he displays a provocative layering of evidence gleaned from cultural historians, economists and anthropologists as diverse as Gregory Bateson, Claude Levi-Strauss, E.F. Schumacher, and others, with the purpose of tracing the cultural development-line of civilization from the riverine culture of Sumeria, circa 3500 BC, onward (1985: 75-140). Thompson's contribution is to demonstrate that none of the cornerstone environmental problems caused by the densification of human communities, by civilization—deforestation, soil depletion, contamination of water stocks, acid rain, and terrorism—has been solved by humanity's ever-evolving technological mentality. These problems, he stresses, have simply been deferred for resolution at a later date (ibid, 85). What is needed, he concludes, is a concomitant shift of human consciousness.

Thompson acknowledges the necessary transformation will not come easily. Other attempts at designing a wholistic architectural framework for the future such as Ken Wilber's (2000) ambitious 'integrational' study, *A Theory Of Everything*, collapse through their own idealism or political naivety. Thompson affirms that the magnitude of social, political and intellectual emergence required to fully realize a new civilizational paradigm will be as significant as progress from the Paleolithic to Neolithic. Constituting this shift, he asserts, will be a necessary, genuine transcendence—over religious and scientific fundamentalism, over economic exploitation of the earth, and over predatory individualism.

Like Fritjof Capra and Joanna Macy, Thompson is both innovator and synthesizer. By outlining the dominant forms of communication, economy, polity, religious experience, mathematics, and literary/artistic expression perennial to that which he describes as the three great previous cultural ecologies of the West (Sumerian riverine/Tigris-Euphrates fertile crescent; Mediterranean; Atlantic/Euro-industrial), he relates how certain human patterns are likely to rephrase themselves in the future. Hence, he establishes an

architecture upon which a "Pacific" ethically-oriented global civilization would function
(ibid, 142-143).  Among its chief characteristics are:

1.  economics based on a social-minded, collectivist model anchored in a
    Gaia Politique, or loving stewardship of the earth;

2.  electronic communications linking individuals aesthetically and
    politically into global networks;

3.  regional or bioregional political identity;

4.  a religious mode based on the group as an ecology of consciousness,
    with a characteristic good of Universal Compassion, and a
    characteristic evil of collectivization through terror;

5.  aerospace-oriented mathematics leading to multidimensional thought,
    to take place when imagistic Chinese culture grows sufficiently
    sophisticated to participate in micro-electronic culture.

In whatever way one evaluates Thompson's cultural atlas of the future, viewed it terms
of the emerging 21st century his schema is already a work in progress.  Internet satellite
technologies and string theory in mathematics and high-energy physics[51] have effectively
opened up the frontiers of electronic, aerospace, and multi-dimensional thought.  And,
arguably, since the 1987 World Economic and Development Commission chaired by Gro
Harlem Brundtland (with whom it is customarily linked by name)[52] , 'sustainability' has

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[51] In *Mathematical Aspects of String Theory (1987)*, Harvard scholar S.T. Yau collates a series of
conference papers on a range of topics within the broad conspectus of string theory.  Since its
publication, work in the field has greatly magnified; however, it remains a useful introductory
vehicle into a mode of inquiry that now addresses four and six space-time dimensions.  Thanks to
University of British Columbia physicist Prof. Brian Turrell for background on this subject.

[52] Under the leadership of Dr. Brundtland, the United Nations World Commission on Environment
and Development presented its 1987 report, *Our Common Future*.  Addressing north-south
relations and the global environmental crisis associated with them, the report presented sustainable
development as its principal theme.  In presenting Dr. Brundtland with its Blue Planet Prize in
June, 2004, the Asahi Glass Foundation citation noted:  "The report further analyzed the structures
of a wide variety of problems including population and human resources, food security, species and
ecosystems, energy, industry, and the international economy, and provided recommendations of
measures that countries around the world should immediately implement toward sustainable
development... it [additionally] proposed the simultaneous pursuit of environmental conservation

become a chief capital valuation benchmark by which major economic developments are measured throughout materially well-developed society. As illustration, the British government's Department of Trade and Industry Action Plan on Sustainable Development Strategies announced in April, 2004, establishes the following criteria by which living standards may be improved "in socially and environmentally acceptable ways":

1. Increased productivity from the use of valuable natural resources;
2. Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Kyoto Accord: this includes national encouragement toward low carbon use technologies;
3. Clean post-production water discharge;
4. Reduction of waste generation;
5. "Greening" of government operations, including recycling and encouragement of "Best Practices";
6. Encouragement of corporate responsibility.

(see www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/sus/sd/html)

In its trans-cultural breadth, Thompson's *Pacific Shift* helped establish the ground for futures studies in North America and much of Europe; yet it is for the manifold layering of its vision that it has become a staple reading text at 'think tanks' from Esalen at Big Sur, California, to Hollyhock in British Columbia, and from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to Findhorn in Scotland, and the Lindisfarne Association in New York state. Encompassing elements and observations drawn from such seemingly disconnected social manifestations as Hopi Indian tribalism, post-modernist literary critiques, rock videos and punk culture, and Zen Buddhism, Thompson's thought marries McLuhan's understanding of the meaning of pop culture—"[he] was the first to see that the content of a communication is not what the communication is truly about" (1985: 28)—with the

and economic development while placing emphasis on social justice and the elimination of poverty that largely existed in the Southern hemisphere. The report ultimately became the impetus behind organizing the Earth Summit, or the United Nations Conference on Environment Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At this Summit, Agenda 21, a resolution to implement specific measures to attain sustainable development, was adopted." See <www.af-info.or.jp/index/index_e2.html>

cognitive science inquiries of Varela, Maturana, and the Kyoto School of philosophy (ibid, 70-71).

In this latter regard, Thompson's harnessing of culture, philosophy and science is enacted at a level of extreme sophistication. Transforming from McLuhan's celebrated maxim that in modern communications 'the medium is the message', and that the style and increasingly materialistic delivery method of a communication has symbolically become as important as the typically banal content of the message itself, (for example Sony Walkmans or the small transistor radios widely paraded by North American teenagers from the late 1950s to the present), Thompson extends this recognition further. In an ever more-democratized, ever more trivial popular culture, he explains, an apotheosis of displacement from traditional cultural narratives from the past is reached in the phenomenon of 'rock video'. Here, traditional linear narrative, which Thompson says "derives from the old industrial habits of thought" (1985: 69), is essentially non-existent; and the discontinuous 'jump-shot' technique with its "multiple, interpenetrating [surrealist] spaces of Magritte…are now part of the common imagery…Music video puts all human emotions into quotation marks, for it is clear that the love song is not expressing love, but is about 'love' (ibid, 67).

What does this mean? For Thompson, "the effect of putting all emotions into quotation marks in music video is to deconstruct the message with the medium. The *content* of the clips is clearly banal and atrocious, but the content is not what is really going on" (ibid, 68). From McLuhan's recognition that the new consumer forms of communications delivery were themselves becoming dominant as ornaments of public display—much the way that costly consumer gadgets such as refrigerators are often displayed in the parlours of Indian homes lacking regular electricity to run them[53]—now the visual-auditory nihilism of fragmented, multi-media music marketing clips using frequently illogical narratives and semi-pornographic images is a commonplace public expression in homes and retail outlets.

Cultural displacement from the past as technological advancement into the future occurs is similarly reflected in shifting existential sensibilities. Discussing the neo-Zen flavoured

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[53] Bharati Mukherjee's essay "Calcutta" recounts her return to Kolkatta after 14 years absence and witnessing the conspicuous display of consumer gadgetry in upscale family homes where power outages are regular.

metaphysics of Japanese philosopher Keiji Nishitani, a former student of Martin Heidegger, who in propounding the equality of *all* "on the field of emptiness" in *Religion and Nothingness* (1982), echoes *The Sandokai,* or *Teaching of the Harmony of Difference and Equality*[54] that is recited in Soto Zen training centers, Thompson writes:

> In the Kyoto School of Nishitani, the East reconceptualizes the West to show how the ultimate development of materialism leads to nihilism. But it takes no mirror made in Japan to make us see that about ourselves, for we need only turn the pages of a history of Western painting to see the full story. We begin with Giotto, in whose work nature is merely a stage for a religious event, as in the *Flight into Egypt*; we pass on to Breughel's *Conversion of Saint Paul,* where the religious event is not so large as the horse's behind; and then we continue on to the landscapes of Ruysdael, where the religious event has dropped out of the picture altogether…with Claude Lorrain the twilight over the temples becomes more important than the stones, and we begin to pass over matter into the mysteries of perception; and from there on there is no stopping until Monet's cathedrals melt and solid matter disappears into the nihilism of the Rothko Chapel. With the paintings before us we can literally see what Nishitani is talking about (1985: 70).

Thompson's originality as thinker rests upon an archival knowledge and comprehension of a difficult range of 'Pacific' visionaries. For instance, by establishing approximations and linkages between the Kyoto philosophical school with the pathbreaking cognitive science ideas of Chilean researchers Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana, Thompson is also able to bridge both shores of the Pacific Ocean—Japan as the edge of Asia, and South America as the furthermost point of traditional European civilization. In doing so, he

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[54] From Sekito Kisen (Chinese: *Shitopu Xiqian*). See Shunryu Suzuki Roshi in *Shambhala Sun*, Sept., 1999, pp. 55-59. The logic of 'nothingness', and of *basho*, or place, are central to the heavily Zen-influenced Kyoto School of thought. James Heisig's (2001), A*n Essay on the Kyoto School,* is an essential study in the school's role in Japanese philosophical history.

articulates how the processes of mind and the construction of ethical codings find a nexus point, even agreeable mutualities within an evolving hybridization of East-West ideas (71):

> It is no cultural accident that both the Kyoto School of philosophy and the Santiago School of neurophysiology share a common Pacific orientation and a common invocation of the relevance of Buddhism to postmodernist science. The Pacific has become the new Mediterranean, with a new relationship between religion and science that is as different from Protestantism and industrial science as Pythagoras's synthesis was from Mesopotamian astrology. Nishitani was a personal student of Heidegger, and Varela has been influenced by Heidegger's writings; but both the Japanese philosopher and the Chilean biologist have not been content to rest with Heidegger's late Christian ontology and have pushed on from a vestigial theology into an explicit a-theology of Buddhism. *The end of the West becomes the ultimate shore of the East* (emphasis added).

The end of the West becomes the ultimate shore of the East! This articulation—and vice-versa—points to the threshold of everything symbolized by the potent but fleeting imagery of the 'Pacific Age.' Challenging cultural orthodoxies of political, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual exclusivity, it willingly synthesizes the best of both solitudes and so points toward the possibility for social thinkers and activists of a similar north-south reflexive cultural encounter. But in light of growing Western sympathy for traditional East and South Asian spiritual and philosophical traditions, and adhering to the principle of "Holding to the One, while considering the many" (see Loy Ching-Yuen, 28-29), by paralleling the convergences in Asian and Western art and literature previously referenced (and that will be further discussed in this thesis), Thompson observes that:

> the interest that Buddhism holds for scientists like [Gregory] Bateson[55] and Varela begins to make sense. It is not simply a question of the West's

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[55] Gregory Bateson, author of the classic work in cognitive science, *Steps Toward an Ecology Of Mind* (1972).

discovery of the *groundlessness* of its emphasis on material reality, but
also of the enormous growth of suffering in the expansion of the industrial
society known as economic development. Buddha's is the aboriginal
questioning of the relationship between mind and suffering; so it is small
wonder that as science approaches the frontiers of mind in cybernetics and
neurophysiology, and as industrial society mass-produces human
suffering, thinkers at the edge of European culture, such as Bateson,
Nishitani, and Varela, would notice the relevance of the past of Buddhism
to the future of science and technology" (74-75).

What Thompson intimates here is the profundity of the shift that has occurred within
Western conceptualizations of reality. The West's original Greek scientific mode "was the
study of the comely and harmonious order of the world…its great triumphs were in
geometry and the theory of proportions" (Hardison, 1989: 11). From the inquiries of Kant
onward, Western philosophy too—like modern physics—affirmed that "we know nothing
that has not been invested with ourselves" (ibid, 47). But with the advance of Quantum
theory and the establishment of Quark theory with its terminology borrowed from Zen
Buddhism to describe the arrangement of unseen particles of nature that are effectually
'intuited' rather than proved empirically, modern physics now expresses ideas that
Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism's primal shamanic sensibility have understood and
taught for more two millennia (ibid, 52). For as cultural critic and founding Quark Club
member of Georgetown University O.B. Hardison, Jr., explains:

Quantum theory shows that nature cannot be separated from the person
observing it. Quark theory suggest the existence of entities that can never
be observed. By proposing that everything in the universe comes from
nothing, the inflationary theory makes the disappearance of nature official
(1989: 56).

Hence, from this perspective energy can be named, but not seen. The central mystery of
Taoism is not too far off when its core tenet says that which can be intuited cannot be

named—*Tao ke tao, fei chang tao*: "the way that can be named is not the eternal way" (*Tao Te Ching,* chapter one, line one). Further correspondences that Thompson's inquiries point toward across traditional cultures are strikingly proximate. Celtic pantheism's version of what in modern terms Allen Ginsberg enjoyed calling "nondiscriminating ultimate reality, equivalent to the nonconceptualizing awareness of ordinary mind" (1984: 788), is further seen in the idea that:

> Not all places are meant to be found; not all times are right for the finding; [and] sometimes what you find will not be what you sought; sometimes you will find what cannot be sought (Monaghan, 189)

This convergence of cross-cultural views of the non-existence or insubstantiality of the self and of all beings and things manifests itself most insightfully not so much as a principle, but also as a way of practice in Buddhism's Mahamudra 'School of the Whispered Transmission.' According to scholar-translator Garma Chang, the Mahamudra view comprehends that "the primordial nature of mind is not only 'void' in its essence, but is also an illuminating self-awareness embodied in the Void" (1999: 8-10). The Mahamudra arises specifically in response to the kinds of questions currently confounding scientists of the Western empirical tradition. As University of Chicago physicist Yoshiru Nambu inquires, "If a particle cannot be isolated or observed, even in theory, how will we ever know it exists?" (cited, ibid, 56).

Communicated throughout the Himalayas by the 11th- century Tibetan anchorite poet Milarepa, whose epic biography the *Mila Grubum,* or *One Hundred Thousand Songs* (trans. Chang), reiterates "all phenomena are of one's own mind," the Mahamudra view instructs how, "mind itself is a transparency of Voidness" by which we are led to full realization (see epistles "The Tale of Red Rock Jewel Valley" [1]), "The Gray Rock Vajra Enclosure" [97]).

Within historical Buddhism this theory and practice of emptiness lies at the foundational heart of both *The Diamond Sutra* and *The Heart Sutra* wherein it declares:

> *The noble Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva,*

*while practicing the deep practice of Prajnaparamita,*

*looked upon the Five Skandhas (aggregates, body/mind)*

*and seeing they were empty of self-existence,*

*said, "Here, Shariputra,*

*form is emptiness, emptiness is form;*

*emptiness is not separate from form,*

   *form is not separate from emptiness;*

*whatever is form is emptiness;*

   *whatever is emptiness is form.*

*The same holds for sensation and perception,*

   *memory and consciousness...*

*Therefore, Shariputra...*

 *no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body and no mind;*

 *no shape, no sound, no smell, no taste, no feeling*

   *and no thought...*

 *no knowledge, no attainment and no non-attainment.*

(trans. Red Pine)

As Thompson asserts, the relevance of Buddhism to the future of science and technology is incontrovertible.  Clarifying where his intuition leads in this line of speculative inquiry, Thompson proposes the idea that "formative cultures express the creative expansion into new space, whereas pivotal cultures express the consolidations into tradition" (1985: 120).  If the goal is to identify clear transformational parameters by which the emerging global order can be adduced, in recognizing East and South Asia's significant formative influence it falls next to researchers to articulate what the nature and shape of the critical *pivotal* culture will be that defines the vision of moral order for the global age.  In this, Thompson says, there may be merit in identifying indicators that have delineated previous pivotal epochs in history:

> In spite of their eighteenth-century Industrial Revolution, [the English] did
> not create either the Atlantic or Pacific-Aerospace cultural ecologies.  The

Spanish and the Dutch were more formative of the Atlantic, and the Americans of the Pacific; but in their global empire, the British were the great monarchical, reactionary force that struggled to consolidate the world into a vision of moral order.

In a popular sense, many manifestations of the *élan vital* of a new world spirit are already evident and interconnected. Everyday, university and college campus conversations reveal how the recent phenomena of 'green', low-impact travel to remote locations, 'world beat' music, and 'world Lit' publishing have arisen organically through alternative 'guerilla marketing' made possible by the world-wide communications web. Unsurprisingly, these low-budget marketing techniques themselves are inspired by a new 'voluntary simplicity' movement (see Snyder, in Carolan 1995), that is itself a mode of spiritually-oriented living identified in Thompson's five-point route map as an indicator of progress toward a globally-oriented civilization "based on the group as an ecology of consciousness."

Thus, Thompson's insights are twofold:

a) relating to matters of sophisticated trans-cultural and spiritual intellection; and

b) offering understanding into disaffected youth cultures in European and North American urban areas, who, marginalized by conservative economists, exist as a class of artistic innovators whose performance artform is their lifestyle (135-139). Here, Thompson contends that youthful punk and ghetto-*chic* attire with its ornate personal ornamentation harks back to the social stratification rituals of medieval times. Ironically, these 'downpressed'[56] unwittingly become revenue generators when their styles are adapted in milder variants by the larger mainstream culture.

Thus does the radical and unorthodox transform mainstream middle-class social mores and appetites. As an illustration, consider the popular American enculturation of values

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[56] A term popularized by Jamaican reggae icon Bob Marley. Hear "Guiltiness", on *Exodus* (1977), Island Music.

once derided during the 1960s as "countercultural", or as Morris Dickstein paraphrases, "insulting to the empirical mind" of the times (1977: 73) These include, among many others: racial equality from the Civil Rights Movement; gender equity from the Feminist Movement; environmentalism from the Ecological Movement; organic foods and vegetarianism; insight meditation and body attunement practices, including Yoga, Tai Chi, Aikido, and miscellaneous martial arts; tolerance of unconventional sexual orientation from the Gay and Lesbian Movement; alternative, low-impact energy sources such as solar power; and appreciation of sex as a wholistic component of daily life—expressed by George Leonard as "reconnect[ion] of the bedroom with the rest of our lives, with society, and nature, and perhaps with the stars…" (cited in Fields, 1984).

Imperceptibly, in a myriad ways from labour standards to the aesthetic values of art and literature, the status quo is always changing, an existential condition confirmed by more than sixty generations of mystics and by Lao-Tzu in his second epistle from the *Tao Te Ching*—"the ten thousand things rise and fall without cease"—*wan wu zhuo yun er bu tzuh*—(chapter two, line ten). This inexorability of 'transformation' underlies Thompson's formative argument, as this thesis contends also, that a fresh civilizational ethos—a *new world dharma* for an emerging world order—is already in birthing process. Strikingly, it is Thompson's belief that a major shunting of the boxcars of history toward this new world ethos occurred during the watch of none other than U.S. President Ronald Reagan, and that it went virtually unnoticed. Frequently synonymous with 'junk bond' commerce[57] and ethical stagnation, the dominant cultural tropes of the Reagan era Thompson maintains, were "small-town, mid-western, Protestant, and [of a] fiscally conservative America." Yet it was Reagan, Thompson argues, more than such other likely candidates as California's Zen-inspired Governor Jerry Brown, who was (28-29):

> the one to effect the shift from New York to Los Angeles, from Europe to
> the Pacific Basin, from steel mills to space shuttles and Star Wars. Just as

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[57] Regarding the Michael Milken financial scandal on New York's Wall Street, eminent Canadian economist and former Kennedy administration diplomat, John Kenneth Galbraith, remarked of the product that Milliken sold in making $550 million in commissions during l987, "They call them 'junk bonds' for a very good reason." His remark is now legend. Currently the term indicates 'below-investment-grade' commercial paper.

Nehru put Gandhi's picture on every wall in India and then led the nation away from cottage industries to capital-intensive economies of scale and nuclear reactors, so Reagan invoked every platitude of the *Reader's Digest* in the very act of calming Middle America as he put them to the side of history.

In placing America at the forefront of advancing history, Reagan was able to move forward while honouring "the mass mind what its society used to be" (29). Thompson understands this mass mind as the parentage of America as it evolves toward global, or planetary citizenship. "Civilizations have parents," he asserts (122):

And for this being we call the West, Greece is the father and Israel is the mother. When Christianity, as reform Judaism, weds the natural philosophy of the Greeks to the discovery of history by the Hebrew prophets, European civilization is the issue. The pattern is repeated in the Reformation, for when capitalism is wed to Protestantism, industrial civilization is the issue. And now that reform Buddhism is being wed to cybernetics, the Pacific Basin is pregnant with a whole new civilization.

This is the importance of what Thompson has achieved—an integrated, synthesized vision of an inevitable global future that has credible forebears and a familiar psychological character. And in recognizing, as Gary Snyder has alluded to, that the recurrent need is to move forward imaginatively to a planetary, or Gaia-centered communal ethics and social practice in which the essential nature of existence is to be both one with the unity of Nature-Tao and separate at the same time, (1995; 1990; 1980; 1969; 1957), Thompson's landmark essays in *Pacific Shift* provide a clear source-point for this new 'beginner's mind.'[58]   In his efforts to reconcile issues of purpose and meaning in an

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58 *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* by Shunryu Suzuki (1980) is generally regarded as the essential introduction to Zen practice in North America. The celebrated little book is a compilation of informal talks on Zen meditation and practice by the founder of San Francisco Zen Center. 'Beginner's Mind' refers to the seriousness Suzuki-Roshi sensed among American students keen to learn more on Zen tradition.

uncertain, evolving chapter of history he joins a distinguished literary lineage featuring voices as diverse as autobiographical Beat novelist Jack Kerouac (1994; 1976), and Kamo-no-chomei (1996), the 13ᵗʰ century Japanese author of the contemplative classic *Hojoki* (see Part Two, "The Liberation Imperative").  In offering positive reinforcement of Rene Dubos' message of  "think globally, act locally",[59] each contributor finds a secure place as required East-West reading into the rites of passage that lead metamorphically toward a genuinely global epoch.

## *II.*  Mapping The History of the Future

*What is precious, is never to forget* - Stephen Spender, "The Truly Great"

   As Christopher Bamford (1995: 43-45) clarifies, *history* in its first Greek utterance by Herodotus means "to find out for oneself."   Through reflection upon history not only does humanity find itself, but in a very real metaphorical sense it also transcends the danger of *losing* itself.  For this reason Bamford, a scholar of Celtic Christianity, contends "it is possible, in fact, that history will become the keystone of the new paradigm we are all seeking" (43).

   In essence, Bamford's idea of  'the new paradigm' is that of living and thinking societally and culturally in a way that is capable of embodying the responses that will be required by the "ethical, political, psychological and social issues" confronting the global era.  "Above all," Bamford emphasizes, "we must develop new abilities of intuition and a new imagination of who we are" (44).

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[59] This phrase was originated by Rene Dubos as an advisor to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. "Its critical inference that working toward community at micro and macro levels is essential to planetary progress, that global environmental problems can turn into action only by considering ecological, economic, and cultural differences of our local surroundings" (Eblen, R. A. and Eblen W. [1994] *The Encyclopedia of the Environment* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston).  See:  http://capita.wustl.edu/ME567_Informatics/concepts/global.html

History is knowledge.  Negotiating its labyrinths requires maps and constructing these depends upon education and experience.  Where no charts exist—say, of the history of the future—explorers are free to draw their own, although demands for accuracy have increased since the days when unnavigated waters could be marked 'Heare be Monsters.' Citing H.G. Wells' warning that "The future is a race between catastrophe and education," W. I. Thompson (2000) too joins Bamford in suggesting that the new patterns of thinking which will be required in order "to come to grips with the complexities of this emergent culture, its perils, and its promise" (2000: 11).  They envision a new educational curriculum in which the fuller implications of social, economic, artistic and political transformations may be understood.  New patterns of human organization oblige an equally new syllabus (5-11).  Might history, as yoked memory of the past, encompass patterns from which can be constructed a 'memory', an intimation of the future?

Thompson recommends a model devoted to an understanding of how the historical and cultural record of civilization leads progressively toward the 'complex dynamical' systems of human self-organization that he and mathematician Ralph Abraham of San Francisco's Institute for Integral Studies view as the global era.  The educational curriculum they propose is also near to a route map for Capra's 'emerging new paradigm' with its *upaya,* or skillful means of perceptually emphasizing "the whole rather the parts" (Capra, 1989: 3; also 2002: 29).

Where Capra's view embarks from the present, or more accurately from the Cartesian 17th century, on into the merging future, Thompson and Abraham are concerned with developing a curriculum that illustrates how the patterns of human history and cultural evolution may be reconceptualized from the archetypal and ancient past, and from there onward to the present moment within an emerging new historical paradigm.  At this point, their ideas merge integrally with Capra's in suggesting new planetary-minded, globally oriented cultural ecology.

Writing in *Lapis,* the journal of New York's Open Center, which many of the formative minds involved in defining and plotting the *new world dharma* have gravitated toward, Thompson discusses how  "a historical curriculum is a miniaturization of one civilization and a transition to the next" (2000: 5). The monastic traditions of western Europe's Dark Ages, notably in Ireland, miniaturized the Mediterranean world's Graeco-Roman

civilization, he explains, into a curriculum of classic texts still familiar to scholars today. What could be codified and miniaturized was not lost. Is this important? A glance at climactic historical moments reveals how commonly the knowledge of vast civilizational panoramas *has* vanished, or has been deliberately purged—witness the sack of Ashurbanipal's great library at Nineveh, the book burnings of China's Qin Emperor, or the fourth-century Christian rage that destroyed the stupendous collections at Alexandria. What rich harvests from the nature and grace of humanity, of existence itself, have been stripped from future use?[60]

Thompson charges that as humanity evolves out of an era dominated by nation-states and industrial economies toward a globally-oriented cultural ecology—an inherently 'noetic' future shaped by organizational principles that accord with Teilhard de Chardin (discussed in chapter two)—a further commission of compressed remembrance is now required. Accordingly, present civilization, memory, knowledge and consciousness will not be lost; and that which is codified may at last be understood.

In a more formative phase of this theoretical proposition in *Pacific Shift,* Thompson articulated how advancement toward new civilizational principles will not be made without anxiety. Speeding such changes, he insists, will be a triumvirate of interrelated environmental and biological catastrophes. These are identified as continued degradation of the biosphere; the breakdown of traditional forms of nation-state; and new biological assaults upon the human body (elaborated in footnote below). Cumulatively, these are the forces Thompson reports that will compel humanity to "understand the intimate relationship between culture and nature in ways that were not obvious for 'Industrial Man'" (2000: 5).

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[60] Harpur (2004: 60) writes that Socrates Scholasticus (380-450) in his *Ecclesiastical History,* records how in 400 AD the vast archives of 500,000-750,000 books and scrolls of ancient knowledge established by Ptolemy I at the Serapheum in Alexandria was "burned to the ground on the orders of Theophilus, the Christian bishop of Alexandria." Fifteen years later, whatever had been salvaged was for a second time left in ashes. These library holdings were a collection of priceless treasures drawn "from every field of human endeavour, from medicine, to theology, including the lost masterworks of the Greeks. At an earlier date, the Qin emperor 247-210 BCE had burned books in a similar fit of Legalist-minded authoritarianism (Fairbank, 1992: 56).

Current scientific evidence suggests that these natural disasters are already in progress.[61]   Among the former, greenhouse atmospheric warming is transforming global meteorological patterns with markedly increased levels of flooding, drought, and wildfires (Suzuki 2003: 60-65, 236-238; Hunter 2002)[62].  On the grosser economic level, Thompson's essay contends that the consequence of this swelling number of ecological upheavals will be to steadily "exhaust the reserves of insurance companies and the emergency funds of even prosperous nation-states" (2000: 5).

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[61] In "Human Activites Give rise to New Diseases", David Suzuki (2003) reports that:  "SARS, BSE and West Nile are not just making headlines, they are making history.  These diseases are truly products of our age—an age of global transport, industrialized agriculture and global warming."   Suzuki's concern is that humans today are recklessly over-stressing ecological boundaries.  By "displacing animal habitants, feeding meat products to herbivores, dining on exotic predators and doing it all while rushing madly about the planet" humanity is encountering dangerously exotic diseases against which it has little apparent immunity, chiefly since they have not previously infected humans.  Among them:

   a) AIDS/HIV, thought to have been transmitted to humans from chimpanzees through the bushmeat trade, that itself has been exacerbated by savage tribal wars in central Africa; more than 20 million people have died of this internationally;
   b) Avian (Bird) Flu, which is adapting more successfully to human hosts throughout Southeast Asia; scores of millions of poultry stock have been slaughtered, and more than 75 human deaths are reported;
   c) Nipah Virus:  Malaysian kampung dwellers chopping deeper into tropical forests for agricultural land displaced fruit bats who relocated to kampung outbuildings. The Nipah virus was carried through their droppings and was passed on to pigs, livestock and farmers. Causing severe coughing and often death, more than 100 people died and more than a million pigs were destroyed;
   d) West Nile virus:  "In North America, appeared in 1999 and has killed hundreds and infected thousands.  The trans-continental spread from Africa is thought to be influenced by global warming.  The mosquito which carries West Nile prefers the organically-rich shallow pools induced by drought."

Suzuki further observes that Hantavirus, Ebola, Hendra, and Marburg virus are other recent infectious diseases that have emerged and which are attributed to species leaps from animals to humans, and concludes, "We are entering a new age of infectious disease and it's largely due to human activities.  When we push deep into forests and jungles, we expose ourselves to new diseases. When we practice intensive livestock farming and feed herbivores to herbivores, we create ideal conditions for the spread of disease.  As we change the climate, we create new vectors for disease to spread.  The growth of international trade and travel further increase the capacity for diseases to flourish" (7).

[62] Robert Hunter, a co-founder of Greenpeace International, was one the environmental movement's longest serving media professionals and was North America's first full-time television ecological issues reporter.  His bi-weekly essays for Toronto's *Eye* magazine can be retrieved at: http://www.eye.net/eye/issue/issue_02.07.02/news/enviro.html

Thus, biospheric degradation is intimately relevant to a nation-state political model which has been operative since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (ibid, 5). Yet the breakdown of the traditional nation-state may not necessarily be entirely negative. The European Union experiment in supra-nationalism, in 'pooled sovereignty', offers an example of new paradigms in how the nature of civil society may emerge in a global context. For as the European Union explores peaceful deconstruction of the nation state— with limited forfeitures of political property to ensure more secure material and social prosperity, versus failed state degeneracy—the nation state itself may be inching toward actual political transcendence (Sassen 1996; Martiniello 2000: 342-385; Neuman 2002: 514-517). Multicultural and inherently diverse, the reorganized political entities Thompson visualizes will also be more militarily pragmatic, designed perhaps along the lines of the NATO police force-type military that was finally deployed in the Kosovo Balkan conflict during the 1990s. Of this landmark dispute with ultra-nationalist Serbia, Thompson concludes:

> there burned alongside the [NATO] bombs the last fires of romantic nationalism with its fireside sagas of folk identity, an ancient story of us and them, a mythic narrative that involved a demonization of an Other and an atavistic descent into cruelty... [Whereas] for the NATO airman, patriotism was not required. Aloft in his jet fighter, this technician would die in the line of duty the way a policeman or a fireman would; but to seek to die for NATO would be as ridiculous as dying for Con Ed[ison], for indeed the new transnational state of the new world economy, be it Western Europe or the United States, is now a public service utility (2000: 6).

This marks a far cry from the profoundly metaphysical tragedy W.B. Yeats depicts in "An Irish Airmen Foresees his Death." But even within Thompson's own pronouncement lies stark irony, for public services utilities themselves are being privatized with negative consequences (Prosser 2000; CUPE 2004).

Attenuating the virulence to which ethnocentric passions are prone, and out of which such slogans as *Blut, boden, ehre, und gemeinschaft* (blood, soil, honour, and fraternity) are born—battle-cries leading inexorably to the horrors of Auschwitz and ethnic cleansing—enlightened forms of transnationalism, Thompson asserts, are cultural inevitabilities. They will not, however, "wash over most conservatives and right wing extremists without violent screams of denial and struggles to go against the current of history" (ibid, 6).

The third catastrophic event or meltdown Thompson views as inevitable is the breakdown or restructuring of the human body. Citing the research of John Maynard Smith and Eors Szathmary (1995), which shows that in the evolutionary record, when a "new and more complex level of evolution emerges, the older constituent units lose their ability to reproduce", it is explained how reproductive capacities pass to the "higher and more complex levels of organization" (2000: 6).

Unlike previous watershed incidents in the evolutionary record, significant new examples of increased brain size or higher forehead development are not observable in the present cultural moment. Instead, Thompson relates that this typical advance in information-processing is being expressed through group clusterings of "complex noetic polities" (ibid). Tellingly, however, the "global electronic networks of consciousness" enabled by satellite internet systems in what is effectively a technological emulation of Taoist and Zen Buddhist 'mind to mind' transmission meditative practice, must also be recognized as the machines they are. Although "once external to us", these increasingly powerful devices are now also becoming "intimate architectures of our involvement with other minds, and other cultures" (ibid).

Echoing the larger ecological concerns of scientists like David Suzuki, Thompson stresses additionally that with radical changes to the tropical and temperate rainforests, compounded with the worst effects of industrialization, the global atmosphere is itself beginning to resemble a "supersaturated solution of bacteria, viruses, parasites [and] chemical pollutants" (ibid). Recent events bear out this toxification of the biome. According to Suzuki, already one in five children in Canada has asthma. (in Carolan, 2003). Add to this the implications of industrialized agriculture dependent on genetically engineered crop strains, pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers, as well as

genetically manipulated animals, and as Thompson warns, "we shall begin to see not merely industrial but evolutionary pollution as well" (2000: 6).

Because of these radical cultural implosions in-progress, Thompson asserts that if they are to be overcome it is critical to understand how human civilization has developed to this juncture in the first place. To this purpose, with Abraham he has developed an educational "miniaturization" of world history. Expanding upon the synchronoptical outline of history and cultural expression begun in *Pacific Shift*, Thompson thickens his original systems view by amplifying it into a series of 'transformations' that are "embodied in seven 'cultural ecologies.'" As simple, imagistic signage they can be regarded as a portrait of humanity and are read as follows (2000: 7-10):

## Fig. 1.  Transformations

| **Hominization** 4,000,000 to 200,000 BC |
| :---: |
| **Symbolization** 200,000 to 10,000 BC |
| **Agriculturalization** 10,000 BC to 1500 AD |
| **Industrialization** 1500 to 1945 |
| **Planetization** 1945 to present |

## Fig. 2.  Cultural-Ecologies

| **Silvan** (prehominoid evolution of Ramapithecus) |
| :--- |
| **Savannahan** (from Australopithecus to Homo-erectus) |
| **Glacial** (from archaic Homo sapiens to modern Homo sapiens) |
| **Riverine** (ancient civilizations: Sumeria-Eygpt-Mohenjo-daro, etc.) |
| **Transcontinental** (classical civilizations: ie. Graeco-Roman, etc.) |

| |
|---|
| **Oceanic** (modern industrial nation-state societies: Euro-Atlantic, etc.) |
| **Biospheric** (planetary noetic polities) |

What Thompson intends by the idea of "transformations", is that each represents a significant "evolutionary bifurcation", and that within these bifurcations arise a compelling synthesis of intellectual, technological, moral and ethical, as well as spiritual innovations. The result is a layering of polities, or a succession of civilizational moments that Thompson describes as new 'cultural ecologies.'

Each cultural ecology, for example, will represented by new prime indicators in its 'mathematical-literary mentality.'   These are represented in Figure 3 as:

## <u>Fig. 3.  Mathematical-Literary Mentality</u>

| |
|---|
| **Arithmetic** <br> (pre and ancient history: "a generative mentality concerned with the problem of how the One becomes the many") |
| **Geometric** <br> (mentality of the classical civilizations—ref. Plato's Academy: "No one enters here without knowledge of Geometry.  Symbolized by architecture) |
| **Algebraic** <br> (mentality of the medieval world; represents the shift from "concrete object to an empowering description registered in a numinous script." Both Celtic and Arabic calligraphic art reach the apotheosis of Western decorative achievement; seen as "visionary scripts", or as evidence of "neoplatonic 'celestial intelligences.'") |
| **Galilean Dynamical** <br> (has as its architecture bodies in motion, whether they be planets, cannon balls, or monetary systems of currency) |
| **Complex Dynamical** <br> (not yet entirely understood; can be envisioned as "the systems of systems; an emergent metasystem that is concerned with the self-organizing architectures, [ie. autopoiesis], of all possible architectures, Life and Artificial Life.) |

Similarly, five representations of corresponding literary or communications mentality can be graphed:

### Fig. 4.  Communications Mentality

| |
|---|
| **Oral** |
| **Script** |
| **Alphabetic** |
| **Print** |
| **Electronic** |

As can five forms of 'human societal associations':

### Fig. 5.  Human Societal Associations

| |
|---|
| **Culture** |
| **Society** |
| **Civilization** |
| **Industrialization** |
| **Planetization** |

To these associative layerings can be added 'a matrix of identity':

### Fig. 6.  Matrix of Identity

| |
|---|
| **Sanguinal identity**<br>(tribal) |
| **Territorial identity** |
| **Linguistic identity**<br>(language and religion) |
| **Economic identity**<br>(class and nation) |
| **Noetic identity**<br>(scientific and spiritual) |

And to conclude this integral discourse, "each of these societal forms and matrices of identity can also be seen to embody a characteristic mode of human governance":

### Fig. 7.  Mode of Governance

| |
|---|
| **Dominance** |
| **Authority** |
| **Justice** |
| **Representation** |
| **Participation** |

Viewed collectively, Thompson's and Abraham's educational construct delivers a basic systems-report analysis in response to the questions posed by Paul Gauguin's immortal masterwork *Where Do We Come From?  What Are We?  Where Are We Going?*  In short, to the eternal questions.[63]

In streamlined analytic method, the construct points toward the evolution of a planetary identity rooted dynamically in both science and spirituality. Orchestrated humanistically along transcultural, interrelated, and participatory governance principles, its integral approach to the study of history and culture can be regarded as a form of cultural ecumenism for the global age.   How global citizenship may be re-imagined constitutes the next subject of discussion.

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[63] Gauguin's Tahitian painting itself marks a key transformative plateau in Western art, serving as both breakthrough and transitional bridge from 19th century *fin de siecle* ennui to the promise of a modern vision at once forward-looking, yet with recursive view of time reaching back to the primitive.

# Chapter 6.

# The Idea of Citizenship

*"Good citizens are the riches of our city"*

- overheard at an Urban Planning Conference

By nature, defining new social or planetary identities compels their juxtaposition with pre-existing forms of citizenship. The idea of citizenship originates from ancient Greece, although in Book III of the *Politics,* Aristotle (1970, trans. Sinclair) argues that citizenship may differ among societies and that "a plurality of constitutions [is] taken for granted" (113). Although Aristotle's fundamental notion of exactly who might qualify for the title differs markedly from present-day understandings, his view of citizenship remains surprisingly contemporary to the extent that he argues for the individual citizen's right to participate in both the legislative and judicial functions of the political community (102-103, 124-126). Thus:

> …a citizen in the fullest sense is one who has a share in the privileges of rule. We are reminded of Homer's 'Like some interloper of no standing'. For [those] whose standing gives [them] no share in these privileges [are] no better than alien[s] (112).

The concept of a constitution by which a society is governed is made equally clear:

> Now in every case the citizen-body is sovereign; the constitution is the sum total of the *politeuma* (the totality of the citizen-body). Thus in democratic constitutions the people or demos is supreme, in oligarchies the few. *That* is what makes one constitution differ from another—the composition of the citizen-body… (113).

Concluding his ethical case for the justice of 'citizenship' in social and political practice, Aristotle continues:

> Another question is 'Where ought the sovereign power of the state to reside?' With the people? With the propertied classes? With the good? With one [individual], the best of all the good? With one [individual], the tyrant? There are objections to all of these…it would seem that the most defensible, perhaps even the truest, answer to the question would be to say that the majority ought to be sovereign…
> (123).

It is noteworthy that in resting upon "the support and consent of the people", as Korean scholars Kang Jung In and Eom Kwangjong (2003: 130) observe, legitimate political authority for Aristotle also lies very near to that of Mencius, who declares Confucian faith in the people as "the source of power",[64] inasmuch as:

> the authority of kings such as Yao and Shun was recognized and given by Heaven, and [that] Heaven in turn also reflect[s] the will of the people…although the two are separate sources of authority" (ibid, 130).

To strike a benchmark in considering new or renewed forms of 'planetary' citizenship, it is expressly through their antagonism to tyranny that Aristotle and Mencius accent further— and from a contemporary perspective, perhaps unanticipated—ancient political mutualities between East and West. Noting Plato's definition in *The Republic* of tyranny as "the extreme illness of a city" (1968: 222), and of his disciple Aristotle's view that it represents a perverted constitution, an unnatural condition of which "there is no knowing how it will change" (*Politics*, 233, 226-27), recent East Asian scholarship (Kang and Eom, 124-134;

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[64] See Mencius, quoting from the *Shu Ching* (Confucius), II.10a: "Heaven sees with the eyes of its people. Heaven hears with the ears of its people" (trans. Lau, 1970: 144). Kang and Eom offer further East Asian appraisal of classical Greek and Confucian approaches to ideas of governance in "Comparative Analysis of Eastern and Western Tyranny", *Korea Journal,* Winter 2003. pp. 113-136.

Lee: 2002,) has been keen to illustrate "the 'Theory of the Overthrow and Punishment of a Tyrant' as an important strand in the Confucian tradition", as well as how the political conviction inherent within the Confucian virtue of 'righteousness' (*Yi*) lies at the philosophical heart of Mencius' contention that:

> The Mandate of heaven is not immutable (Mencius, IV.A.7; orig. *Book of Odes*).

For the will of heaven is the will of the people: in the Taoist mind they are one, and the Mencian understanding of the will of heaven is approximated by Rousseau's conception of the 'general will' which provided intellectual ammunition to the French Revolution. Accordingly, if Mencius was devoted to his spiritual father Confucius in the belief that:

> Benevolence is the heart of man, and rightness his road.  Sad it is indeed when a man gives up the right road instead of following it and allows his heart to stray without enough sense to go after it… The sole concern of learning is to go after this strayed heart (VI.A.11),

then, how remarkable is the 'revolutionary' view two millennia later of Rousseau who believes "the only knowledge worth having is the knowledge of virtue [moral goodness]" (Greer and Lewis, 476).  And how in this enterprise, "The principles of virtue are engraved on every heart" (Rousseau, cited ibid, 476).

While forms of citizenship change, at root it would seem, 'the fundamental gestures' of citizenship do not.[65] With its prophetic revolution in 1789, France breathed new life into Aristotle's original discourse on citizenship, and through the Declaration of the Rights of Man established fresh marching orders within the principles of European governance, notably through the delineation of individual rights and obligations. For although it pays homage to the 'natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man,' the Declaration also defines the *duties* of individuals in society" (Greer and Lewis, 458-459).  In this fashion, while

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[65] Borrowing this phrase from Jean Starobinski's essay "On the Fundamental Gestures of Criticism."  See *New Literary History,* Spring, 1974.  5: pp. 491-514.

"Every citizen summoned or seized according to the law ought to obey instantly," the Declaration also reframes classical democratic principles so that:

> All citizens have the right to participate in the making of law, and its administration must be the same for all…(cited, ibid., 458).

The critical objective in defining a bona fide citizenship for the global age therefore, must be to identify the particular political, social, spiritual, and ecological terms of reference pertaining to it. If local societies are obliged to look beyond themselves, defining these terms must invariably involve an intellectual exogamy. Lu Chi (trans., Sam Hamill, 1987), Ezra Pound (1996), and Gary Snyder (1983), all hark to imaginative challenge in 'making it new',[66] and variously recall of this externalizing mission, how "the model is near to hand."[67] In illustration, American poet and early Beat Generation figure Michael McClure remembers in an interview how the west coast's towering literary figure Kenneth Rexroth was intimately involved in North America's first major post-WW II social awakening:

> He told us that we were part of the West Coast and we had more in common with Japan, China, Korea, than we did with Paris and London. New Yorkers related to the capitals of Europe; we could relate otherwise and be natural with Asian religious and philosophical ideas and ways of seeing and making art. As a person of the Pacific Rim, I could experience history in a different way...(in Foley, 2004: 11).

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[66] The influential American poet William Carlos Williams gave this phrase to Allen Ginsberg, who used it as a personal maxim in introducing novice writers. It has since evolved into general usage.

[67] Lu Chi's preface to his *The Art of Writing* (*Wen Fu*) observes "when cutting an ax handle with an ax, surely the model is near to hand." In "Ax Handles" Snyder notes Lu Chi's borrowing of this epigraph from a 5th century B.C. Pin area folk song found in the *Book of Songs* (*Shih Ching*). Pound recounts the same famous episode in his sprawling *Cantos*. Hamill translates Lu Chi in 1987, after previously copying out a translation by Achilles Fang (*New Mexico Quarterly*, Autumn, 1952).

Experiencing and making history are a matter of degrees and personality. The divisional point is one of vitality. In extending, and as McLuhan might have it, 'massaging' Rexroth's pronouncement, Thompson's subsequent theory in *Pacific Shift* is that the Euro-Atlantic world view which spawned the Industrial Age is giving way to a historic fourth stage of world civilization. This new "world-system", he suggests:

> is emerging around the shores of the Pacific, and as Eastern mysticism meets Western science, a wholly new Pythagoreanism is being born" (1985: 62).

This new 'Pythagoreanism' is a hybrid, cultural form joining the cyberdigital ethos of California's Silicon Valley and the original communitarian principles of China's Yellow River Basin.[68] Emblematic of this cultural transformation toward the fuller harmony of 'the Global Age', is a reformist shift in the nature and scope of humanity's fundamental cultural ecology. Rooted in a cross-cultural etiquette of East-West humanism that also responds equitably to the North-South divide, Thompson looks toward a future in which humans, science, technology, creativity, and nature can coexist together in a planetary home severely compromised by growing global environmental degradation that is itself the accumulation of all preceding environmental crises (1985: 85).

The move will be, he asserts, "from a culture of competition, accumulation, and conflict in industrial civilization to cooperation, sharing, and coevolution in a planetary ecology" (ibid, 62). The nature of this transformation, he argues:

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[68] In his historically annotated translation of the *Taoteching,* Red Pine (1996), records that the Huang-Haui Plain between the regularly flooding Huangho, or Yellow River, and the Hauiho, or Huai River to the south has been used to grow wheat and millet since Neolithic times. "It remains one of the most productive agricultural areas in all of China," and was "a rich prize over which many states fought in ancient times" (xii). Interestingly, Lao-tzu was born in this same area of ancient China's "shamanistic periphery" (xiii) , roughly between 604 and 571 BC. The historian Ssu-ma Chi'en records Lao-tzu as Keeper of the Royal Archives in the Chou Dynasty capital of Loyang, which itself was "a Neolithic campsite as early as 3000 BC" (ibid). A memorial stone inscribed with Lao-tzu's name stills exists, located approximately six kilometers west of Loukuantai, site of the former royal observatory at the foot of the Chungnan Mountains.

…will be taking a step as important in our evolution as the movement
from animal to human (ibid).

Acknowledging the proposal's sheer idealism, Thompson admits that conflicts over
resources and all-too human competitive behaviour—one is mindful here of the U.S.-
Anglo 'second crusade'[69] against Iraq—are likely resurgences, but that:

Humanity will continue to stagger and stumble along the path illuminated
by the longings of the heart and the intuitions of the spirit (ibid, 62).

As redacted to this present point, in manifold contexts the linking up of heaven—the
intuitions of the spirit—with the longings of the individual heart (the most earnest ideal of
Mencius), constitutes the necessary step into the future that for Thompson, Capra, Macy,
Snyder and others, symbolizes the nature of a reformed, renewed citizenship in the global
age. For as the poetic, mystic imagination has it, "Things are symbols of themselves."[70]
And as Thompson espouses, it is time as conscious actors that:

We…take the risk of finding, beyond the conventional politics of
corruption, the new and surprising politics of incarnation (1985: 62).

If humanity as a tapestry of cultures is to heal the injuries of the past in forging a global
future, reforming current practices of citizenship at the individual participatory level will

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[69] The BBC reports Osama bin-Ladin calling U.S. and British attacks on Iraq the works of
"Crusaders", in reference to the medieval barbarism of European Christians in their earlier
religious invasion of the Levantine Muslim world. See BBC News, Feb. 16, 2003.
< http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/2768397.stm >

[70] The controversial Tibetan reincarnated lama Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, gave this slogan to
his senior disciple Allen Ginsberg who recorded it at Naropa University in Boulder, CO. See
"Mind Writing Slogans" in Appendix A, *What Book? Buddha Poems From Beat To Hiphop*, ed.
Gary Gach (1998), p. 197-98.

necessarily be part of the 'global' incarnation Thompson envisions.[71]   Implicit too, are the obligatory governing articles of enfranchisement in this global citizenship: that it be acted out at a personal level, in a community-minded global environment and, categorically, be grounded in a reformed, wholistic concept of place.


## *II.* <u>Cross-Cultural Literacy of Place as 'Gaian Citizenship'</u>

Cultivating a deeper understanding of what global age citizenship may mean requires engaging with the challenge it poses to collective human imagination in terms of ethics, progress, rule of law, pluralism and diversity, self-reliance, and economics as an expression of appropriate, sustainable community development.  East and West, North and South—conceptually the seed idea of 'common wealth' proceeds from this grounding.

How, for instance, are civil societies to meaningfully sustain themselves when, increasingly, individuals must struggle for meaning in an age of large-scale migration, of rootlessness and institutionalized social mobility, of severed individual relationships with the natural world, and of weakened or abandoned spiritual engagement?  How, as a successor civilization, can the digitalized, trans-national civilization Thompson sees arriving address the global crisis of spirit and search for meaning that is the detritus of the Atlantic-Industrial Age?

These are profound sociological, if not metaphysical questions. To those not employed in specific media, business, or academic capacities, the concept of a global age imbued with the wisdom of both Western and Asian cultures alike, while a familiar-sounding term, may appear as an exotic if not purely abstract idea. For Westerners to fully comprehend the significance of a global age to one's individual, regional, and national interests, Asia's cultural background especially—more so than Europe's or Latin America's generally more familiar cultures—must be appreciated in the richness of its diversity.  In Asia one is in the presence of deep and antique cultures, all different, and many subtle, culturally-imposed

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[71] Or as radical Afro-American political and social activist, Eldridge Cleaver, is attributed with coining—an apocryphal phrase that is now part of North America's lexicon—'You're either part of the solution, or part of the problem'

constraints must be overcome to consolidate freer and successful communication exchange in the kinds of ideas that offer sharper insight into how differences among the cultures of the greater Pacific Rim may be resolved more companionably.[72]   More bridge-building between North American, European, Latin American, Australasian and Oceanic cultures with those of the Asia-Pacific is required.[73]  More needs to be known about the history and changing patterns East and West in such traditional concepts as self, ethnicity, gender identity, approaches toward spirituality, and geopolitical sensibilities.  What this points toward is the need for a comparative East-West sociology, a kind of 'literary anthropology' that can be studied, critiqued and interpreted through the analysis of various modes of cultural expression.  This thesis proposes naming such a new interdisciplinary program as the study of *cross-cultural literacy of place.*

   Cultivating appropriate responses to the world's contemporary crisis of meaning and purpose will require greater competency in providing meaningful assessments of North American and Asian arts and letters, environmentalism, community planning, their various insight practice traditions, attitudes toward authority, and so on.  As yet, this genre of critical discourse has not yet been fully developed, although a range of current authorship points toward it, ranging from Maxine Hong-Kingston's *Hawai'i One Summer* (1998) to Gary Snyder's *The Practice of* the *Wild*, or from Andrew Schelling's *Wild Form, Savage Grammar* (2003) to T.R. Reid's *Confucius Lives Next Door* (1999), as well as a rich body of translations from contemporary and classical Asian literature, including the Tang poets (Hamill, 1985; Watson, 1996; O'Connor, 2000; Schelling, 1991),  Ryokan and Basho (Stevens and Hamill, 1993), the formative Sutras (Red Pine: 2004, 2001, 1993),  the Koryo-Chosun *shijo* masters of Korea (O'Rourke: 2002, 1999).

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[72] The point here being that works such as Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) argue for what is essentially a continuation of old line antagonisms in geopolitical relationships. See, "Civilization Makes for a Poor Paradigm", G. John Ikenberry et al, *Foreign Affairs*, March-April, 1997. 162-69.

[73] It can be sensibly and logically argued that it makes only good sense for the "Indian Ocean Rim' communities to dovetail into such bridge-building.  This newer international/intercultural economic organizational impulse was initiated in March, 1997 with a membership of 14 nations including Australia, India, South Africa, and Mauritius.   Membership is anticipated to double and will forge deeper relationships between the nation peoples of South Asia, Southern Africa, and through the Pacific bridging nation of Australia, with the great Pacific.  Background, see *The Indian Ocean Rim: Southern Africa and Regional Cooperation*, ed. Gwyn Campbell (2003).

Offering an unparalleled lens into 'other-cultural' experience, these works of exposition and the creative imagination of their authors' lives and times are able to authenticate, for all its differences and the thousands of miles that separate it from North America or Europe, how Asian daily life especially can still appear so familiar. Without such images of re-envisioned literacy of place and what it may mean—in paraphrase of the immortal Basho, that every day is a journey shared amongst each other, amongst ourselves, and the journey itself is home',[74] no truly new concept of individual or community *global* citizenship can be advanced. Mindful of the collective interdisciplinary branches of knowledge that have contributed to the understanding of this interconnected human dynamic, this thesis further proposes that it be formally named *Gaian Citizenship*.

Given the 2,000-year history of exchange between 'Asia' and 'the West', and compounded by the profound differences that still exist between East and West concerning views toward such core human values as the nature of political authority, governance, civic discourse, and even reason, there is much to argue against any meaningful cross-pollination, or dynamic synthesis of global ideas, Asian and Western. Yet for virtually the first time in their histories, the technological goals of both Asia and the West are now identical.[75] Therefore, a study of respective common humanist values and social practices

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[74] See Basho (1993), *Narrow Road to the Interior,* trans. Sam Hamill, "The sun and moon are eternal travellers. Even the years wander on…every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home" (p. 1).

[75] In *Economic Initiatives in the New Century*, U.S. economist Lester Thurow states in *Head To Head* (1992), 2nd chapter entitled "A New Economic Game", that the following areas will comprise the essential economic initiatives of the new century:
- microelectronics
- biotechnology
- the new materials-science industries
- telecommunications
- civilian aviation
- robotics plus machine tools
- computers plus software

He develops his idea further by suggesting that developing environmental policies more responsively toward the needs of people and place will become a paramount concern. But if these economic and social phenomena hold up as primary technological challenges, can patterns be traced that will lead toward credible new social paradigms featuring sustainable, just societies? In *Getting to the 21st Century,* David Korten (1990) offers the example of the European Union as a useful model for social, political and economic transformation.

as they are offset against the technological and geopolitical changes currently underway ought to provide a fitting lens into the viability, and even the desirability of such an East-West sociology of place.

## *III.* <u>**Learning to See Community as Commonwealth**</u>

In *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, E.F. Schumacher (2001) discusses how following his experience as a United Nations developmental economist in Burma, he came to understand how humanity's essential spirit exists in relationship to the land.  Further, he observes how for a sense of community to thrive, those comprising its local human ecology must cultivate greater appreciation of their immediate biosphere's finite resources after the manner of Taoist *feng shui* practice.[76]  Through this emphasis on the cultivation of harmony, or balance among natural environmental forces, a greater participatory sense of community evolves among contributors. One approach is through an emphasis on smaller, local-scale economies, which gives people an opportunity to see for themselves where the products they consume have originated, as well as witness their own role in the life-cycle of trading goods and services.  In an economic sense what transpires is a locally unique co-mingling of ethnocentricities, religiously-based concepts, and an embrace of the natural, physical world as much as the emotional and spiritual.

One contemporary phenomenon that is becoming widespread through urban and rural communities alike in 'developed' societies is the revival of neighbourhood farmers' markets, seasonal fairs, and what in Britain are called 'continental markets' of roaming European trader collectives.  Typically held on weekends and holidays, these community-based events renew medieval-style local fairs or market-days, encouraging communities to cherish traditions of place and ways of living. Often featured are elements of local natural resource harvesting (timber trade, fishing, agricultural), or regional artisan craft (tile and terrazzo work, cloisonné, pottery, glasswork), with textile and fabrics, art, music, and poetry, and local food specialties all interwoven in a multi-level establishment of

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[76] *Feng shui*—'geomancy', or the art of placement, is based upon the cosmological principles of Taoism, especially 'five elements' theory.   See Thompson (1979), *Chinese Religion*, pp. 22-24.

community relationship building with consumers. As travellers discover, this revival has been embraced avidly from Paris to Australia's Byron Bay. As they learn from experience, from Seoul's East gate market, to the women trader markets of Abeok Uta, Nigeria,[77] in long-established societies the idea has never left.

The idea of community offers manifold layers of meaning. For those living a transient life, or obliged to live highly compartmentalized lives within dense urban environments, it can seem as the Tokyo novelist Yoshiko Shibaki writes, that "people [are] washed together and then engulfed… aimless[ly]" (in Carolan, 1992: 15). In such circumstances, community can be a difficult concept to grasp. Traditionally, though, it has meant a group of people who live in the same area and have a number of things in common (Asumi, 2001). Indeed, community typically means a place to call home and an understanding of the social glue that holds a local culture together. This can be partly defined by geographical reference points, or even in terms of human geography; for example, through the lens of an ethnic, religious, ideological, or other sub-cultural identity. So understanding the nature of community—the local model of civil society in which one lives—is in large measure about understanding oneself, and of the place one lives.

As Snyder observes:

> There are two kinds of human sets that we all relate to. One is our network and the other is our community. Some people don't have communities to relate to and only relate to the network. The network is like: all the dentists in the United States have a magazine and they have conferences and they all talk the same lingo and don't talk to anybody else. That's a network…But there's also the community, who are the people in the place that you live. The thing about a network is that everybody speaks the same language and more or less agree with each other. The thing about a community is that you don't all agree with each other and there are problems that you have to live with and work out over a long scale of time (1980: 90).

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[77] From personal conversation with Wole Soyinka, Nigerian playwright; 54th PEN International Congress, Toronto, Sept. 25, 1992.

On the surface, the drive among those dedicated to renewing and reforging traditional concepts of community in a 'global' age appears consonant with McLuhan's 'global village' idea. Technological innovations, however, are transforming the way we think and live as much as the ways we communicate with each other. With the expansion of 'free market' globalization practices comes universal standardization of once-local phenomena such as food or style of dress, prompting O.B. Hardison, Jr. to comment:

> A MacDonald's hamburger is the same in New York and Rome, and a Pepsi-Cola produces the same bubbles in Vladivostok and Grand Rapids. In all of these cases, the effect of change has been the disappearance of regional and parochial identities and the emergence of a global consciousness (1989: 2).

'Community' as a set of shared practices and customs becomes not simply a micro social reality but a macro concept as well. Yet, the individualist self, which is the poetic self, is inclined to recoil at the blancmange 'oneness' of such a borderless cultural bill of fare. As Snyder articulates, the very beauty of local community is the degree of commitment it engenders to place itself:

> One of the key problems in American society now, it seems to me, is people's lack of commitment to any given place—which, again, is totally unnatural and outside of history. Neighbourhoods are allowed to deteriorate, landscapes are allowed to be strip-mined—because there is nobody who will live there and take responsibility: they'll just move on. The reconstruction of a people and of a life in the United States depends in part on people, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, county by county, deciding to stick it out and work where they are, rather than flee…[from] my own experience in rural California: I have never learned so much about politics or been so involved in day-to-day social problems. I've spent years arguing the dialectic, but it's another thing to go to

supervisors' meetings and deal with the establishment, to be right in the middle of whatever is happenning right here, rather than waiting for a theoretical alternative government to come along (1980: 117).

In brief, 'small is beautiful' and is worth fighting for.

Mirroring the contemporary phenomenon of whole nations ceding sovereign rights, or 'pooling' authority within mutually beneficial, centralized administrative alliances is the conscious practice of what in North America is increasingly referred to as building 'intentional communities'.[78] Heralding a renewed ecology of consciousness, 'reimagining' what community and home-place in this manner can become as relevant a spiritual, social or political gesture as adopting a traditional 'wisdom path' such as Yoga, Zazen meditation or Chi Kung. Among previous examples one finds Catholic Worker-style communalism, traditional Mennonite society, 'Back to the Land' communes, or various other lay religious paths. The result for those participating is a more livable environment—one based on conscious action. With the postmodernist social critique laying such extraordinary emphasis on the fragmentation of cultures and society—indeed, how else can it be summarized?—the decision within free market systems to 'opt out' and selectively build other more cohesive local living environments 'in place', while negotiating necessary economic and administrative links with the greater community outside, is effectively showing the way toward components-oriented society in a global future. It is also a clear, deliberate choice of communitarian lifestyle over American-style individual "fierce living."[79]

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[78] In a personal letter, Canadian writer Al Rempel (2004, June 7) explains the idea of his family home within an 'intentional community: "As to our Intentional Community, although it wasn't created to be an intense 'greeny-organic' community, there is certainly a back-to-the-land element. Plus a desire to see closer relationships among neighbours and a safer environment for kids. Basically, five families live on one quarter-section of land (160 acres), in separate houses spread out between 5-10 minute walking distances. Decisions that affect everyone are made on a consensus basis…Our zoning is a special category developed with regional authorities. It's based on density rather than property lines."

[79] A term coined by Albertan author Murdoch Burnett. See "Public and Private Parts", *Last Issue,* No. 2, April, 1983, p. 6-7.

Snyder elaborates that the benefits from beginning to settle into a place and take communal responsibility are threefold.  These are:

1. Economic:  "in that in the long range all of us, all over the world, are going to have to learn to live by photosynthesis and with the watersheds once again.  Agribusiness and petrochemical infusions into what we could call mining-farming, isn't going to sustain us that much longer."

2. Ecological: for "the benefit of rootedness is that people take care of a place because they realize that they're going to live there for a thousand years or more.  They know that they aren't going to be forever moving around."

3. Spiritual:  "Because by being in place, we get the largest sense of community.  We learn that community is of spiritual benefit and of health for everyone, that ongoing working relationships and shared concerns, music, poetry, and stories all evolve into the shared practice of a set of values, visions, and quests.  That's what the spiritual path really is" (ibid, 138-141).

While the social and economic are important foundation-blocks, even when supported by religious belief, they do not necessarily ensure community harmony.  Nor does tradition necessarily provide all the answers.  Religious communities from the Hare Krishnas to the Hutterites are no strangers to dissension and conflict, and the practice of 'shunning' is still alive in our times.[80]  Snyder offers guidance regarding what must also be located at the root of healthy community practice by returning to the concept of place:

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[80] 'Shunning' refers to the practice of deliberate exclusion of an individual or group from within a community, usually religiously affiliated.  To be shunned is to be effectively made a 'non-person', and almost inevitably made to leave.  Generally associated with dissenting behaviour and actions within orthodox, close-knit Christian societies such as the Doukhabour, older Mennonite, and Hutterite.

What have to be built are community networks—not necessarily communes or anything fancy. When people, in a very modest way, are able to define a certain unity of being together, a commitment to staying together for a while, they can begin to correct their use of energy and find a way to be mutually employed. And this, of course, brings a commitment to the place, which means right relation to nature (1980: 110).

The process of exchanging ideas alone does not guarantee meaningful insight or that knowledge will result. Too often, 'talk' is mistaken for action,[81] so to obtain the useful people need to look at issues from many angles and perspectives.[82] Community interests benefit through the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds who bring with them a fresh outlook, new ideas of the possible, and an interest in learning. In this way, through the shaping of plans for concrete action, obstacles can be overcome and conflicts prevented. With an ear for the broad lessons of history and tradition, the results can be unexpectedly new, or 'renewing'. Snyder summarizes the situation thus:

We cannot again have seamless primitive cultures, or the purity of the archaic [but] we can have neighbourhood and community. Communities strong in their sense of place, proud and aware of local and special

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[81] Rodney Jones speaks to this situation of mistaking talk for action in his poem "Winter Retreat: Homage to Martin Luther King, Jr." Recounting an all too-familiar administrative conference retreat convened to,

> …make certain inquiries, to collate notes on the instruction of the disabled, the deprived, the poor…We felt substantive burdens lighter if we stated it right…We walked together beside the still waters of behaviourism…We enunciated every word clearly and without accent…We extended ourselves with that sinuous motion of the tongue that is half pain and almost eloquence…We praised diversity and involvement…And what I remember of that week of talks is nothing the record shows…we had wanted to make the world kinder, but, in speaking proudly, we had failed a vision."
> (in *Poetry: a Pocket Anthology,* 2004; ed. R.S. Gwynn, p. 360).

[82] The unmistakable echo here is from Chuang-tzu: "All men know the use of the useful, but nobody knows the use of the useless!" The explanation refers to how fine-grained timber and tasty fruit cause certain 'useful' trees to be harvested and consumed, whereas old and gnarled trunks are left along to live epic ages due to their 'uselessness' *(Basic Writings,* trans. Burton Watson).

qualities, creating to some extent their own cultural forms, not humble or subservient in the face of some 'high cultural' over-funded art form or set of values, are in fact what one healthy side of the original American vision was all about. They are also, now, critical to 'ecological survival.' No amount of well-meaning environmental legislation will halt the biological holocaust without people who live where they are and work with their neighbours, taking responsibility for their place, and *seeing to it*: to be inhabitants, and to not retreat. We feel this to be starting in American: a mosaic of city neighbourhoods, small towns, and rural places where people are digging in and saying 'If not now, when? If not here, where?' …The process becomes educational and even revolutionary, when one becomes aware of the responsibility that goes with 'rootedness' and the way the cards are stacked against it; we live in a system that rewards those who leap for the quick profit and penalizes those who would do things carefully with an eye to quality (Snyder, ibid, 161).

To amplify this approach, rethinking how a stronger sense of community might be fostered for the global age begins with consciously re-evaluating one's whole existing notion of identity and community. As Snyder argues, "The point is to enter the dialogue of the times," (1980: 130).

This is where restructuring begins—with the arrival of a more mindful Gaian citizenship founded upon planetary principles, through which, as American Zen Master John Daido Loori explains, "Each action that brings us closer to the goal, is the goal itself" (in Whitmyer, 1994: 32). As an East-West grace-note in response to modernity's existential crisis of meaning and purpose, it should be noted that within the conscious practice of reimagining what community can be it may also be discovered that—as American farmer, philosopher and essayist Wendell Berry observes—"There was something like the Oriental wisdom here all along, wasn't there?" (in Snyder; ibid, 124).

# Chapter 7.

# Modernity's Existential Crisis of Meaning and Purpose:

*And so the question: where should we live?  And how?*

Kamo-no-Chomei, *Hojoki* [83]

In a searching essay entitled "Permissive Cornucopia",[84] former U.S. Secretary of State Zbigniew Brzezinski (1994) uses the rural harvest image of a cornucopia as a symbol for North America's bottomless yearning for consumer products.  By contrast, traditional connotations of the familiar wicker-woven basket horn are of goodness, simplicity and abundance: in effect, the 'horn of plenty' symbolizes Puritan-era America, with its values of hard work, piety and thrift.  However, in addressing the "viable balance between individual desire for material self-enhancement and the need to infuse into life an awareness of its transcendental dimensions" (ibid, 1), Brzezinski chooses to equate the cornucopia negatively with the spiritual emptiness of contemporary permissive society.

Acknowledging the dilemma of European thinkers such as Czeslaw Milosz[85] who professed the idea that Marxism arose as the inevitable consequence of "the profound erosion of man's religious imagination on the European continent" (cited, ibid, 1), Brzezinski similarly observes the affluent, democratic society of the United States especially seems intent on forgetting its own history, moral compass and civilized direction.

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[83] Hojoki (1996), trans.  Yasuhiko Moriguchi and David Jenkins.

[84] See Innovative Ideas Series, Gorbachev Foundation USA.  *From Out of Control, Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21ˢᵗ Century,* MacMillan Pub.   See???

[85] The 1980 Nobel Laureate in Literature.  Polish, he lived in the U.S. for more than 20 years, teaching Slavic literature at University of California at Berkeley, and eventually became a naturalized citizen of the United States, which he fondly described as "a great republic, moderately corrupt."  He called himself "a man of one or two streets" who wrote about "the bonds of civitas." See: http://www.boston.com/globe/search/stories/nobel/1982/1982af.html

Commenting earlier on changing social paradigms within industrialized society, the German sociologist Max Weber regarded the shifts within popular imagination that occurred as a form of 'disenchantment with the world' (cited in Buruma and Margalit, 2004: 112).  With its philosophical roots in rational, empirical inquiry, a secular, industrialized society, Weber understood, could only exist in a state alienated from its traditional past.  In essence, "the removal of the spell of religion that clouds the relation of what causes what" (ibid) was now complete.  While economically successful, the modern secular state was cut off from the bindings and comforts of religion.

Looking upon modern social changes in modern North American society, Brzezinski finds them charmless, even threatening to its long-term stability, arguing that:

> The erosion of the religious imagination is, in my view, the core of twentieth-century thought; and it is what has lent our age its apocalyptic features…It is enough to look at the prosperous and well-fed sector of humanity in the countries of the West to become convinced that a concept of a religiously ordered cosmos is disintegrating also under the impact of science and technology, and that if people, especially among the younger generations, still have a strong need for faith, it is a homeless, groping faith that does not necessarily turn to Christianity (ibid, 1).

This concern speaks to a central concern of 21st century social thought.  For the spiritual nihilism Brzezinski observes among the young within Western urbanized cultures may frequently present itself as a moral and ethical vacuum, too—one that attracts what Australian poet Les Murray terms "religion substitutes", specifically the non-medicinal use and abuse of drugs  (interview, 1986: 35).  Analyzing the source of his own poetics to the experience of the rural poor within southeastern Australia's immense physical space, a home environment where the individual spirit often finds itself starkly alone, this space for Murray its also its greatest singular spiritual resource.  His insight into the nature of the isolated self therefore possesses a distilled purity:

>It seems to be one of the great western questions …If you won't do your religion traditionally, what will you find as a substitute, because the spirit is going to cry out for expression.  What kind of surrogate, perhaps terrible expression, will it find? (ibid).

Murray's recognition of the fundamental value of traditional religious world-views seems sound, for in taking them away and replacing them, more or less unconsciously, with the terrible surrogate of alcohol, European contact with aboriginal societies in both North America and Australasia proved near fatal for native populations (Stenson, seminar 1988; Varga, interview, 2005).  The similar contemporary phenomenon of disaffiliated Western youth's experience with heroin, crack cocaine, or crystal methamphetamines is a tragic, but familiar cross-cultural approximation of the inner vacuum created by shattered moral codes.

In citing his countryman Milosz's observation that, "the discredited metamyths of utopia" are all too easily followed by the spiritual vacuity of unfettered materialism (ibid, 1), Brzezinski exercises Murray's understanding of 'spiritual emptiness' by pointing to the moral confusion occasioned by communism's still recent ideological collapse in the former Soviet Union.  In the absence of a core intellectual and spiritual direction, post-Soviet society has witnessed an orgy of self-gratification and corporate monopoly-building imitative of early 20th-century American capitalism, that like its forbearer has failed to extend substantial material benefits throughout society.  In a Buddhist sense, the importance of what he articulates is inherently logical.  If, as the historical Buddha Shakyamuni instructed, the source of suffering is human desire, then unbound craving can only ensure endless dissatisfaction, therefore further suffering.[86]

Brzezinski's concern with cornucopian permissiveness is that, increasingly, individual existence is being shaped by glamourized metaphors of desire.  With secularized politics proving no substitute for religious self-discipline,

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[86] Four 'Nobel Truths' comprise the core Buddhist dharma, or teaching. The first, 'The Truth of Suffering', variously translated, is that "Living brings dissatisfaction."  The second, 'The Truth of the Cause of Suffering', is that the cause of dissatisfaction is desire.  Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, Tokyo (1989).

…the progressive decline in the centrality of moral criteria is matched by heightened preoccupation with material and sensual self-gratification…'Greed is good'—the battle cry of the American yuppies of the late 1980s—is a fitting motto (ibid).

Noting that many exceptions exist to his harsh judgment of permissive Western culture, from Brzezinski's vantage-point the situation is not improving.  This, he contends, is due to Western media values which are the chief contributors to growing moral apathy.  Most culpable in his eyes are Western television producers who generate shock-programming that is, "more and more inclined to the sensual, sexual, and sensational," (ibid, 3).  The result is little more than a proscribed form of cultural pornography.  With the average American householder now viewing 28 hours of television per week according to Nielsen Media Services, or approximately one-quarter of all his or her waking hours; and with more than 20 per cent of U.S. teenagers watching more than 35 hours of television each week, popular exposure to consumer advertising and the values such advertising encourages, including sexual activity at younger, less precocious ages, has become a matter of not only North American, but of growing international cultural and political concern (ibid, 2-3; see also Dimbleby, 2005: 56).

At issue here is not the fact of television *per se,* or of its tireless promotion of more consumer goods, but of its substantive content and ethical direction.  Brzezinski notes that this dilemma was addressed with profundity by another of his countrymen, Pope John Paul II (1991), in his encyclical *On The Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum,* in which he stresses:

It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards *'having'* rather than *'being',* and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself (in Brzezinski, ibid, 4). [emphasis added]

At issue here is that in seeking to fill an undefinable void, the North American focus on 'having' can frequently lead individuals to forget their purpose in the world, or to lose track of who they are becoming. For when material self-fulfillment evolves as the prime arbiter of happiness, the haste to acquire possessions deemed desirable by mass media messaging easily leads to a forgetting of the traditional idea of short term pain for long-term gain. In the absence of such conventional morality, in one fashion or another, the immediacy of instant-gratification must be paid for, typically through credit-card indebtedness at exhorbitant rates to financial institutions, although this is often forgotten. More importantly from the perspective of community stability, the 'soft' role once played by family, neighbourhood, school and church in establishing the fine-points of individual and communal social behaviour is usurped by other forces.

This is of special alarm, for a self-centered society where individual worth is measured by the valuables one owns is indicative of a people whose civic responsibility is becoming a forgotten ideal. This is a matter of growing concern. As longtime U.S. political activist Tom Hayden reports in *Street Wars: Gangs and the Future of Violence* (2004), in the past two decades, more than 25,000 young black American males have been killed in inner-city gang violence: "From the poorest of the poor, [they are] relegated to the fringes of society beyond the usual controls of family, school and police. They are socialized in multiple marginality on the streets" (Hayden, 2004: www.alternet.org/story/18538).

Gang participation, Brzezinski observes in like fashion, flourishes among unemployed youth and the "permanently excluded…creat[ing] the condition of militant desire for the fruits of cornucopia" (1994, 1). Unhappily, the same cornucopian values desired by these dispossessed Americans, and which seduce them into following unhealthy route maps into the future, through the globalizing processes of electronic media are also exported via television, film, and advertising to well over one hundred countries around the world.

But the phenomenon begins at home where for many young viewers, television provides a first glimpse of the larger world outside. Through heavy daily exposure, and by presenting standards of success, achievement, good taste and appropriate social conduct, television programming in a large way has come to define for many North Americans what 'the good life' is about. But by seldom setting limitations on behaviour, television programs can also present a vision of life that has little basis in reality, a situation

extravagantly demonstrated by the overwhelming popularity of 'reality television' programs such as *Survivor, The Apprentice* and *Fear Factor*, which are entirely artificial in construction.

In this way, for the sake of advertising profits, mass communications media play a heavy role in manipulating the social mores of contemporary society. Through peer-pressure incited by commercial product advertising, teenagers and children are most vulnerable to the influence of popular media images. Direct-market advertising to the young, and the content of popular lifestyle programs themselves—the mainstay of 'prime-time' evening viewing hours for youth audiences—continue to encourage the idea that consumer possessions bring happiness, and offer wildly unrealistic options of fulfilling desires through sexual adventure and contentment. This in turn can lead young people to loss of self-control, to the inevitable angst of sexual promiscuity, and to an ambiguous understanding of local community standards of social behaviour.

Even as its own moral and spiritual imperatives have grown suspect, as the world's singularly most successful export commodity (Carolan, 1992: xiii), America's consumer society is responsible for replicating its materialist ideology among non-affluent states who are least able to afford pursuing societal modes of *having* rather than *being.*

This raises the question of whether poorly developed nations, like U.S. inner city youth gang members, might experience similar conditions of militant desire for the fruits of cornucopia. If so, the benefits of unbridled global capitalism are a poor blessing bestowed by modernity upon aspiring states. Paraphrasing Mikhail Gorbachev, what is evidenced too often looks less a 'new world order', and more "a world disorder."[87]

In commenting upon the volatile nature of socio-economic disparities between wealthy nations and the poor, Gorbachev specifically advises that it is television which puts the lie to dreams of global prosperity being achieved through ever-inflating filibusters of consumption. Where Brzezinski observes, "Instensified envy rather than successful imitation is more likely" to result among have-not nations looking to imitate Western cultural patterns (*Permissive*, 4)—and that is likely to engender further divides— Gorbachev warns how it is through television that:

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[87] Gorbachev refers to the "period of transition" between the collapse of the Cold War and the arrival of a true new world order. See his *The State of the World: Revisioning Global Priorities (*1995: 5). The specific quote is from an address given in Seoul, Korea March 27, 1994.

Those in poverty can see the wealth of the wealthy. Hence the unprecedented passions and brutality and even fanaticism of mass protests. Here, too, is the breeding ground for the spread of terrorism (1995: 8)

Examining the cycle of events by which Gorbachev's nightmare begins, from a societal perspective, perhaps worse than the rampant permissiveness of modern American life is the likelihood that as self-interested moral judgments increases, concern for the well-being of others decreases accordingly. Thus, by searching for individual happiness through excessive materialism, the value of interacting and helping others diminishes in importance. Brzezinski is a fierce believer in the idea that the moral standards one adheres to and holds close to one's hearts is what shapes an individual and her or his role in the world. For him, the political implications of a self-centered society are disturbing. Less compassion for others represents a loss of fundamental humanity in oneself, and when this is married with a belief in the inherent superiority of one's own culture over others—perhaps based on presumably 'liberal' or democratic ideals—it suggests a dangerous base-line trend for the future of international relations with others should they misinterpret such narcissism or ignorance for an arrogant new version of cultural imperialism.

Moral behaviour is near-cousin to compassion. Without them, societies inevitably drift toward moral vacuums in which personal freedom is too-easily defined as the absence of restraint. As Confucians understand, without sufficiently defining frameworks, only social chaos can result (*Analects,* XVI.1). Indeed, Confucius said: "Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble, but will have no sense of shame" (*Analects* II.3, D.C. Lau, trans.). Brzezinski, Hayden and Gorbachev share this philosophical *cri de coeur*. As Brzezinski explains:

…a society in which self-gratification is the norm is also a society in which there are no longer any criteria for making moral judgments. One feels entitled to have what one wants, whether or not one is worthy. Thus moral judgments become dispensable. There is no need to differentiate between 'right' and 'wrong,' Instead, for pragmatic reasons of social

order, the critical distinction is between what is 'legal' and 'illegal'; thus legal procedure, especially the court system, substitutes for morality and for the church as the principal definer of that morality (ibid, 2).

Spiritually bereft and yearning for each season's artificially stimulated consumer fad items, North American life, Brzezinski cautions, is being progressively dominated by a cultural ideology that is difficult to differentiate from simple celebrity worship. Unsurprisingly, fissures have begun developing within its civil society (ibid, 2-4). Citing an "erosion of moral criteria" in defining what 'the good life' may be, and thus what a clear "definition of freedom" may be also, he asserts that within the West's increasingly secularized societies the very idea of citizenship with a social contract of reciprocal rights and obligations is under siege. Consequently, "the appeal of Western-type democracy itself" is lessened among developing world nations (ibid), for:

> In a society that culturally emphasizes the maximization of individual satisfactions and the minimization of moral restraints, civic freedom tends to be elevated into a self-validating absolute. In other words, civic freedom is divorced from a notion of civic responsibility. Traditionally, since both the French and the American revolutions, the notion of freedom was defined in the context of citizenship: that is a definition of individual rights within a sociopolitical setting which also involved some responsibilities to that setting…which in turn calls for an inner spirit that prompts the willingness to serve, to sacrifice, and to exercise self-restraint…This definition today is in jeopardy. Increasingly, freedom is defined as the accumulation of rights and entitlements as well as license for any form of self-gratification. The notion of self-imposed or socially expected service to society has become unfashionable (ibid, 2-3).

Reminiscent as its message is of Judeo-Christianity's old testament prophecy, with Buddhism's Five Moral Precepts,[88] and the Confucian *Analects,* (XX.2; XVIII.7; XVII.6), Brzezinski's call for a return to moral and civic responsibility as a necessary political response to modernity's relentless materialism, absolute faith in technology, and "licentious personal liberty" may sound unfashionable.[89]   In decrying these as being delusory in nature, he grounds his argument in the conviction that when "morally infused choice becomes irrelevant", permissiveness and self-gratification:

> …in the context of worldwide political awakening and of the simultaneous reality of massive socioeconomic disparities, the foregoing hardly foreshadows the emergence of a globally shared and unifying political ethic (ibid, 4).

In short, by unconsciously subverting an authority that balances economic and military *puissance* with a moral authority accrued through democratic regard for rule of law and respect for human rights—and which since WW II it has frequently used to criticize, or even use as basis for military interventions—the West, as Brzezinski sees it, ignores its own short-term history at the likely cost of its current, and perhaps foreseeable global authority.

One practical answer at a national level is for a new approach to marginalized youth. Tom Hayden has called for "a peace movement" against the inter-related U.S. federal government 'wars' on gangs and drugs.  As an appeal on behalf of one of the most

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[88] The prophetic tradition of Jeremiah, Isaiah and others calls out a warning echoed in Leonard Cohen's contemporary song-poem "The Future" (1993):  "When they said REPENT/I wonder what they meant…" The tradition includes Socrates, to whom is attributed the maxim "The unexamined life is not worth living."  Buddhism's Five Wonderful Precepts are discussed in Thich Nhat Hanh'*s Living Buddha, Living Christ* (1995), pp. 90-110.

[89] Concerning 'permissiveness', within the period of a single year Canada (2003-4), for example, witnessed legal challenges to its marriage laws from advocates of polygamous marriage, including forced polygamous, fundamentalist Christian unions of girls as young as 13; also from advocates of homosexual and lesbian marriage; witnessed legal defeat of a federal prosecution against possession of child pornography; saw conditional discharge of a prominent socialist politician to community service hours after being found guilty of theft of a $64,000 engagement ring; and witnessed conditional discharge of a drunken driver with more than 25 convictions for the same crime.

vulnerable groups in American society, this is an initiative he emphasizes that can also be duplicated in America's own strategic self-interest as an instrument of foreign policy

> We need a global New Deal targeted towards the youth of inner cities here and abroad, not a global WTO nor a blank check for an indiscriminate war on terrorism. The US now spends less than one tenth of one per cent of its economic resources on UN programs for food, clean water, and literacy, less than half that of the Kennedy Administration 40 years ago (cited in http://www.alternet.org/story/18538/ ).

Hayden's call could be neither more timely nor prophetic, for in an ironic confirmation of Brzezinski's and Gorbachev's worst fears, enemies of the West such as the Islamic terrorist organization al-Qaeda have begun ascribing precisely the permissive cornucopian values Brzezinski rails against, as the new *jahiliyya,* or barbarianism of a 'global' age they vehemently reject. In *Occidentalism* (2004), veteran East-West commentator Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit examine the phenomenon of jahiliyya which has turned Islam's historic tolerance for Christians and Jews—*al-dhimma*, or 'people of the book'—on its head.  Inverting Edward Said's *Orientalism,* which obliged Western scholarship to examine its conscience in viewing Asian, but more particularly Arabic cultures, 'Occidentalism' radically revises previous Islamic views of the West from those of a resigned, even benign tolerance, to raw hatred.

This new *jahiliyya,* Buruma and Margalit explain, looks upon how:

> …even religious Christians and Jews [have] hopelessly compromised their faith by allowing worldly rulers to encroach on the realm of God. The great worldwide clash then [is] between the culture of Islam, in the service of God, and the culture of jahiliyya, in the service of bodily needs that degrade human beings to the level of beasts.  All that is valued in jahiliyya culture is food, drink, sex, and creature comforts, things fit for animals…jahiliyya is worse even than that: it is the culture of supremely arrogant animals who try to play God (*Occidentalism*, 8; 32; 106-7).

Few in American popular reportage, other than conservative columnist Phyllis Schlafly seem prepared to understand the fundamentalist Islamic view of this new barbarianism (see thesis section 1.iii).

While the negativity of Occidentalism may offer cold comfort to those endorsing Samuel Huntington's idea of the global future as an era of clashing civilizations,[90] it should give pause to uncritical supporters of World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, or Multilateral Agreement on Investment approaches to global economic policies, which as Buruma and Margalit understand, to the intolerant or conspiracy-obsessed can appear inextricably linked to the 'Westernization' initiatives of jahiliyya culture (8; 32; 106-7). By linking the West, the U.S. most notably, with a 'godless', dehumanizing materialism it wishes to impose upon the rest of the globe under the guise of "an alternative system of values" (ibid, 72), the Islamic jihadists propose a distinctive argument, for they give themselves a common cause with the anti-globalization protest community.

This then offers compelling evidence for Hayden's idea of 'a new deal'. The contention of this thesis, however, is that for a new deal to be effective it must also incorporate a renewed way of understanding external notions such as citizenship and community as real forms of living commitment, and of encountering and experiencing the inner concept of the divine—in the form of experiencing nature—in a sacramental way. Rethinking, or re-articulating what these 'soft' institutions mean for collective humanity, offers secular societies a credible method of engaging and leaning into issues of right and wrong, and with the idea of 'freedom' being more than one long holiday from obligation to anyone or anything. This constitutes much of the premise for an emerging *new world dharma.*

Fortunately, as Hans Kung has noted, humanity enjoys a capacity for bridging a plurality of structured ideas—classical capitalism, for example, has absorbed elements from socialist programs in shaping the 'social democracy' of many European nations, Canada and Australasia. (1994: 14). In the 21st century's ongoing dialogue of civilizations it should be possible in borrowing from teachers as diverse as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,

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[90] See Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster (1996)

Thich Nhat Hanh, the Dalai Lama, and Ghandi to give voice to such transformational

spiritual energies as mindfulness and *agape*.[91] Surely there will also be others. As

historically proven antidotes to the crisis of existential meaning and purpose that

Brzezinski has drawn to attention from modern, secular society, it seems they will be much

needed.


## II. *Westernization as Formless Geometry*


Despite well-intentioned criticisms such as those of longtime Singapore strongman Lee

Kuan Yew (interview, 1994), democracy continues to offer a special kind of freedom. And

regardless of the surging numbers of citizens throughout the U.S. and Canada who decline

to take advantage of the range of opportunities for meaningful civic input that participatory

democracy has to offer—due principally to unprecedented cynicism with both politicians

and the political process itself (Carolan, 2005, p. 6)—he or she is still likely to enjoy the

extremes of personal mobility it affords. Active citizenship of the kind that helps create

substantive change within the civic process comes with a price, however, and North

Americans have been reminded of this for decades by public intellectuals such as June

Callwood and Jane Jacobs.[92] The particular responsibilities it obliges require one's being

and staying politically informed, although declining voter turnouts in both the U.S. and

Canada suggest an eroding individual willingness to bear this cost (Participatory

Democracy Group, http://www.socialaction.ca/about_us/index.html). How the concept of

'participatory' democracy is to be sustained offers Western societies a unique challenge,

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[91] See "Loving Your Enemies", Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.(2000). *Shambhala Sun*. Jan., Vol. 8. 3. pp 4 0-41. *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (1995), Thich Nhat Hanh. New York: Riverhead.

[92] Callwood's essay "Making A Difference" (1998) serves as a primer in step-by-step local civic action campaigning for community activists throughout Canada. Jacobs' work as urban ecologist and journalist has inspired two generations of neighbourhood activists. Her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) launched a frontal assault on European influenced post-World War II urban planning such as that of Le Courbusier, whose high-rise, low-cost worker housing-block structuralism had previously dominated city development (see M. Miles, Hall, Borden et al, 2000: 16-18; 69-73).

and re-envisioning how ideas of individual citizenship and community might proclaim themselves in the future rests at the heart of this research inquiry.

Similarly, nations modernizing along Western-style models also face certain costs. As the distinguished international architect Rem Koolhaas articulates in a probing discussion of the urban and psychological geography of Singapore, the tariff is unlikely to be entirely monetary (2000: 22). It may reach into a developing nation's soul.

Because the status quo is always evolving in terms of language, culture and religion, societies need to identify the vision that lies beyond their immediate present, and into the future. Part of the challenge inherent in responding to this form and rate of change is verifying precisely *who* and *what* will be involved in sustaining the evolutionary forms that re-imagined society will take. In this way, citizenship is organically linked to the concepts of community sustainability. Given their unpredictability, transition periods are generally a time of unease, therefore how population growth and civic transformations express themselves in theory and in planning practice should help explain how the community's economics, arts and culture, healthcare, and governance take root and flourish.

In considering the challenges that a society's social voyage into the unknown offers to its scales of computation—to its raw brainpower—social responses to changes within the global world system will be as much about involving humanity's creative imagination as they are a test of fortitude in living through the changes. In studying the economic and technological impact of Western-style modernization processes exerted on Singapore during its essentially one-party leadership history, Rem Koolhaas' findings are instructive.

A multi-ethnic, spectacularly successful economic story, the city-state of Singapore has managed to grow and thrive as an Asia-Pacific bastion of liberal economic practice, but at significant psychological and aesthetic expense. With its prosperity, Koolhaas argues, has come a narrowing of perception that has resulted in a Westernized architectural environment, which for all its ambition continues to lack a cohesive, overall vision. This has resulted in a city-state afflicted with 'a formless geometry'. Ironically, as a benchmark of material success, or a set of goalposts that Singaporean achievement could emulate, the regime of Lee Kuan Yew long favoured its northeast Asian neighbour, Japan. But as Donald Richie (1999) has observed, the exponential development of post-World War II

Tokyo—like the city-state of Singapore—came at enormous expense: the preservation of its traditional character.[93]

The challenge this poses for Singaporean self-identity is easily perceived. "As a manifesto of the quantitative," Koolhaas argues, "…Singapore represents the point where the volume of the new overwhelms the volume of the old" (2000: 23). While it thrives economically, the sterility of much of its high-rise construction makes it challenging to guess whether many buildings house residents or strata-level silicon-chip manufactories. This curious abstraction, he argues, results in a form of "soullessness" (ibid), with impersonal modern streets being framed by architectural tributes to monumentality that lack either warmth or human character—a complaint heard frequently by those who engage in conversation with the city's younger, educated residents especially. From the mid-1980s this group has increasingly sought to emigrate, and current statistics suggest that between 100,000-150,000 educated Singaporeans are currently studying and living abroad. That the lion's share have indicated they are unlikely to return as residents has caused government alarm (Seah C. Nee, 2005:www.thinkcentre.org/article.cfm? ArticleID; see also <reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/singapore/>).

What is apparent to those conversant with the mushrooming corporate suburbs of coastal China such as Shanghai's Pudong district, Dalian's new Xigang city, or South Korea's booming metropolitan areas, is that the Singaporean model originally borrowed from Japan is replicating itself rapidly throughout East Asia. If there are negative social consequences in these 'metastasizing' sites, as in Singapore they are unlikely to be reflected or articulated in official government announcements. Certainly in Singapore, as in China, little complaint is registered through the popular media. Rather, recent fiction and poetry from authors such as Wei Hui (*Shanghai Baby*), Xu Xi ("Until the Next Century"), Alfian Sa'at ("Pillow"), Chun Sue (*Beijing Doll*), Catherine Lim ("The English Language Teacher's Secret"), Choi In-hoon ("The End of the State Highway"), Yoshiko Shibaki ("Snow Flurry"), and others has raised awareness of the need for alternative forms of social development that bringer lower long-term human costs.

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[93] See Richie's *Tokyo:* "with its vast lack of an apparent plan, its mammoth deficiency of any civic attention, the place appears profuse, febrile, prodigal and extravagant…this is a quality one associates more with Asian than Western cities, and indeed Tokyo is much like Calcutta with all the amenities, or Singapore before the city planners wrecked it", pp. 11-12.

Echoing Koolhaas' criticism that Singapore's exterior manifestation is all surface gloss and lacks the patina of historic depth, one of the West's most respected commentators on Asia-Pacific cultural and political affairs, Ian Buruma, suggests that culturally the city-state lacks authenticity; that its identity—such as it may be defined after thirty years of post-colonial existence—does not yet possess a depth psychology of its own.

 "Small, rich, claustrophobic", nothing is left here for citizens to work out by themselves, he informs (2001: 136).  For a typical enterprising young citizen, the struggle for self-identity is not a simple matter.  Buruma's remarks are supported by a surprising array of characters.  As S. Rajnaratnam, founding government member of Singapore and longtime Foreign Minister, explains, "Singapore has no history to speak of…" (1989: 146).

Koolhaas concurs.  Over-regulated and over-planned by its authoritarian Confucian bureaucracy that brooks no dissent, the city-state survives, he maintains, as "the brainchild of one man, Lee Kuan Yew"—its first post-colonial prime minister (2000: 14).  Under Lee it has emerged as:

> *…a city without qualities…*dominated by a kind of Confucian post-modernism in which the brutal early housing slabs are rehabilitated with symmetrical ornament (ibid, 23)

Uncharitable perhaps, but Koolhaas is more than architecturally astute.  In identifying Singapore as a city lacking in qualities, he recognizes that what it does have, and was indeed founded upon by Lee, is a collation of impulses—political, cultural, spiritual, materially swank—which through the arbitrary nature in which they are expressed adds up cumulatively to a form of autocratic luxury that on closer examination becomes, in fact, a form of democratic poverty.

Buruma's explanation for this condition is that, "Few countries have so clearly taken on the characteristics of their leaders as Singapore" (1989: 144).  Clarifying this further, in a controversial work entitled *Bad Elements: Chinese Rebels from Los Angeles to Beijing* (2001), he states that since terminating its colonial relationship with Britain in l963, under Lee's direct or proxy leadership Singaporean governance has been, "imbued with the most authoritarian aspects of British colonial rule [and] an autocratic Chinese spirit (p. 127).

As a disciple of classical Chinese Legalist-style measures,[94] Lee Kuan Yew has customarily responded to criticism of this calibre without apology.  Interviewed by Fareed Zakaria in *Foreign Affairs* for the mandarinate leadership of Washington, D.C.'s policy-making elite, he has acknowledged the components of Western, primarily American, culture and government that he finds attractive:

> …the free, easy and open relations between people, regardless of social status, ethnicity or religion…a certain openness in argument about what is good or bad for society; the accountability of public officials; none of the secrecy and terror that's part and parcel of communist government (interview, 1994: 111).

Understandably, these elements are desirable in any forward-thinking governance for the present era and in future.  But Lee persistently demonstrated a zest for authoritarian measures as well, and this legacy has contributed to Singapore's Orwellian international reputation as an orderly, clean city-state where the breath of a centrally-imposed thinking very like neo-fascism blows upon the individual neck.  In his rejection of key standards of the contemporary American model of civil liberty and freedom, Lee has remained plain-spoken:

> …As a total system, I find parts of it totally unacceptable: guns, drugs, violent crime, vagrancy, unbecoming behaviour in public—in sum the breakdown of civil society.  The expansion of the right of the individual to behave or misbehave as he pleases has come at the expense of orderly society.  In the East the main object is to have a well-ordered society so that everybody can have maximum enjoyment of his freedoms.  This freedom can only exist in an ordered state (ibid).

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[94] Proponents of 'strong measures' that they believed were necessary to maintain stability in uncertain times, the Legalists are synonymous with Han Fei, their chief theorist, and Lord Shang of Ch'in state (approximately 330 BC).  Legalism is less a philosophical school than an approach to ensuring public order.  Through time it became submerged within Confucian practice.  See Frederick Mote, *Intellectual Foundations of China* (1989), pp.103-114.

The result, as Buruma describes Lee's prosperous brainchild from a Western perspective, is "a city of fear", where dissent is routinely sanitized through coercive or directly repressive action (1989, 141). The tightly-ordered society Lee has fostered, he insists, remains vigilantly "…on guard against the corrupt and flabby state of other societies…it's an old Chinese paranoia, that the state is surrounded by barbarian threat" (*B.E.*, 128). As Buruma's report for the *New York Review of Books* (1999) set forth, the effect has been:

> Government surveillance of every aspect of Singaporean life. A heavy emphasis on infrastructure—the superb airport, phones that might be tapped but always work—is also conducive to international business. People are properly housed, well fed, and highly educated, but can they think?…The real question is whether they are allowed to think, to think for themselves; that is, to think critically and in public, as citizens (p. 37).

While Lee struggled to ensure that English—"the language of modernity, science, progress, excellence"—became the lingua franca of multi-ethnically composed Singapore (Buruma 1989: 152), as time progressed this was tempered by a new, or rather 'traditional' influence. Classical Confucian culture and the Chinese language came more and more to represent Lee's personal political vision and have been introduced into the educational system. As the currency of older and deeper historic traditions, they could be regarded politically as representing the character, even the ethical bedrock of East Asian civilization. With their virtues honouring family, filial piety, and community loyalty, a number of Confucianism's principal tenets could also be regarded as being approximate with traditional 'Indian' and Malay cultural values, and in Lee's eyes this could only serve Singapore's ethnic-social mosaic well (Chinese 76.7%, Malay 14%, Indian 7.9%) [careers.berlitz.com/Asia/sg/profile.asp?aInfo]. Although a Cambridge-educated barrister, Lee has explained his anxiety with Western social models:

Westerners have abandoned an ethical basis for society, believing that all problems are solvable by good government, which we in the East never believed possible…Eastern societies believe that the individual exists in the context of his family. He is not pristine and separate. The family is part of the extended family, and then friends and wider society. The ruler or the government does not try to provide for a person what the family best provides (112-13).

Buruma attests that one key extension of Lee's and his People's Action Party's dedication to the Confucian values of thrift, hard work, filial piety, loyalty, and respect for scholarship and learning (Lee-Zakaria, 114), has become an obligation of Singaporeans to, "Wear the badges of racial identity" (1989: 147). As an identity-building exercise there may be symbolic value in this, perhaps tokenism too, for ethnic-Malays and Indians do not generally respond enthusiastically to periodic government calls for greater Sinification, such as the government's periodic Mandarin language-use initiatives.

What Singapore needs, Rem Koolhaas contends, is to loosen up and recapture something of the 'creative disorder' that once made it Far East literary hub for writers such as, among others, Rudyard Kipling, Somerset Maugham, Joseph Conrad, Ernest Hemingway, and Paul Theroux.[95] By creative disorder, what is meant is, "…the helter-skelter of the streets with their ground floor stores, pubs and light industrial and craft shops intermixed with residences and exhibiting no obvious order or rationality" (Robbins: 2000: 30-32.) As planners such as Jane Jacobs and adventurous travellers have long discovered elsewhere, even though social life in such circumstances can appear to the uninitiated as

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[95] The Raffles Hotel was, and remains, a magnet for writers in particular and its Writer's Bar, though costly, remains a hallowed pilgrimage site for those in the craft. Among works relating to the city and area, see Theroux's *Saint Jack* (1973), Maugham's *The Cosmopolitans* (1959) and *Favourite Stories*. All are redolent of Singaporean and South China Sea imagery. *Tales From The South China Seas*, edited by Charles Allen (1986), from his BBC documentaries is an unsurpassable work of oral history by former European residents of the British colonial territories in the region. Robin Winks and James Rush (1990) observe in their introduction to *Asia In Western Fiction* how much of the human and literary energy of the period is summarized by Alec Waugh in *Hot Countries* (1930), noting:

> …the real romance of modern Asia…and specifically of Malaya involved not men and women, but work; work aimed at developing 'a strange and hostile country into a happy and prosperous dependency' (9).

"endlessly enervating and debilitating [with] idlers conflicting with working people, teens with shopkeepers, children with adults, and drunks with the sober," the general tapestry of life within such community environments lends itself evocatively toward a "harmony of purpose", in which happenstance and spontaneity are part of community structure (ibid).

In some respects Singapore has shown an inchworm willingness to tolerate a little 'creative disorder', witnessed most noticeably in its softening of strictures against the local gay and lesbian communities there (Fairclough, 2004), although the impetus has been less humanist than capitalist: educated gays are more likely to migrate permanently to Sydney, Vancouver or New York (www.thinkcentre). Thoughtful visitors to Singapore recognize that not all is objectionable, however, and there are moments when a slice of its fascinating history still presents itself. But with its compact size, a great part of the architectural and cultural features of this colourful past has vanished before the advance of high-density construction at a steady rate, and what remains—Serangoon Street's Indian emporia and flophouse district, the Chinese shophouses near New Bridge road, or the Malay feel of Arab Street—can seem archival. Even the once-notorious Bugis Street tenderloin has long been homogenized. Koolhaas' point is that Singapore is, not to put too fine a point upon it, a city intent on turning itself into a single "hyper-dense" shopping-mall. Inevitably, as an artificially constructed state-society that has been consciously planned as an ordered materialist utopia, Singapore's urban progress has become a series of uneven facades that are "all foreground and no background" (ibid, 22).

A society, however, is made up of its members. It cannot be sustained with facades and needs roots. When intimacy within groups is diminished, community members begin to feel dislocations and lose their sense of belonging. The erosion of local patterns of communal identity and affiliation is one of the primal fears of those resisting westernization, globalization or jihaliyya—a view confirming U.S. bioregional thinker and poet Wendell Berry's assertion that, "if you do not know where you are, you do not know who you are" (Northwest Earth Institute, http://www.nwei.org/pages/bioregion.html).

Not to know the rhythms, potential, and limitations of the community and place one inhabits is to fall prey to the alienation and meaninglessness that, in the case of Singapore with only a thin post-colonial veneer of history to call its own, leaves it searching for a modern self-identity (Koolhaas, 22). Consciously rewriting its former colonial and

Eurasian history that for a long time was intentionally obscured through the pressures of nation and culture building, culturally speaking the city's current identity has only multiple layers of administrative "periods of transition, revision, marginal adjustments, [and] New Orientations", to fall back on (ibid, 23).

Lee Kuan Yew himself has spoken to the difficulty of this situation, confessing that, "We have left behind the past and there is an underlying unease that there will be nothing left of us which is part of the old" (interview, 118). The old, as he has related to Western journalists, consists of a set of attitudes and circumstances that when got right accord with the immortal Confucian axiom, *Xiushen qijia zhiguo pingtianxia*—"cultivate yourself in order to become useful; take care for the family; everything is peaceful under heaven" (cited in Lee, ibid, 113].

To walk about in Singapore though is to experience the rigidity of authoritarian capitalism. This same authoritarian face holds a powerful attraction for a significant number of East and Southeast Asian regimes. For while the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan have moved toward multi-party electoral systems, Thailand, Myanmar/Burma, Vietnam, China, Malaysia and Indonesia remain under the spell of rigidly institutionalized authoritarian systems (Lingle, 1995). The irony for Singapore is that in sweeping out the old, it may have lost the spiritual underpinning of a traditional Asian soulfulness. This is part of the tragic cost of modernization, for Lee Kuan Yew has declared that this same soulful spiritual essence offers the collectivist societies of the Asian-Pacific their most effective antidote against 'Western values'—the social and human rights excesses of Western liberal democracy that to his mind 'do not apply to Asians' (Buruma, 2001: 127).

Today Singapore exists as a city over-managed by Confucian ethics that as Hong Kong legislator and democracy activist Martin Lee (2005) pronounces, "can rightly boast of having the most efficient system of universal suffrage in the world" (www.singaporedemocrat.org/). Alas, as Lee rejoins, "the perpetual ruling party—the People's Action Party knows precisely how many and which seats it will win and which two seats will go to the opposition parties long before the first ballot is cast" (ibid). Ornamented with granite, brick and glass skyscrapers, where Asian aesthetics coexist with up-market department stores and global brand-names such as Nike and Chanel, it may also be a city-state that is afraid to confront its history. For all its administrative efficiency,

hygiene and public discipline, and despite its multicultural diversity, Singapore's Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnic divisions, as well as a very substantial corps of expatriate professionals from abroad, are inclined to rely on their separate traditions as a reliable connection with the past (Buruma, 1989: 154-55). If a futuristic landscape has already risen, re-imagining a collective identity for the future is still a work in progress.

As Koolhaas reveals in citing the 'Next Lap', Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, the successor to Lee, has announced a national planning vision for Singapore as it embarks upon the 21st century. Beyond the illusory promise of a more coherent society founded on a return to the sense of tropical 'islandness' it began losing with rapid modernization, with its disinclination toward substantive cultural policy formation the city-state's future looks prone instead to further architectural kitsch, bureaucratic rhetoric, and commercial trendiness—problems it shares with South Korea's rapidly transforming urban society, and that are succinctly addressed by Kim Won-Bae in the next chapter.

Still lacking a clear sense of cultural self-identity, the city-state outlined in Next Lap planning sounds attractive in theory—"Our vision is…an island with an increased sense of 'island-ness'" (Goh, cited in Koolhaas, 23-24)—while the specifics are an odd assortment of beaches, marinas, resorts, presumably built on reclaimed land from the sea. The existing haphazard sprawl that pushed big development to the water's edge remains unaddressed, and the barometer measuring human quality of living goes without redress.

Hence, in a bizarre twist of fate, after paralleling Japanese modernization and re-creating itself from ramshackle tropical out-port to full-fledged southeast Asian commercial powerhouse and financial hub, Singapore has now begun a process of aesthetic 'makeovers'. Having paved its countryside and waterfront areas, it is now intent on re-introducing elements of landscape greenery and artificially-constructed beachfronts to replicate the island's former tropical environment. It plans to clone its former identity.

The irony is self-evident. After glorying in monumental *nouveau riche* building projects that left it as little more than a large central shopping precinct with commuter residential suburbs, it has dawned on Singapore's government mandarins exactly *why* a growing stream of the state's best and brightest young want out. They want breathing space and a more loose, creative social environment. As the severely marginalized

opposition Singapore Democratic Party reflects, until now the only choice educated youth have been offered is, "To conform or not to conform" (www.singaporedemocrat.org/).

The case of Singapore is not an easy one. Its economic and social achievements are impressive; yet, as an often-heard aphorism has it, "Only nothing is for free." The costs are especially borne by the city-state's maligned political opposition and anyone courageous enough to speak out and act in their defence (ibid). Meanwhile, Lee Kuan Yew in his retirement has been a hawkish proponent of 'Asian values', and his message has been fruitfully received in Vietnam and Cambodia, while Myanmar/Burma has become a special investment sphere of interest for Singapore. Whether these nations choose to follow Lee's lead into a transitional future that Koolhaas describes as one moving from "a hyper-efficient garrison state to a more relaxed version of Sparta" (23) is unclear, although China ominously continues to express admiration for Lee's Asian values concept.

Perhaps what is needed is a new term of reference to better describe the process of modernization itself. Increasingly within international discourse *Westernization* is viewed as a term of aspersion. Kim Won Bae (1999) of Korea's Research Institute for Human Settlements proposes substitution of the culturally non-specific term 'developmentalism', although this too is regarded with concern in some quarters as is explained in discussion of the second case which follows. [96]

## *III.*  __The Forward View__

Developmentalism, as it is particularized by Kim Won Bae, describes the phenomenon of 'catch-up" modernism in which economic development is aggressively pursued by non-affluent states at the expense social and cultural standards (1999: 6). In a situation not unlike the experience of Singapore, Kim observes how:

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[96] See "Developmentalism and Beyond: Reflections on Korean Cities", *Korea Journal,* Autumn, 1999.  pp. 5-33.

> Having been busy with importing and emulating foreign ideas and practices,
> Korean society has not had sufficient time to dwell upon its own heritage, its
> resources, and its potential. Moreover, original concepts and models developed in
> the Western countries have often been misinterpreted and distorted by the ruling
> elite in the process of importation and emulation (ibid).

In its haste to compress the process of modernization from the period of the Park Chung
Hee regime beginning in 1961 and onward, economic growth was established by
successive governments as its most urgent task. In essence, developmentalism became
state ideology and wealth creation was regarded as the new measure of national well-being
(ibid, 7).

   Employing H.M. Hsiao's term of 'the developmental State' as a descriptive analogy for
the Korean and other 'tiger' economies that contributed to the Asian 'Economic Miracle'
of the late 1980s and early 1990s,[97] Kim observes how the developmentalist ethic's
truncated approach was not without "long-lasting impacts" on Korea's national psyche and
landscape respectively (ibid, 11). Personal conduct, even within a rigorously Confucian
society, suffered heavy negative consequences, and population shifts from the countryside
to urban environments were enormous: within 35 years the urban population rose from 7
million to 35 million, while numbers in rural lands were drastically reduced (ibid; see also
Kim Wang Bae, 2003: 16-17).

   It is in the area of transpersonal relationships and practices that Kim attributes the worst
effects of developmentalism. As an ideology it:

> …transformed traditional behavioural patterns and created a new social
> ethos. Although competitiveness, achievement-orientation, and mobility
> are positive forces for the development of individuals and the nation, these
> behavioural orientations tend to produce negative effects when they are
> separated from the social norms necessary to maintain social order and
> integration…ordinary Koreans became achievement-oriented with little

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[97] See Hsiao (1990), "An East Asian Development Model: Empirical Explorations." See *In Search of an East Asian Development Model,* P. Berger & H.M. Hsiao, eds. pp. 12-22.

consideration given to normative dimensions (ibid; see also Lee, 2004; Yi, 1999; Song, 2000.).

To reprise, when the attainment and accumulation of material things is all that matters, corruption of the human spirit—while not inevitable—should hardly cause surprise.  More nakedly, when utilitarian behavior to the exclusion of all else is given premium consideration, 'the ends necessarily justify the means.'  Kim adds:

> As a result, 'me-ism' or 'we-ism', instead of individualism or communalism balancing rights and duties, became a pervasive ethos in the urban society of Korea (ibid, 12; also Kim, 2003).

The long-term socio-cultural impact of developmentalism on Korean society, and by extension on East Asia's other tiger economies is still to be charted.  In the short-term, however, the attempts to achieve the material prosperity of jahiliyya-style consumerist society look wanting.  In Korea, Kim emphasizes how state domination of markets, collusion between *chaebol* corporate conglomerates, and maximization of decision-making power by state bureaucrats are but one part of the corrosive impact:

> Competition and uniformity became entrenched in every corner of society. The lack of legitimacy and principles drove people to use personal connections (often based on kinship, locality, and schooling) to obtain consent and support for what they do…The communal spirit of helping each other, which has been a traditional value of agrarian society including that of Korea, degenerated into utilitarian profit-seeking behaviours. Thus, the positive aspect of interpersonal association was suppressed, while the negative aspect was maximized.  Nepotism became a permanent element of Korean society during the developmentalist period, not only blocking rational discourses but also damaging social integration (ibid, 12-13; Yoon, 2000).

Korea valorized and overhauled its national economy and enhanced its international reputation while rotting its cultural foundations from within. This was recognized by the IMF during the 1997 Asian financial crisis when South Korea sought urgent loans that were granted on condition the nation's institutional *chaebol,* or family-corporate economic compact system, be fragmented.[98] Previously, images of social dissent and democracy movement marches within 'the Land of the Morning Calm' were nightly feature of international television news during the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Organized in reaction to an institutional system that encouraged labour strike-fixing, bribes in exchange for lobbying, revelations of presidential slush fund accumulation, crony loan policies, and unfair elections that preserved the status quo (Yoon, 185-199), the civil strife became an inescapable prelude to the crash and trauma of 1997. This tragedy, Kim summarizes, is the inevitable logic of unthinking accumulation (1999: 14).

Ironically, the development of a Korean middle class proved little deterrent for the worst forms of crony capitalism that are customarily attributed as the cause of the 'Asian Meltdown' of 1997 (Tait, 1997; Krugman, 1998). Kim continues:

> The emergence of the middle class, which is often regarded as an indicator of the maturity of civil society, did not play much of a role in establishing morality and social ethics in Korea. The reason was simple. The middle class was co-opted…more accurately, middle-class people implicitly endorsed unethical capital accumulation because they were busy securing their own stake in the burgeoning national economy (ibid, 19).

The notion of such basic quality of living index items as "clean air, clean water, and a comfortable and safe environment" did not appear to enter Korea's developmentalist approach to national happiness—and, arguably, from visual first-hand visitor evidence in similar modernizing situations in China, India, Thailand, the problems Kim notes are not

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[98] See Ahn, Choong Yong (2001), "Financial and Corporate Sector Restructuring in South Korea: Accomplishments and Unfinished Agenda". *The Japanese Economic Review.* 52 (4), 452-470. At: http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1468-5876.00206?cookieSet=1. Retrieved July 9, 2005. "Chronology of the Korean Financial Restructuring" provides a detailed report on the mechanics of Korean economic restructuring in the wake of the 1997 financial crisis. See: < http://www.korea.net/korea/kor_loca.asp?code=E0206 > Retrieved July 9, 2005.

exclusive to Korea.  Nor are they unique to Asia: from the Romantic reaction against Western Europe's industrial revolution, to the urban and environmental critiques of Jane Jacobs (2000: 16, 196; April, 2000), Roland Barthes (2000: 195-96); Lewis Mumford (2000: 121-125); in Jamison & Eyerman, (1995: 103-140), the question of maintaining cultural equilibrium in the face of new economic complexities has been of central intellectual concern.  This points to the need for critical reappraisals of the internal direction of developmentalist societies, and for the establishment of meaningful, countervailing initiatives and codes of conduct against the most predatory and destructive shifts within the developmentalist ethos (Kim, 27-28).  At the most fundamental level, for any society this means the right to expand definitions of citizenship to include the building of "autonomous organizations that can represent individual citizen interests and demands at the level of civil society" (Choi, 2000: 56-57).

Futures studies rests upon the detection of shifts—structurally, intellectually, culturally, ethically—knowing that shifts in political and economic dynamics will follow.  What Slaughter (2002) calls "the forward view", rests in large part on:

> prob[ing] beneath the surface of social life and [discerning] some of the deeper processes of meaning-making, paradigm formation and the active influence of obscured worldview commitments" (ibid, 3).

Similarly, problems-oriented futures work directs itself with "the careful and sustained study of social or economic phenomena and the framing of proposals to ameliorate perceived problems" (ibid, 7).

Finding a place within one's larger modern community is a difficult task.  As the examples of Singapore and Korea demonstrate, the sheer sprawl of modern cities mitigates in many ways against the development of stronger forms of traditional community.  The task of framing proposals to address contemporary problems remains, however, and in drawing from diverse cross-cultural wisdom paths the *new world dharma* must be one which acknowledges, and is able to draw upon ideas yet to be tapped from the vast reservoir of non-Western knowledge (Goonatilaka, in Slaughter, 17).

Accordingly, if in the global age humanity is to understand that its survival is intrinsically linked to new modes of *consciousness* rather than endless mutations of the same old industrial paradigm; by respecting the *process* of achievement as well as the outcome, even modern history—for all its faults—can be used as a blueprint for mapping the future.  Outspoken Thai social activist Sulak Sivaraksa in his much-studied essay "True Development" reminds the Western audience that:

> …in materialist civilization, time means only that which a clock can measure in terms of work-days, work-hours, and work-minutes.  Space simply has three dimensions that are filled by material things (1990: 170).

His implication is that other modes of awareness, of perceiving the critically important essences of reality do exist. For example, in a similar way that Chinese appreciation of the *Tao* perceives it as both noun and verb—as 'thing' and 'process' (Thompson, 1979: 5-7; Carolan, 2003: 35)—Buddhism, Sivaraksa explains, holds the view that:

> …true development is attained in stages…the goal of increasing the quality of life is understood differently.  From the materialistic standpoint, when there are more desires, there can be further development.  From the Buddhist standpoint, when there are fewer desires, there can be further development (ibid, 171).

The moot point, of course, lies in defining what development really is.  Where Western-style consumerism rests on the acquisition of 'more'—of extremes—the Buddhist worldview "emphasizes the middle way between extremes, a moderation which strikes a balance appropriate to the wisdom of nature herself" (ibid, 172).  This is what E.F. Schumacher understood in sub-titling his epochal work *Small Is Beautiful*, 'economics as if people mattered.' Or as Sivaraksa concludes:

> True development places less emphasis on the production of material things: when people become slaves to things and the system that produces

things, they have no personal time left for seeking the truth beyond the material realm...Perhaps a truly developed city would not be distinguishable by a multitude of sleek skyscrapers, but by the values attendant to its growth: simplicity, comfort, and respect for the community of life around it (ibid, 172-73).

Canadian biologist Peter Francis (2004) echoes this 'coming together' of economics, spirituality, social planning, and ecological responsibility, theorizing:

As Taoist ideas infiltrate the scientific consciousness, the scientific approach moves from a mechanistic understanding of an ecosystem to a wholistic approach which yields new kinds of insights. As these ideas of wholeness move through civic planning, medicine, architecture, engineering and other disciplines, we will [hopefully] see approaches which no longer treat people as cogs in a big machine but seek to create an environment in which people can fulfill their individual destinies. Perhaps the new values will even break down the walls between disciplines so that the architect also practices medicine in his design and the engineer incorporates spiritual values in her construction. This would be truly a shift in consciousness.

This would indeed be a reconceptualized approach to civic thinking, to participatory democracy, and to ideas of community and citizenship—issues that humanity has confronted uneasily since the days of Socrates and Chuang-tzu.[99] It would also, in post-modernist culture, represent a fundamental return to viewing the world itself as a totality, rather than a sum of disparate fragments: a return to the 'science of unity' instead of the 'science of divisions' (Carolan, 1989: 66-67).

Borrowing from Barthes the idea that semiology has cultural relevance (1957: 134-135; Visser, 2001, 1-4), it is clear that the entrophic but powerful currents of extremism,

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[99] See Plato, The Last Days of Socrates; also, Chuang-tzu, the basic Writings.

fundamentalism, and terrorism have deconstructed much of the charm that postmodernism's mélange of European literary theory and psychoanalysis held for *fin de siecle* Western intellectualism. Very arguably, since New York's '9/11' watershed in international relations and security studies, the postmodernist critique itself may become an obsolete vehicle for interpreting the complex new dynamics of the 21st century. With the growing acceptance of complexity and dynamic systems theory, the interdependencies now evident at molecular structural levels link not simply humans and nature, but humans and other humans as well. Increasingly, the West's fragmented mosaic of 'the many' offered by postmodernist bricolage must give way to the classical Asian view shared by Hindu, Taoist, Confucian, and Buddhist wisdom paths that 'the Principle is one and its manifestations are many'—*Li yi fen-shu.*[100]

To the extent that culture becomes politics—as Robert Fulford is noted arguing in chapter 1 of this thesis—and because both are always a response to change that is "in some sense a comment on experience" (Hardison, 1989: xii), this thesis now turns toward consideration of the *new*.

New Age, new paradigm thought, *new world dharma*: their evolutionary progression arises out of privileged dissatisfactions that remain basic to humanity. Through an examination of the historical and social events underlying the literatures which have inspired them all, one is led inevitably toward the unique geography of their place of succor in northern California.

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[100] See Martin Lu, introductory essay in *Toward A Global community: New Perspectives on Confucian Humanism*. Eds. Lu, M., Dellios, R., Ferguson, James R. Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies, Bond University. Qld., Australia (2004); p. xix.

# PART II.

# The Evolution of an Ecology of Consciousness

# Chapter 8.

# Evolution of a Literature of Resistance: The Beats, The Sixties and Beyond

> *[Edward] Sapir stated that language powerfully conditions all our*
> *thinking about social problems and processes; that the 'real world'*
> *is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits*
> *of the group…And as [Benjamin] Whorf has noted, a language can*
> *transfer our appreciation of the Cosmos.*
>
> Yo-In Song, "Implications of Literary Translation" [101]

A literature of resistance is one that perceives itself working in opposition to what it regards as toxicities in the social, cultural and economic status quo. As Russian painter Wasily Kandinsky observed in 1914, the typical force engendering such a creative efflorescence is a cultural moment "when religion, science and morality are all shaken; when the external supports threaten to collapse, then man's gaze turns away from the external world towards himself" (Adato, 1989). Russia's independent literature and art of the early 1900s remains an obvious, if short-lived attempt at creating a literature and poetics of emotional, spiritual and socio-political liberation. [102]

By examining the cultural reverberations of literatures and art from certain galvanizing cultural-historical moments, however, the impact they exerted upon their time and place can be critically assessed in larger contexts, as well as how they may or may not reflect other formative periods in 'Great City' histories—pivotal moments when significant new intellectual climates burst forth to change the way humanity and society thinks and works.

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[101] See *Thirty Years of Turmoil in Asian Literature*. Taipei: Taipei PEN Centre (1976), p. 84.

[102] Poets of this stormy period who are best known to readers in English include Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930), Osip Mandelstam (1891-1938), Sergei Yesenin (1895-1925), and Anna Akhmatova (1895-1966). With Stalinism, the independent creative life in Russian literature they struggled for was effectively ended or harshly suppressed, as in the cases of Akhmatova or Nobel laureate Boris Pasternak (*Doctor Zhivago*). See: *Encyclopeadia of Russian Poets*, http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Russian. Retrieved: 08/18/2004.

As approximations, one might consider the society and intellectual fervour of Paris and multicultural Vienna of the late 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ century, Edinburgh during its 18$^{th}$ century period as the intellectual 'Athens of the North', Florence under the Medicis, or Athens during its golden age roughly 2500 years ago.

In the view of this thesis, from recent generational experience it is similarly possible to examine the historic 'countercultural' conversation involving knowledge, aesthetics, ethics and politics, nature, and the arts and letters which flowered in the city of San Francisco during the l950s-60s as a literature of resistance. Given the remarkable civic and cultural ethos which developed there for a short period, San Francisco's social experiment, or more rightly its 'experience' during the 1960s, affords the opportunity of analyzing and interpreting how it differed antithetically in degrees of space and imagination from both the conservative cultural milieu of the U.S. east coast, as well as from its European intellectual forbears in the same period.

The literature which arose from the periodicity of San Francisco's countercultural experience arrives directly from the mingling of social and cultural forces prevalent in the life of the times; from a new, dissenting cultural energy that grew in opposition to American Cold War-era consumerism. But more vitally, the city's—and California's— own historic evolution must be understood as the prime incubator element in the shaping of what would come to be the formative compositional element of the *new world dharma*. For purposes of clarity some of its contributing authors may be regarded as including: Alan Watts (*The Spirit of Zen, Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen);* Paul Reps (*Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*); Allen Ginsberg and selected members of the Beat Generation (*Howl*); Herbert Marcuse (*One-Dimensional Man*); C. Wright Mills (*The Sociological Imagination*); Richard Brautigan (*Trout Fishing In America, The Abortion*); LeRoi Jones (later known as Amiri Baraka: "Black Art"); Diane di Prima (*Memoirs of a Beatnik*); Carlos Castenada (*The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*); political and sociological authors such as Paul Goodman (*Growing Up Absurd);* Timothy Leary (*The Politics of Ecstasy);* and a clutch of troubadour bards of whom Bob Dylan ("The Times They Are A-Changing", "Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall"), and John Lennon ("I'm a Loser", "Give Peace a Chance") are representative influences. To these should be added 'alternative culture' publications such as the *Berkeley Barb, Ramparts, East Village Other, Evergreen Review,*

and a constellation of novelists, poets, playwrights, journalists, early environmentalists, and anti-Vietnam War and New Left political activists (Roszak, 1969; Jamison and Eyerman, 1994; Bain, Beatty and Hunter, 1973).

Additionally, it is the contention of this thesis, that the steady blossoming of this literature of resistance bears much in common with both Buddhism's recognition of *pratitya samutpada*, or co-dependent origination, and New Criticism's 'Geneva School'[103] view of literature in which a 'consciousness' is regarded as manifesting itself 'textually'. In this context, successful comprehension of the larger significance of a written work requires consideration of the wholeness of the inspiring elements which motivate a writer, or writers, in the production of both the text and an author's larger *oeuvre.* As has been alluded to previously in this thesis (chapter 7. III), rather than deconstructionism, from the 'new world' or global perspective, the Geneva School's wholistic appreciation of literature as an amalgam incorporating a sense of history, physical environment, and social and ethical grounding, is preferable as a vehicle for understanding the evolution of a literature—especially one as broadly and cross-culturally significant as that emanating from San Francisco and its natural alliance zones.[104]

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[103] Taking inspiration largely from Marcel Proust, the Geneva School critics ushered in a vogue for phenomenological criticism which holds, as Evelyne Ender observes, to: "primacy [of] the literary text, whose themes and figures they attempt to articulate in their critical writing. This textual approach enables them to seize a particular consciousness, the creative impulse or certain expressive patterns at work in the writings of an author or in a group of texts…embod[ying] one individual way of making sense, through writing, of the self and the world. Their critical project ultimately consists in pursuing across the whole *oeuvre* of an author (books, diaries, letters, fragments) the particular vision that creates the work… Thus their larger claims—that they are tracing in their criticism the significant moments of a history of the imagination, of feelings, and of consciousness in the modern era." See:
(http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/hopkins_guide_to_literary_theory/geneva_school.html).
Retrieved 06/25/04.

[104] San Francisco is regarded by an important constituency of west coast Canadian writers as their natural cultural alliance area, rather than the eastern cities of Montreal and Toronto several thousand longitudinal and psychological miles distant. The San Francisco Bay Area is popularly regarded as 'northern' California in contrast to the Los Angeles-Orange County 'southern' California, and here its alliance zone can also be regarded as extending equally to Oregon and Washington, with their chief cities of Portland and Seattle. In many respects its 'new world' character also incorporates the West's frontier ethos: see note re. Gary Snyder, Chapter 1 of this thesis.

By way of explanation, and in the spirit of the Geneva School of inquiry which found a warmer reception among west coast scholars as opposed to the deconstructionism hailed by Yale and Princeton on the U.S. east coast,[105] this thesis segues briefly to the historical foundation events that led to the development of San Francisco as a modern-day Great City.  From this tapestry of history and events the crucial period of the mid-1950s-1960s can be understood as an inevitable manifestation of the ethos—a particular humanist impulse—that remains contemporary with this new century and millennium, and which lies close to the heart of all that is intended by the appellation of a *new world dharma.*

## *II.* <u>City by the Bay: The Coming of History</u>

> *…wee came within 38 degrees towards the line.  In which height*
> *it pleased God to send us into a faire and good Baye, with a good*
> *winde to enter the same.  In this Baye we anchored, and the people*
> *of the Countrey having their houses close by the waters side, shewed*
> *themselves unto us, and sent a present to our Generall*
>
> Richard Hakluyt,[106]  "The famous voyage of sir Francis Drake…"

Geographically, San Francisco's physical setting and place is exceptionally fortunate. Situated near the 38th parallel of latitude, like the similarly located Athens or Cordoba, its climate is Mediterranean and painters have traditionally been drawn by the quality of its light (Ashton, 1962: 20-31).  The surrounding country is relatively dry, prefigured by coastal chapparal vegetation, and the nearby rich, productive territory of the Sonoma and

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[105] Deconstructionism in the person of Derrida was literally born in the U.S. at Yale University. Princeton was influenced by Paul DeMan, at least until his unmasking as a notorious imposter hiding a wartime past as a Nazi sympathizer in Europe.  David Lehman's *Signs of the Times* (1998) indicts De Man for his role in propounding "an elaborate literary theory that conveniently touts the impossibility of truth."  See: http://www.writersreps.com/live/catalog/authors/lehmand7.html. Retrieved 07/08/04.

[106] See "The famous voyage of sir Francis Drake into the South sea, and therehence about the whole Globe of the earth, begun in the yeere of our Lord 1577" in *Hakluyt's Voyages* [1600], (1965), pp. 216-242.

Napa valleys is the heart of California's long-established wine-growing region. Sacramento, the state administrative capital lies 80 miles to the east, leading toward the Sierra Nevada mountains. Due south, the unparalleled natural splendour of the Big Sur coastal highway route passes with Hispanic resonance through the historic 'Mission route' linking Monterey, Carmel and Santa Cruz, and leading on toward Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and San Diego. To the north, coastal Marin and Mendicino Counties have traditionally drawn artistic communities, while inland routes lead toward the towering Sequoia, or Redwood forests of Humboldt County, and on to the arid stock-raising and agricultural country of Ukiah and Redding. Major military and naval shipyards are housed around the Bay area, and two major international research universities are located nearby: at Berkeley, adjacent to the port city of Oakland across San Francisco Bay; and at Stanford near San Jose (Bartholemew, 1960; *Everybody's Cyclopeadia*, 1912).

The 'city of earthquakes' sits atop the west coast's large, tectonic fault zone, and historically, its trading alliance routes have extended northward, following the geological rift toward the gold rush migrant-route cities of Seattle, Vancouver, and the north in Alaska and the Yukon. San Francisco's large, sheltered harbour which originally drew European mariners has also served to foster trade with the 'mission' route leading southward to Mexico, of which until the War of 1845 between the U.S. and the 25 year old Mexican republic, California was a province. Trade with Europe was conducted via the Valparaiso, Chile-run which also expedited commercial and migration links with the rest of South and Central America. The latter would gain in importance with construction of the Panama Canal from 1906-15. The city also sits advantageously on the lucrative trans-Pacific trade routes to the *Extreme Orient,* chiefly Japan and China, as well as to Hawaii, for which it long served as chief entrepột and beneficiary to the islands' sugar trade. As the terminus of the first U.S. transcontinental railway—the Union Pacific—completed in 1869, San Francisco grew as a transportation nexus. Upon completion of the railway's construction, it became a magnet in particular for Irish and Chinese migrant labourers, which added to the region's original Native aboriginal peoples—the larger Koi Nation, Maidu and ElemPomoi—and its Hispanic, European-Atlantic American settlers (Schwartz, 1998; Palmer & Colton, 1965).

The city's notoriously unpredictable summer weather shifts,[107] caused early Spanish explorers to sail past its summer voyaging-season, fog-enshrouded harbour for 50 years before the English pirate-adventurer, Sir Francis Drake, after raiding the Spanish coast of Chile and sacking Lima, entered San Francisco Bay in mid-June, 1579 on his way north in search of the Northwest Passage during a three-year circumnavigation of the globe. Drake traded with the native peoples of the Bay area and named the region Nova Albion (Hakluyt, 1965: 230-34).

Historically, northern California's native inhabitants were subject to maritime interventions, notably slaving-raids by northerners from as far off as Haida Gwai, (Queen Charlotte Islands in present-day British Columbia), who forged southward in massive yellow-cedar ocean-going canoes. Ironically, the Bay area country had been 'renamed' once previously, however, in a further other-cultural intervention that remains the subject of much historical conjecture. Legend and written accounts both have it that this same coast was visited earlier by a Chinese ecclesiastical embassy under the monk Hui Shin, an Afghan Buddhist likely of the Kushan-Gandara monastic area situated on the trading route between India and China. In recounting his purported journey in 499 AD, Hui Shin recorded it as a proselytizing 'mission to the Far East' made under imperial aegis.[108] Hui Shan is said to have voyaged the west coast area as far south as Acapulco, formally naming the west coast 'Fu Sang' after a tree (undoubtedly cedar) from which thread stronger than silk could be made (Keddie, 1980: 2-6; Foon Sein, 1948: 3; Glavin, 1988: B1-4).

Two centuries after Drake's arrival, with California now an integral part of the colonial empire of New Spain, Franciscan friars intending to convert the indigenous peoples established a mission at San Francisco in about 1769. Their settlement area is still known as 'the Mission' district, a traditionally low-income area. Seven years later, a Spanish

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[107] Mark Twain who moved to the city in 1865 to work as a journalist is attributed with the celebrated witticism, "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco." He refers, of course, to the city's sunlight-blocking summer fogs.

[108] Extensive work has been published on this provocative historical legend. Jesuit priests working at the imperial archives in Beijing first sent reports to Europe and these are studied in Joseph Deguignes' (1761), *Memoirs,* Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, Paris. See also Grant Keddie (circa 1980), "Early Chinese Explorations On The Pacific Coast?", Archaeological Division, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria; p. 2-8. While much inconclusive material in the way of ancient Chinese pottery shards, ancient coins and so on have been unearthed, opinion is divided on the authenticity of this legendary incident.

military post was established close by.  At this time, European and American trading and
military mariners all plied the Pacific coastal waters, and as the Englishman Captain John
Mears (1933) recounts in a little-known journal, Spanish men-of-war routinely seized
foreign vessels—Russian, British, and others.

The west coast's chief trading prize was sea otter pelts destined for China, and iron bars
were bartered to natives in exchange.  En route to southern China's main shipping bases at
Macao and Canton, trade in sundry other items including ginseng is mentioned in
dispatches (Mo, 1986; Leiper1997).  Return voyages over-wintered in the Sandwich
Islands at Honolulu, where Lahaina, a second Hawaiian port would shortly become
mission-station to the Pacific whaling fleet (Schodt, 2000: 157-184).

In l835, an Englishman erected the first tent on the site of the present city at Yerba
Buena, three miles from the Mission.  A village soon grew up here that by 1846 was united
with the older Mission district.  Two years later—1848—gold was discovered in what was
now newly American California at Sutter's Creek, precipitating a land rush.  Legions of
European immigrants flocked to the Bay City, along with Chinese, Atlantic seaboard
Yankees, and Chileans.[109]  By 1850, the city had swelled to a population of 25,000 and at
this time received its city charter.  Subsequent gold strikes to the north in British
Columbia, the Klondike and Alaska helped further enrich San Francisco as an embarkation
port and helped deepen the 'Frontier Mentality'—the hardy migrant's ethos of self-reliance
that is a deep part of North America's historic idea of 'The West' (McInerney, 2001: 166;
Miller, 1990; City Lights, 1989; Schwartz, 1998).

For newcomers, the frontier provided a space to grow. Unsurprisingly, what drew
settlers 'out West' to San Francisco was the opportunity of making their fortunes; although
as Lewis Lapham records, both the city and the state have traditionally offered an
opportunity to get away from social conventionality:

> The wandering Bedouin of the American desert traditionally migrate to
> California in hope of satisfying their hearts' desire under the palm tree of
> the national oasis.  They seek to set themselves free, to rid themselves of

---

[109] Uruguayan author Eduardo Galleano (1985) offers portraits of the overlooked legacy of early
South American immigration to California in *Memory of Fire: Faces and Masks.*

all restraint, to find an Eden or the fountain of eternal youth withheld or
concealed from them by the authorities (nurses, teachers, parents, caliphs)
in the walled towns of the East.  They desire simply to be, and they think
of freedom as a banquet (1990: 191).

What made 'the West' special as a frontier was its capacity to breath life into the more
settled trans-Atlantic culture of the U.S. east coast, and to offer an individualistic,
progressive future based on the humanist ideal of democracy and a general antipathy
toward bureaucracy.  As will be explained, this is revealed in its literary tradition.

### *III.*  Hispanic Influences

Spanish colonialism in the New World of the Americas crumbled during the 1820s
when sixteen young South and Central American republics including Mexico rose in arms.
Engulfed in its own domestic wars, European imperialism was at low ebb at this time,
permitting the new Latin American nations set off on their rocky course.  Their fledgling
enterprise was bolstered when in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine was announced by a still
emerging United States that declared no further European colonialism would be tolerated
in the Western hemisphere.  As history would demonstrate repeatedly, this by no means
precluded American interference in the affairs of sovereign nations in this 'zone of
influence' (Palmer & Colton, 541-42.  See also Reeves, 2000: 7, 56-58; Brogan, 1985:
304-08; McInerney, 163-165).

As an independent republic, Mexico was quick in shaping a policy prohibiting slavery.
At this time, its borders reached well northward of its present territory skirting both the
Mississippi and the Rockies.  Yet, hardly had Mexico gained independence when land
seekers poured into its sparsely populated northern territory from the U.S.  Many arrived
from the Southern States bringing Negro slaves with them to plant cotton, a traditional
southern crop.  Exported to European textile mills in Britain and France, the demand for
cotton was literally inexhaustible, a situation that gave rise to the South's large-scale

plantation economy based on slave labour (McInerney, 132-34). The importation of slavery was fundamentally offensive to the newly liberated Mexican republic, however, and local conflicts ensued. With Mexican federal authority located far from the country's northern hinterlands, separatist American settlers were encouraged to proclaim their own republic of Texas. To their pleasure, in 1845 the U.S. conveniently announced its 'annexation' of Texas. War followed. While Mexico won the legendary Battle of the Alamo, it lost the war disastrously and was forced to cede an enormous landmass reaching from Texas to California—almost half its national territory—to the U.S (Palmer & Colton, 623-24; 542-43; Brogan 305-06; McInerney, 164). This would mark a new beginning for the small Hispanic town of San Francisco.

On its admittance to the American Union, California announced prohibition of slavery within its jurisdiction. The effect of this decision was highly significant, shifting the North-South balance of power on the national slavery issue. In compensation, the industrializing Northern states offered their agriculturally-based southern counterparts the morally repugnant policy of forcible return of runaway slaves. Previously, runaways able to escape across the North-South divide—the Mason-Dixon Line—had gained their freedom. This only further inflamed the nation's profound ethical crisis on the slavery issue which has haunted American cultural life for more than 200 years and, with the ultimate cessation of the South from the Union, civil war ensued (Reeves, 16-20).

Victory favoured the North. At war's end in 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery everywhere in the U.S. without compensation to southern slave-owners, most of whom were ruined. Many drifted west, following well worn trails established by migrating poor whites whom, ironically, they themselves had previously dispossessed and displaced. California would receive them.

Four years later with completion of the 'Union' Pacific transcontinental railroad, vast brigades of cheap Irish labour who had been driven across the Atlantic by British famine policies in Ireland join the westward migration. Many of the Chinese labourers who had been imported by labour-gang contractors to build the railway were also made redundant; most turned to the mining fields of California and the western states. It should be recalled that bloody wars against native aboriginal peoples were still taking place in the western states well into the 1870s (Palmer & Colton, 543-44; Brogan, 433). Against the

background of these unsettled conditions, and to help stimulate broader settlement of the West, the Homestead Act was introduced and land grants were provided to new settlers on relatively easy conditions. Land was also granted to colleges to encourage improvements and the expansion of agricultural science. The result was that San Francisco became the growing nation's western hub, accruing benefits from all the aforementioned (Palmer & Colton, ibid; Brogan, 309-311).

## *IV.* <u>**The Banquet of Freedom**</u>

*The center in this world is quietly moving to San Francisco where it's most alive*
Gary Snyder, Journal: Kyoto, 23.V.56, *Earth House Hold*

Development of San Francisco's East-West linkages with Asia followed a pattern not dissimilar to that of the economic migration and military adventurism which helped build the American West. In 1854, as a competitive response to increasing trade concessions being given by China to Britain, France, Russia and Germany, the American navy's Commodore Perry forced his way into Yedo (Tokyo) Bay and compelled the opening of Japan to American and Western trade. San Francisco became the natural U.S. recipient of the commercial harvest which followed, and ever since, the twin ports of San Francisco and Oakland have enjoyed heavy dividends in this regard. (Foster,1998; Palmer & Colton, 548-49; McInerney, 169-70, 245-55).

The city's Asian commercial interests surged again when during the Second Opium War in 1857, 17,000 French and British soldiers entered Peking and torched and looted the Emperor's Summer Palace. The exported imperial loot created a sensation in the West's new industrial bourgeois class, spawning a vast market for *Chinoiserie* in Europe and America, with the latter's appetite being whetted through Californian merchant depots (Palmer & Colton, 652-55; Fairbank, 1992: 200-13). Thus, San Francisco's relationship with Asia deepened further, growing yet more complex with the increased settlement by newly independent Chinese migrant labourers drawn to *Gum San, or* Gold Mountain— most of whom had been originally recruited in southern China's Tai Shan county near

Canton.  In this fashion, San Francisco became linked in popular imagination with its 'Chinatown' settlement.  Accordingly, a host of stereotypical myths grew relating to its 'sojourner' male residents—most of whom were denied the privilege of bringing wives from China—adding to the city's East-West mystique based on wealth from its fabled 'China Clipper', and later Pacific Steamship trade in tea, fancy textiles, cloth, porcelains, medicines, and foodstuffs that arrived through the port's fabled 'Golden Horn' entrance.

With establishment of trans-continental railway lines by 1869, the need for lengthy runs from China to Boston via the treacherous cape of South America was done away with, and San Francisco boomed as North America's principal gateway to Asia (Chong, 1995; Schwartz, 1998; Palmer & Colton, 1965).

As the result of American naval incursions into East Asia,[110] followed by the strong-arm annexation in 1898 of the sovereign Hawaiian Islands then ruled by Queen Liliuokalani,[111] San Francisco's commercial maritime history became increasingly interlaced with U.S. military strength.  San Francisco Bay at Oakland and Vallejo especially, became and remains the site of sprawling Pacific naval yards and military reservations; while in the city proper, The Presidio, a 1500 acre waterfront military reserve was established at a site now shadowed by the Golden Gate Bridge.

Through aggressive immigration, by 1860 the U.S. population had swelled to 31 million, making it almost as large as France and slightly more than Britain (Brogan, 403-09). Inevitably, San Francisco's civic demographics and cultural energy have since reflected the contributions made by certain immigrant groups, notably the French, whose architectural influence makes it arguably the most handsomely constructed major city in North

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[110] In 1898, when the U.S. also defeated Spain in war over Cuba, the U.S. reacted to Japan's growing imperial designs in the Eastern Pacific by taking the Philippines from Spain.  A bloody war of resistance by Filipinos followed but was savagely crushed.  Spain's historic trade route in silver, gold, gems and foodstuffs from Manila to Lima, thence to Europe was consigned to history: the Manila to San Francisco route entered international shipping registers.  The old Manila-New World merchant run is recounted in Shusaki Endo's historical novel of early Japanese-Spanish missionary links in *The Samurai* (1983).

[111] By 1840, the 'Sandwich Islands' were being thoroughly manipulated by foreign interests, and in 1875 a U.S. protectorate was established.  U.S. capital and management poured into the tropical islands and by 1891 the nationalist Queen Liliokuokalani was overthrown in a reenactment of the Mexico-Texas provocation.  Annexation of Hawaii by the U.S. followed.  Henceforward, 'Hawaii' especially enriched San Francisco, notably Claus Spreckles' vast family sugar empire (Palmer & Colton, 1965).

America; the Irish, whose influence on law and order, administration, the sporting life, and journalism is traditional; the Chinese, whose colourful core residential neighbourhood and commercial enterprise have attracted generations of holiday visitors; the Italians and Portuguese whose cuisine and North Beach district has traditionally provided solace to the city's artistic and bohemian community; and the Russians, who mainly as refugees of the Bolshevik Revolution brought *élan vital* and European *haute* cultural sophistication.  The city has enjoyed historical links artistically and educationally with France especially, and Gertrude and Leo Stein, Alice B. Toklas, and Isadora Duncan are all numbered among those who gravitated from the Bay City to the cultural ambiance of Paris.

Among 19th century immigrants, the Irish and Italians especially practiced Catholicism, a faith which was inclined to provoke strong emotions among Americans who found it abhorrent to their own fundamentalist lineage of Puritan Protestantism that gave rise to U.S. republicanism and liberalism alike (Palmer & Colton, 540-41; Reeves, 12-14).  While not always successful as a haven of intercultural concord—bigotry against the Chinese was institutional, and in 1906, anti-Japanese rioting took place (London, 1990; Schwartz, 1998. See also Brogan, 449; Reeves, 55-56)—English served as the unifying language of official life.  Ethnic groups were free to mind their own affairs in their own tongue, and through religious worship, newspapers, professional and community associations and the like, San Francisco's community mosaic remained salty and uncommonly colourful.  Among the many-cultured attractions the city held for Beat Generation writers and artists in particular during the 1950s were its Chinese and Japanese Buddhist temples, the Italian conviviality of North Beach, and the Irish liberality of its bars and music haunts (Snyder, 1995: 3-6; 7-13).  Indeed, like New Orleans, the city has long celebrated its sybaritic reputation, and not for nothing was the landmark U.S. censorship battle over Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* fought and won here by Ginsberg and his publisher, Lawrence Ferlinghetti of City Lights Books (City Lights, 1989; Schwartz, 1998; Ginsberg, 1995).

Building a new land served as a unifying crucible and as the above elements were smelted, they helped create a robust, often ribald newspaper and publishing tradition. Despite its relatively youthful history as a city, San Francisco produced, among others: Mark Twain, Jack London, Richard Henry Dana, Ambrose Bierce, Bret Harte and Frank Norris.  Robert Louis Stevenson, Anthony Trollope, and later Rudyard Kipling, Somerset

Maugham and others would also visit.  To these, add Gertrude Stein, Alice Toklas, William Saroyan, Dashiell Hammett, Kenneth Rexroth, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Ishmael Reed, Ken Kesey, Richard Brautigan, Amy Tan, Robert Duncan, and periodic exiles such as Robinson Jeffers, William Everson, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Hunter S. Thompson (Miller, 1990; City Lights, 1989).

By any standard it is an impressive lineage.  Additionally, its Muse has clearly been *reformist* (Twain), *democratic-egalitarian* (Hammett, Saroyan, Ferlinghetti, Ginsberg), *striving* (Norris, Harte), *unorthodox* (Stein, Toklas, Brautigan, Duncan), *nature-focused* (London, Jeffers), *multicultural* (Reed, Tan), cross-cultural (Rexroth, Tan, Ginsberg), and passionately devoted to the *spiritual* (Everson) [italics added].

Admixed has been an essentially reformist, Labour-Democratic political lineage with more than a tinge of Berkeley and Stanford intellectualism.  In contrast to southern California's Los Angeles-basin Republicanism that propelled both Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan to the national presidency, recent San Francisco-oriented public figures have included Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown, State Congressman Tom Hayden, Governor Jerry Brown, City Councilman Harvey Milk, and Mayor Willie Brown.

Gary Snyder (1985) has noted how much of this derives from west coast labour traditions and 1920-30s I.W.W. (International Workers of the World, or 'Wobblie') Syndicalism—that is, the Great Depression-era's 'One Big Union' idealism (see also Reeves, 46-48; Brogan, 427-433).  In this, west coast timber, fishing, mining and industrial labour embraced Scandinavian, Italian, British and Irish working class politics. Admixed with anarchist overtones from Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, Marx' and Engels' *Origins of the Family* and *Private Property and the State,* the ennobling spirit of Ghandian resistance borrowed from India's independence struggle, and its frontier developmental history, San Francisco generated for itself a politics of autonomy and resistance to  'the System', to established capitalist interests, and against establishment administrative practices that were viewed as favouring "the big over the little guy"  (Snyder, ibid).

Yet as British novelist Anthony Trollope reveals in a sarcastic dismissal of the city during a visit in 1875—"I do not know that in all my travels I ever visited a city less interesting to the normal tourist…There is almost nothing to see in San Francisco that is worth seeing" (1990: 26)—for all its exponential growth over the latter half of the 19th

century, and despite its many social improvements that, as Trollope observes, "[give] the labouring man in California a position which I have not known him to achieve elsewhere" (ibid, 27), San Francisco was not necessarily viewed as a 'world renowned' metropolitan centre. That would change in 1906 when first a great earthquake, then massive conflagration devastated the city and obliged massive rebuilding. That these incidents received international attention, was partly due to the journalistic treatment they received from Jack London, who at the time was arguably the world's most successful author.

## V. <u>The Cold War: the Rise of Consumerism and Moral Uneasiness</u>

> …*The point about writing is that it is existentially real, an active*
> *mode of discovery through the modalities of the imagination…*
> *Writing is an act of expressed moral responsibility.*
>
> Michiko Kakutani [112]

What led to the sudden explosion we know as San Francisco in the Sixties? According to historian David Halberstam (1993), the geopolitical theatre of the 1950s was instrumental in redefining American society literally as a whole. In a post-World War II world, the U.S. was ultimately triumphant. Its continental mainland had not been devastated, and it possessed the atomic bomb. Internationally, an era of retreating colonialism emerged as Britain and France began the retreat from empire. As newly independent nations emerged in this tide of change, Pandit Nehru's 'non-aligned' movement sought a middle-way between super-power rivalries in which to pursue their own national interests. It was also the period of deepest chill in the Cold War with the USSR (Rexroth, 1970; Greer & Lewis, 1992: 587-592).

In the domestic theatre, America's post-war culture was supremely devoted to the pursuit of settled, comfortable family life. Employment was plentiful in an economy that led the reconstruction of Europe (Snyder-Carolan, 1996: 20; Reeves, 139-40). Young

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[112] On David Lehman and Signs of The Times. In The New York Times Book Review. See: *http://www.writersreps.com/live/catalog/authors/lehmand7.htm*. Retrieved 08/03-04.

urban couples preferred their own small, independent homes, while the nation's rapidly expanding consumer culture afforded them increased social mobility through popular availability of mass-produced automobiles. The post-war acme of American manufacturing expertise brought forth unparalleled supplies of consumer goods (Halberstam, ibid).

Mass production and distribution of goods wrought change upon American social identity though. The war economy had been a great leveller of regional, economic, social, and ethnic differences, and no change was more dramatic than the new economic power of women who had entered the wartime labour force. Greater economic independence and social mobility extended personal freedom. Men and women could shift careers, try new ventures, resume their education, even travel abroad to study in Europe on the G.I. Bill for military veterans: these transformations also made it possible to allow relationships and even including marriage across religious and ethnic lines. Beginning an ancillary process in the South, American Negroes walked across apartheid lines in restaurants and other venues in a bid for equal citizenship (Rexroth, 108-118. See also Greer & Lewis, 608-11; Reeves, 161-64; Brogan 634-65).

This newfound general level of affluence was modest by contemporary standards: 'the American Dream' could be described as owning a smaller detached home offering freedom from the eyes of prying tenement neighbours, a refrigerator, 'modern' furniture of Bauhaus influence, and a range of home appliances—radio, hi-fi, washing machine, perhaps a black and white television. A car, weekend golf, or even country club memberships were possibilities of the upwardly mobile. Through their export via television, popular music and film, these 'consumibles' would come to be recognized as hallmarks of westernization in economically developing nations (Fields, 1983: 214-231; Tay, 1997: 14-16; McInerney, 327-31). The primary social and economic model of post-war economic progress was a post-war phenomenon known as the 'tract-house.' Invented by Bill Levitt, his sprawling grids of mass-produced, identical homes for young-families with yard and fence sold for $7,790 and could be purchased with a simple $100 deposit. 'Sub-division' construction spread rapidly across the nation marking the advent of 'suburban' living—a development that would be rejected artistically and philosophically by a new generation whose views ran 'counter' to the prevailing consumer orthodoxy. But between1950-80, sixty million

people in the U.S. joined in the flight from traditional inner-city society to the automobile-oriented life of the "suburbs" (Halberstam, 132-144; Reeves, 139).

In many ways, the dream these migrants pursued in the 1950s and early sixties was that of the modern cult of westernization. How American society responded in its time could well be a metaphor for the global project in the 21st century. As a shift of heavy magnitude, U.S. society's transition during the Cold War period did not pass without criticism, notably from Leftist intellectuals at various east coast universities. "Fresh-air slums…breeders of conformity," New York's intelligentsia called the new 'Levitt Towns' (ibid, 139). They would be joined in their critique by a previously unheard of group who migrated from various points about America, ultimately coalescing in San Francisco. Once a small literary group known as 'the Beats' led by Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg drifted westward from New York and encountered a similar group of young, articulate and disaffiliated counterparts recognized as the poets of the San Francisco Literary Renaissance,[113] their critical mass became known as 'the Beat Generation', and their role is quintessential in the development of the *new world dharma.*

By contrast, the young suburbanites who were themselves chiefly working class, newly-minted white collar families who had exchanged inner-city apartment living for a private house and yard within driving distance from their jobs, did not seem to concern themselves with what highbrows thought.

Amidst the McCarthyite 'Red Scare' of the Cold War 1950s, this classic intellectual divide of opinions regarding the further 'alienation' of individuals from traditional society through the propagation of mass consumerized structural changes, was ridiculed by Levitt. His riposte echoes popular Cold War, anti-Soviet sentiment: "No man who owns his own house and lot can be a communist," he said. "He has too much to do" (Halberstam, 132).

The inescapable observation of America's mushrooming suburbanism was its dislocation of traditional family life. Children moved well away from their parents and in-

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[113] The 'Beat Movement' that in New York took form in 1944 when Kerouac, Ginsberg and William Burroughs met through student life at Columbia University. The group would expand to include such other literary personalities as Lucien Carr, Gregory Corso and John Clelland Holmes. The poets of San Francisco's 'literary renaissance' included Gary Snyder, Phillip Whalen, Phillip Lamantia, Michael McClure, Joanne Kyger, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Kenneth Rexroth, Robert Duncan, William Everson, and Alan Watts. In some respects Henry Miller and Robinson Jeffers were regarded as the new 'Beat Generation's' spiritual godfathers (Prothero, 10-21).

laws in the inner cities.[114]  Family living space now meant the 'nuclear family'—parents and a limited number of children, without the encumbrances of older relatives or extended family members, and was championed on television programs.  Women especially were drawn back to traditional housekeeping roles, and in many cases surrendered the independence they had gained in the war years (Greer & Lewis, 637-641; Halberstam, 588-89).

Amid the key new suburban-related phenomena that flooded into American life during the 1950s there is much that can be noted, for mention of them often emerges in the resistance literature of the subsequent 'counter' cultural flowering.  David Halberstam, whose work *The Fifties* has become standard text, includes the following notable innovations:

i) *Motels:* low-budget/low maintenance travellers accomodation brought into existence by automobile transportation. First sprang up along Route 66, the post-war 2,000 mile highway reaching from Chicago to Los Angeles.  Helped begin the decay of central-downtowns in North America. Jack Kerouac's novel *On The Road* focusing on themes of long-distance highway travel and 'freedom' launched a generational revolt against 'conformity' (ibid, 173-79; see also Prothero, in Tonkinson, 1995: 23-28).

ii) *Shopping Malls and Big Box Discount Retail Chain-Stores*: marks the advent of targeting 'young family shoppers.'  Followed by fast food restaurants (Halberstam, 144-54; 156-172).

iii) *Rising influence of television in popular culture*:  hastened the decline of radio, and especially of cultural regionalisms in language and phrasing,  and led lead toward homogenization and trivialization of culture (Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums:* 128-29; 157-158; Reeves, 157-58).

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[114] In *The Colours of Heaven* (1992), the first major compilation of Asian Pacific short fiction in 25 years, edited by the author of this thesis, the predominant themes expressed by writers of recent Asian fiction are also those of breakdown of the traditional family system and urban dislocation.

iv) *The Kinsey Report on Sexuality in the Human Male and Female*: begun in the 1950s, this explosive document revealed discrepancies between fact and myth in social roles. With the Cold War generating a new demand for 'science', it opened up the field of sexuality for the first time to public discussion along 'scientific' terms (Halberstam, 271-81).

v) *Margaret Sanger's Birth Control Movement*: the bohemian New York activist and journalist's unrelenting work from 1914 onwards championing birth control led directly to development of the Birth Control Pill—initially derived from native Mexican *brujo,* or shamanic use of wild yams for the same purpose. Compelled a redefinition of the terms of male-female sexuality (ibid, 282-88. See also Reeves, 48-49).

vi) *Civil Rights equality:* America's Black soldiers had fought in World War II in segregated units, but for what? Sensing that they too had a claim to the fruits of liberation, many of these veterans had learned how to organize. Little formal organization was open to them in their reform campaigns other than their churches, especially in the South. That would change with the arrival of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and a new generation of young, educated African-American leaders. With the lynching of Emmett Till, a northern Afro-American visiting the South in 1955, the horror and brutality of southern apartheid was widely reported and led to the rise of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) as coordinating vehicle of the Civil Rights Movement. Anti-Vietnam War protest campaigns began following similar patterns of public expression of those of the Civil Rights Movement (Halberstam 420-21. See also Jamison and Eyerman, 200-208; Brogan, 634-665; Reeves, 161-64; 187-89).

vii) *The Birth of Rock and Roll*: a mixture of black juke-joint rhythm & blues and white countrybilly music also from the South, through its exposure by popular 'rebel' figures including Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee

Lewis and Johnny Cash, its massive appeal among young people across the country began ushering in alternative views of 'the good life.'[115] Key black originators to achieve mass popularity included Chuck Berry and Little Richard. Began the mainstreaming of black American music and cultural expression in the U.S.

viii) *Madison Avenue' Advertising:* sales of home appliances, fashion apparel, automobiles, and other consumer goods were driven by an increasingly sophisticated advertising industry from New York's Madison Avenue-centered public relations industry. For social critics, 'Madison Av' became the symbol for all that was wrong with consumerism.[116] For most mainstream Americans, buying on credit was still a new, suspicious idea, but a powerful selling tool emerged with television's image-making capability that gave consumers "permission to have fun without moral guilt." U.S. financing and credit loan policies changed to reflect the new advertising-driven demand for 'luxury' goods. Larger loans and longer payback periods evolved. Consumer debt evolved as a new social concern (Halberstam, 497; 500-07).

ix) *Stress:* Whereas tuberculosis and polio were the frightening killer microbes of the 1950s, with the growing pressures of debt and buying into upwardly mobile lifestyles a new health disorder was created: *stress*—a less physiological, more psychological human response to coping with anxiety. 'Alienation' as a condition entered public discourse (ibid, 526-28).

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[115] A philosophical concern in Western thought at least since the *Meditations* of Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, ideals of the 'the Good Life' were re-moulded through American rock and roll music and amplified by Hollywood stars like James Dean (*Rebel Without A Cause*), and Marlon Brando (*The Wild One*, *A Streetcar named Desire*). Broadened appetites for social mobility and personal freedom resulted, as well as a popularization of overt sexuality in youthful life through fashion and 'attitude.'

[116] See Sloan Wilson's (1955), *The Man In The Grey Flannel Suit* and Arthur Miller's (1949) *The Death of A Salesman.* These works established the importance of a new social-artistic critique of America's middle-class 'dream' founded upon consumer affluence.

The rise of suburbanism brought all these things. Perhaps most significant among them, however, was a new commitment to material prosperity as an end in itself. As 'the good life' in America increasingly became an adjunct of self-gratification, individualism inexorably took precedence over long-established ideals of community centeredness. The veneer of middle-class comfort came with a price though, for the power of consumer advertising ensured that the individual was obliged 'to keep up with the Joneses', and once-cherished notions of community identity and belonging were easily manipulated and deflected toward the acquisition of further badges of materialist conformity. For the uneasy, replacement identities were only an advertising jingle away—'The Pepsi Generation', 'Ford—for people on the go!', 'What's good for General Motors is good for America!'

If there was optimism and a sense of hope in the new social meta-myths of endless consumption, in more reflective quarters of American society there was a troubling sense that the official homogeneity of consumerist culture was not leading Americans to the new Jerusalem. With the Cold War came moral unease and fear that the nation's growing military-industrial complex was wielding unprecedented influence in shaping even the intellectual life of Americans. For an emerging generation of scholars and authors this development presaged a crisis of faith in the very nature of the republic itself. As a matter of moral responsibility their response was to offer a diverse set of alternatives to the mass-media propaganda of corporate-boardroom U.S.A.

## *VI.* <u>**Rebirth of the Prestige of Criticism**</u>

Tempered by the brutal experience of the Depression-era 1930s, the literary generation of John dos Passos (U.S.A., *49th Parallel*) and James T. Farrell (*Studs Lonigan Trilogy*) had inspired leftist sympathies within American intellectual life. The labour movement especially supported idealistic hopes based on the purported achievements of the Soviet Union, persisting in the belief it could be a salvationist model for the common citizen.

Even as knowledge of Stalin's genocidal crimes spread to the West, the Soviet Union's recent role as an ally in the war against Nazi fascism pursuaded many labour supporters to continue their belief in 'the Cause' of Soviet-style socialism (Jamison and Eyerman, 21-47).

The descent of a new 'Cold' War was precipitated in 1948 by the Soviet blockade of Berlin and a Soviet takeover of Czechoslavakia subsequent to the communist murder of President Masaryk (Reeves, 143-46). The formation of NATO in 1949 out of fear of a possible Soviet attack on western Europe further contributed to the deterioration of U.S.-Soviet relations by heightening threat perceptions in Moscow, and this was not aided by a U.S. nuclear monopoly in the early period following the war. With the swift developments of Mao Zedong's victory in China, followed by the Korean civil war's rapid escalation to proxy war between capitalist democracy and totalitarian communism, genuine fear came to haunt U.S. government and business leaders that a communist 'Fifth column' might exist within the domestic labour movement and its intellectual supporters (ibid, 143-45; McInerney, 315-21). But with the Korean War and sudden, tumultuous rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the anti-leftist witchhunts he inspired, the late Truman-Eisenhower years of the 1950s witnessed a steady erosion of leftist influence in public discourse (ibid, 149-52). Hollywood's high-profile, liberal film industry was a special target of anti-communist investigations and was shaken so badly by the McCarthy attacks,[117] it was fifteen or more years in recovering (Jamison and Eyerman, 16; Dickstein, 1977: 58; Brogan, 616-20). Consequently, the 'Old Left' as it was known, faded from view—overtaken by the advertising industry-driven consumerist ideology.

Yet progressive intellectual life continued, mainly through New York-based journals and periodicals on the margins of official academic culture such as *The Partisan Review* (Jamison and Eyerman, 36, 52), although socially critical work remained chiefly literary in the forms of novels, stage-plays, or literary criticism (see Arthur Miller, Saul Bellow (*Herzog*), Bernard Malamud (*The Assistant*). Occasionally, in a manner that would become familiar to readers in *samizdat* form throughout the Soviet bloc in the 1960s and

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[117] Woody Allen's *The Front* (1976), a cinematic portrayal of America's television and film industries during the McCarthy purges is acclaimed for its treatment of this dark era. Zero Mostel, Allen's on-screen comrade was a prominent victim of Hollywood, television, and Broadway stage blacklisting.

1970s, veiled attacks such as Miller's *The Crucible* took on right-wing McCarthyite repression. At the same moment, the hothouse theatre of southern-born playwright Tennessee Williams brought social critique and overripe sexuality to main-stage audience attention across the nation. It was through academic circles such as that in New York led by Columbia University professors Lionel and Diana Trilling that cohesion was gradually brought to the new social critique, for if cinematic images and content were monitored intensively on cinema screens, *the word*—on stage, in the novel, and in criticism—began assuming new importance and would flourish. Curiously, for the young in particular, poetry continued to be seen mainly as an academic enterprise (Ginsberg, 1985; Snyder, 1985; Dickstein, 55-66)).

The publishing industry itself remained an old-boy network. Into the late 1950s taboos were many and deep. Obscenity laws were rigorously enforced and Americans continued to rely on printed-in-France editions of writers such as D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller. Challenge to these laws would come in a landmark legal case not in New York or Boston, the traditional publishing cities in the U.S., but in San Francisco involving publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti and a young, previously unknown poet named Allen Ginsberg.

Yet if the Old Left had been relegated to the dustbin of history, at Columbia University in New York a Catholic sociologist from Texas was determined to restore dignity to ethical discourse in public life. Equipped with a new Ph.D., C. Wright Mills began writing and questioning the moral cost of America's inflating social conformity. The first genuinely leftist critic to rise from the ashes of McCarthyism into a semblance of popularity, his work became a critical flashpoint for the revival of intellectual social inquiry. Mills' rejection of the growing sterility of post-war American and suburban life is conveyed throughout his books, *The New Men of Power* (1948), *White Collar* (1951), and *The Power Elite* (1956), railed against corporate indifference to the common people, and echoed the old labour populism of Dos Passos and John Steinbeck (*The Grapes of Wrath*), in calling for a renewal of pride in both individual and American workmanship. It was the loss of these precious components of the American character that he claimed was the "downside of affluence" and was instrumental in creating 'mass society' (in Jamison and Eyerman, 38; Reeves, 169-70). Expressing sympathy for the new 'masses' of white collar workers whom he regarded as "the everyman of modern society" (ibid, 41), Mills states in *White*

*Collar*—in a passage that reads like a harbinger of 'globalization from above' in the early years of the 21st century:

> By examining white collar life, its is possible to learn something about what is becoming more typically 'American' than the frontier character probably ever was. What must be grasped is the picture of society as a great salesroom, an enormous file, an incorporated brain, a new universe of management and manipulation. By understanding these diverse white-collar worlds, one can also understand better the shape and meaning of modern society as a whole, as well as the simple hopes and complex anxieties that grip all the people who are sweating it out in the middle of the twentieth century (1951, xv).

Mills sensed that unlike former overtly visible forces of social control such as factory owners, railway barons, or landed aristocracies, a less identifiable authority had begun exerting social dominance in mass consumer society (Jamison and Eyerman, 43). This new power elite was administrative—an interlocking, bureaucratic caste comprised of 'experts' in business, labour, media, the military, and academia. In his celebrated last address to the nation before leaving office, two-term republican president Dwight Eisenhower would offer his own caution against the self-interested machinations of 'bureaucratism' in what he termed the nation's new 'military-industrial' complex (ibid, 42-43).

   Bureaucratism, political scientist John Starr records, exhibits a primary characteristic of striving organizationally toward rigidification, and toward reduction of behaviours within government operations to such point that they become routine (1973: 151). Rigidified, bureaucracies—whether in corporations, universities, government agencies, or within the military—become resistant to change, and this typically takes the form of establishing blockages in the traditional flow of communications within the organization itself, and in the channels between governors and the governed. The 'alienation' that inevitably occurs between these two is termed a "communications gap" (ibid). Precisely this same bureaucratism was an early concern for Mao Zedong who viewed it as administrative self-

interest and self-mythologization to the point where the bureaucracy becomes its own ideology, with all idealism directed toward the organization, rather than the people or interests it is intended to serve (Starr, 1973; Black, 1966). In his essay "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship' (June 30, 1949), Mao comments presciently:

> It is hard for any political party or person to avoid mistakes, but we should make as few as possible. Once a mistake is made, we should correct it, and the more quickly and thoroughly the better (1967: 147).

If America's new bureaucratic power elite was viewed darkly by Mills, it would be echoed by historians such as Halberstam, who in writing *The Best and the Brightest,* examined the Kennedy administration and the origins of the Vietnam War it inherited from the Eisenhower regime, could write of the new mandarins of expertise in whom:

> …pragmatism had again and again confronted morality, and morality had from time to time been sliced, but it had always been for the greater good of the career. It was the American way, ever upward… but the price was ultimately quite terrible…they had no other values, no other identity than their success and their titles. The new American modern man was no longer a whole man…no one decision, even a war, could make them give up their positions (1973: 4)

That which New Left critics like Mills, along with Paul Goodman and Herbert Marcuse who would follow in his wake, feared most was the breakdown in long-established principles of fundamental civic virtues in U.S. society. These are symbolized by the basic structural-functional dialectic—the *dharma* of national governance[118]—which a fellow traveller like educational theoretician such as Alexander Meiklejohn argues in *Political Freedom* is an interrelationship of "the scholars, teachers, and [the] combination of

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[118] This phrase is used in the spirit employed by Rosita Dellios (2003), in her conference paper "Sino-Indonesia Relations: Lessons from the Past." Discussing cultural-political approximation between the two nations, she refers to "…the dharma of the present diplomatic age would require an internal respect for difference within the national entity" (1).

economic, political, social, moral, aesthetic, and intellectual" elements of society (1965: 126).

The public's ability to engage in participatory democracy, Meiklejohn argues, depends on its right to know and receive factual information from government, corporate, and other administrative authorities. While there are no actual laws compelling such activities, or that the bureaucracies speak honestly with the people, it is a deduction from the basic democratic contract that 'the People and the Government are One' which forms the belief that significant public issues shall be decided by universal suffrage (ibid, 27).

The New Left critique of the Fifties viewed the traditional unity of social relationships in the U.S. as having been hijacked; of becoming a platform with a false bottom within a general "decline of pluralism" (Marcuse, 1964: xii). Standards of achievement and personal conduct that should be established and nurtured by family, church and school were now increasingly the jurisdiction of 'the System' as it was propagated by television, and in judging the slippery ethics this lapse encouraged, belief arose among critics that traditional civic pride in what one had was transforming to become 'shame with what one didn't have.' With the prestige of science booming exponentially in response to perceived Cold War nuclear threats, and with the new 'cult of the expert' this boom promoted throughout virtually every stratum of society, the very foundations of the nation's social contract appeared to be tottering. Thus:

> With the virtual elimination of social movements and their innovative barrier-breaking movement intellectuals, corporate America propelled the elitist expert to a position of power and influence. With so many people moving out to the suburbs and leaving behind both historical tradition and a sense of continuity, experts emerged to fill the gap with new kinds of professional advice…the lonely crowd of postwar America was socialized into a new scientific age (Jamison and Eyerman, 14).

For Mills, the scientific age presaged an existential crisis of meaning and purpose. European onlookers could share his anxiety. Veteran British touring lecturer-poet Stephen Spender could write in 1953:

> [In American culture] mystery is stripped from everything.  All people of all other countries have something in common, which is the sense of mystery.  The European, the Latin American, the Asiatic, the African, know that religion, sex and poetry are things which cannot be explained. In America not only is everything explained, but sometimes you get the impression that nothing exists but the explanation.  Analyze American existence to the ultimate essence and what you get is an explanation or a fact.  This is all contained within the concept 'The American way of Life'… American learning is always haunted by the idea that there is an 'explication' which is the ultimate reality…Perhaps the American taste for violence is really the endeavour to discover a mystery (127-28).

But in l957, the Russians launched Sputnik, initiating 'the Space Race.'  Jack Kerouac's novel *On The Road* was published, heralding the birth of Beat culture and another form of social dissent that had nothing to do with literary prestige or academic formality.  Arriving as the popularity of rock and roll music began to peak, its arrival caused a national sensation.  America was rocked to the core of its being.  When, three years later, an American spy-pilot, Gary Powers, was shot down over the Soviet Union under the Eisenhower administration and a bellicose Premier Kruschev brought terror to everyday American life, further changes were due.  In the national election in November of that year, Senator John F. Kennedy was elected as the youngest president in the history of the United States.  A new sensibility was in the air.  Paraphrasing Leonard Cohen, 'you could feel it and you could taste it.'[119]

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[119] See "Light As The Breeze" (1992), *The Future*.  New York: Sony Music Corp.

# Chapter 9.

# A New Sensibility

*It has been said that the problems that face California today, America*
*must meet tomorrow.  The waves of the future break first on the rocky*
*California coast, change comes most rapidly.  There is truth in this.  It*
*misses the point a little, because no place is like any other place, and*
*California is in many ways unique.  Yet no one can afford to be unaware*
*of the changes and difficulties that confront California.  They are too*
*likely to be the problems of all the civilized world.*

Ray Dasmann, *The Destruction of California*

Inspired by the writing of Mills, and disenchanted by a Cold War society that to many Americans now seemed to be losing scientific ground to its communist rivals, intellectual interest grew in a second wave of New Left criticism spearheaded by Herbert Marcuse.  A German immigrant affiliated with the Marxist Frankfurt School that would also offer up the influential, if now neglected as elitist, communications criticism of Theodore Adorno, Marcuse accepted a teaching position at Berkeley University in the San Francisco Bay area.  In 1964 he refined his social critique, narrowing Mills' warnings of the depersonalization of mass society into a barbed assault on what his best-known work of the same title terms, "One-Dimensional Man."

It is difficult to overestimate Marcuse's influence on student political activists and academic life of the times.  Taking as its charter the delivery of stinging rebukes against 'the System' of America's 'conformist' life and society—a process that was steadily eroding public participation in American life, his work was amplified by a growing school of social critics, including that of humanist Hannah Arendt (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1951), psychoanalyst Erich Fromm (*The Sane Society*, 1955), inner-city social organizer Saul Alinsky (*Rules for Radicals*, 1971), "ecological intellectuals" Rachel Carson (*Silent Spring*, 1962) and Fairfield Osborn (*The Limits of the Earth*, 1953),  atomic physicist-peace activist Leo Szilard, and anthropologist Margaret Mead (Jamison and

Eyerman, 54-59; 51-54; 103-06. See also Dickstein, 83-88; Roszak, 64-67). Under their influence the campus political movement of the 1960s quite literally came into existence.

But what was 'the System' that Marcuse and other New Left thinkers rejected, and that updated for the early 21st century inspires such depression and anger among anti-globalization activists? In *The Archeology of Knowledge,* French structuralist Michel Foucault (1972) discusses his theory of the *episteme*, an organizational paradigm comprised of its measurable "totality of relations" (p. 191) that is similar to Clifford Geertz'idea of culture as "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings…expressed in symbolic forms" (1973: 89). What Foucault intends is that a society's fundamental grounds of being, its metaphysical *raison d'être* and physical infrastructure—its episteme—shapes certain inevitabilities of human action and reaction. While perceptual differences among individuals do exist, a homogenized and conditioned way of seeing, of conforming to shared perceptual expectations, is subscribed to by the individual participants of that society. For New Left critics, this 'conditioning' represented a potentially fearful drift toward totalitarianism (Jamison and Eyerman, 22). A generation later, feminist critics like Sandra Bartky would reprise how, "In modern societies, [the] effects of power…gain access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures, and their daily actions" (1988: 79). In brief, when such comprehensive conformity to 'the System' itself becomes the norm, the dialectics of this dehumanization of the masses[120] can lead only to a 'new world order' of tyranny.

In *One Dimensional Man,* Marcuse declares freedom of the individual within mass society as his ethos and debunks the self-absorbed nature of scientism which he regards as having slipped the net of ethical and social constraints. Advancing a 'dialectic of liberation' away from the technology which, "serves to institute new, more effective, and more pleasant forms of social control and social cohesion" (1964: ix), he denounces:

> The totalitarian tendency of these controls [that] seems to assert itself in still another sense—by spreading to the less developed and even to the pre-industrial areas of the world, and by creating similarities in the development of communism and capitalism. In the face of the totalitarian

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[120] Extending this term from Jose Ortega Y Gasset (1948) in *The Dehumanization of Art.*

features of this society, the traditional notion of the 'neutrality' of technology can no longer be isolated from the use to which it is put; the technological society is a system of domination which operates already in the concept and construction of techniques (ibid, xv-xvi).

Thus, centralized control of communications technology—and in the 21st century *globalized* corporate control—and of television most acutely is to be looked upon with apprehension and grave concern. The remedy Marcuse proposes is renewal of the participatory democracy that had formerly been the philosophical root of American life before industrialization. Arguing that as a way to knowledge in changing social paradigms, "Truth [is] derived not from empirical, objective research but from the subjective participation of the observer in shaping reality" (Jamison and Eyerman, 118), individual self-liberation rests upon the possibility of alternative ways to shape reality.

Marcuse wrote from a Marxian position, compounding it with Freudian psychoanalytic perspectives in a manner that would also be reflected in a rising school of French literary theory which history has named Postmodernism. But unlike the postmodernist emphasis on *theory,* Marcuse's political science suggests that any real social revolution must be as much 'internal' as external, psychological as political. When America's campus leftists responded to President John F. Kennedy's call to 'do something for their country', it was through the Marcusian lens of re-engagement—of personal participation at the political level.

In the emotionally-charged campus politics of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a New Left organization inspired by the very ideas espoused in *One-Dimensional Man,* and that would be front and centre in the upheavals at universities across North America in the late-1960s, Marcuse's clarion cry came to fruition. In a key excerpt from its SDS Port Huron Statement of 1962, SDS—which would vault Tom Hayden to national political—proclaims:

Our own social values involve conceptions of human beings, human relationships, and social systems… We oppose the depersonalization that reduces human beings to the state of things (in Roszak, 58).

Contrasting with the ideological 'Cause' obsessed labour movements of the 1930s, SDS's commitment to political action begins within the individual, the psyche, and the dignity of community solidarity.

The old gap between dogma and practice would also be erased by other voices and activists through 'activism'—an American rephrasing of the 'engagement' that French intellectuals following Sartre imparted to American students attending the Sorbonne on the G.I. Bill. Dorothy Day, founder of the communitarian Catholic Worker Movement, and 'neighbourhood' activist Saul Alinsky struggled to overcome poverty, juvenile crime and injustice in Chicago and the nation's inner cities. Organized to battle against "community anonymity", they "engag[ed] ordinary people in decision-making processes" (Jamison and Eyerman, 187), by crossing traditional solitudes established along religious, economic class and racial lines. Through participatory action, they began returning "power to the people" (ibid), with the result as Gary Snyder has observed that, "what we learned from the sixties was how to organize" (seminar, 1985).

With this potent brew of neighbourhood activism, conscious resistance to an economic and political system that increasingly took the common citizen worker for granted, and anger at the depersonalization of the individual within unfeeling mass society, a new 'liberation theology' was being born. With the rise of the Civil Rights Movement to give it focus at the level of the streets, and the emergence of its charismatic leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a new religious and moral grounding was also being brought to the political sphere. With its borrowing of the Ghandian ideals of *ahimsa,* or non-violence, and its original Jeffersonian ideals of equality under the constitution, more and more the new liberalism became the cause to serve and young white university students from the northern cities began travelling and marching for social justice and racial equality alongside black Americans in the south. Moreover, through the black voter registration campaigns of 'Freedom Summer' in 1963, they came in contact with a deeper, more primal spirituality than most had ever experienced previously—with *the living holiness* of the southern gospel church, and with Dr. King's electrifying oratory preaching the power of love, of Christian righteousness, and of that quintessentially black American ideal that

would now be shared by a generation—*the beloved community* in which all of humanity formed one community in the eyes of God  (Jamison and Eyerman, 207).[121]

These things—a syncretic social movement that had become political, personal, spiritual and psychological—would shape the definitive social experiment of the 1960s. The world would come to name this movement 'the counterculture.'  An ideological stew of anti-establishment social libertarians, leftists, neo-Luddites, environmentalists, feminists, racial equality activists, Beats, and latterly free spirited hippies, it would arrive as something that can be situated historically between the 'Big Sleep' of American post-World War II consumer culture and its 'Big Forgetting' of post-Watergate Scandal culture during the 1970s.  And for a brief historical period, it all found a headquarters in the great, tolerant city of San Francisco.

Contributing to the colourful mélange that would become the periodicity badge of the San Francisco Renaissance-Beat-Haight-Ashbury era, one must add the anti-Vietnam War Movement that made Russian Revolutionary-style marches commonplace features on the nightly news, as well as a certain amount of youthful intellectual interest in Chairman Mao's Great Cultural Revolution in China that was gathering steam at the same historic moment.  Add the uncertain beginnings of an ecological movement, the advent of the contraceptive pill and evolution of the Women's Movement, and new thinking about the nature and practice of 'tribe', religion and sexuality—together, these are the ingredients of America's own cultural revolution of the l960s, from which emerges the reform world-view of the *new world dharma.*

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[121] As black American essayist Charles Johnson observes, "the beloved community" is essentially the *sangha,* the third of Buddhism's Three Gems of practice.  In North American Buddhism the idea expands upon the original Asian notion of monastic community to include the whole community of lay practitioners.  See *Best Buddhist Writing 2004.*

## *II.* <u>Reawakening the Contemplative Tradition:</u><br><u>East meets West</u>

*Think what a great world revolution will take place when East meets West finally,*

Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*

Whether consciously or not, historically, poets and poetry have been a driving force in the promulgation of new ways of looking at, and experiencing, the world.  From the ancient Greeks with their poetic tradition of invoking the inspiration of the Muse at the advent of an ode, formative links have existed between poetry and the sacred.  In 1821, Percy Bysshe Shelley argued in his essay *A Defence of Poetry* how,  "A poem is the image of life expressed in its eternal truth…A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one…Poetry is indeed something divine" (1974: 619-632).

During the 1950s, poetry emerged to fill a crucial role in re-shaping art and intellection as reflections of the sacred in American life at a time when Cold War paranoia made new choices of expression a necessary relief-valve. Reacting against a rising wave of unfeeling, corporate culture, a new generation of unaffiliated literary voices took as its course of action the task of engaging in public discourse.  If their preferred métier was the word, they expressed it not through established educational, social, political, or publishing institutions but chose instead to deliver it as spoken word at readings in alternative spaces—galleries, bars, nightclubs and cafes—and published it as circumstances allowed; either with small local presses or self-published in the long tradition of independent poetry (Ginsberg, cited in Carolan 2001: 74).  In a shift away from the prevailing academic formulae of the times that under the influence of poets like John Hall Wheelock favoured "ambiguity and tension" (Snyder, 1985), a new generation of thinkers chose to write as catharsis, as challenge, and as tocsin.  Trading on a vernacular legacy pioneered by such eminent artists as Walt Whitman (*Leaves of Grass*), Ezra Pound (*Cathay, Personae*), William Carlos Williams (*Patterson, In The American Grain*), Kenneth Rexroth and others, they worked—as Shelley proclaims—in the knowledge of:

grammatical forms which express the moods of time, and the difference of person, and the distinction of place [that are] convertible with respect to the highest poetry without injuring it as poetry" (ibid).

Allen Ginsberg would refer to this literary sensibility as a form of "inspired poetics" (Carolan, 2001:17). By extending the Romantic view of poetry as expressed by Wordsworth in the Preface to Lyrical Ballads (1802, in Abrams et al, 1974: 125)—"Fitting to metrical arrangement the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation"—Ginsberg and his associates known as the Beats would incorporate a new Buddhist-inspired technique of 'aesthetic mindfulness' in their practice of the craft. Of the latter, Ginsberg describes it as, "Writing our own mind. Writing down what we see when we see it, what we feel when we feel it" (Carolan, 19). This approach of using meditation as a primary poetic tool would herald a growing influence of classical Asian literature on North American arts and letters

Propelling the inspirational, even spiritual turn of American poetry during this Cold War period was the conviction remarked upon by Gary Snyder that "poetry suddenly seemed useful in 1955 San Francisco" (1980: 162). Convinced in the belief that their post-war society was starving spiritually, younger artists such as Snyder, Ginsberg, Philip Whalen, Lew Welch, Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure and others (ibid; see also Winson, 2004) were drawn to San Francisco by its fructifying climate, architecture and tolerance for simplified styles of living, and joined the Bay Area's veteran literary contingent in the emergence of a 'poetry renaissance.' Through their action poetry was redefined in terms of what it could be and how it could operate as a new form of self-awareness.

What poetry *had* been, in Snyder's view, and what it had represented was,

> A mentality…[an] idea that poetry cannot have an audience, and indeed that it was a little shameful if a poem was too popular…There was also the defeatist attitude that 'we live in a philistine culture' and 'no one is interested in art anyway, so we'll just write to each other' (ibid, 163).

For the Beats and their literary allies—elders and mentors like Kenneth Rexroth, William Everson, Robert Duncan, Henry Miller, Robinson Jeffers and William Carlos Williams— from New Jersey but a significant mentor nonetheless (Snyder 1995: 13)—poetry could be much more.  It could become a way of "remodeling themselves, their way of life, their perceptions and sensitivities" (Roszak, 1968: 63).  Snyder relates how,

> My generation found that boldly, to put it bluntly, having something to say helped with audiences.  It also should be apparent that one is not *owed* an audience by the culture; but one can indeed go out and try to build an audience.  Building that audience is done in part by going out on the road and using your voice and your body to speak to the people's condition, as the Quakers would say, to speak to the condition of your own times…So poetry readings as a new cultural form enhanced and strengthened poetry itself and the role of the poet (1980: 163).

Public poetry readings until San Francisco in the mid-1950s were a dormant aspect of literary practice.  But once established, and the idea took off immediately, they provided a sequence of events about which a regular community could coalesce in embracing new ideas of what else society could be.  And when Jack Kerouac took this news on the road, on publication in 1957 his eponymously titled novel of beat literary life, *On The Road,* would not only make 'Beat' a household word in North America, it would make the U.S. aware literally overnight that "it had a generation of writers and intellectuals on its hands that was breaking all the rules" (Snyder, 1995: 9).[122]

Corporate America responded with old-fashioned 'Yankee know-how' and turned dissent into money (Rexroth, 1970: 18).  In the ultimate capitalist ploy, it commodified even the anti-consumerist beat critique launched against it with a series of shamelessly

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[122] In "Rexroth: Shaker and Maker", William Everson (a.k.a. Bother Antoninus) [1981] notes that, "…We did gain some national notoriety from a blast in *Harper's* called "The New Cult of Sex and Anarchy…The Beat Generation was picked up by *Time* and *Life* magazines and assiduously promulgated.  *Life's* feature on the Beats was called "The Only Rebellion Around…"  To Rexroth's credit, he fired back.  His "San Francisco Letter" in Barney Rosett's *Evergreen Review* (Vol. 1, No. 2, 1957), helped give the larger group of young writers who had become known as the Beats their first real national public attention.

commercialized spin-offs, spoofs and misrepresentations.[123] Yet if 'Madison Avenue'
chose to make money, Ginsberg, Kerouac, Snyder and their confreres remained faithful in
their discovery through poetry to what Kenneth Rexroth could intuit as, "The thing that
endures, that gives value to life" (1959: 18). From their previous individual existences as
isolated seekers, the Beats effectively came together as a community of individuals, and
through their shared poetic interests would discover how in their dedication to the craft and
the muse that own their daily existence would be reinforced by,

> comradeship, loyalty, bravery, magnanimity, love, the relations of
> [humanity]in communication with each other, personally, as persons,
> committed to each other. [Knowing that] from this comes the beauty of
> life, its tragedy and its meaning, and from nowhere else (ibid).

The crystallizing moment of San Francisco's poetry renaissance was a public reading
held at the Galley Six on October 13, 1955 that has since been celebrated in a host of
critical, literary, cinematic, and stage productions (Ginsberg, 1986; Snyder, 1995: 7-17;
Pothero, 1995: 10-13). Sparked by Allen Ginsberg's first public reading of his incendiary
epic *Howl,* the event became a turning point in American poetry (Snyder, 1995: 7-17) and
is recreated in thinly-veiled prose by Jack Kerouac (1958) in his novel *The Dharma Bums.*
From this catalyst a cohort of previously fragmented artists were able to coalesce in airing
and sharing their dissenting views on American society, and become recognized not simply

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[123] Capitalizing on the 'Beatnik' phenomenon, publishers rushed to market sleazy characterizations
of beat culture's alleged promiscuity, drug use, passion for jazz and black American society.
Hollywood produced similar beatnik-flavoured productions, including a sanitized version of
Kerouac's novel of inter-racial love, *The Subterraneans* in which, unlike the novel, all ends well
and the Negro heroine Mardou Fox is replaced by Caucasian actress, Leslie Caron. Prime-time
television too, brought beat life to the nation when *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* introduced
comic actor Bob Denver as Maynard G. Krebs. Unwashed, unshaved, and an inveterate sponger,
Krebs' signature one-liner "What? Me work?!" became a national joke. The term 'beatnik'
originated with popular San Francisco columnist Herb Caen in June, 1958 when he spliced
Kerouac's 'beat' appellation with the name of the Russian-launched Sputnik 1 satellite that startled
the world.

a 'school', but as 'a generation'—the Beats.[124]   Summarizing their effect upon the
American intellect, Theodore Roszak (1968) contends that,

> If Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* stands as the founding document of the counter
> culture, we must remember what [its] poet had to tell the world: 'I have
> burned all my money in a wastebasket' (67).

In a collection of essays entitled *Against Interpretation* (1966) that vaulted Susan
Sontag to the forefront of critical authority, she argues in "One Culture and the New
Sensibility" (293-304) that a new way of thinking and working is most effectively
demonstrated in "simply living by the new values."  For:

> Art today is a new kind of instrument, an instrument for modifying
> consciousness and organizing new modes of sensibility…all kinds of
> conventionally accepted boundaries have thereby been challenged… The
> new sensibility is defiantly pluralistic; it is dedicated both to an
> excruciating seriousness and to fun and wit and nostalgia.  It is also
> extremely history-conscious… (ibid).

This new sensibility that Sontag explicated for "large highbrow journals that had held the
monopoly on avant-garde writing for so long" (Snyder, 1995: 8-9), was hard won and
came from younger artists dedicated to renewing the public function of poetry even as they
"made their money at almost any kind of work… carpentry, railroad jobs, logging, farm
work, dishwashing, freight handling—anything would do" (ibid).  Specifically as a result
of their creative and economic independence they,

> had a sudden feeling that we had finally broken through to a new freedom
> of expression, had shattered the stranglehold of universities on poets, and

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[124] Historical epochs in the arts frequently have been generationally titled.  Examples include the
Parisian *fin de siecle* writers and arts of the 1890s, the "Lost Generation" of Hemingway and
expatriate Americans in Paris so-named by Gertrude Stein during the 1920s, and the Oxford-bred
'Auden Gang' of the Thirties.

gone beyond the tedious and pointless arguments of Bolshevik versus capitalists that were (and still are) draining the imaginative life out of so many intellectuals in the world (ibid, 8).

Non-elite, diverse in origin, socially and politically engaged, comfortable exchanging ideas in the vernacular, demographically what this represented for both poets and their audience was something entirely new—a reawakening of the ancient tribal function of poetry, its oral tradition in which "the community and its poetry are not two" (Snyder, 1980: 174). Attempting to educate the conscience of his conservative east coast peers, notably among the high-brow journals of New York who looked upon the west coast literary renaissance with little more than distain, Kenneth Rexroth explained the emergence of the Beat phenomenon as the revival of "a contemplative tradition" (1970).

In language that poets of the American Pacific Northwest such as Lew Welch, Philip Whalen or Snyder would have little difficulty comprehending, Samoan author Albert Wendt (1980: xiv) explains the reciprocal nature of this unifying poetic-communal relationship in terms of "spiritual sustenance," adding how,

> Like a plant, the artist through an unconscious process of osmosis draws his mana (his artistic and imaginative energy) from everything surrounding him, as from a birth sac—the aesthetic and cultural traditions into which he is born, his personal relationships, even the food and drink he consumes. This mana he transmits back into his community in reconstituted form. How well he does this depends on his talents and on the willingness of his society to receive his paintings, or his poems, or his songs (ibid).

In essence, the poet and his or her working enterprise is involved with the larger community at a level that is symbiotically virtuous. From tenderness, to the life of the spirit, to indictments—everything in the life of the community is mirrored, from fundamental harmonies to the illogical discontinuities of everyday human experience in the world. In this regard, addressing Ginsberg's forceful, confessional poetic style especially,

Paul Zweig (1969) summarizes that what we are made to understand by such incantatory practice is that "nothing is safe from poetry" (in Dickstein, 16).

Kenneth Rexroth, a tribal elder to the Beat Generation, shares Zweig's assertion. He is also able to see sharply into to the formative relationship that emerged between Beat poets and poetry of the 1950s and the classical East Asian masters whom Rexroth himself translated (1955, 1971, 1972). Importantly, if nothing is safe from poetry, nothing is untouched by its virtues either, and "the great Chinese poets" whom the Beats came to regard as 'virtuous ancestors',[125] according to Rexroth:

> …say the same thing, except that they make no moral judgment of the universe. They have no gods to fight against. Man and his virtues are a part of the universe, like falling water and standing stone and drifting mist (1959: 18).

Unsurprisingly, Rexroth learned plenty himself from Chinese poetry, chiefly through his translations of Tu Fu (1971; see also, Schelling: 2005: 15-25). Trusting to his heart and ear, what he *heard* was a tone, a kind of plaintive resonance still echoing from the T'ang dynasty. He also recognized in Tu Fu "a purity, a directness and a simplicity [that] presents himself as a person in total communication…Even after he was fired and the T'ang court was demoralized, he went right on 'admonishing the Emperor' " (1959: 17). What is obvious in Tu Fu's sharp aesthetic is the poet's search for wholeness by relying on Taoist-Buddhist intuitive understandings as opposed to 'rational' analytical methods.

Writing from the same engaged literary tradition, William Everson has commented of how Rexroth "extolled Pacific Basin culture, translating Chinese and Japanese poetry into the vital American verse idiom" (1981: 253), but interestingly, the way in which Rexroth translated Japanese and Chinese poetry would also influence certain streams of American poetry itself during the latter half of the twentieth century—a critical relationship notably

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[125] Borrowing this liturgical phrase from the evening service of Zen Buddhism's Sesshin practice.

associated with "the nature elegies of some poets today" which themselves may be seen as a perennial incarnation of Chinese poetry (Snyder, 1995: 87; Schelling, 2005: 13-21).[126]

As Gary Snyder (1995) suggests in a brief essay entitled "Goddess of Mountains and Rivers":

> When English-speaking readers first came onto Chinese poetry in translation…there was a sigh of relief. It was refreshing to get away from romanticism and symbolism and to step into the cool world of Chinese lyric poetry. Here were poems of friendship and journeys, moments of tender thought for wives and children, praise of quiet cottages…We were ignorant of the fact that the poems are far more complex and formal in the original than any translation could let us know (1995: 86).

The translations Snyder alludes to appeared in *Cathay,* a collection of fourteen poems that Ezra Pound published in London in 1915. Focusing mainly on the work of Li Po (whom he introduced by his Japanese name Rihaku), Pound gave readers in English a glimpse into classical Chinese aesthetics that would pave the way, ironically, for the age of 'modernism' in Western literature (Ginsberg, 1986: 7-8). For Pound bought to this little volume a grace, economy and elegance that had run dry in late-Victorian and Edwardian English poetry, and his effort, especially the feminine tenderness of "The River Merchant's Wife" with its sorrowful monkey noise, paired butterflies, mosses, bamboo and magnificent yearning would become enormously influential—such that contemporary American poet and translator Sam Hamill claims it as, "the single most influential volume of poetry in this century…*Cathay* opened the doors to American modernism" (1999: 81).

What Pound brought to English language sensibilities was a new way of describing what it is the artist and poet *sees*. Allen Ginsberg explains that, "Pound provided a method of handling epiphanous or visionary moments, *satori* or *kensho* as Japanese might say: a method of rendering clear sight into words and preserving the breathing mandala of direct

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[126] See the anthologies *The Wisdom Anthology of North American Buddhist Poetry*. Ed. Andrew Schelling. Boston: Wisdom (2005). *Beneath A Single Moon*. Ed. Kent Johnson. Boston: Shambhala, 2001; and *What Book!? Buddha Poems From Beat To Hip Hop*. Ed. Gary Gach. Berkeley: Parallax, 1998.

perception of things simultaneously occurring during time of epiphany" (1986: 7). American poet Charles Simic (2003: 12) suggests further that in Cathay, Pound "not only invented a new kind of poem in English…he changed how we think of Chinese literature." T.S. Eliot concurred with this view. As Michelle Yeh (2000) observes:

> In his 1928 introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems*, [when] T.S. Eliot lauded Pound as the "inventor of Chinese poetry for our time..[he] clearly recognized the creative transformation involved in translating poetry from one language to another, hence his distinction between Pound's translation and "Chinese poetry-in-itself" (139).

By concentrating on the image in Chinese poetry, as Yeh explains further, Pound would find "that visual image—*phanopoeia*—is the most translatable part of poetic language" (ibid, 140). Thereafter, in his own original work Pound would intensify the most malleable, imagistic aspects of his poetic craft, stripping way human experiences to the bone—finding symbol as the way to a spirit much like Zen. Consider, for example, Pound's now universally admired, haiku-like "In a Station of the Metro" (1916):

> *The apparition of these faces in the crowd*
> *Petals on a wet, black bough.*

With a group of like-minded artist associates in Paris and London, Pound founded 'the Imagist movement' which sought a deeper, authentic knowledge of self and the creative process in which "the natural object is the adequate symbol" of direct perception (cited in (Ginsberg, 1986: 7).

Discussing the origins and development of Imagism in *The Pound Era*, Hugh Kenner (1971) explains its principle as the idea that:

> a poem may build its effects out of things it sets before the mind's eye by naming them…and [that] words or names, being ordered in time, are bound together and recalled into each other's presence by recurrent sounds" (in Simic, 199).

Pound's Chinese-influenced ideas descended through a dual line of transmission to the Beats of the 1950s.  Firstly, through the British translator Arthur Waley, whom the poet Robert Duncan argues was a central influence upon Rexroth, and in turn upon Snyder (interview, 1980: 18-19; see Schelling, 2005: 13-17).  Then, most directly, via the American imagist William Carlos Williams, who by writing the introduction to the first City Lights edition of Allen Ginsberg's Howl gave it the imprimatur of an acknowledged modern master.

But what did Western artists and readers see or feel from a cultural influence about which few had direct experience?   Beat generation critic, literary alumnus and editor John Clellon Holmes (1981) observes that in sharing with Pound "a certain native crankishness and village-scholar erudition", they responded with frontier-style enthusiasm to,

> The powerful appeal of Oriental modes of thought, and these [beat] writers probably came closer to apprehending, across the map-less cultural Pacific, the unique genius of the Eastern Mind than any Westerners since [R.H.] Blythe and [Ernest] Fenollosa.  Zen Buddhism, particularly, seemed to describe the fix they had perceived they were in, trapped in the absurdity of time-consciousness, only able to point at things, waiting for the sudden blissful silly flash to come.  Both Zen and Existentialism are ultimately concerned with the true nature of reality, which the formulating intelligence obscures.  The purpose of *haiku* to blow the mind; *satori*, perfect apprehension of what is *there* (9-10).

Transpiring from their encounters with East Asian spiritual paths and aesthetics came precisely the renewed awe of the holiness of nature and of sacred poetry that would increasingly be understood as 'Eastern mysticism', but that was also the very element which the religious minded Buddhist-Catholic Rexroth correctly saw as a revival of the West's own ancient, but neglected contemplative civilization.  For those from the Pacific Northwest, the *mana* found within the mythological layers of Native aboriginal wisdom traditions was also profoundly similar.

Japanese translator Shogo Oketani sees their thirst for authentic experience rooted not simply in the aesthetic, but in the context of the overarching social and political considerations of the Cold War period:

> The basic reason the Beat poets were fascinated by the world of *haiku* symbolized by Basho's *Genroku Haikai*, or by Zen, was not because they were looking for 'new and unusual' things. Rather, faced with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and the advent of the Cold War, they were forced to acknowledge the deception in their social and cultural background, which had supported a highly developed consumer society monopolized by white people. They needed new values to replace the materialism and commercialism on which their society rested. One alternative was the world found in the haiku written by Basho, which saw the self as having an uncertain place in nature. The Beat poets' inner need led them to this world (2000: 121).

For the poets of the Pacific Northwest who migrated to San Francisco—Phillip Whalen, Gary Snyder and Lew Welch—classic East Asian landscape paintings at least bore similarities to their own "mountains and rivers without end" terrain.[127] Snyder recalls his seeing such paintings at the Seattle Art Museum from his boyhood and recognizing in them a space similar to that he experienced when climbing mountains in the Coastal Range (1980: 93-94; 1996: 153).

Snyder's many years of travel as seaman, lay Zen student in Japan, pilgrim through India, and inveterate guest reader on the American and international poetry and dharma circuit gave him opportunity to study East Asian masterworks at many of the world's great gallery collections, including Beijing's Palace Museum and its counterpart in Taipei. He observes (1966: 157) that, "Gazing at these many paintings was each time a mysteriously enlarging experience." In *The Real Work* (1980) he further explains how,

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[127] A particular style of Japanese landscape watercolour painting, the "Mountains and Rivers Without End" tradition derives from Sung dynasty Chinese landscapes. It is also the title of Gary Snyder's (probably) best known work that he identifies as a long poem *sutra* and "mythic narrative of the female Buddha Tara" (Snyder, 1996 152).

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> The Chinese perceived mountains and rivers as numinous; special bends in the rivers or the contorted strata of high-piercing pinnacles were seen as spots of greater concentration of *chi*, spirit power…The fifth century B.C. *Tao Te Ching* is full of the echo of a great goddess: spirit of the valley, mother of the ten thousand things, marvelous emptiness before being and nonbeing" (87).

The origins of an appreciation for the more ineluctable elements of Eastern religion begin from such encounters and epiphanies, although in the Pacific Northwest recognition of the sacred in nature was already an established tradition. The important modern American painter Mark Tobey from Seattle had visited Japan several times (Rexroth, 1959), and Oregon artist Morris Graves had an interest too in Asian art techniques (ibid). Further north, in British Columbia the painter Emily Carr from Victoria, who is now an iconic figure for Canadians, would help redefine visual art in Canada through her intensive thirty-year engagement with Native aboriginal cultures after a formative study period with Tobey (Tippett, 1979). More revealing of the influence of Asian art upon North American models is the work of Frederick Horsman Varley. During his North Vancouver period in the late-1920s-early 1930s, Varley shared his abiding interest in Hindu and Chinese colour and painting theories and as an influential instructor introduced them to a new generation of emerging west coast artists (Tippett, 1998; Shadbolt, 1990). And Lawren Harris, the spark-plug personality among Canada's pre-eminent Group of Seven nationalist school of painting, introduced both Varley and Carr to Theosophical philosophy with its Asian spiritual underpinnings (Tippett, 204-207; Carolan, 1999: 7). As an interpretive school, each of these path-breaking artists and their followers subscribed to a creative process that is best expressed by Tobey's dictum, "Depth is a thing to be felt, not seen" (cited in Rexroth, 1959).

For the Beats, the importance of having a sense of wholeness extended through to their poetry. From their preliminary readings into works such as the *Tao Te Ching*, the Confucian classics, and the *Bhagavad-Gita* (Snyder, in Winson 2004), spiritual concepts that seemed to be losing ground within American society could still be located in a literary

context at least, through readings of classical Chinese and Japanese literature. Snyder confirms this, saying,

> When I went into college I was bedeviled already by the questions of these contradictions of living in and supposedly being a member of a society that was destroying its own ground...I began to perceive that maybe it was all of Western culture that was off the track and not just capitalism—that there were certain self-destructive tendencies in our cultural tradition (1980: 94).

In "What Poetry did In China" (1995) he discusses the relevance of a different set of traditions that seemed to be reflected within East Asian literatures:

> Chinese poetry, at its finest, seems to have found a center within the tripod of humanity, spirit, and nature. With strategies of apparent simplicity and understatement, it moves from awe before history to—a deep breath before nature. Twentieth century English-language translations make this poetry into 'plain tone and direct statement,' and this form Chinese poetry...had a strong effect on occidental poets tired of heroics and theologies...It can be understood as having something to do with the twentieth century thirst for naturalistic secular clarity. Chinese poetry provided the exhilarating realization that such clarity can be accomplished in the mode of poetry (91).

What Snyder (1980) and the Beats were able to comprehend is that poetry with its ability to compress large ideas into compact language and space, and to marry the edges of both the conscious and unconscious mind, also functions as,

> a social and traditional art that is linked to its past and particularly its language, that *loops* and draws on its past and that serves as a vehicle for contact with the depths of our own unconscious—and that gets better by

practicing…Like Dogen, the Zen master, said, 'We study the self to forget
the self.  And when you forget the self, you become *one* with all things'
(65).

Clearly, what poetry could be was shamanic, "a mode of speaking for our dreams and
for the deep archetypes" (ibid, 93).  In this regard, the Buddhism that has evolved in the
Americas largely out of this same poetic vision-quest has had a profoundly literary
grounding, and an empathy with both Native aboriginal traditions and the practice of
psychological inquiry.  For those willing to swim outside the cultural mainstream, both
poetry and Buddhism have also served as a licence to venture and explore alternative
realities.  In an East-West context, the proviso has been that like,

…the Chinese with their Confucian focus on the family and the
community, and the Chinese Buddhists with their return-to-the-world-to-
help vows… one will bring back and share whatever one has found  (ibid).

The hallmarks of this practice remain clarity, direct expression and individual
responsibility.  Poet and essayist-translator Andrew Schelling summarizes it as "a blend of
Buddhist practice, ecological consciousness, outdoor adventure, spiritual renunciation, and
life on the margins of conformist North American society" (2005: 16).

The study of Chinese poetry, literary Taoism, and what Buddhist-study entry points
were then extant—miscellaneous translations, often in stilted Victorian English, of classic
texts; the "Buddhist Bible" compiled by Dwight Goddard; and the Berkeley Jodo-Shin
Buddhist church—first led Gary Snyder especially into deeper Buddhist inquiries he had
begun while a student at Reed College in Portland Oregon (1996: 153-54; 1980: 93-96; in
Winson, 2004).  Meanwhile, on the U.S. east coast Jack Kerouac independently pursued
his own related inquiries, while in Honolulu, Robert Aitken engaged in a like-minded
search (interview, 1996).  Something was in the air, but on the ground individual seekers
were still obliged to write their own route maps, parsing an East-West canon still of
extremely limited scholarly dimension due to the rarity of skilled translators.

Nevertheless, by cobbling together his own syllabus Snyder moved forward in his studies and dividends were forthcoming:

> The convergence that I found really exciting was the Mahayana Buddhist wisdom-oriented line as it developed in China and assimilated the older Taoist tradition. It was that very precise cultural meeting that also coincided with the highest period of Chinese poetry—the early and middle T'ang Dynasty Zen masters and the poets who were their contemporaries and in many cases friends—that was fascinating. Then I learned that this tradition is still alive and well in Japan. That convinced me that I should go and study [there] (1980: 94-95).

In 1956, Snyder left for a lengthy residence in Kyoto. Philip Whalen also undertook a similar quest. Allen Ginsberg and others would make visits. Other Western students of Zen and Japanese culture in Japan at the time included poet and publisher of *Origin,* Cid Corman; Clayton Eshleman who would later become publisher of *Sulfur* (1996: 153-158); the prominent translator Burton Watson, who arrived ahead of Snyder; the artist Will Petersen; Dutch Zen student and future author, Janwillem van de Wetering; Neal Hunter, an Australian, who referred Snyder to Japanese counterculture figure *par excellence* Nanao Sakaki; novelist and translator Donald Richie; Philip Yampolsky, who would become Professor of Japanese at Columbia University; and Mrs. Ruth Fuller Sasaki, an American who had established an institute for Zen study at Daitoku-ji temple in Kyoto and who helped arrange Snyder's first visit (Watson, 1999: 53-59; Yampolsky, ibid, 60-69, in Halper, 1991).

The work of these Zen enthusiasts did much to overcome the myths that had attached themselves to popular homespun conceptions of Zen Buddhism in the West. Immersing themselves in rigorous zazen meditation training, sutra and chanting practice, koan practice, and the commonplace life of lay practitioners living in modest circumstances, they began consolidating a more sophisticated Western awareness of Buddhism within a new direct knowledge of its devotional, intellectual and practice-oriented streams.

Snyder quickly discovered the qualities he had set out to find—that Asia still held "a more enormous teaching tradition intact", in which "several great wisdom traditions with teachers and schools" still flourished (1980: 17). Apart from the learning he acquired about what *sangha* could mean within such traditions, he would arrive at a fundamental recognition of what the archetypal Asian guru-chela relationship entails:

> What do we learn from the Eastern traditions? Something about patience, about long term commitment to a spiritual path…One of the reasons that you have to be very patient and very committed is that the way the transmission works is that you don't *see* how it works for a long time. It begins to come clear later (ibid, 87-98).

Poetry too, would remain a central endeavour and Snyder's first book would be published in Japan.[128] Both poetry and Buddhism rest at the heart of the cultural legacy bequeathed by China's T'ang dynasty. In "The Old Masters and the Old Women" Snyder recounts how T'ang culture of the eighth century witnessed the flowering of poets Wang Wei, Li Po, Tu Fu, Han Shan, and Liu Tsung-yuan (1995: 102), while:

> Contemporary with these poets are the great creative Chan (Zen) Masters Shen-hui, Nan-yueh, Ma-tsu, Pai-chang, and Shih-tou. For whatever reason, the Golden Age of Chinese poetry is also the Golden Age of Chan (ibid).

If the T'ang Dynasty wrought a strong impression on Western sensibilities, it did so perhaps through its own remarkable *mise en scene,* or historical staging.[129] Noting how "from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, the poetry of China reached far (but selectively) into the world of nature" (ibid, 92), Snyder elaborates further that:

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[128] Cid Corman at *Origin* published a Japanese-style handbound edition of Snyder's *Riprap* and translations of Cold Mountain (Han Shan) in Kyoto in 1959.

[129] *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, E.H. Schafer (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1963), provides indispensible background on T'ang culture.

Creativity is not at its best when it's a by-product of turbulence. The great Zen masters, the great Chinese poets, and some of the great Buddhist philosophers, were all contemporaries over just a few centuries in the T'ang Dynasty. The whole power that comes out of that is the power of men who have achieved sanity of a working sort in a society which has a working peace, and then have said, 'Now where do we go from here?' When we get to the top of the hundred-foot pole, keep going!" (1980: 41).

In meeting Zen on its own terms, in its own environment Snyder and other Western seekers would tackle its irreducible teaching, being mindful as Basho advised his students not to "merely follow in the footsteps of the masters, but [to] seek what they sought' (Hamill, 1999: 88). In their work, finding poetry and Zen as mutually-informing sides of a coin, they would return North American poetry to reverence for the sacred, the holy and the natural. Following in their wake would come subsequent waves of disciples bridging poetry, dharma, citizenship and community. Roszak (1968) infers how the Beat-inspired poetic ethos was evolving into something more substantial:

> The spirit of Prince Kropotkin, who learned the anti-statist values of mutual-aid from villagers and nomads little removed from the Neolithic or even Paleolithic level breathes through all the young say about community…They wisely recognize that participative democracy cannot settle for being a matter of political-economic decentralism—only that and nothing more. As long as the spell of the objective consciousness grips our society, the regime of experts can never be far-off; the community is bound to remain beholden to the high priests of the citadel who control access to reality (265).

Whereas East Asian Taoist masters like Chuang-tzu with his 'parables of the Useless' found spiritual freedom through *disassociation* (see *Basic Writings*, trans. Watson, 1996), by contrast, the 'back to the world' vows of Buddhism with its bodhisattva commitment to save all sentient beings engendered a belief among Western seekers that indifference to the

suffering of others should be a source of *guilt*. Returning to the world with news was an integral part of the Beat program and two generations of youthful North American dharma and social justice activists have since committed themselves to a leap of meaning and purpose in which participation in society defines their moral growth. This democratic conviction has ultimately helped to define alternative ideas of globalization.[130]

With their experience of the sacred in ecological terms especially, a sensibility has arisen from dharma-inspired writers and artists that it is not so much what one sees that is essential, but the way in which one can shift her or his capacity to see new things, and in new ways, that is critical to advancement of the human condition. These creative artists and intellectuals who became popularly regarded as mystically-inspired themselves (see Watts 1958, *Beat Zen, Square Zen and Zen*), would lead toward growing Western interest in contemplative practices from zazen to yoga and tai chi, from the practice of writing haiku now found in virtually every Western elementary school, to greater appreciation for a more frugal lifestyle in which inner spaciousness is a thing to be welcomed daily, rather than purged through endless, fleeting consumer distractions; toward elevated appreciation of cross-cultural exchanges, and ultimately toward the spiritual values of compassion and mindfulness.

In an age of declining, even post-institutional religious values, they would return the dimension of the *spirit* to a place of honour within the public discourse of one significant stream in Western civilization—the province of arts and letters. From the marriage of their growing ecological concerns with poetry and dharma they helped usher in "eco-psychology, eco-spirituality, eco-nomics, and eco-politics" (Keen, 1994: 214-15; Markoff, 2005). More broadly, in espousing their meditative view of the natural world's interpenetrating living systems as a *commonwealth,* they created conditions for the

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[130] The student political action of the 1960s that spread through the model of Berkeley University's 'Free speech' movement spread to Canada, Europe and beyond. Its Haight-Ashbury affiliations in San Francisco owed considerable debts to the Beats, and as this thesis has previously noted, these roots have continued to manifest themselves in counter-cultural movements since then, especially pertaining to social diversity and environmental issues. Illustrating how these traditions have mainstreamed, *The Economist* (March 19, 2005; p. 6-7), notes that Daniel Cohn-Bendit, former "fiery leader of student riots in Paris in 1968", which themselves were mimetic of the initial Berkeley protests, is now the "respectable co-head of the Greens in the European Parliament." Definitive background into the French variant of this *activiste* period is found in *Red Flag/Black Flag:* Patrick Seale and Maureen McConville (1968).

emergence of what seekers like Fritjof Capra, Joanna Macy and other scholars understand as "a science of the sacred' (ibid). In radically rethinking sacredness this way, the Zen-inflected intuition of these scholars allowed them to recognize that nirvana too, lies within samsara, in ordinary mind and everyday existence—an integral self-liberating component of *new world dharma*.

### *III.* **The Liberation Imperative**

In an 'outsider art' essay entitled "The White Negro", Norman Mailer (1959: 315) charges that "man is not only his character but his context." In the sense that Mailer intends, 'engagement' is literally a form of contract with the self, and this follows in the mainline of the modernist project[131] in 20th century arts and letters which, from its inception, borrowed from Matthew Arnold's conviction that it was the job of artists and poets to bring "intellectual news to all those who were…'interested in the advance of the general culture' (cited in Krystal, 2001: xxiii). In this fashion, art becomes more than skilled depiction, decoration or social declaration; rather, it is a dialectic through which one's own history and time are experienced intensely, and that through personal experience seems to illuminate the artist's own individuality.

As Robert Fulford has noted in chapter one of this thesis, on the thresh-hold of the 21st century it is difficult not to think of culture as a form of political discourse as well. Like Mailer, Gary Snyder also contends that character and commitment are binary in nature and this line of thinking is demonstrated in his influential essay from the late-1960s, "Buddhism and the Coming Revolution." Observing that, "no one today can afford to be innocent, or indulge himself in ignorance of the nature of contemporary governments,

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[131] Modernism is defined as, "A broad trend in twentieth-century art and literature emphasizing aesthetic innovation and themes that comment upon contemporary life. Modernist art flaunts difficult, often aggressive or disruptive, forms and styles; it frequently challenges traditional 'realistic' art and criticizes mass popular entertainment. Thematically, modernism displays a fascination with technology, city life, and problems of personal identity. It embraces both political critique and spiritual exploration" highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0070384290/student_view0/glossary.html. Retrieved 02/21/05.

politics and social orders" (1969: 90-91), Snyder illustrates how from this stance the act of writing can be at once testament, tocsin, catharsis and healing. Phillip Whalen provides a striking example.

A formative Beat poet who was latter ordained as a Zen monk and became abbot of San Francisco's Hartford Street Zen Centre, Whalen's work includes "an active Greek and Roman tradition in combination with a conspicuously Eastern disposition, albeit one shaped by a Modernist sensibility" (Holsapple, 2004: 129-151). Specifically, both classical Western and East Asian influences are at play in his demanding style of work, as are Whalen's social reformist and religious impulses. Unsurprisingly, given the influence that veteran political organizer Rexroth exerted on Whalen and on Snyder also, Whalen's poetry can be regarded as a form of philosophical interrogation (ibid). This is consistent with the larger Beat interpretation of poetic form and experience. Admixed with the shamanic, prophetic style revived from biblical tradition by Ginsberg in *Howl,* the Beat school's modernist concatenation of literature as an artist's *fuga,* or 'way'[132] emerged as a compassionate, activist poetics. What Whalen regarded as "essentially an Indian-Chinese-Japanese paradigm" (interview, 1995, p.227), summarized the Beat reconciliation and healing of wounds between the poet and his or her own self.

For Jack Kerouac, North America's first mass-market popularizer of East Asian philosophical ideas, the discovery of Buddhist and Hindu religious texts in the 1940s-50s grew to become an extension of his search for meaning in a world clouded with Cold War uncertainty. Possessing a profoundly devotional French-Canadian Catholicism (Snyder, 1995) his spiritual yearning blossoms as a genuine religious intoxication in the most searching of his extensive oeuvre, *The Dharma Bums* and *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity*, written in 1959 and 1960 respectively. Sharing with his close friend Allen Ginsberg the maxim 'scribble down your nakedness' (Morrissey, 2000; Carolan, 2001), and a belief that the poet's role is to get to grips with the independent impulse in his or her own heart—"I warned him at once I didn't give a goddamn about the mythology and all the names and national flavours of Buddhism, but was just interested in the first of

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[132] Believing that poetry could be a source of enlightenment, Zen monk and haiku master Basho (pseudonym, Matsuo Munefusa, 1644-94) introduced this concept of an artist having his or her *fuga,* or 'way.' See http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Island/5022/bashobio.html. Retreived 02/19/05.

Sakyamuni's four noble truths, *All life is suffering...*"(ibid, 12)—Kerouac's version of religious self-examination can also be regarded as a form of continual self-interrogation. Deriving insight from Zen practice, its appreciation of life's golden moments begins by focusing upon external stimuli then moves to the inner landscape of the heart.

Kerouac's brace of dharma masterworks trace a spiritual odyssey in which 'self' is discovered through 'uncovering' the layers of what D.H. Lawrence understood as "our cultural winding sheets"—the expectations and obligations imposed upon one by participation in modern industrial society (Burns, 1975: 5-6). Kerouac's conscious wish was to disassociate from the excesses of consumer society with its "middle class non-identity" that demands its members,

> consume production and therefore have to work for the privilege of consuming all that crap they didn't really want anyway such as refrigerators, TV sets, cars, at least new fancy cars, certain hair oils and deodorants and general junk you finally always see a week later in the garbage anyway, all of them imprisoned in a system of work, produce, consume, work, produce, consume…" (1986: 97).

Committed to raising consciousness of the sacred in American consumer society, what Kerouac understood implicitly is the ancient shamanic principle of reclusion: the need, from time to time at least, to retire from crowded cities and repair to the wilderness, and ultimately to mountains.[133]

In *The Dharma Bums*, Kerouac's alter-ego character Ray enters a metaphorical *terra incognita* within himself when he takes work as a fire-lookout atop Desolation Peak which flanks the Washington State-Canadian border. There, in a secluded sixty-three day mountain-top vigil, his story unfolds as more than a simple test of character. Incorporating Kerouac's yearning for Buddhist insight alongside his own 'original face' Catholicism

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[133] Historically, mountain peaks are associated with transcendental experience. One is mindful of the Greek mythic world of Olympus, the biblical analogies of Christ in the Lenten wilderness for 40 symbolic days and nights, the Sermon on the Mount, the Buddha's Fire Sermon and addresses in the vicinity of Vulture Peak, St. Patrick's 40 day fast atop Croagh Padraic, the Himalayan abode of Lord Shiva, and the mountain-focused insight of Zen master Dogen.

bequeathed him by his traditional upbringing, Ray ultimately achieves self-awakening—the *satori* or *kensho* of Zen—thereby liberating himself (albeit for what is undoubtedly a fleeting moment of illumination) from the need for further self-searching.

In preparation for his literary tangle with self and soul, Kerouac's own autobiographical character readies himself through a vagabond life, practicing a life of austerity on the open road. "I was very devout in those days," he says; "and was practicing my religious devotions almost to perfection…I was a perfect Dharma Bum myself and considered myself a religious wanderer" (ibid, 5). Additionally, he experiences a series of dharma conversations with a new friend, Japhy Ryder, who as noted previously is the fictional alter ego of real life Kerouac buddy Gary Snyder. Through Ryder/Snyder, Ray (and Kerouac's sprawling audience) is introduced the T'ang dynasty poet Han Shan, "a man of solitude who could take off by himself and live purely and true to himself" (ibid, 23) whose 'Cold Mountain' poems his friend Japhy/Snyder is translating. Through the latter's eyes, and through the wilderness vigour and dry discipline he encounters in Japhy, the hard-drinking Ray begins slowing down his own citified, frenetic metabolism and comes to appreciate the subtle grandeur of the alpine terrain:

> Here now the earth was a splendorous thing—snow on the ground, in melting patches in the grass, and gurgling creeks, and the huge silent rock mountains on both sides, and a wind blowing, and the smell of heather (66).

By bringing the pristine natural world down to a sharp delineation of details—rocks, waterfalls, the glint of light on snow and stone—in quintessential Taoist fashion the presence of the natural world is enlarged, and the diminishment of the individual within the landscape is a matter of course. Symbolically, these contrasts in value juxtapose the eternal crags with the temporal world of Ray and humanity. In doing so, the mortal realm is seen to emerge out of the eternal—the 'ten thousand things' arise from Tao—yet the linkages within this intimate conversation are obvious. In an organic parallel of Taoist, Buddhist and Hindu understandings of primal divinity, humanity and the natural world are observed as mutually arising.

In a curatorial statement accompanying *Fantastic Mountains,* a travelling exhibition of classical Chinese Landscape Painting from the Shanghai Museum  (Sydney, Australia, 2004), Liu Yang asserts,

> Among the many variations of the reclusion theme in Ming and Qing landscape traditions, 'gazing at a waterfall' was one of the most popular and enduring.  In Confucian teaching, living water is understood as a metaphor of virtue or a higher state of mind…reinforcing 'a sense of the other worldly' and pointing at the immortal realm.  Often seen among red maples and zig-zag streams is a *fangwai jiao,* or 'otherworldly friend', [a lohan].

In this aspect, Kerouac's novel closely shadows classical Chinese tradition, seeking a new artist's *fuga* for the author's uncertain political age.  This shadowing is redoubled when for insight and guidance, 'Ray' relies on a trusted other-worldy dharma companion after the beloved Chinese Buddhist example of Han Shan (English translation, 'Cold Mountain') and his sidekick, Shih-te.  In venturing into the higher heights far from "evil" cities (*Dharma Bums*, 156), by communing with nature rather than imposing themselves upon it, Ray and Japhy follow, "the steps that lead the painter-scholar to the edge of refinement and mystical introspection, where man's reflections on nature and nature itself are one" (Anderson, 2004: 12).

This is further seen in the increasingly ineffable imagery when Ray and Japhy traverse alpine country:

> We went on, and I was immensely pleased with the way the trail had a kind of immortal look to it, in the early afternoon now, the way the side of the grassy hill seemed to be clouded over with ancient gold dust and the bugs flipped over rocks and the wind sighed in shimmering dances over the hot rocks, and the way the trail would suddenly come into a cool shady part with big trees overhead… (Dharma B., 61).

With little else to do but express their reverence, Kerouac's characters stand poised on the edge between primal holiness—the eternal—and their temporal self-hood.  This tripod of 'heaven', self and the reverence which joins them, shapes the mandala consciousness, or 'golden eternity' that Kerouac strives for throughout his incessant wanderings.  But, philosophically, the temporal is "the territory of the known" (Kang Grosjean, 2000: 90), and Kerouac yearns for the unknown world beyond where, "as Blake declares we can perceive the universe in a grain of sand, and where each moment become eternal" (ibid).

John Clellon Holmes claims of Kerouac and the Beats, whom he knew well, that, "Their real journey was inward; and if they seemed to trespass most boundaries, legal and moral, it was only in the hope of finding a belief on the other side" (in Charters, 1991, xxix).

As generations of mystics have discovered, the key to awakening the inner self is to slow down the mind (Keen, 1988, p. 43).  In Allen Ginsberg's view, what Kerouac and the Beats learned from experience is that, "In meditation, the lack of distraction—our stillness, our rootedness—gives us greater awareness of the phenomenal world" (in Carolan, 2001: 29).  This meditative clarity also has utility in the actual craft of poetry.  By blending the two in a synthesis of Western and Asian ideas during his extended mountain retreat, Kerouac discovers that when meditative practice joins creative practice the result can also be psychotherapeutic:

> …one night when I began to experience what is called 'Samapatti,' which in Sanskrit means Transcendental Visits.  I'd got a little drowsy in the mind but was somehow physically wide awake sitting erect under my tree when suddenly I saw flowers, pink worlds of walls of them…and I saw an ancient vision of Dipankara Buddha who was the Buddha who never said anything… It, the vision, was devoid of any sensation of I being myself, it was pure egolessness, just simply wild ethereal activities devoid of any wrong predicates (D.B., 147).

In adopting the traditional values of insight training and compassion that have been preserved in East and South Asian cultures, Kerouac discovers a sovereign antidote for the ills and missing elements of his own culture. With these seed values he feels empowered to remind others that meaningful forms of liberation actually do exist (ibid, 239), and is secure in his role as transmitter of the dharma and as sometime healer of world's torn vision. With this, he is now fully able to turn and head "on down the trail back to this world" (ibid, 144).

Nonetheless, as Sheldon Pollock (2003) reminds, for the purist Kerouac's mountain-quest awakening may be a hybridized form of self-realization, for:

> The Orientalism debate has alerted us to the political constraints—in the widest sense of 'political' that have operated in the production of knowledge about Asia. It has made Western scholars more sensitive to the fundamental importance and difficulty of learning to listen, at once sympathetically and critically, to non-Western voices when attempting to understand non-Western cultures (12-13).[134]

Accordingly, in examining East Asian contemplative traditions as they comprehend the mysteries of existence, what is frequently revealed from them is a less analytical focus—one that, instead, is more concerned with totality, and is less devoted to the need for an exhaustive analysis of human experience.

In illustration, Kamo-no-Chomei's *Hojoki*, a classic of Japanese scholarly literature written in 1212 when the Heian period was giving way to the Kamakura Shogunate in Japan, remains even with contemporary Japanese society a beloved text depicting a wandering poet-priest's endeavours to retire from the world and transcend the vicissitudes of life. It represents an archetypal Asian counterpoint to Kerouac's Dharma Bums.

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[134] Notable academics such as Pierre Ryckmans (Simon Leys) and Donald Richie, however, have dismissed Edward Said's 'Orientalist' critique within discourse relating to Asia-Pacific cultural issues. See Australia's Radio National Boyer Lectures: www.abc.net.au/rn/boyers/stories/s988170.htm; and Carolan, "A Conversation with Donald Richie", *Bloomsbury Review* (2001), Vol.21.2: pp. 23-24.

Chomei (1155-1216) was born into privilege (Moriguchi and Jenkins, 1996: 19-26).  An imperial court position provided him with unique insight into the blood sport of feudal Japanese politics, but it seems that a youthful indiscretion in matters of protocol cost him the grace and favour of a hereditary family sinecure (ibid).  Converting to Jodo Shin Buddhism—the Pure Land sect—he later took ordination as a monk at age 48 or 49.  Like his contemporary fellow bardic monk, Saigyo (1118-1190), Chomei retired to a series of small, rustic huts in the hills outside the old capital, and like the revered T'ang dynasty master Po Chu-i before him (see Watson, trans. 1994: xi-22), recorded his reclusive life in journal form.

Chomei's work is an archival record as well as a poem.  As a historical testament, the Hojoki relates much of the warp and weft of daily life in medieval Kyoto, an imperial city that for all its refinement was ravaged by the twelfth-century's Taira-Minamoto clan wars.  Amid an unprecedented series of natural calamities—floods, fire, earthquakes and famine—that add fuel to the civil disorder, Chomei retreats to a ten-foot square mountain hut, drawing progressively further away from the city while documenting the human catastrophe underway below.  Thus begins the Hojoki with its opening like that of Herakleitos[135]  in homage to the transience of mortal life:

> *The flowing river*
> *never stops*
> *and yet the water*
> *never stays*
> *the same.*
> *Foam floats*
> *upon the pools,*
> *scattering, re-forming,*
> *never lingering long.*
> *So it is with man*
> *and all his dwelling places*
> *here on earth*
>
> (trans. Moriguchi and Jenkins, 31)

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[135] Herakleitos, approximately 540-480 BC, lived in Ephasos, Asia Minor.  One of the fathers of Western philosophy, his Fragment 21, trans, Guy Davenport (1979) reads: "One cannot step twice into the same river, for the water into which you first stepped has flowed on."

In his simple hut, Chomei finds merit in the Confucian scholar's timeless pursuits of music, singing and playing his *biwa* lute, meditating on the passing of the seasons, and studying three small baskets of holy books and poetry. Living on rush mats with a simple altar, he embraces the uncertain life of a religious mendicant. It is the elemental hermit's existence, revered throughout Taoist-Buddhist East Asia (Porter, 1993). Bearing witness to the tragedies that befall his former neighbours, he recounts their suffering: "Sure enough / time passed and / confusion, anguish / filled the hearts of all" (ibid, 44). Wandering through the shattered streets of Kyoto, he looks upon the plight of worthy people unaccountably blasted by nature and comes to realize the futility of attachment to material goods that are destroyed in a blink.[136]

The nature of sin and self-sacrifice also come under his scrutiny. With nothing else for trade goods, families begin tearing apart the wood from their own homes, selling and burning it little by little; and the mystified scribe sees other wood "painted red" with "glimpses of gold leaf" pass by, and learns that in desperation people have been reduced to,

> *…breaking into temples*
> *and stealing images of Buddha,*
> *tearing out the fittings of the halls*
> *and chopping them to bits.*
> *Sinful times!*
> *That I should witness*
> *such a dreadful thing!*     (ibid, 48)

As for loving couples, he observes how "the one whose love was deeper / always died first. / They held back / gave the meager food / to their dearest" (ibid, 49).

Sin, it seems, is a relative virtue. After a terrible earthquake that causes the Great Buddha at Todaiji to fall, Chomei relates how people in their suffering could talk "of the vanities of this world / and people seemed to be rid / of the sinfulness in their hearts / But days and months went by / then years / and no one spoke of it again" (ibid, 53-54).

A meditation on the ironies of power and integrity follows:

> *The powerful are greedy.*

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[136] The Great Hanshin earthquake that rocked the Kobe city area in 1995 is credited with a national Japanese revival of interest in the *Hojoki*.

> *Those who stand alone are always mocked...*
> *If you conform to the world*
> *It will bind you hand and foot.*
> *If you do not, then*
> *It will think you mad*      (ibid, 57-58).

All of this brings Chomei, like a wearied J. Alfred Prufrock, to the irreducible moment that can no longer be avoided:[137]

> *And so the question,*
> *where should we live?*
> *And how?*
>
> *Where to find*
> *a place to rest for a while?*
> *And how bring*
> *even short-lived peace*
> *to our hearts?*          (ibid, 58)

In reply, Chomei's spartan poetic rendering echoes the weeping of the evening cicadas that surround his hut, and which "seem to grieve / this husk of a world" (ibid, 64). Compounding his loneliness and sorrow for the world are further evocative images of "distant cries of monkeys", "tears [that] wet my sleeves", "awakening at night and / poking embers from the ashes", and the "cries of copper pheasants" (ibid, 68)—all drawn from the essential well of compassionate Buddho-Taoist literary aesthetics that so captivated Ernest Fenollosa, Ezra Pound and generations since them in Western arts and letters.

The prescription Chomei devises to keep human spirit alive and bountiful, even during oppressive times is elemental: "…always walking, always working" (ibid, 74). And drawing again from the T'ang aesthetic that recalls the 'travelling' poems of Tu Fu and memory poems of Chia Tao,[138]

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[137] In T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", widely regarded as the most beloved poem of the 20th century, the protagonist is traced through insidious streets that "lead [him] to an overwhelming question…" (line 10).

[138] Tu Fu ("We cross the battleground at midnight: / cold moonlight falls on frozen bones. / Ten thousand men enlisted at T'ung-kuan, / now ten thousand men are gone" [from "Travelling North", trans. Sam Hamill]); and Chia Tao ("I asked the boy beneath the pines / he said, 'The master's gone away / herb-picking on the mountain / cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown' ["Seeking But

*On quiet nights*
*I recall friends*
*while looking at the moon*
*through the window*                (ibid, 67).

Yet in time, as a Buddhist, Chomei understands that even as a renunciate he has grown
attached to material desire.  Where others yearn for homes that are large and enviable, his
love for his tiny hut, even though it is a "useless pleasure" (ibid, 77) now binds him as
surely as the fleeting riches of merchants in the city.  Though it is an attachment to
frugality, his 'desire' is still worldly and unworthy of a true penitent.  Surely, he realizes,
he of all should know better:

*Buddha taught*
*we must not be*
*attached.*

*Yet the way I love this hut*
*is itself attachment.*

*To be attached*
*to the quiet and serene*
*must likewise be a burden*     (ibid, 77).

Without an answer for the world's suffering, Chomei can accept the truth of his
humanity: he is "soaked in sin" (ibid, 78) like all the rest.  He does not mask it, but rather
accepts it, questioning whether he himself has become too attached to the Holy Life.
Knowing that "there is no answer" (ibid, 79), and aware of the approach of death, in mood
of pious contrition he offers up with "impure tongue" his prayers, calling upon the merciful
name of Amida Buddha.  Like Shakespeare's Hamlet, "the rest is silence" (V.ii. ln 340).

Within the conspectus of Chomei's Hojoki one finds the core repertoire of classical
Sino-Japanese aesthetics that Gary Snyder has previously alluded to in this thesis, and
which Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* is besotted throughout.  To reprise, these include the
ideas of abandoning society for the consolations of art, meditation and philosophy;

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Not Finding the Recluse", in Alan Watts]), epitomize the bittersweet, compassionate tone
associated with Ch'an (Zen) Buddhist influence on Chinese poetry.

retreating to a simple hermitage in the mountains; living with the ebb and flow of the seasons and seeing in them the primal beauty of the Tao; passing through ennui, wisdom, loneliness, wonder, despair, and ultimately a breakthrough into sacramental faith.

In her introduction to the 1994 edition of a little-known Kerouac work entitled *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity,* poet Anne Waldman comments that, like Chomei, Kerouac was able to compose a form of sutra—"a discerning meditation on the nature of impermanence & consciousness, subtle like the dharma it invokes" (p. 6). While not a questing after truth in the archetypal European model of spiritual seeking, instead, in its more Asian yearning for enlightenment, Kerouac's text "kindles tenderness" (p. 4). It is precisely this heart-centeredness that allows him to beginning perceiving the 'emptiness' or spaciousness of both the human world and the 'natural' world in its unvarnished beauty: this is his 'Golden Eternity.' If Chomei's *Hojoki* offers the reader tutoring in the appreciation of art, meditation, philosophy, seclusion and retreat into nature, what Kerouac's brief scripture provides is a mentorship in the cultivation of emptiness as a mental nectar, as religion: an awareness that, at bottom, 'all' and 'nothing' are one and the same.

It is this awareness that the Cambodian Buddhist, Maha Ghosananda, terms the *Dharmayana*, the 'fourth *yana,* or vehicle' of Buddhism—recognition of the basic universe itself. As he explains, "because it is complete, [the dharmayana] can never be sectarian…it is comprehensible and can be understood by anyone. Dharmayana is the kind of Buddhism I love" (1992: 67).[139] In this same metaphysical and ontological spirit, the knowledge that everything and nothing are the yin and yang of the Golden Eternity are Kerouac's, and the Beats', core epistemological contribution to the *new world dharma*. Even as Kerouac professes in stanza 25 of his scripture that, "Though it is everything, strictly speaking there

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[139] *Somteja* (Supreme Patriarch) Maha Ghosananda has led international peacemaking and landmine-clearance efforts in Cambodia for many years. It is through mindfulness of *Panavuddha* that one becomes a Buddha, he explains (interview, 1995). The three realms of mindfulness are 'Here, Now, This'. In English, the Panavuddha path is presented as:
S – sense of direction
U – understanding
C – courage
C – compassion
E – esteem
S – self acceptance
S – self acceptance

is no golden eternity because everything is nothing: there are no things and no goings and comings: for all is emptiness, and emptiness is these forms, emptiness is this one formhood" (1994: 33), he still recognizes that, "this world is the movie of what everything is" (stanza 10, p. 26).

What we have within this movie of existence is an idea in which, "All things are different forms of the same thing: I call it the Golden Eternity" (stanza 29, p. 35). As scribe and postulant in a new dharmic confraternity, for Kerouac this golden eternity is "…that timeless moment of unconsciousness… [in which] I saw heaven… It was perfect, the golden solitude, the golden emptiness, Something-Or-Other, something surely humble" (stanze 64, p. 59). On close reading there is more than a suggestion of the 'negative capability' here that the Romantic poet John Keats reckoned as the moment, or awareness, "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason…" (1974: 705).

For Kerouac, attainment of the beauty of self-realization compels ironically that, "nothing will be acquired at last" (stanza 51, p. 51). Here the echo of Chuang-tzu's Taoist parables of the useful and useless rings across time and space. In the *new world dharma* that he is inching toward, liberation means kindness, compassion, living with less—a dignified bliss founded upon the middle way between extremes, a kind of daily spiritual song with chords composed of joy, impermanence, and living without regret. As an activist path, one intended for sharing and teaching others, unlike Chomei's choice of disengaging from the world and its suffering, Kerouac's mindful, if spiritually romantic response is to advise the practice of kindness:

> If someone will simply practice kindness, said Gotama to Subhuti, 'he will soon attain highest perfect wisdom.' Then he added, 'Kindness after all is only a word and it should be done on the spot without any thought of kindness' (stanza 52, p. 53).

This then is the path beyond the constant distractions of the mind in a fragmented, materialistic society; living life, as the Dalai Lama explains, with "a cool heart" (interview, 2001: 9-10).

It may be of interest to those whose lives are currently lived within the paranoiac influence of a global media culture obsessed with 'the War on Terror', that Kerouac wrote for a society in which 'the American Dream' was being suffocated by Cold War paranoia. Kerouac's prescription for a renaissance of fundamental integrity at both individual and community levels was Japhy Ryder's vision of a "rucksack revolution" (*The Dharma Bums*, 97-98*)*. History records that however romantic, life on the open road in pursuit of personal, spiritual and ecological happiness and freedom could itself prove ephemeral. The Beat ethos evolved within years to the Haight-Ashbury Summer of Love movement, and while in retrospect the latter experiment did not last long it did bring Occidental culture closer to Asian thought and values than ever before. Perhaps it became an unsustainable idea, for in spite of its idealism and new attempts at building alternative social constructs, the actual golden period of Haight-Ashbury in the 'Sixties' would last less than three years. Bearing a measure of similarities with the generation of the 1930s that Stephen Spender and 'the Auden Gang' were a part of, the idea of freedom for them, Spender confesses of his earlier 'tribe' in his *Journals*,

> consist[ed] of exploring unimportant and superficial ideas…Freedom, the young people of Hamburg said is sexual freedom primarily, then freedom to enjoy yourself, to 'wander', not to make money, not to have the responsibilities of a family or the duties of a citizen. *Freedom is one long holiday* (l986: 32).

The idea of freedom though, contains multitudes: Kerouac imparts another interpretation, certainly unexpected by the politically-minded of the Auden Generation. "When you've understood this scripture, throw it away," Kerouac relates: "If you can't understand this scripture, throw it away. I insist on your freedom" (stanza 45, p. 46).

In this seemingly anarchic strategy, Jack Kerouac and his confreres pointed out a new path for North Americans. Resting upon spiritual underpinnings, their work and message was to remind a growing audience eager for new forms of self-expression and self-awareness that the idea of 'community' and of individual decision-making, rather than mind-numbing conformity, remains an enduring possibility. They insisted too, that

harmony, sense of belonging, and friendship within one's own community were integral components of the happiness alluded to within the American republic's founding constitutional documents.  And they warned of how quickly such ideas of community are usurped by a corporate world-view emphasizing big-growth and power.

As a response to the crisis of meaning and purpose afflicting modern consumer society, Kerouac's scriptural antidote—his *upaya*, or skillful means—is uncomplicated:  the everyday practice of an observant life, one that honours individual independence in addition to community interconnectedness and interdependence.  In advocating community as a natural extension of family, the exercise of kindness and generosity also compels the individual to embrace communal responsibility, to take action when required, rather than looking on as a disinterested or frightened spectator.  In this, it draws very near to classical Confucianism with its concepts of humanity (*ren*) and ceremony (*li*) [Little and Reed, 1989: 5-6]. Thus, through a life of simplicity, humility, and mindfulness, "Everything's alright, form is emptiness and emptiness is form…don't worry about nothing" (stanza 53-55, p. 54).

In short, through the practices of right livelihood and right views, the work needed to better situate the self in the phenomenal world is already underway.  For the East-West influenced school of arts, letters and ecological activism, this is also a philosophy and a belief—an expression of putting one's contemplative energies, meditation, or prayer into action.[140]   In the chapter which follows, some of this school's principal informing doctrines will be discussed in the context of traditional Taoist and Confucian views toward individual and community responsibility.

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[140] The reference to Tibetan lama Chogyam Trunpa's *Meditation In Action* (1991), is acknowledged.

# Chapter 10.

# The Taoist-Confucian World Citizen

In *A Love Supreme,* the American saxophonist John Coltrane (1964), revealed how as an artist at the pinnacle of his working form he had continued to pay attention to ideas from other cultures.  As his former patron Miles Davis had done earlier, in listening to African, Arabic, and Asian modes of musical expression, Coltrane learned a different way of thinking about *what he already* knew (Loud, 2005; see also Kahn, 2002).  The result did not come with an identifiable label, yet Coltrane's inward musical journey to self-realization brought about a revolution in jazz, bringing a new sacred element to what had long been profanely regarded as 'the devil's music' (Segrest and Hoffman, 2005: 60-61).  Afro-Americans especially hailed Coltrane's achievement as a form of spiritual praise and as a reflection of their lengthy struggle for racial equality.  In San Francisco, the musician's spiritual quest inspired a new Afro-American religious denomination, and the Church of John Coltrane survives there as a holiness tabernacle forty years later.

Seeking an identity greater than themselves, during the 1950s and 1960s Western seekers from the Beat poets, jazz artists, and free-thinking philosophers like Alan Watts, through to Nobel laureate Mircea Eliade began "gather[ing] evidence from a wide variety of cultures," (Keen: 89).  Their purpose, he says, was to illustrate how, "an experience of the sacred creates a special way of organizing life…[and] whatever provides the organizing principle for our life, we experience as holy" (ibid).

In the turn toward more profound aspects of life and thought from East and South Asia—notably Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Vedanta—Western seekers like Alan Watts identified how Asian religious traditions have different functions than the dominant Greco-Judeo-Christian mode of the West.  In exploring the rich harvest of Asian religious ideas, and in seeing how they may compare with the West's—an exchange symbolic of what a truly global age might be—one may consider the three traditional forms of wisdom in the West; that is, religion, philosophy, and science (Watts, radio lecture, KPFK Berkeley, n.d.).

Of the term religion itself, Alan Watts notes that it derives from the Latin '*relegare',* to bind, and comprises the day-to-day rules of life, creeds, and systems of ideas. By contrast, Asia's spiritual traditions do not involve what the West would call belief or faith: rather, they abandon opinions and theories in favour instead sensual and sensory experience. Nor do Asian ways attempt to mold humanity in accord with an image of God (ibid). So East Asia's Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, and Korean Shamanism, as well as South Asia's Jainism, Hindu Vedanta, Sikhism—and the Buddhism that East and South Asia increasingly share with the West—are different in subtle, but critical dimensions. As Watts (*The Spirit of Zen,* 1960*; The Culture of Counter-Culture,* 1997), Paul Reps (*Zen Flesh, Zen Bones,* n.d.), Ram Dass (*Be Here Now,* 1972), Suzuki-roshi (*Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind,* 1980), and many other commentators have related, Asian philosophy is not so much concerned with beliefs as it is with waking up one's individual consciousness, or awareness of mind, normally through a branch of meditative practice that inspires us toward a new way of using our senses—Zazen meditation, Yoga, Tai Chi, 'Kung Fu'-martial arts, Tea Ceremony, Flower Arranging, and so on—and then bringing this new awareness back to one's to family, community life, workplace, or even statecraft.

What Western seekers have long sought in Asian wisdom paths has been another type of insight into the human predicament. What is the good life? What kind of life should one aspire toward? What kind of relationship should one have with Nature, with the Divine? How should we deal with suffering; with life and death? How is society best ordered? These are religious issues that as relevant and contemporary as the daily news and have been addressed by Asian philosophers since China's classical age and India's Vedic era—both roughly contiguous with the golden age of Periclean Athens.

As Alan Watts has clarified regarding methodology, traditional Western and Asian approaches to philosophical and spiritual inquiry are different. Whereas philosophy in the West is, "primarily a verbal activity…about the nature of knowledge and being, ethics, logical structure of ideas…about ideas and their expression in words", Asian approaches by contrast are not so much concerned "with beliefs, but [with]… transference of humanity's consciousness as a new way of using our senses" (lecture, n.d.). Simplifying this, we can look to the example of the late American author Ray Carver. After a life of alcohol addiction and chronic insecurity, like Miles Davis and John Coltrane who broke

through their own psychological imprisonments, Carver emerged with a single book of stories entitled *Cathedral* (1981), which through its declarative genius of style and spartan economy of language reconfigured the nature of American fiction. A Sophoclean-influenced story of a blind man's encounter with a 'trailer-park' lout, Carver's title-story illustrates how the ability to simply *see* in life is not of paramount value. Rather, what is essential is the manner in which one can learn to shift one's capacity to see new things, and by reading into these new things gain deeper personal insight that will allow oneself to 'see' in new ways.

For the Western seekers of the 1950s and 60s, the wisdom of East Asia's Buddhist and Taoist traditions especially would provide both direct and indirect answers to their inquiries. As noted previously in this thesis, with little knowledge of insight-practice techniques themselves, most of their exposure came through translations of classic religious texts. Yet from this limited contact, a critically important school of literature could grow, and through its members' exposure to Zen Buddhist ideas the New York School of abstract modern art expressionism could commit to a new understanding of 'form and emptiness.' As the critic and theoretician Clement Greenberg explained of the result, it meant that "When it comes to abstract art, there's no content—but there is subject matter" (interview, in Adato, 1989).

Cultivating new epistemological groundings does not happen overnight. It is a process. In their way, Kerouac and the Beat poets, Watts, Davis and Coltrane, and second-wave seekers like Carver and George Harrison of The Beatles were obliged to make leaps of faith. All were major cultural attractor-forces and the shifts in consciousness they reflected in their creative work of the period had the impact of tectonic plates shunting along geographic fault-lines: quakes in which some things crumble, others are thrust upward, with aftershocks continuing over a space of time. Arguably, the awareness that Western culture was able to acquire of Asia during this period has never come closer. The openness of so many minds to Asian ideas, among the young especially, came without a label and was representative of a widely shared ethos, a specific yearning for community identification which—at the time—was known simply as *Love* (Joplin, personal conversation, 1968), but not 'love' in any sense that has been in currency since then: more will be explained of this in the following chapter.

In a Taoist sense, these times represent flux in the *Wu Chi*, the unvarnished spaciousness of the Way. Through the uncertain, shifting swirl of primal energies, new potentialities arise in defining themselves as a marriage of complementary dynamics—*yin* and *yang*—which in establishing their own renewed balance constitute and bring forth the *Tai Chi* with its manifold, limitless opportunities. For Chinese civilization, this Taoist cosmology would also serve as the foundation of its medical theory and practice, of its art and aesthetics, and of every aspect of devotion to unity and monism (Wieger, 1976; Chang, 1963).

Reflecting on the transformations taking place in North American society during the late 20th century when the Western encounter with Asian thought was at its fullest, O.B. Hardison (1989) observes:

> The transition that is occurring in modern culture is something like the process [that St. Augustine describes in his *Confessions* when pagans crossed over into Christian culture], although it does not involve religious conversion. What it *does* involve is movement into the unknown. The experience is sometimes frightening and often confusing, but it can also be exciting and challenging. It is, at any rate, dynamic and associated with life, not death (7).

Looked at this way, the period of civilizational change from the Pagan to Augustine's newly-Christianized Roman world, then to the Dark Ages after the Roman fall was as unsettling as the 21st century's still-uncertain turn toward a global age. Yet the contributions of the artists and thinkers discussed here are as secure as those of the 8th and 9th century Irish monks, who with their manuscript production of *The Book of Kells* and similar illuminated gospels (Trinity College Library Guide, 2002), during an Age of Terror could still devote themselves to "turning darkness into light" ("Pangur Ban", 9th century). Created from a syncretic Celtic-Christian tradition during a lengthy period of Viking-induced strife, the sacred geometry of their books' religious ornamentation marks the apogee of Western civilization's decorative art—rivalled only by the religious calligraphy of Islam (Meehan, 1985). From uncertainty sprang forth hope and continuity.

What might this mean for internationalism?  Consider William Irwin Thompson's idea (thesis, chapter 5) that Mark Rothko's entirely abstract Chapel represented the inevitable progression of a Western art influenced by four hundred years' of scientific progress. When a culture's key artistic expression becomes influenced by elements of physical science such as quarks—unseen particles that are arranged using terminology borrowed from Zen Buddhism (Hardison, 52)—and when elements of nature are effectually 'intuited' rather than proven empirically (in direct contradiction to the established principles of that science), then the physics themselves have already transformed, or more accurately 'enantiomorphed'[141] to the primal shamanic sensibility of Animism or Taoism. Change, which may have seemed hopeless, becomes possible.

Historically, art represents transformations within the larger culture.  As a theory therefore, if as the longtime Canadian media icon Peter Gzowski (1985) argued, that artists serve as early warning systems for a culture, then the works of popularly-received artists, unconventional or otherwise, will at some point reflect the appetites of the culture around them. Thus, the spiritual thirst of a North American generation of East-West culturally influenced artists is indicative of a greater cultural yearning for fulfillment, and one may extrapolate that for a large population the Greco-Judeo-Christian ethos upon which it was reared has lost its capacity to inspire.[142]

Ideas of emptiness, abstraction, and spontaneity are not necessarily integral to Western spiritual traditions, yet in turning toward and studying Asian wisdom paths, Western seekers have encountered, or renewed, their acquaintance with exactly these ideas, and with others such as: primal spaciousness, ritual, mystery, compassion, mindfulness, and the

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[141]  Enantiomorphosis refers to the process by which a subject inexorably changes to become its 'opposite'.  Taoists have long understood the waxing and waning of the moon in these terms, in which the full moon gradually but assuredly transformed in the new, or 'no-moon', then back again.  Some political approximations would include how former rightist Latin American states become leftist (Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela) and vice-versa (Argentina, Chile, Panama); the current situation in the 'liberal' U.S. where fascism casts creeping shadows; in former totalitarian, socialist Eastern Europe, now 'free market'; the former zenophobic states of France and Germany, now solid Euro 'community' members; the former 'white dominions' of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, all now officially multicultural.

[142]  In *Zen in Brazil: The Quest for Cosmopolitan Modernity* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), Cristina Rocha details how the educated upper middle classes of Latin America and most notably Brazil, have also eagerly adopted Buddhism "as a set of humanistic values to counter the rampant violence and crime in Brazilian society."  Europe is now home to Buddhism of many varieties, and Britain and Ireland have been particularly receptive to institutional traditions.  Monastic and lay teaching centers are now widespread there.

chief Hindu-Buddhist *dharma* practice of 'letting go'—of not clinging to mental projections that bring suffering.

Concomitantly, the answers which China's Taoist and Confucian paths have offered to life's fundamental questions are markedly different from those of Western faith traditions. In this they remain uniquely Chinese, and to adopt an interest in Chinese ideas is to become sympathetic to the culture which produced them, much in the way that for Koreans, Chinese, or Japanese to subscribe to Christian beliefs is to hold an open mind to Western civilization. In either case, to sustain belief in such 'otherness' and to elevate it above the merely exotic must surely require a compelling motivation, such as hardship or suffering. Strikingly, the globalization debate has generated concerns regarding the impact of Christian ideas, and whether in extending their reach they may compromise spiritual traditions which are synonymous with national identity.

Fear of such encroaching hegemony seems misplaced. A look through the doors of most Christian denominations in the economically developed world during the late 20th century revealed an significant retreat from organized religion. Polls indicate that in the U.S., Canada, and European nations, affiliation with organized religion is falling at a rate of 1% annually or 10% per decade (http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_prac2.htm: 2005). Even so, within increasingly secular Western cultures these same polls indicate that individuals in growing numbers regard themselves as spiritually, rather than institutionally-grounded in their faith practice, a response accounting for 33% of North American adults. Strikingly, exceptions to this trend occur in nations at the polar ends of the economic spectrum where fundamentalist belief may be hardening—among the under-developed states of Africa and the Middle East, and in the singular economically-advanced nation of the U.S.A. (Adams and Gudmundson, 2005)

Asia's diverse spiritual paths have brought fresh ways of regarding existence that Western wisdom-seekers and artists can find comfortable, particularly the recognition that diverse views are possible without antagonism, contradiction, or guilt. Certain Asian spiritual ideas have already become mainstream such as Buddhism's teaching of mindfulness that has quietly entered North America's vocabulary, where to hear even police and government officials use it publically is now common. Spiritual questing among Occidentals has also led to the examination of a variety of other cultural paths, and various

forms of Vedanta, Bahai, Sikhism, and Islam have drawn a share of adherents. Among younger people, ecologically-attuned paths cobbled together from vestigial Goddess traditions, mainly Celtic and termed Wiccan and Druidic, are in current vogue although this is linked directly to the phenomenon of ecstatic Rave dance-culture and its staying power has yet to be tested. What seems underway among a growing sector of the 'spiritual but not religiously affiliated', a group now comprising many millions of North American adults, is that they are carpentering their own faith identity, often drawn from diverse traditions such as Goddess worship, Buddhist, Taoist, residual Christian or Jewish (http://www.adherents.com/rel_USA.html: Aug. 18, 2005). In contributing to this booming growth, a major sustaining factor appears to be such self-discipline practices as yoga, Tai Chi Chuan, and various forms of sitting meditation. Intriguingly, all are yoking traditions premised on the understanding that it is the things we yokes ourselves to that return better dividends.

Of the three predominant civilizational alternatives explored by Westerners—Celtic, Chinese, and Indic—unless directed toward traditional intensive fasting practice, the Celtic tradition is least physically yoking. Indic-Vedic practice is predominantly yoga-focused and has grown extensively through periodic revivals of interest during the past 35 years. Buddhism, originally from the north Indian-Nepali high plains can be seen as representing a branching-off of Hindu tradition in the way that Christianity retains key foundational lineages with its Sumerian-Judaic progenitor. A proselytizing faith, Buddhism's initial Himalayan cultural boundaries dissolved as it became a major world faith, and it remains the one Asian tradition to make significant inroads into the West. Accordingly, among Occidentals it is the best known of Asia's major religions and North American Buddhism is informed by teachers of Tibetan, Sino-Japanese, Korean, Southeast Asian, Sri Lankan, and first and second-generation Western heritage streams. With this diverse background, Buddhism's growth in the West is being enriched by knowledge and practice from its three *Mahayana, Theraveda*, and *Vajrayana* paths alike. These represent Buddhism's classical doctrinal spheres: the serene Theraveda, with its original Pali-language canon directing human affairs toward nirvana, and that survives in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia; the Mahayana, a reformist, more cerebral variant that introduces *bodhisattva*-inspired compassionate action, and which extends through the Himalayas, China and its Asian

diaspora, Korea and Japan—best known through its Zen manifestation; and the Vajrayana, an ornate Tibetan Mahayana form incorporating elements of Himalayan high-plateau *Bon* Animism.

Much has been noted on Buddhist thought and practice throughout this thesis. Ironically, however, the image of the historical Buddha known to history, and especially to the West has its roots in the hybrid Greco-Indic period known as the Maurya dynasty, first under Alexander the Macedon, then later under Ashok the Great who would unify ancient India—a culture that would also give the world its first image of 'the Buddha', with the head of Apollo atop the body of a meditating monk. Curiously, historic stone images of this same figure were lately destroyed by the Taliban in Afghanistan (see thesis chapter 3)—once a part of the old Maurya-Ghandara world—who, insistent on playing their own part in the eternal transformational ethos of religion in the heart of Mother Asia, have brought its importance for the early 21st century to the West's closest shores.

Of greater historical consequence for China has been the evolution of its two native wisdom traditions, Taoism and Confucianism. As this chapter espouses, in a host of ways they are intertwined while offering separate but equally unique and rewarding insights. Over centuries, the two developed syncretically with China's third spiritual stream of imported Himalayan Buddhism. According to tradition, from roughly the 8th century onward this hybrid *sanjiao gui*, or 'three-in-one' religious amalgam of China came to shape and inform every aspect of daily Chinese life. Theodore de Bary observes that from the Confucian perspective, through East Asia's traditional attention to education it still influences how global thinking is incorporated into existing social systems in East and parts of Southeast Asia (1988: 111). In this respect, the Three Teachings can be seen as complementary, with "Buddhism speaking to the mind, Taoism to the physical culture, and Confucianism to human social concerns (ibid, 49).

Classically devoted to maintaining harmony between the heart and heaven, humanity and the universe, Taoist and Confucian teachings offer a joint alternative to Westerners searching for new, secular ways of viewing their relationship with nature. What was previously an almost entirely literary enterprise with Occidentals coming to knowledge of Asia through book translations of Asian classics has, since the rise of China as a world economic centre, now become a two-way stream. More than 400,000 foreign citizens

currently live and work in China, a number that is projected to grow as China becomes one
of the world's most attractive locations for expatriate life, (*People's Daily,*
http://english.people.com.cn/200312/18/eng20031218_130636.shtml).  Through their
study of Chinese language and customs, interest in Confucian ideas—long misunderstood
or trivialized as 'fortune-cookie' wisdom in North America—will only further expand.  In
this regard, a review of key Taoist and Confucian concepts will be useful.

## *II.*  <u>Tao: A Watercourse Way</u>

In the traditional Chinese view *Tao* is not an omnipotent diety.  Nevertheless, from
ancient times, among Taoists *the Way* has been understood as a numinous, strictly neutral
power.  Confucius and Mencius, the two foremost exemplars of the classical 'Confucian'
canon, each acknowledged this power and its role in human affairs.  Since neither
attempted to improve upon Lao Tzu's enduring interpretation, it may be accepted that it is
agreeable to the Confucian mind:

> *There is a thing confusedly formed,*
> *Born before heaven and earth*
> *Silent and elusive*
> *It stands alone and does not waver …*
> *It could the mother of all*
> *I do not know its name,*
> *Call it Tao…*
> *I call it Great…*          (*Tao Te Ching*, XXV)

Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching,* or Book of the Way and Its Virtue, is comprised of 81
brief epistles that collectively hang together like poetry.  Underscoring them throughout is
an emphasis on the reciprocity between individuals and their surrounding environment.
Reading Lao Tzu, one is presented with the idea of a 'Way of Heaven' (ibid, IX), an
unceasing numinal flow that is made manifest through humility and a yielding spirit.  In
human terms, this is reflected as a continual process of self-realization and attunement with
the 'Big Watershed' of creation.

Whereas Lao-Tzu and his follower Chuang-Tzu stress that individual spiritual development is necessary to attain fulfillment in the physical and social aspects of life, Confucius and his follower Mencius argue from a societal perspective in emphasizing that satisfying essential human needs is achieved only through proper mental and sociological understanding. This paramount Confucian concern is analogous with the fundamental concept of order. Order is understood as the culture of the society. From this order derives all manner of authority relationships, between emperor and minister, parent and child, husband and wife, and between friends. In this regard, both Confucius and Mencius regard the Tao in a new way, and in their own specific fashion, viewing it as a totality encompassing the idea of Heaven. Tao is indeed supreme—Confucius himself declares, "He has not lived in vain who dies the day he is told about the Way" (*Analects*, trans. Lau, 1979: LIV.8). Although in having acknowledged this, achieving happiness is regarded as a matter of living a life of moral cultivation, conducting one's social relationships benevolently, and observing the correct rituals honouring traditional values. Within the eternal verities of existence, leadership, statecraft, and the structures of human society are governed precisely by the moral power bestowed by 'heaven', itself an integral part of Tao.

Confucianism emphasizes cultivation of character. In the prime distillation of Confucius' thoughts and maxims compiled by his disciples known as *The Analects,* 'the Master' as he has been known to the Chinese for more than two millennia, literally engages the reader in a conversational discussion upon righteous living. The master's view is that virtuous living is fundamental to the development of any ethics worth cultivating. Here, Confucius focuses mainly on 'learning', or individual intellectual development which through rational thinking will restrain the winds of war, cruelty, and wanton destruction within and among states.

In the hierarchy of virtuous individuals that Confucius envisions society producing, the Sifu (*Sheng*) of complete rectitude, ranks high. The ideal expression of true moral character though, is realized in the person of the *chun tzu,* or gentle man or woman. Here, the great dignity of Confucius shines through, for 2500 years ago in the age of tyrants he was a moralist in asserting unequivocally that the determining element in such gentleness is not the possession of noble blood, but noble character—only this is worthy of respect. And underlying this portrayal of virtuous character is family loyalty of the deepest hue, for

"Straightness is found in such behaviour" (ibid, XIII.18).  Organically, it follows for Confucius that any such genuinely cultured individual must equally be "in awe of the Decree of Heaven" (ibid, XVI.8)—a mandate from the Supreme Way ordaining the destiny of human societal affairs.  The critical point in understanding this *tian ming,* or heavenly mandate, is clarified by Mencius who establishes that unlike the immutable Tao, the mandate of heaven is changeable.  Thus, to retain the legitimacy of heavenly favour in leadership and practical affairs, right morality and benevolent conduct must be actively cultivated throughout the pattern of one's relationships within family, community, and larger political spheres.  Here*, hsiao—*filiality—is of utmost regard, for unless one understands one's place within the structure of family and social relationships, there can be no further development of personal character.  As Confucius says:

> Once the roots are established, the Way will grow from there.  Being good
> as a son and obedient as a young man is perhaps the root of a man's
> character (ibid, 1.II).

Citing the linguistic and textual scholarship of Taiwanese professor Tu Er-wei, Bill Porter locates the origins of the word *Tao* historically in reference "to the phases of the moon" (1993: 35).  Derived from the native nature wisdom of China's ancient shamanic traditions, which themselves descended from the first settled culture of the late-neolithic period, Chinese mythology attributes the Yellow Emperor Huang-ti 's meeting approximately 5000 years ago with an early Taoist master, Kuang Ch'eng-tzu, as the beginning of formally received Taoist nature wisdom (ibid, 36).  During this same formative period, likely the early Shang dynasty (Fairbank, 33-35), the legendary figure Fu Hsi is also credited with originating the trigrams and hexagrams which form the basis of the *I Ching*, of *Book of Changes*, and this has long been accepted as an evolution of the 'oracle-bone' system of spiritual divination of which the 'dragon-bone' exactions at Anyang have provided abundant evidence (ibid).

Iconographically, Fu Hsi's eight primal trigrams, the *Ba Gwa,* or "Eight Steps", which are symbolic of human and family structural relationships, came to be symbolized by the 'Tai Chi', or 'Great Energy' image interwoven of reciprocal male and female principles—the *Yin*

and *Yang*—of primal polarity energies. Gradually this evolving system would define itself as a syllabus of knowledge, the *I Ching,* harmonizing Taoism's rough shamanic edges and providing China's Yellow River basin civilization with instruction regarding appropriate action and conduct in particular situations. From such early shamanic lore-bearers evolved the cosmology that from the time of the early chronicler Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *Shih Chi* (*Historical Records*, approximately 100 BC), would be labelled 'Taoist' (Porter, 36; see Chang, 1963), and that would become identified with Tao as both governing precept, and as a concept explaining the panoply of everyday happenstance in the world and its events. More substantially, from Taoism's cosmological reasoning process would evolve the principles of Chinese civilization's medical and aesthetic systems.

To reiterate, as previously stated in chapter two of this dissertation, Tao is the mystical Chinese visualization of that from which all things temporal and eternal emanate: Tao is the truth of w*hat is*—the 'ten thousand things' of daily circumstance in the world (Loy, 1993; Porter, 208-220), and this quintessential idea is foundational to both Taoist and Confucian cosmologies. Tempered by the concept of duality, of interactive 'male' and 'female' energies, Tao represents a path between extremes, a 'middle way'—the concept it shares with Buddhism. By pursuing a simpler path of doing only what is necessary, and by declining pursuit of that which need not be done, one is able to experience the deeper truth of the Way. Lao Tzu perceives this as a virtuous means of encouraging others into accord with the harmony of the Way: "Should lords and princes be able to hold fast to it / the myriad creatures will be transformed of their own accord" (TTC, XXXVII).

As an approach to living that is natural, yielding and effortless, Taoism is also known as 'the watercourse way—an expression mirroring the Great Watershed of creation, the interdependent warp and weft of life that embraces both the chaos of pre-creation, and the primal harmony of Mother Nature. In this, Tao also represents the necessary union of intuitive knowledge (yin) and cerebral, rational intelligence (yang). Yin is associated with the darker, fecund, earth forces and is represented in Taoist inscription by three broken lines that are symbolic of 'the well', or female receptive principle. Yang is associated with the rain of heaven, and is represented by three unbroken rods symbolic of the male fertilizing principle.

The point of balance which exists between the two is of paramount focus and Chuang Tzu stresses the importance of "holding fast to the source" (*Chuang Tzu*, trans. Burton Watson, 1996: p. 65). Illness for example, is seen as the inevitable consequence of slipping out of alignment with the cosmic flows and shifts of *chi* (Carolan, 2003; Chia, 1990). Similarly, good health results from the dynamic balance of the physical, psychological and social components of one's individual relationship with the larger world. Taoism's world vision then can be seen as a weather-report in which physical, mental, and spiritual values are balanced alongside organizational, economic, and administrative leadership principles. Addressing whether Taoism's philosophical perspectives have application to the larger, modern world, Fritjof Capra (1988) observes in *Uncommon Wisdom* how, "Societies need stability and change, order and freedom, tradition and innovation, planning and laissez-faire" (p. 218). In essence, harmony in human affairs requires both the yin and yang of existence.

Less concerned than Confucianism with the rational, Taoist wisdom consists of pragmatic, observable truths, although these truths may be intuitive by nature. It also emphasizes the need to be mindful of, and to observe the cyclical flows of nature:

> *Humanity follows earth*
> *Earth follows heaven*
> *Heaven follows Tao*
> *Tao follows what is Natural*   (TTC, XXV)

Clarifying the essential one-ness of the 'ten thousand things', Lao Tzu's image for the vastness of objective reality, Taoism may be seen as pantheistic, but this is more rightly interpreted as recognizing the 'Godhead *in* all things', not 'the God of each thing.' Harking continually to that form of human understanding handed down from neolithic Animism, this may be intuited as 'the wisdom of the heart.'

Taoist cosmology begins with 'pre-reflective' consciousness—with recognition of the primal emptiness, or spaciousness which existed before creation of 'the red dust' of the world (Loy, 32). For Lao Tzu, this is emblematic of "the uncarved block" (ibid, XV), or "freedom from desire" (ibid, XXXVII), which can be understood in modern imagery as a metaphor for the idea of pure potentiality. In the collection of tales bearing his name,

Chuang Tzu, who followed Lao Tzu as Mencius followed Confucius, understands this as the *chi wu lun*—the fundamental unity and equality of all things: "…things grotesque and strange, the Way makes them all into One" (CT, p. 36). From this totality flow the twin, swirling polar energies of yin and yang. Their harmony and duality shapes the 'Tai Chi'—the Ultimate Energy. Yet, at best, this is only an approximation, for in the Taoist context chi represents not so much a thing or an actual element, but a *process*—an ineluctable system of cyclical energy flows.

Taoism relies upon the joint foundation stones of modesty of nature—knowing when enough is enough; and self-attunement with nature—with what the Occident since Pythagoras in early Greek times has called 'the music of the spheres.' In a contemporary light, much of the basic Taoist world-view can be recognized through Deep Ecology's concept of living lightly and responsibly in stewardship with the Earth (Maser, 1998).

An ethical, if not always palpably practical set of spiritual principles, the Taoism of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu rests in large measure on the principle of *wu-wei*, of 'doing-not doing' (see TTC, XXXVII), which in a modern action or political context equates with 'non-interference'. Within the Taoist paradigm this is not be mistaken for adopting a principle of vegetable-like inertia. Taoism is neither complacency nor cultivated quietude. Instead, it may be conceived of as a process of subtle discernment, emulating the ancient masters who intuitively understood the need to avoid unnecessary entanglements until the time was right for practical engagement—the wisdom of professional boxers who must learn to pick their fights. Lao Tzu describes such teachers as, "Watchful, like men crossing winter streams / Alert like men aware of danger…Yielding, like ice about to melt" (ibid, XV).

As an ethical stance, Taoism obviously is as relevant to the early 21st century's yearning for spiritual insight and geopolitical harmony as it was to China's war-torn axial period of history. Like Mr. Toad of *Wind In The Willows*, the modern West is given to impulsive, ideological crazes such as Evangelical Republicanism, neo-liberalism, decentralization and deregulation, each of which has a tendency to veer to extremes. But these reform winds are fickle and subject to the public mood. By contrast, wu-wei represents a gradual path. Politically, this might be expressed as recognition that even the status quo changes over time. The courageous political examples of Ghandhi, Thich Nhat Hanh, Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr., Aung San Suu Kyi, and others have shown that by deflecting aggressive opposition rather than deliberately struggling against the grain, the *ahimsa* or non-violence of wu-wei can be irreplaceable in defusing confrontational situations. Lao Tzu summarizes this in his 57th epistle: "I take no action and the people are transformed of themselves…I prefer stillness, and the people are rectified of themselves" (TTC, LVII).

When Tao is discussed it must be understood that, "The Way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way" (ibid, I), suggesting that the ability of language to express the ineffable is limited. Chuang Tzu echoes this, relating, "The Way has its reality and its signs but is without action or form. You can hand it down but you cannot receive it; you can get it but you cannot see it. It is its own source, its own root" (CT, p. 77). Externally invisible to the eye, the root of the Way exists within the human heart and both Taoists and Confucians concur in this appreciation. In his 67th epistle, Lao Tzu says to hold Tao in one's heart means that one comes to cherish the 'Three Treasures' of mercy, frugality, and humility. Similarly, Confucius portrays the Way as a repository of virtues that are the *sine qua non* of the enlightened, gentle individual he wishes to see advance in society through benevolence *(jen),* wisdom *(chih),* courage *(yung),* and trustworthiness *(hsin)* [see Lau, TTC: 12-26]. This is further expanded upon by Mencius with his devotion to the concept of humanity's inherent goodness, a virtue rooted firmly in the heart. Similarly, in the three-in-one tradition, Buddhism's version of this trinity of virtues is expressed as a commitment to compassion, moderation, and disciplined self-interest.

Confucianism comes nearest to being a 'spiritual' path through Mencius' eloquent exposition of how the human nature is innately benevolent, and how its root in the heart must be cultivated through dutiful conduct lest unconscionable shame befall oneself and the good character of one's family and ancestors. For Mencius, the heart as seat of one's own good character is of maximum importance. Indeed, "a man must not be without shame, for the shame of being without shame is shamelessness indeed" (*Mencius*, VII.A.6).

In practical terms, the connection between self and Tao consists of mindfully executing one's duties throughout daily life. Mastering the connection between Heaven and one's own inner heart however, requires practice. Indeed, 'linking up' the unity of heart with Heaven is among the Taoism's most profound meditative practices (Loy: 31-34), for as

Chuang Tzu observes, "He who knows what it is that Heaven does, and knows what it is that man does, has reached the peak. Knowing what it is that Heaven does, he lives with Heaven" (CT, p. 71). The purity of one's heart, Mencius explains though, is easily waylaid and must be safeguarded. Hence, it must be exercised through continual moral refinement and attention to one's parents, family, and others in the community. It becomes evident from this moral imperative to serve with loyalty and benevolence that,

> For a man to give full realization to his heart is for him to understand his own nature, and a man who knows his own nature will know Heaven. By retaining his heart and nurturing his nature he is serving Heaven (Mencius, VII.A.1).

In summary, to know oneself is to be dutiful to others. In the present accelerated culture remaining observant of this obligation may be growing harder with the constant intrusion of e-mails, cellular telephones, text-messaging, and the like around the clock. With the dominance of industrial and electronic information service roles in the economy, individuals are also frequently compelled by self-induced economic pressures to work in tasks they do not enjoy. As the Dalai Lama often says to Occidental audiences, the answer to the mystery of 'stress' is usually explained through self-examination of one's own desires, or 'wanting mind'. Lao Tzu's timeless response to this drift away from the root of contentment is to re-embrace the heart's inner chamber through meditative awareness:

> *I do my utmost to attain emptiness;*
> *I hold firmly to stillness.*
> *The myriad creatures all rise together*
> *and I watch their return.*
> *The teeming creatures*
> *all return to their separate roots.*
> *Returning to one's roots is known as stillness.*
> *This is what is meant by returning to one's destiny*   (TTC, XVI).

Buddhism identifies this same exercise as 'Returning to the Source'. Whether in serving others or in re-forging one's spiritual bindings, Taoist teaching professes that humility is

essential.  As Chuang Tzu counsels,  "Hold on to all that you have received from Heaven but do not think you have gotten anything" (CT, p. 94).

For Mencius, reaffirming this form of moral rectitude is critical in leadership for the nature of political power is ephemeral and ever subject to the will of Heaven.  His most controversial edict relates how the emperor (or politburo), will rule only as long as the people endorse, for "The people are of supreme importance" (Mencius, VII.B.14).  In justifying the removal of a ruler—through violence if necessary—who has lost the mandate of the people, he recollects the admonition of sages who were ancient even to his own age:  "Heaven hears as the people hear; Heaven sees as the people see" (ibid, Bk.V.A.5).  The echoes in subsequent political leaders such as Malcolm X and his Afro-American rallying cry, "By any means necessary!" are clear.

From this monumentally significant textual passage from Mencius we may adduce the depth and balance of classical Confucianism's belief in the renunciation of self-interest as pre-condition of holding public office.  Cultivating such austerity requires perseverance. In the Ching Chung tradition, one of Taoism's two predominant schools, students of both passive and active meditative techniques—the school's complementary meditative and physically oriented branches—study Mencius on this precise subject of perseverance:

> Heaven, when it is about to place a great burden on us, always first tests our resolution, exhausts our frame and makes us suffer starvation and hardship, frustrates our efforts so as to shake us from our mental lassitude, toughen our nature and make good our deficiencies…It is only when we are frustrated in mind and in our deliberations that we are able to innovate (ibid, VI.B.15).

In summary, the lot of the virtuous is to endure—an admonition straight from Confucius, who in his first discourse in the Analects announces, "…To remain unembittered even though one is unrecognized, is that not to be a noble individual (*chun-tzu*)?" (I.1).

Discussing the process by which the heart is unified with Heaven, Mencius elucidates that it is *chi* which links the circuitry between temporal and eternal.  "Born of accumulated rightness" (ibid, II, A.2), chi functions as the catalyst in fusing physical with spiritual

energies.  Literally conceived of as the breath of Heaven, through the practice of mindfulness and virtuous living it conjoins the physical body with the larger cosmos. Practically speaking, a modern interpretation suggests that what Mencius intends is the attainment of a more refined level of consciousness.  Concerning the mean of attainment, he instructs, "Take hold of your will and do not abuse your chi…nourish it with integrity and place no obstacle in its path and it will fill the space between Heaven and Earth [humanity]" (ibid, II, A.2).

Chi is the neutral energy field that unites Heaven and the human heart, and both Taoist and Confucian meditation endeavour to refine the individual's spiritual energies through the cultivation of inner emptiness, for as Chuang Tzu observes that where "Fortune and Blessing gather … there is stillness" (C.T., 54).  As a wisdom practice, both Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu instruct that for clear mindedness to emerge, one's heart must be emptied not only of desire, but of any unnecessary sensations for these are distractions to followers of the Way.  Chuang Tzu's advice is elementary:  "Be empty, that is all." (C.T., p. 95).

The calm equanimity of attunement with primal spaciousness that arises through this emptiness training is identified by Chuang Tzu as "fasting the mind" (C.T., p. 53). Capable of accepting both "favour and disgrace" without discrimination (TTC, XIII), it represents a mental nature devoid of preconceptions:

> Make your will one!  Don't listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don't listen with your mind, but listen with your spirit.  Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with recognition, but spirit is empty and waits on all things.  The way gathers in emptiness alone.  Emptiness is the fasting of the mind (C.T., p.54).

Free of the Occidental mind's dualistic, often adversarial nature, the animating principle of the Way may be discerned as something apart from honours, titles, prestigious occupations, media reputation, or from inequitable global economic networks.  As Chuang Tzu asserts, "Therefore I say, the Perfect Man has no self; the Holy Man has no merit; the Sage has no fame" (C.T., p. 26).

The relevance of Taoism today is not for any organic vision it offers of a more equitable or noble society, although the four tenets of the Green Party—Ecological Wisdom, Social Justice, Non-Violence, and Stability—bear more than surface resemblance with perennial Taoist insight (Green Party Canada web-site).[143]   In many respects the regard it exhibits for the individual is similar to the concern for individual freedom that has evolved in American society.  But the appetites that the latter may encourage for utmost degrees of personal freedom can veer unhealthily astray in North American life.  Under the banner of 'freedom of expression', art for example is easily transformed into exploitative pornography or trivial politicization such as the 'Meat Dress' or 'Piss Pope' art-installation exhibitions in Ottawa and London[144].  Freedom of mobility too, can be interpreted as a rational for aimless drifting or promiscuous sexuality, both of which suggest their own limitations.  The freedom that Taoism proposes is altogether different.  Instead, it allows how the individual who takes care to cultivate and clarify his or her thoughts, and who works to minimize disorder can attain harmony in social, commercial, or even possibly political life.  The reward of striving for such equanimity and harmony can be happiness; and in the ethical system which arises through living with the Way, in which profit and fame are no longer one's navigating pole-stars, happiness is one's *raison d'être*.  It is a simple path.  Mencius himself speaks to this, declaring "The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart" (IV.12).

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[143]  In Green Party thinking which began in New Zealand and Australia under the leadership of Dr. Trevor Hancock in 1972 at Hobart, Tasmania, ecological wisdom is respecting all forms of life including non-human species, acknowledging the wisdom and customs of indigenous peoples, and the fact that we depend on the earth's resources.  Social justice is regarded as equality of distribution of these resources.  Non-violence is the respect for a culture of peace and cooperation, in which security is not dependent on military strength, but upon strategic economic and social development, environmental regard, and respect for human rights.  Costa Rica is example of a nation that, while imperfect in many areas, has done without an army for generations, has managed to co-exist peacefully with its neighbours, provide much progressive legislation, and has avoided the bloody-minded histories which have plagued all its neighbours (Green Party web-site, 2005: see also, Wikipedia, 2005: CBC News, 2004).

[144] Montreal artist Jana Sterbak's National Art Gallery of Canada exhibition featuring 50 lbs. of raw steak threaded together as a dress prompted a national outcry regarding the appropriate use of taxpayers dollars on public art (see http://www.snopes.com/politics/arts/meatdress.asp); re. the juvenalia of Andres Serrano, see Adrian Searle (2001), "Negative Energy", http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/critic/feature.

Living productively and working meaningfully in concord with the Way transmits into the realm of what Buddhists comprehend as 'right livelihood'. The joy of spontaneous, mindful action lies at the root of Chuang Tzu's offbeat 'skill stories', and their eccentric characters demonstrate how instinctive, intuitive applications overcome begrudging, by-the-book action in every occasion. At the heart of this teaching is wu-wei, not consciously doing or thinking, but simply executing one's skill with the naturalness of a flowing stream. In the story of Cook Ting, a rascally fellow worthy of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* explains how he was able to master the slicing-up of an ox with the acme of professional panache:

> When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now—now I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants (C.T., p. 46).

By focusing on the goal, by doing only that which needs to be done without distraction, by working from the position of emptiness which is also paradoxically a fullness, through one's fasting of the mind and practice of wu-wei nothing is left undone. For the medieval European monks this was understood as *age quod agis*—'do what you do', or 'be what you are'. In Cook Ting's every workplace action, he excels at simply 'being what he is'. In identical fashion the guild-hall masters of medieval Europe formerly understood this point of self-actualization as 'coming into one's *mystery*.' By tradition, it was also the ritual sign of one's emotional and spiritual readiness to become a contributing member of the larger community and for the taking of a marriage partner.

Whether one terms it mastery, *upaya* (skillful means), or automatic action, for Chuang Tzu the most laudable vocation is that which has blossomed as one's true *avocation*. Like form and emptiness, to a practitioner of the Way they are one and the same, refined through constant application until one's 'work' is no longer a matter of conscious purpose. In the Occident's artisan trades which until recent decades maintained their own respected title of Master and concept of trade mastery/mystery, any accredited journeyman was taught to understand how at a certain point of skill one's tools (or position) virtually work

by themselves—or rather, become one with the labourer. Chuang Tzu calls this adroit form of execution "the secret of caring for life" (ibid, p. 46). What can be assumed from this is that applying Taoist philosophy in the modern world implies moving beyond the present day's obsessions with celebrity, and for constant sensory stimulation—all which are inexorably tied with consumerism and artificially created desire. It requires recognition of when enough is enough. As a realistic sensibility in the workplace, it this suggests finding if not comfort, at least balance between the complex and the simple, the prosaic and the banal.

Similar Taoist views offer an alternative approach regarding the values of utility and uselessness. Both these values are regarded as mere illusions, necessary tricks of language used to define countervailing forces evident in the phenomenal world. Occidental thought prizes utility and reliability. By contrast, Taoism delights in practical advantage, teaching new ways of seeing and valuing the mundane. Lao Tzu's parables of the water-jar and the wheel are illustrative. Where Cosimo di Medici (or the Han Emperor) might value the beauty of a rare, stone-encrusted goblet by Benvenuto Cellini, the Taoist perceives real usefulness in the empty space within the humblest clay pot. Why? It is the empty hollow that when filled provides true value. Likewise the utility of a wheel where, "Thirty spokes share one hub, but it's the emptiness that makes the wheel go round…" (TTC, XI). Outwardly, what appears useless to others for the Taoist may be the thing of most handiness. This Taoist attitude toward defining real value is applicable in a wide-ranging series of ideas—beauty, truth, justice, loyalty, and the like. Only rarely is it exercised in Western culture, and then perhaps as folk-wisdom at best such as in parental guidance regarding 'inner beauty'. Only at exceptional, unconventional moments does it seem to manifest itself in ideas such as Shelley's 'Negative Capability'. In the end, what is at issue is the concept of preconceived, untested forms of experience with the unavoidable implication that, 'No one can know my Tao': each individual and every generation must renew the verity of the Way's complementarities for its own, redefining the dynamics of stability and change within society as surely each generation must refine its own moral position for the times. Yet the trail-markers are well-established, left by one's family and community ancestors: look deeply, search carefully, "move your wheels along old ruts", but test them for yourself, regard everything as One (TTC, XIV). Both traditions—the

ways of the ancients—and innovation, whether technological, social, or political are integral to the unity of the Way.

de Bary has argued that the strength of Confucianism has always been embedded in "the family, the school and the state"; and that likewise "its great problems have lain in how these can coexist" (1988: ix). Perhaps the keenest substantial contributions Taoist and Confucian ideas can make to contemporary society is through their insistence on relentless clarity of language in defining meaning and purpose whatever the situation, organizationally or individually. This is seen in Confucius' concern with education as a nourishing force for social order and harmony. Teaching and instructing others by one's own moral example in leadership is the preferred model for achieving this goal, for only by ruling morally will the people's essential needs for food, shelter, security, be realized. For the ruler to show benevolence and loyalty to the people from above is certain to engender reciprocity from the people below—a form of yang to yin and back again, which constitutes a kind of political-structural *feng shui*. Putting into practice what one has learned as a scholar and leader is a practical means of actualizing the Way and of accomplishing the tasks of our role in life and society.

Ideally, in the ordered, harmonious human order decreed by Heaven, every individual will know his or her place. This is memorialized in the declaration: "Let a ruler be a ruler, the subject be a subject, the father a father, the son a son": *Jun, Jun, Chen, Chen, Fu, Fu, Zi, Zi* (Analects, XII.11). Establishing a standard of propriety in matters of personal and business conduct, ritual propriety, or governance, this 'Rectification of Names' (*zheng ming)* is arguably the most enduring legacy of the Master's teaching, for:

> *Asked what he would undertake first,*
> *Were he called upon to rule a nation,*
> *The master replied: To correct language…*
> *If language is not correct,*
> *Then what is said is not what is meany,*
> *Then what ought to be done remains undone;*
> *If this remains undone, morals and art will deteriorate;*
> *If morals and art deteriorate, justice will go astray;*
> *If justice goes astray,*
> *The people will stand about in helpless confusion,*
> *Hence there must be no arbitrariness in what is said.*
> *This matters above everything*

By stating clearly what is intended, one removes any ambiguity in the language of self-definition. Clarity of one's own meaning and purpose in the world is thus affirmed; and with consistency of self-application, fulfilling the role that one has been appointed to by destiny is made easier—regardless of whatever turmoil might befall the times. Language then is another vehicle for the expression of benevolent moral conduct, and because the Confucian view does not allow for slackness in either personal conduct and language, acquiring knowledge through 'lifelong learning' is critical to the honourable individual. The root of classical China's absorption with the idea of education lies here, for as a means of self-improvement and honouring one's family through preferment in the civil service it has no rival. Acknowledging that unlike benevolence, intelligence is not innate, Confucius recounts how, "I was not born with knowledge but, being fond of antiquity, I am quick to seek it" (VII.20).

Occidentals are apt to regard these restrictive self-definitions and values as suffocating, but from the classical Chinese perspective they shape the parameters of a simpler, happy life. Contrasting with the other-worldly obsessions of Christianity that too often have discounted the pleasures and privileges of objective reality in the rough and tumble of commonplace daily existence, to the Taoist-Confucian mind, "The reward lies in the doing of what is good, and this constitutes the joy of following the Way" (Lau, introductory essay, 1979: 52). Much like Buddhism, in which "the way (of the dharma) is endless" (The Four Bodhisattva Vows: in Aitken, 1993: 172), among Taoists and Confucians following the Way is a continual process of self-purification and rectification, and nothing brings this into more acute relief than virtue of expressing one's filial piety (*hsiao*).

The Confucian Analects begin by introducing and establishing the qualities of an honourable and gentle individual (*chun tzu)* who is worthy of serving as a civic model. As the Master expounds, "Being good as a son and obedient as a young man is perhaps the root of a man's character" (I.2). Mencius concurs saying, "What is the most important duty? One's duty towards one's parents." (IV.A.19) This commitment to filiality permeates the Confucian world view and comes as close to the Occidental idea of 'love' as one is likely to find among China's ancient masters. To be a good and dutiful daughter or son is to become, in time, a parent of equal virtue, and because an honourable, educated

householder is expected to fulfill her or his duty to the community and state, this is consonant with being a good and worthy citizen, or even serving in a leadership capacity. Filial piety then is nothing less than an integral understanding of one's own individual participation in the mandate of heaven.

### *III.* <u>**Linking Heaven and Heart in a Modern Context**</u>

In Taoism's revered 'Golden Light' meditation, the practitioner cultivates the image in mind of a golden thread linking one's heart, mind, and breath with Heaven. A 'world meditation,' it conceives of the heart, and of the actions flowing from one's heart as a alchemical catalyst linking Earth (humanity) with Heaven. Within the Decree of Heaven's tripod of the Heaven-Humanity-Earth relationships this is also the position occupied by the ruler or leader, and Confucius is candid in his strictures regarding how the responsibility of a ruler or administrator is the welfare of the common people (Lau, 28). Respect and courtesy to others, including those below one's own station, and especially to the elderly, are cornerstones in the filial practice of extending benevolence in the Taoist tradition 'above and below, within and without' (Loy, ix). Here also lies the nature of the three-in-one teaching of 'community karma', for in the practice of mindfully extending one's best efforts to the community, these efforts are reciprocated to the giver in the form of healing chi (Chung Hung, cited in eulogy: Carolan, 1994).

For the past 400 years the empirical Occidental mind has sought external validations of knowledge. Since the receipt of Descartes' proposition, *"Cogito ergo sum"* in 1637, the trajectory of Occidental civilization has also favoured freedom of individual inquiry and mobility. Among East and South Asian cultures, however, the highly-stratified communitarian principles necessary for the development and preservation of traditional rice-growing cultures have, on the other hand, fostered a strong sense of social conformity. Unsurprisingly, the sense of self that has evolved in these cultures, especially within Taoist and Confucian spheres, is different from the West—as different as eating from a single, personal plate is from the sharing of a larger communal bowl. Nevertheless, both Taoist

and Confucian ethical approaches to living encourage one to search for virtue and truth within one's individual heart—an internal validation of one's own inherent compassion and dignity—and both find joy within the idea of diminishing the 'self' for the fuller harmony of the Way, the "unfathomable source of the ten thousand things (TTC, IV). In an uncertain world, the virtues that they recognize and the positivist techniques they recommend—wu-wei, fasting the mind, holding to the One, rethinking the ideas of utility and uselessness, unifying the heart with Heaven, filial piety, the Rectification of Names, abiding by the Decree of Heaven—offer hope. Where the Occidental striving for individual salvation is other-worldly directed, the Taoist-Confucian path is eternally 'this worldly' and ultimately aims to link one's own self-hood with the deeper, interdependent nature of the living holiness, *Tao.*

Again unlike the Occident's unvarying certitude, there is irony here too. If Buddhism has long been able to laugh at itself and its seriousness (one thinks of Zen's many ribald teachings), even the Confucian path—unaccountably mistaken in many Western inquiries for a kind of unrelenting Chinese Calvinism—understands the bittersweet. Asked about the realistic possibility of humanity truly comprehending and living by the Way of Heaven, Confucius' reply is the Mona Lisa smile of East Asian civilization: "The gentleman takes office in order to do his duty. As for putting the Way into practice, he knows all along that it is hopeless" (Analects, Bk. XVIII. 7).

This is why for more than two thousand years Confucian culture has bowed to the Master. Oddly, his humanist teachings find an unexpected approximation in the folk wisdom of the North American frontier, 'the West', with its own maxim, "Cowboys do the right thing, even when nobody's looking". Could such wry optimism still work in the modern West? Perhaps. After living in Tokyo, *Washington Post* reporter T.R. Reid describes in *Confucius Lives Next Door* (1999)*,* the positive values he found in contemporary Japanese society, a comprehensively modern Confucian model:

> The world's lowest rates of violent crime, theft, and drug use; strong
> stable families with low rates of divorce, and virtually no single parents;
> public education that tests out as the best in the world; a broad sense of

equality that gives everybody a stake in the society and [that] help[s] assure, for the most part, safe and peaceful living condition (14).

Reid contends that Confucianism's contribution to Japanese society boils down to the virtues of traditional moral and civic learning which are reinforced through the public educational system.  Yet after experiencing the meaning of communitarian responsibility at a local neighbourhood level, Reid concludes that essential Japanese cultural values are really only minimally different from those of the West: "The basic precepts are the same in both hemispheres; they differ in nuance but not in substance" (ibid, 241).

Reid's sojourn among the Japanese leads him to lament that The Analects at least are not compulsory reading in the West.  Their truths, he asserts, can "fit the contemporary West as well as they fit the ancient East" (98).  For some, this may be a difficult argument to accept, yet as George Pruden has argued on this subject (2002: 63), Confucian values—stable families, education, moral examples, rituals, duties and responsibilities toward others in the groups to which one belongs—all have counterparts in the West's own ethics descending from "the Bible, the Greeks and Romans, and other key sources of the Western tradition" (ibid, 244).

For all their power and humaneness, however, these same philosophical streams have seldom resulted in bringing stillness to the human heart, and this is what Western seekers so often hope to achieve through their exploration of Asian wisdom paths.  East Asia's chief spiritual paths did not produce an equivalent to Europe's Enlightenment, but all have encouraged stillness, and as this chapter has articulated, this is the result of their never having had the idea of 'getting' to begin with.  East Asian wisdom has been in the 'offering', for the dharmas of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism are by nature gift-economies and have not expected a return.

Following this line of thinking, the critical question seems to be why, or how have East Asian cultures accomplished a better job of realizing their traditional cultural values in daily life than the West?  Reid's suggestion is that much of the answer lies in how East Asian societies continue to ritualize the events of daily life, and he recommends the increased use of ceremony in North American culture as a means of reinforcing moral and civil values.  This includes a spin on the idea of defending 'family values' by suggesting

that North Americans, "ought to make it harder for single people to start families; we ought to make it harder for married couples with children to break up" (ibid, 247). What makes sense from a Confucian position however, is sure to inflame civil libertarians.

Employing the idea of Taoist-Confucian virtues as "ethical software" (Dellios, 2004: 144), there can be little doubt as to the good sense of incorporating its chief tenets into a minimum sense of 'global citizenship'. Implicit in such citizenship is the notion of a universal identity which as April Carter has determined, already has a lengthy history deriving from the international anti-slavery, socialist, peace, feminist, environmental, and human rights movements.[145] In the uncivil hour of the early 21st century that Rosita Dellios describes as being overshadowed by a "unipolar international structure in which a single nation holds a preponderance of power and wields it in the style of *wu* (martiality)" (ibid, 150), what more effective remedy in restoring meaning to the world's increasingly empty political and social rituals could there be than "promot[ing] the politics of *wen* (civility) in a systematic fashion" (ibid)?

Reinterpreting and discovering what is most precious in its mythologies, theologies, and ideologies is the unending challenge of every generation. East Asia's paths have recognized that the route lies through finding nirvana in the samsara of everyday coarse events; Western traditions have striven to seek new intellectual equations for achieving individual liberation and social advancement. Here lies the essential distinction between the two: the Asian school's approach to *uncovering* what is inherently there within oneself and one's larger culture; and the Western concern with *discovering more*—new ethics of responsibility, new paradigms of acceptability, new concepts of what self and community identity may be. Both are equally valuable. In the end, as the world's great religious traditions seem to agree, all is One; and as the Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima (2000: 43) observes, different standards are but a matter of geography. Re-visiting the past helps one fathom what the implications of the present may be for the future. By asking the right questions and envisioning what the results may be of bridging ancient values with the contemporary in constructing these 'memories of the future', further crises may be averted

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[145] In *The Political Theory of Global Citizenship* (2001), April Carter considers a divergent range of theories addressing the broad idea of cosmopolitan, or global citizenship.

in the approaching decades for the health and betterment of humanity's collective communities.

# Chapter 11.

# Building Community, Healing History

In theory, the Taoist and Confucian philosophical approach to living as a contributing citizen within society is as vital as anything devised in the West.  Historically, in practice as Tu Weiming observes, however, too frequently it has devolved into an emphasis "on authority, obedience, hierarchy, status, and gender differentiation" (2004: viii), and the literary evidence by writers such as Lao She (*Rickshaw*), Hahn Moo-Sook (*And So Flows History*), Kajiyama Toshiyuki (*The Clan Records*), and others more than supports Tu.  The admonitions of Mencius concerning the removal of unworthy rulers had only a limited application, and within Chinese political history inflexibility, ultra-paternalism, and cronyism became as entrenched as the Tammany Hall politics of New York.  American political scientist Lucien Pye (1985: 41) simplifies the political critique further, suggesting that in practical terms Confucianism perceives power only in moralistic terms, and arguably the examples of Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore or Chiang Kai-Shek's Republic of China on Taiwan attest to this.  Writing from Australia subsequent to the Tiananmen Massacre of 1989 in Beijing, Simon Leys (1997) has further rebuked the Confucian legacy for specifically ignoring such precepts as "social justice, political dissent, or the moral duty of intellectuals to criticize the ruler."  Realistically, the shortcomings of the Taoist-Confucian philosophy as it tends to devolve as a direct political path can seem of limited practicality for the global age.

This is not to deny their unique virtues, nor their value in a contemporary spirit.  In writing of the enlightened future of East Asian states, Tu Weiming understands that while,

> …it is inconceivable that there may be a form of modernity without a market economy, democratic polity, civil society, and the legal means to protect human rights…embedded in the habits of the heart of East Asians… [there] is [also] Confucian humanism"  (*New Perspectives*, xii) .

Tu's contends that despite practical Confucianism's fuzziness regarding human rights, the twin Confucian principles of benevolence *(jen)* and reciprocity *(shu)* shape an engagement point for "universalizable ethics" (ibid, xii), and this is worthy of cross-cultural examination. Some recent attempts at articulating such an ethics include the Dalai Lama's public dialogues in which he routinely stresses the need for an intercultural 'secular ethics', and the work of Hans Kung whose call for recognition of "a global ethic" is discussed in chapter one of this thesis (see also Liu, 2004: 222-223; and Kung, 1993: http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/Center/kung.htm. The statesman Mikhail Gorbachev has also appealed for a "new conceptual view of the future…[that] could be defined as global humanism" (1995: 21).

With Martin Lu's observation that the Sung dynasty neo-Confucian concept of *li-yi-fen-shu* (the Principle is one and its manifestations are many) is consonant with contemporary multicultural ideas of diversity and pluralism (ibid, xix; Dellios, 144), perhaps unexpectedly one is presented with the renewed relevance of Taoist-Confucian humanism to current Western thought regarding the nature of 'community'.

The concept of community is complex and varied. Community is about belonging to a place, to a group, without necessarily having to define one's personal identity exclusively in terms of that community. In this regard, a healthy community is a collective of free-thinking individuals in which the larger personality of the collective is negotiated through the continual interaction of the community members themselves. From this interaction comes a sense of belonging, and by nature 'belonging' is a guarantor of emotional stability. From such existential stability comes the confidence to establish further, deeper linkages within the community—ownership of property, volunteerism, business development, participation in local leadership activities through civic associations, commitment to raising children, and so on. Viewed through a deeper lens, community identity—like self-identity—can also be seen as a kaleidoscope of one's personal and spiritual values and ethics. Living within community one is able to feel confident about sharing interactively with others of generally similar hopes, concerns, joys, lifestyle, and ethics; and from this sense of belonging, of stability and sharing, comes the basic notion of security of the person within the community. Typically this 'architecture of security' is expressed through codification of the rights and obligations that can be expected of an

individual within the specific community's space, thereby establishing parameters of sociability and weaving people of diverse backgrounds into a basic sense of kinship. This is true citizenship at the most democratic local level (Ferguson, 2004: 169-171).

Acceptable community or 'civic' behaviour is local in identity because it is susceptible to changes from varying demographic, economic, and political fortunes: therefore, 'progress' within community is a kinetic idea, tempered and made flexible not only by the community's need to move forward, but by its enduring customs and traditions as well. From this forging of old and new comes forth meaning and purpose that is less superficial, more fulfilling, and better able to withstand challenges from contradictory community forces such as aggressive and unwanted social, commercial, or industrial encroachments in community areas. Arguably, in a political sense institutions such as NATO, ASEAN, the EEC, and even the U.N. are premised upon similar suppositions.

Because communities differ from cultures in intellectual scope and scale it is useful to delineate the two. An urban and regional planner, the American futurist Magda Cordell McHale has articulated an idea of what culture might be in the larger sense. Since it has been embraced for two decades by the Manila-based *Solidarity* forum group comprised of eminent Asian-Pacific thinkers and activists, it merits attention. McHale's view of culture is summarized by Indonesian cultural statesman Mochtar Lubis (1983), as that, "what is acquired by people as members of a society in terms of knowledge, beliefs, systems of meanings, ideologies, art, morals, law, conventionalized understandings and behaviours, and various other psychic and material artifacts," (p. 3; see also Dator, 1993: www.futures.hawaii.edu/dator/futures/Workshops.html). As previously noted, Clifford Geertz has also offered a widely acknowledged definition suggesting that culture "denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms" (1973: 89).

Culture then, is a larger idea. What both culture and community share, however, is memory. Specifically, this is the memory of shared desires and ideals, and as Thomas Langan illustrates (see thesis chapter one), to possess an identity as a member of either of them requires knowing about the past—from which one descends, or hopes to connect with through re-settlement or as an immigrant. From this perspective, community membership is psychological as well as emotional in praxis.

The past is an index.  Because it is representative of the interconnections joining the individual with his or her environment, acquiring a sense of community belongingness necessarily means understanding something of its physical aspects as well—its environment, the local ecological patterns, and what Gary Snyder might call its 'wild, unruly nature'.  Thinking constructively, the uniqueness of a community is comprised of its various emotional, psychological, and physical components—what might be understood academically as its 'sense of place' (see thesis chapter 3), and what Hawai'ian architect David Miller more accurately describes as its *soul* (2001).

## II.  <u>Bending Culture, Rebuilding Community in the Mid-Pacific</u>

The Asian-American author and anti-war activist Maxine Hong-Kingston has written extensively on the chains of history, nostalgia, and spiritual yearnings—on the soul that bind individuals to the idea of 'community as home'—especially when home is lived in a place apart from one's ancestral roots (*The Woman Warrior,* 1976; *China Men,* 1980; *Trip Master Monkey—His Fake Book. 1989*).  As the author of the most widely-assigned reading texts in America's university system, her influence on ideas of multiculturalism in North American over the past 30 years has been profound.  Yet it is her least-known work, a collection of non-fiction essays compiled for the *New York Times* during a 17-year residence in the tropics halfway between East Asia and North America entitled *Hawai'i One Summer* (1987; renewed 1998), which most clearly articulates her intercultural vision of what 'building community' in the present age may mean, and how one comes to recognize the soul of a place.  In the view of this dissertation, Hong Kingston's Hawai'ian book is a formative text that articulates much of the emerging nature of citizenship that will be necessary for a truly global age.  It is discussed here in detail, for the wisdom it reflects is integral to the emergence of a *new world dharma.*

Building community, Hong Kingston comes to understand through frustration and experience, can become its own 'practice', or wisdom path.  For community is not built

once and for all.  It must be imagined, practiced, and re-created.  The reality is that it takes action. The process, she reveals, is evolutionary and is comprised of three stages:

1) imagining community;

2) practicing community; and,

3) realizing community, either from scratch or by re-creation of a previous form.

As her accounts document that, like the nautilus sea-shell, the process is cyclical with growth compounding upon itself, until upon what may seem like climax further growth leads naturally to other new forms of community where the spiral begins anew.

Hong Kingston relates how she and her husband journeyed to the Hawaiian Islands during the Vietnam War which they resolutely opposed.  Social idealists who believed that, "it was the duty of the pacifist in a war economy not to work" (ibid, 15), they relocated to what appeared to be a place well out of the U.S. mainstream society.  In tropical, cheap Oahu they could live marginally but at something like peace with their convictions.  The irony, they discovered, is that the island paradise is also a large military depot and deployment centre and was situated even nearer the Vietnam conflict than California.  By fleeing the war 'at home', they inadvertently ran nearer to its day to day martial operations.  Yet, as dissenters, they had chosen this place and were determined to establish themselves locally as much as possible.  As no 'mere interlopers' Hong Kingston and her husband set about discovering its terms of enfranchisement as local community members.

Hong Kingston's accounts reflect how the biggest obstacle to settling down in new community is overcoming past resistance to the idea of 'taking ownership', for this entails responsibility and commitment.  As a rootless outsider who rents property, Hong Kingston has been free to move on whenever the urge hits her; to drift with the tide, or avoid having to defend her place.  But a home is built on foundations of trust, and in a moment of vulnerability she must confront her own limited personal ability to trust anything outside her immediate family conspectus.  In the wanderer's classic existential dilemma, she asks, "If I do not feel at home in Paradise, where is home?" (ibid, xi).

Connectedness to place arrives when Hong Kingston is able to transcend the bonds of language through ownership.  To become a purchaser, she has worried, is to become mortgaged, fettered, and 'mortgage' with its auxiliary references such as *mores, mortis,*

*mortal* (ibid, 4) is somehow synonymous with death. But through dialogue with her husband and new friends, and through an examination of historical land-title records reaching back to Hawai'i's sovereign, independent past, in something like a Buddhist way she is able to reach the understanding that any ownership is transient; that transformations are inherent through the nature of community organization. If the past cannot be legally re-written, in a Confucian sense at least one's own views of the past can be 'rectified' in accordance with 'the Way of place'. In modern American short-hand, '*the past simply happened. Get over it.'* Thus ownership can be conceived of as constructive stewardship: it need not be negative. Similar to Ray Carver's *Cathedral,* 'not clinging' to past conceptions emerges as the portal to a new way of seeing.

David Miller argues that the key to coming into a new country, community, or place successfully is "assimilation and creativity" (2001). Whatever it is one seeks in trying to approach and honour the soul of a place, a community, its ambiguity "is hard to define but [its] absence is quickly sensed" (ibid). By caring for a small house and piece of garden Hong Kingston's family are able first to make a home, and in the process adapt to the rhythms of the island. Everyday life maintenance activities—Buddhism's 'ordinary mind'—such as washing dishes, painting a room, pruning back bushes, become a quiet, but meaningful way of living in place (*Hawai'i*, xii). The doubts and suspicion that previously existed are soon filled with the ebb and flow of activities which Hong Kingston lives as woman, artist, mother, and community member. Old problems, she learns, dissolve amid the new challenges of finding harmony within the diversity of tropical abundance—an archetypal transformation process symbolized by the Himalayan mandala image of the *bhava cakka,* 'the wheel of becoming', that draws one steadily deeper into the still point of unity with the larger whole (Grey, 2005; Khantipalo bhikku, 1995: http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/khantipalo/wheel147.html). This is the ethic of responsibility that Joanna Macy interprets as integrating, or greening oneself with nature, and that is summarized by Gary Snyder (1985), as the point of realization when, "knowing who we are and knowing where we are, are intimately linked" (p. 89).

In discovering the fuller meaning of community, Hong Kingston's Hawaiian accounts offer a road-map by which one may uncover the true nature of self-identity as well. In befriending others and coming into contact with the ancient secrets and myths of the

Polynesian people, she learns as a writer that the ancient ways are *kapu,* forbidden for export or commercial exploitation.  So begins a gradual path of learning, for wisdom comes slowly.  Mindful of kapu, of describing Hawai'i not through her epic histories and myths but "piece by piece" (Hawai'i, xviii), Hong Kingston succeeds in "making up meanings as I go…" (ibid, xvii).  As such, over time the timbre and fabric of the islands' ancient dreams reveal themselves in renewed contemporary ways that honour their cultural integrity, and which increasingly come to witness the island and its community as truly sacred ground.

Philosophically, Hong Kingston's retreat to domesticity and the embrace of a new community identity is not unlike the decisions taken by Kerouac and Kamo-no-Chomei.  Kerouac chooses the community of friends and the sanctity of nature.  Chomei throws himself upon the mercy of the Buddha of the Earth.  All three learn to simplify and to forgive.  Hong Kingston encounters the obligation of forgiving through the unusual circumstance of a high school reunion gathering.  Initially reluctant to consider the wounds and hurts of youth that have never been forgotten, and which the reunion event brings flooding back, she attends as a way of confronting old demons.  However, as the experience unfolds for her, it becomes an opportunity to reconcile these old indignities.  As an adult she can see how the emotional dislocations of her youth were caused by her own inability to select her own friends due to strictures of social and economic caste that were beyond her control.  Little wonder, she realizes, that she was frequently alone or unhappy.  What could be more human?  With the levelling agents of experience and maturity however, Hong Kingston discovers that "friendships among equals is a possibility" (ibid, 11).  Crucially, it is equanimity between self and others that allows the possibility of forgiveness: it is possible, she discovers, to come together as one people, one community again.[146]  Even fellow citizens who do not share one's own views opposing the war can be re-imagined: by re-thinking the nature and possibilities of community, healing is possible.

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[146] John Ralston Saul (2001) notes in *On Equilibrium,* that during the proceedings of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission the concept of forgiveness was actively encouraged and incorporated within public policy as an agency of reconciliation (see also Henderson, 2000; Byrne and Irvin, 2000).  Ralston Saul notes, "The need was to establish a personal and national sense of justice… Society itself seemed to need these meetings and revelations in order to find a 'communal starting point' " (p. 93).

Like families, communities may have internal disputes that smolder for decades. Hawai'i's Polynesians offer a fascinating glimpse into how reconciliation can be made. Hong Kingston relates a story that she learns of which centers upon the great Hawai'ian Unifier, King Kamehameha of the Big Island of Hawai'i's northern Kohala Coast. In unifying the northernmost Polynesian island chain, Kamehameha slaughtered his own noble *ali'i* cousin Keoua Ku'ahu'ula as a last link in confirming his sovereignty—a shameful story from Hawai'i's violent past. This murder created toxic relations between island clans for generations. But in 1991, through a historic re-enactment of the incident at the Pu'ukohola *heiau,* a sacred site dedicated to the ancient concept of sanctuary, their descendents met again. This time, clan representatives of the two leaders met in peace; they walked together. For a new generation of descendents, and for posterity, as Confucius might say, they 'rectified' the wrongs of the past. In Hong Kingston's reporting of the ceremony as she received it, the descendents greet each other in peace rather than war. Conducted on the sacred ground of the volcanic stone heiau temple enclosure, the meeting ceremony is anointed through *aloha*, through love and community, not violence and killing. The old ali'i obsessions with power and war are transformed into what is needed *now* in the island's history. The past, while not forgotten, is made new. This reunification is what the islands' children will remember and pass down as tradition, that "unification is the coming together of former enemies in peace. It is possible to heal history. It is possible to be one people living together in harmony" (ibid, xiv). Can humanity ever tire of hearing such a simple message?

In this way the past is not forgotten, but as in a marriage when one partner has strayed the union may still be reconciled for the greater good. By respecting the tradition of harmony—in the family, in the community, in new forms—the social components of living and sharing in community forge a crucible of accountability that makes healing genuinely possible. Hong Kingston's story brings a stirring message, worthy of an Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa, the Dalai Lama of Chinese-occupied Tibet, or the mothers of the dead on both sides in Northern Ireland: 'if we can do it here, in Hawai'i, halfway point between East and West, North and South, why not *anywhere?*' If, as is attributed to Thackeray that, 'bravery never goes out of style', in a global age perhaps a new motto for humanity will be 'let the courage to forgive and make new among us never go out of

style'. What Hong Kingston reveals to the larger world outside the islands is that through self and community purification, old pollutions that have long set one another apart can be cleansed away. As the Dalai Lama urges at virtually every public address, 'It is a simple plan'.

It is an ideal plan for the global age. Hong-Kingston also learns that recognizing the land we stand on and the space we share with others in our community as meaningful ground, becomes an effective way of overcoming alienation in daily life. Yet this acknowledgement of the sacred in the natural environment underpinning one's sense of community need not be traditionally religious in orientation. It embraces religious values and lies beyond them at the same time.

Hong Kingston arrives at her awareness of the living holiness of the land by a circuitous path. In an account entitled "Talk Story"—island pidgin for tender conversation among friends—she recounts the political edginess of a writers' gathering at Honolulu. The *kama'aina, or* Hawai'ian-born detachment lay down the law to writers from outside the islands, including Hong Kingston. They want no appropriation of the myths and legends of their place. "You have taken our land. Don't take our stories" (Hawai'i, xii), they argue. Hong Kingston honours the *kapu.* Incrementally through her personal reports she gathers an ensemble of images and incidents that "piece by piece" describe the islands' ecology and human geography, concluding with the hope that "the sum praises her" (ibid, xviii). This approach meets with local acceptability. Indeed, Hong Kingston explains how the Hawai'ians share "a vision of the artist not as anchorite, but as builder of community" (ibid, 50).

Hong Kingston's understanding of the islands as "living, sacred earth" is ultimately forged and sealed through a crossing to Mokoli'i Island—the 'Chinaman's Hat well-known to every visitor journeying around Oahu. Sitting around a fire with friends and children on the large, uninhabited rock, they are made uneasy when a howling arises: Hawai'i—the farthest point of landfall from anywhere else on earth—has "overwhelming animism" (ibid, 54). At first it seems like wind, or birds, but gradually awareness dawns that at certain moments, "to find guidance, you have to use the lore that science scoffs at" (ibid, 56). And so,

> The air was still, and the high, clear sound wound like a ribbon around the island.  It was, I know it, the island, the voice of the island singing, the sirens Odysseus heard…We had all heard it, the voice of our island singing (ibid 33).

This is the sound any adventurer touched by the primal spirit of the Earth has heard—the drone of the Ganges, the morning hum of the mountains and the rainforest.  Having heard it, intuited it, the life force flowing with it and of it—having known the stillness, its *presence*—one's relationship with the earth is "changed utterly" (see Yeats, "Easter 1916": 1970).  Thereafter, not only does Hong Kingston regard herself in a different light—sensing now that "a place gives no special writing powers to those born and raised in it" (ibid, 48)—but the kama'aina too, appreciate that she has entered their world.  Like healing, acceptance of the outsider becomes possible.

China's ancient Taoists separated wisdom and power into two classifications—'intuitive' knowledge and 'acquired' knowledge (Loy, 1997: 31-33).  The first, intuitive, is that which one is blessed with by nature: one is born to it. It is rough, general, elegant, economical and efficient.  Acquired knowledge is derived from experience and from the teachings of others. It is specific, sharp, detailed, apt to be complex.  For Hong Kingston, the distinction is magnified in her response to the dangers her young son faces in his morning surf routines in the rough Pacific.  As a mother, she comprehends these hazards.  Understandably, she fears them—sudden undertows, sharks, hazardous lava shoals.  As a parent too, she has raised her son to honour both personal and communal integrity, imbuing his growing up with the values necessary to lead a fulfilling life, rich in compassion, brotherhood, respect, and self-dignity.  His leaving therefore, even as a boy, to make his own decisions such as surfing in risky ocean waters poses a complex challenge.

In a compelling twist familiar to any parent, even as an adult citizen who has struggled to become a part of something larger, more unitary, Hong Kingston as a mother must also let go her 'clinging mind' in allowing her son to create his own attachments.  The best she can do, it seems, is join her husband in watching their boy paddle out with other youths to the breakers and talk story with them later, endeavouring to understand how the young find magic in the surf.  In the end she turns to words.  There, in language—her own *métier*—she

finds meaning.  Surfers, she discovers, find sacredness in riding the white noise and power of the waves' translucent tubes and channels of the sea—an experience one veteran describes "an iridescent ride through the entrails of God" (Hawai'i, 72).  Could it be otherwise when *place* is the well of each day's spiritual grounding?   Knowing this, as mother and as a working school-teacher, Hong Kingston cannot doubt the veracity of seeing in her son the full expression of "person and place coming together" (ibid, 54). To become human and mature, she realizes, is to honour simultaneously the unique, but interconnected virtues of intense attachment and the pain of letting go.

The community one lives in, and is shaped by, is an adjunct to the Confucian idea of goodness.  Indeed, as Hong Kingston learns through joy and pain in re-expressing for the early 21st century—the dawn of the global age—it lies near "the root of a man's character" (Confucius, *Analects*, I.2).  Home, the present, is where one's roots are—not in the dreams of old homelands, old cravings, old antagonisms.  Surely this moral vision of community—that marries sacredness and samsara, the ordinary and extraordinary, outsider-ship and acceptance, receiving and giving—offers a better alternative path to the experience of globalization.  By living together as an ensemble of familiar, but individually and regionally different individuals and nations in peace and mutual tolerance (which does not necessarily oblige 'approval' of different cultural mores), a more ecologically healthy world is possible. With greater tolerance for diversities within the mosaic of cultures, surely the grounds for better addressing the chronic problems of poverty, malnutrition, and the interconnected problems outlined by Fritjof Capra in chapter four of this thesis are possible.  The experience is there:  "It is possible to heal history.  It is possible to be one people living in harmony" (Hawai'i, xiv).

## *III.*  The Burden of Reconciliation

Whether in the asking or bestowing, forgiveness does not come easily.  Individual ego makes it difficult: the first requires swallowing one's pride; the second, letting go of one's hurt and anger.  But carrying the wounds of the past as Korean-American essayist Phil

Choi (1999: 35-36) confesses, "is heavy luggage—a luxury too burdensome to carry". This is equally true of any community, culture, or new world age. Fortunately, the examples of leaders who have urged humanity to overcome its old ideas of enmity in coming together as a new community are near to hand: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his teacher Thich Nhat Hanh who both were inspired by Ghandi (2000: p. 3), and the Dalai Lama (2001: 9-10; 1994: 3-14) have all taught the compassionate self-discipline of 'loving one's enemies'. Mother Theresa and Aung San Suu Kyi have both offered the examples of self-sacrifice to try and win the understanding of disinterested or hostile political establishments for the sake of those oppressed around them.

The words of Rev. King (2000) express the motivational ethos reinforcing the remarkable acts of courage and endurance such leaders have typically endured:

> Upheaval after upheaval has reminded us that modern man is travelling along a road called hate, in a journey that will bring us to destruction and damnation. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, the command to love one's enemy is an absolute necessity for our survival. Love even for enemies is the key to the solution of the problems of our World (40-41).

Ultimately, the wisdom of the West's Christian tradition and Asia meet on this one point. Where Rev. King and Mother Theresa work from a stance as followers of Jesus, the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Aung San Suu Kyi as Buddhists believe that life is a connected series of 'instances'. At the nexus for both traditions is the need to separate the harmful action or 'instance', from the individual. Through the expression of *agape*—King's "redemptive goodwill for all men" (ibid, 41)—and *bodhicitta*, the mind of enlightenment and love, (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1995: 200)—both Asia and the West possess long-established policies for reconciling with the doer of harmful deeds, while opposing the harmfulness of these same deeds.

Lest this be mistaken for jejeune idealism, Rev. King explains his understanding of the word 'love':

> Now we can see what Jesus meant when he said, 'Love your enemies.'
> We should be happy that he did not say, 'Like your enemies.' It is almost
> impossible to like some people. 'Like' is a sentimental and affectionate
> word. How can we be affectionate toward a person whose avowed aim is
> to crush our very being and place innumerable stumbling blocks in our
> path? How can we like a person who is threatening our children and
> bombing our homes? That is impossible. But Jesus recognized that *love*
> is greater than *like*. When Jesus bids us to love our enemies, he is speaking
> neither of *eros* [romantic or aesthetic love] or *philia* [reciprocal love
> between friends]; he is speaking of *agape*, understanding and creative,
> redemptive goodwill for all men ("Loving", 41).

What King intimates is at the plainest neighbourhood level, while one may not like the
family next door, if their house is on fire in the night the fundamental human response is to
help save them and their children. Perhaps out of such core human decency understanding
can grow.

Adopting new ways of seeing and embracing new stories for one's own time helps
overcome the burden of carrying a painful history, especially when crossing cultural
frontiers through migration. In the building of healthy communities for a global age what
will be required therefore are new ways of envisioning one's own self-identity. Only a
transcendence above the old emotional scars of one's personal history allows one to move
forward in making a new start with a fresh slate.

Relationally, this may mean different things for different cultures. Whereas in the U.S.
this may mean following periodic national drifts toward California, the Southern sun-belt,
or the Pacific Northwest, among East Asians as Lucien Pye explains, "the search for self-
identity means finding a group to belong to…" (1998: x). But the phenomenon of
interculturality itself, and intersection of national cultures is now well-advanced and will
continue, and already this makes it easier to become self-selecting about the past. In such
an atmosphere even the once-rigid cinctures of religion are not immune from
transformation. Chan Kwok Bun and Emilie Yun defined this uniquely modern situation at

the 2002 David C. Lam Institute workshop in Hong Kong addressing the importance of internationalization:

> Comparisons enable one to discover and be fascinated by the richness of the variability of the human experience…What was formerly held as sacred, inevitable, and unchangeable could soon be found during comparisons to be artificial, man-made, and changeable (cited, 2004: Conference Program, p. 2).

The implications for fundamentalist religious rigidity here are obvious.  As surely as Darwin's theory of evolution outlined in *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* wore away like water at the assumptions of traditional Christian creation mythology, even in Northern Ireland and the Levant where for generations Protestant Unionists and Republican Catholics, or Jews and Palestinians respectively have been unable to 'imagine' the mutual presence of each other, once-unthinkable degrees of change are conceivable: the Hawai'ians have shown that healing is possible.

## *IV.*  <u>Shifts in the Spiritual Ground</u>

One remedy for the difficulty of change lies in making connections with the most positive aspects of the new and meshing them with the most relevant elements of the past. Tu Weiming has observed that a connecting point which has proven useful during recent international dialogues has been the physical environment, a subject upon which Buddhists, Christians, indigenous American aboriginals, Hawaiians, and Maori share related beliefs (Kowinski, 2004: www.sfgate.com/cgi-article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/ 2004/04/11/ RVGR15V5J61.DTL).

Acceptance of oneself, one's roots, and one's own changing nature is a different matter, however, than agreeing upon the beauty, frailty, and holiness of nature.  While such changes are universally accepted facts of living and ageing, ironically, among the world's

major religious leaders only the Dalai Lama has declared that Buddhist epistemology will change if necessary in accordance with contemporary science (Kowinski, ibid). What is apparently happening in Occidental spiritual life is a form of personal identity shape-shifting in response to the psychological pressures of the age. American scholar Patricia Hampl (1999) summarizes this contemporary cultural plasticity and questioning in the context of her own changing definition of self and larger community. In "Crying Out In Silence" she writes:

> I now think more inclusively than I did before. I'm less edgy and more casual about my own Catholicism; it's just who I am and what I do. Catholicism has become more a cultural fact for me, akin to the way many Jewish people feel about their Judaism. This is true for a lot of Catholics today. As the Church in America has lost its immigrant hold, it has streamed into a cultural awareness (152).

In one respect what Hampl hints at here is a return to the archaic, to a mode of living and being in which one carpenters one's own version of faith and community commitment from the stew-pot of personal experience and accrued wisdom, rather than from dogmatic 'official party lines.' This matter was expounded upon by the Japanese novelist and cultural theorist Yukio Mishima prior to his appalling, ritualistic suicide.[147] In "On Nakedness and Shame" (2000), which can readily be seen as a rejection of globalization, Mishima despairs at the loss of traditional foundation-stones in Japanese society—its traditional samurai warrior spirit, national attire, customs, and festival rituals. Lamenting their passing, Mishima does not so much grieve their loss however, as much as revile the shame which the Japanese people were compelled to live with in trying "to deny their past" (ibid, 43) during the inglorious national struggle to modernize swiftly along Western economic, military, educational, and political lines.

Ridiculed as primitives by the Western powers who forced unequal treaties on Japan as they had previously done to China, among the nation's first traditions to be suppressed

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[147] In 1970 at the zenith of his artistic and literary career, citing his despair at the fallen state of Japan's modern society Mishima took his own life in a ceremonial *seppuku*—Samurai-style ritual disembowelment and beheading by his retainer.

were its manners of dress, notably among peasant stock, women, and day labourers (ibid, 44). At the heart of this loss, according to Mishima, was the Japanese sense of physicality, particularly its traditionally open expression of nakedness, which during sacred festivals was associated with an all-pervasive, undisguised "mass intoxication and rapture" (ibid, 44-45). Emblematic of the nation's spiritual essence, these ancient shamanic rituals were near to the soul of the land itself and Japan's very notions of community were galvanized about them. For Mishima, the vulgarization and marginalization of such festivals by the nation's westernizing military rulers brought "the final sorrow" to Japanese society. Once jettisoned in favour of imported ideas, Japan was bereft of its original sacred nature and for a hundred years the nation-community literally lost contact with the bonds that had shaped its identity for so long.

In exchange for their shame and for forgetting their past, the Japanese emerged with unprecedented speed as a modern industrial nation—for Mishima, a Faustian bargain; for in pursuing Occidental models of success ands aesthetics, Japan's old ways of living and thinking were eroded and ownership even of its sense of place slipped into other cultural hands. Written in 1968, Mishima looked upon a dazzling turnabout in national life. Two decades after the second world war Japan had become one of the world's five leading industrial nations, while Western civilization—the U.S. most notably during its debilitating Vietnam conflict—was showing "cracks in its façade…In short, Japan actually [found] herself the equal of the West measured by the West's own yardstick" (ibid, 45). But with prosperity came another absurd swing of the pendulum. In 'discovering' this rebuilt Japan, the international tourist trade with its yearning for 'authenticity' began craving what Japan had long since devalued and junked—traditional architectures, its peasant festivals, the floating world of art, geishas, and feudal era pageantry. The result? Thirty years before Singapore would commit to re-creating its 'sense of islandness', Japan was obliged to generate a barrage of ersatz cultural replicas of its past! (ibid, 46).

Mishima's example of Japan as a symbol of progress and prosperity illustrates the negative impact of insufficiently thought-out social engineering. Regardless, with its national pride restored through unrelenting labour and economic success, a new generational appreciation was made possible for the old customs. Acknowledging that the profundities of the old 'naked' festivals can never be entirely recaptured, the nation's

reawakened appetites for many of its former 'barbaric' ways has encouraged a revival of Japanese "pride in our primitivism" (ibid, 46). In Mishima's view, resurrecting and paying homage to the nation's ancient shamanic Shinto roots is as fundamental to reintegrating the grounds of sacredness and "joy, fierceness and laughter" in Japan's entire cultural tapestry—an argument understood by Kenneth Rexroth, a longtime observer of both Zen Buddhist and Christian mystic traditions. Noting how in Buddhism the material world of 'reality' is regarded as illusory because it lacks "substantiality", he explains by contrast that the religious experience which binds the individual both to the common universe and the divine remains unshakably the one substantial thing in life (1995: 336). This is not far from Mishima's conclusion: "How glorious it is for a civilized man to retain his primitivism" (ibid, 46).

While important, history and tradition do not provide all the answers or else a peaceful era would have arrived long ago. With the advent of a global age, increasingly communities are blurring old boundaries between cultures, becoming recombinant themselves from the diverse elements now existing within their boundaries. And in the way that newcomers must surrender clinging to outmoded ideas, forward-looking communities must now absorb new influences. From foods, restaurants, and music to the possibilities of intercultural friendships and marriage, and with them introductions to fresh ideas, a 'free trade' in cross-cultural imaginings is now a virtual necessity, or else as the painful example of the former Soviet bloc illustrates too well, a community or even a powerful empire risks intellectual isolation and economic-technological vapourization.

A critical challenge for the global age, and for a *new world dharma* responsive to the demands in this age will be finding the balance-point between retaining the good of the old and implementing the benefits of the new. Assessing the difficulties of making such adjustments within the social dynamics of a multicultural state like Indonesia, Mochtar Lubis (1987) writes:

> The greatest challenge is, of course, to our own humanity. Can we go through this process of cultural transformation without losing our human values, our human compassion, and all the other values which distinguish a civilized society from a barbaric one? (20).

This makes obvious the need for a carefully defined objective, one reminds that followers where they are headed collectively and what the value of getting there is. As forestry conservation specialist Chris Maser reminds with the Nova Scotia proverb, "If you don't know where you're going, any path will take you there" (1988: 166). An attitude of right direction can lead to the development of individual, community, or organized political party expressions of representation in both local and larger venues of power. It is a way of getting things done.

The critical path to accomplishing specific goals in increasingly pluralistic contemporary forms of community and culture is through negotiation. David Malouf (2000) and John Ralston Saul have jointly commented that with the rise of political and social pluralism, for individual groups not to take part in the whole life of their 'place'— their regional or national landscape—is to forever doom themselves to marginalization. Canadian examples such as the founding of Nunavut Territory in 1999 or the Delgamuukw Case with the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en aboriginal tribes in December, 1997, have demonstrated the sagacity of this strategy.[148] By negotiating their way into the 'centre' of the national political discussion, Native Canadians overcame the impediments of generations of mutual cultural incomprehension between themselves and other Canadians. Malouf and Ralston Saul correctly interpret that moving toward the centre invariably means moving into another social and political class and psychology. Similar to the transformations documented by Hong Kingston in Hawai'i, the results for Canada's Native peoples in achieving historic land claim victories with the ensuing economic potential this entails, has shown that such changes do not have to be destructive to their own cultures. Building community in new and renewed ways is possible.

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[148] See http://www. oldfraser.lexi.net/publications/pps/, 2000; also, http://www .sisis.nativeweb.org/clark/gitksan.html, 1998.

# Chapter 12.

# Multiculturalism, Networks, and Change

Overcoming cultural barriers in achieving new goals requires a strategic vision. Likewise, the same process holds for the universalization of key values and ideas if they are to gain better traction among less economically developed nations. A strategic vision here would be a 'moral vision' of globalization—one capable of addressing such issues as radical social inequalities, ecological degradation, and spiritual emptiness. Lee Kuan Yew has stated explicitly why the current U.S. neo-liberal capitalist development model has been found wanting by Asia's economic tiger states, and why Marxist state economic models are no longer credible. In seeking the benefits of economic prosperity, however, one possibility may be through the surrender of certain degrees of national autonomy for larger collective advantage. Already, Europe's interpenetrating and interdependent economies have led toward deeper structural integration and the diminishment of old notions of statehood operative since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Similarly, a number of dynamic East Asian communities are already reinventing their traditional cultures to respond to contemporary challenges in ways that are alien to the Anglo-American world. Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan offer proven models of East and Southeast Asia's historic ability to respond successfully to such cultural transformations. And, already, South Korea, Vietnam, and Singapore are looking toward a resurgent China with its "long history of far-reaching imperial government, and recurring revival after decline", for lessons on how to meet this challenge (Little, 2005: e-letter).

In the way that "self examination is the first step toward liberalization of the human mind" (Kang Sukkyong, public address, 2003), it appears likely that even large, centralized nations such as Canada and the U.S. may be obliged to examine the consequences of shifting centers of political power in the way that Indonesia has done recently, and that the former Soviet Union was incapable of coping with. A radical, but not unthinkable notion is that sprawling, centralized states might be an obsolete political paradigm for the global age, and John Ralston Saul (2005) raises this at least figuratively in his international public addresses. Some forms of redefinition appear inevitable.

In the western regions of North America early progress in this direction has been made with such initiatives as the 'Cascadia' concept (http://www.altacolumbia.com/). Linking western Canada with the American Pacific Northwest states of Washington and Oregon, the relatively benign goal of its proponents is 'regional autonomy' based on shared cultural patterns, traditional trade-route links, and ecological-mutualities—a close parallel to Gary Snyder's bioregionalist interpretation of west coast North American life as 'Douglas fir'' territory, extending from southern Alaska to northern California. Politically, cross-border trade, transportation, and emergency response plans have been developed and are shared by both Canadian and American government agencies.

Much of Europe and the Anglo-American world has already commenced the shift toward multiculturalism. Where post-World War II migrant populations were drawn as cheap replacement labour from South Asia and the West Indies to Britain; from the Balkans and Turkey to Germany; and from North and central Africa to France, migrants arrived from regions with established colonial linkages to the motherland, or in the case of Germany from older German-Austrian spheres of influence (Coleman, 2003: www.apsoc.ox.ac.uk/oxpop/publications). In North America by contrast, post-war prosperity led traditional patterns of population growth into decline. However, the phenomenon of smaller families meant diminished long-term economic prospects, hence immigration was calculated to increase the size and economic fortunes of Canada and the United States. For Canada, like its sister 'white dominion' Commonwealth states in Australia and New Zealand, this obliged a formal renunciation during the 1970s of long-established racially-exclusive immigration policies (Bissoondath, 1994; Borjas, 2001; see also *Columbia Encyclopedia*, 2004: http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/section/immigrat_ImmigrationinOtherCountries.asp;

Multiculturalism has since flourished as an industry as much as an instrument of social policy, and controversy is never far from the subject in developed nations who have given it favour. It is in fact a separate dissertation, yet with the rise of what Canada's newest Governor-General Michaelle Jean (2005) refers to as the 'multicultural ghettoes' which are a by-now familiar aspect of the urban landscape throughout large cities in Europe and North America, (in Jaimet, A-4), a new critique of multicultural policies as they have been practiced is rising throughout Europe and North America. In response to what citizens feel

has too often become an unwillingness by Arabic, Turkish, African, or South Asian immigrants to integrate and embrace European and developed world values, recent years have seen repeated voter rejections of multicultural policies in Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Switzerland (Coleman, p. 5). The Netherlands has since formally abandoned its multicultural policy entirely; the Danes have severely curtailed it; and France has begun reining-in its former liberal version of multiculturalism (ibid, 5-6).

Building upon the controversial critique leveled by Neil Bissoondath in his searching 1994 work *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, Jean has questioned the actual nature of the citizenship that is created when ethnic leadership interests make a living from the multicultural project. Implying that such leaders encourage ethnic ghettos which leads to "all kinds of absurdities surrounding this development", the Haitian-born Jean suggests that this undermines immigrant adherence to the cultural values of their newly adopted home (Jaime, ibid)

While the advantages of immigration are well-documented—bringing in investor capital and dynamic new energy which reinforces existing social safety-net provisions for ageing citizens of the new homeland—fear of 'the Other' (see Said, *Orientalism*, 1979) continues to make multiculturalism a mixed blessing. Aggressive immigration targeted toward the growth of metropolitan centers such as Toronto and Vancouver will prompt, as Bissoondath notes, "an unusual milestone" early in the 21st century when, "the words 'minorities' and 'majority' will be turned on their heads and the former will become the latter" (1998: 1). While these are also cities, he asserts boldly and correctly, where "ethnic identity has become a kind of fetish" (ibid, 3), the fundamental obstacle to achieving multicultural harmony here is still as the late novelist Robertson Davies asserted,

> that *tolerance* is but a weak sister to acceptance. To tolerate someone is to put up with them; it is to adopt a pose of indifference. Acceptance is more difficult for it implies engagement, understanding, an appreciation of the human similarities beneath the obvious differences. Tolerance then is superficial—and perhaps the highest goal one can expect of Canadian multiculturalism (ibid, 2).

The net result, Bissoondath concludes, "is a kind of provisional citizenship"—one he joins with feminist Toronto writer Laura Sabia in resisting when she says, "I was born and bred in this amazing land. I've always considered myself a Canadian, nothing more, nothing less, even though my parents were immigrants from Italy. How come we have all acquired a hyphen?" (ibid, 3). For Sabia and Bissoondath alike, the idea of a multicultural 'mosaic' has devolved to where it functions as a destructive divide and rule strategy for politicians in electioneering.

Throughout the developed world though, and partially this now includes Japan, societies are increasingly taking on the characteristics of the diverse communities living within them. As veteran travellers discover and share amongst themselves, perhaps the greatest sensory pleasures are found in places with highly mixed populations—in such 'Old Beat' cosmopolitan centers as New York, Paris, and London, or the emerging 'World Beat' cities of Sydney, San Francisco, Vancouver, and Rio de Janeiro. Of enduring magnetism too, are the crossroads places of historic intermixing—Jerusalem, Katmandu, Melaka on the ancient Straits, Cheju-do off Korea in the Yellow Sea, or Hawai'i. Their rewards may number history, architecture, public customs and rituals, music and literature, but always their truest delight is in the extraordinary non-homogeneity of the people. For by nature a crossroads is a meeting place, and whether fought-over, traded through, or proselytized and converted, then reconverted again, it is in the sharing and commingling of cultures and visions that the uniqueness of place in each of these remarkable centers takes root and arises as an almost irresistible attractor force—crossroads places have been fought over for control throughout history.

Mochtar Lubis has written of the urgent need "to find a place in our national culture[s] for a *new world culture*" [italics added] (1987: 5). To be effective, such a new world culture in a global age will need to move beyond paying lip-service to the realities of interdependency, and will be compelled to look environmentally to bioregional, and politically to flexible regional and international cooperative solution-making (ibid, 4-6). This dissertation adopts the Hawai'ian usage of the Japanese term *Hapa,* or 'half-half' inter-racial mixing as the descriptive for one genuine form of societal re-creation that must, at some point, be reached by any multicultural society if it is to live at peace within its own

skin.  Beyond stereotypical archetypes of race, colour, and religion, Hapa is the literal human personification of 'World Beat'.  It shapes the bio-rhythm for a global age, and the evidence of its power and magic is seen on the streets of new world metropolitan areas like Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Vancouver.  Underscoring the vitality and progressiveness of such developments, the distinguished journalist and military historian Gwynne Dyer (2000) reports that in Vancouver, which has emerged as a modern Pacific Rim hub city, between one-quarter and one-third of young urban couples are now racially-mixed (http://www.langara.bc.ca/prm/2000/hapa/Hapa.html).

The types of cultural transformation currently evolving throughout the trans-Pacific world—in eating and socializing patterns, business and commercial practice, expanded employment situations, international education, intermarriage, new spiritual and artistic sensibilities—afford the present generation unique opportunities, as well as barriers to be overcome, in the shaping of a global age.  Underlying all these relationships and customs are certain ethnocentric uniqueness, psychological frames of mind, that help shape and influence cross-cultural expectations of one another—expectations that can lead to misunderstandings.

One might point, for example, to the traditional Chinese concern with the physical geography of a newly purchased property—with the marking and staking out of the margins of the land. By contrast, North Americans place greater emphasis on familiarizing themselves with the human geography of a new property—typically, their first priority is with introducing themselves in a friendly way to the neighbours.  So it can be useful to understand why the Chinese view of establishing appropriate neighbourly relations rests on ancient points of legality confirmed by Mencius (III.A.3)—"…begin with land demarcation…Once the boundaries are correctly fixed, there will be no difficulty…"  In the Chinese view, this establishes the point by which any possible future conflicts will be judged and settled. The contrasting Western view depends upon establishing personal character as an important basis of future conflict resolution in community disputes.  Hence the frequent cross-cultural misunderstandings reported in cities like Vancouver of new Chinese immigrants attempting to cut down 'undesirable' (in their *feng shui*-informed view) tree-lined common borders.  But these are things which are overcome through

familiarity and education.  As a example of a multicultural society that succeeded brilliantly for 700 years, one may look to the Iberian example of al-Andalus.

## *II.*  <u>al-Andalus: The Golden Age of Multiculturalism</u>

In *Ornament of the World,* Yale scholar Maria Jose Menocal (2002) examines the rich multiculturalism of the al-Andalus period, which thrived from approximately 750-1492 AD in what is now Spain.  Under Muslim sovereignty this Arabized civilization brought forth the best, respectively, of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish society from out of the ashes of Visigoth tribalism that befell the region following the collapse of Rome.

Advancing from the Adrar region in what is present day Mauritania, the Sanhadja Berbers, a tribal confederacy of desert nomads rose "on a spur of religious zeal conquered and became lords of not only the whole of the western Sahara, but also all of that which is Morocco, of large parts of Northern Algeria and the Muslim lands in the south of Spain" (Hudson, 1991: 75).  This Saharan confederation rose to encompass a cultural domain reaching from Spain to the gold-rich peoples of West Africa at the terminus of the traditional Maghrebi salt-trade routes (ibid, 96).

Observing that Muslim governance with its shifting potentates hardly provided long-term centralized leadership, Menocal argues that the Arabic civilizational impulse still offered an attractive social stability to the Iberian peninsula in which Christians and Jews were able to participate fully and benefit from its Arabized, yet uncommonly secular life. City-states such as Cordoba, Granada, Seville, Toledo and others contended with each others for primacy, and as a result the three monotheistic 'peoples of the Book', or *al-dhimma* (as Christians and Jews were known to Islam), were able to collaboratively advance in forging a superbly creative, generally tolerant and enlightened culture that became the envy of the world.

Among the fertilizing streams of al-Andalus were the poetic grandeur of the Arabic tongue, the Christian world's Latin heritage, the renaissance of literary Hebrew, and the vestigial Romance vernacular of the Visigoths.  Toledo, where representatives of these

traditions met and worked together multi-lingually, became a learning center of prime international importance and vied for influence in the Muslim world's epic translation project that was dedicated to reviving the classical knowledge of the Greeks and Persians. Long-centered in Damascus and Baghdad, the joint-axis of supreme Muslim authority, this project dispersed knowledge of the rediscovered philosophical, medical, scientific, and literary treasures of Hellenic civilization throughout the Mediterranean world. With economic prosperity and relative political peace, prestigious Andalusian centers such as Toledo began importing their own Greek scholars, adding to its existing reverential tradition of multicultural scholarship in which Muslims, Jews and Christians worked collegially on behalf of an Arab governance. Together, their collective dynamism began producing and re-exporting the wisdom of the ancients, bringing even greater intellectual prestige to the flowering artistic and commercial achievements of al-Andalus. The historic intellectual contributions of Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides were nurtured here; and among the illustrious who were inspired by Andalusian genius were Ferdinand and Isabella of Castille, Christopher Columbus, Miguel de Cervantes, St. Thomas Aquinas, Geoffrey Chaucer, Dante Alighieri, and Giovanni Boccacio (ibid, 201-215).

Menocal's portrait of al-Andalus stands in contrast to the example of multiculturalism that was developed in Austria-Hungary under the Hapsburg dynasty and that survived until the end of the first World War. Exempting its overt racism and anti-semitism, John Ralston Saul (2001: 224-225; 258-59) has observed that in many ways the high period of the Austro-Hungarian empire provides striking parallels with contemporary Canadian society, and a wave of contemporary cultural scholarship such Austrian film director Paul Rosdy's (2004) documentary *New World,* has rekindled interest in its achievements. The Austria-Hungary of 1900 observes art historian Patrick Werkner (1980) *was* impressively diverse: federal, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and individualistic. Juxtaposed with the cultural inertia of Tsarist Russia and its fiefdoms, life in the Austrian empire as renowned Warsaw journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski (1988) has stated, "was like freedom." However, while "European, metropolitan, and industrialized [with] all their attendant social problems…Austria was a remarkably acute barometer of a civilization in crisis" (ibid). Supporting Werkner's contention is the exotic and frequently disturbing cultural expression of early-20th century *mittelEuropean* art—the novels of

Kafka (*The Prisoner, The Castle, The Metamorphoses*) and Joseph Roth (*The Radetzky March*), the music of Gustav Mahler, and the visual art of Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Oscar Kokoschka—all of which constitutes a psychological biopsy into a social and political world dominated by "irrationality, spirituality, and mysticism" (ibid). In this "continent of regions [with its] permanent tension of difference and agreement" (Ralston Saul, 2001: 224), it is unsurprising that the modern field of psychological analysis took root here through the work of Freud and Jung.

In contrast to the uneven nature of the Hapsburg empire, the earlier Andalusian multiculturalism *worked*. In myriad ways its three religious communities cross-pollinated, sharing both Arabic language and the Romance vernacular brought to many by Christian mothers within intermarriages. By permitting each other to participate in the full scope of civic polity—short of ultimate authority—in commerce, medicine, the military, in state diplomatic service and civic governance, the cumulative effect was extraordinary: a syncretic blending of cultures renowned for its manufactories, spice trade, silk textiles, books, literature, learning, and warlike prowess. As Menocal illustrates, al-Andalus existed as a golden period in which Socrates, Plato and Aristotle returned to learning; in which knowledge of algebra, Arabic numerals, and algorithms were added to mathematics; and in which the astrolabe was exported to northern Europe giving immense new navigational skills to mariners. As an incidental note, out of this world in which separate faith communities were able to co-exist, Andalusian song and literary styles rose to help shape the troubadour tradition that revolutionized renaissance Europe's aesthetics and literature (Menocal, 128). Uncannily, this foreshadowed a similar powerful cultural transference when during the 1960s Indian culture through Ravi Shankar, a master classical sitarist, would influence George Harrison of The Beatles and Brian Jones of The Rolling Stones (Menuhin, 1999; Carolan, 1998: 291-97.) The revolutionary effects this exerted upon popular rock and roll music would provide the soundtrack for the historic counter-cultural changes which this thesis has discussed in chapters 8 and 9, and it spurred a generation's interest in the culture and philosophical legacies of Asia.

Eventually, the golden age of al-Andalus turned tragic. In Europe mono-linguistic, mono-religiously based states arose (Menocal, 271), and in 1391 the Black Death carried off twenty per cent of the peoples of Europe giving rise to scapegoatism. Iberia's Arabic

syncretism found itself facing the fundamentalist wrath of heresy-obsessed Christendom which looked with incomprehension upon what it regarded as the "slacker" Christianity of al-Andalus. Simultaneously, the materially comfortable Umayyad Muslim traditions of al-Andalus were attacked as weak and deluded by harsher Islamic interpretations of the Koran from Berber Africa to the south (ibid, 268). Al-Andalus found itself the battleground as contending fundamentalist energies met head on, precipitating a see-saw Christian-Muslim rivalry on the peninsula where it sadly became possible to view "religious-ideological warfare [as] a reality, cultural orthodoxy a real possibility, and monochromatic identity a realizable ideal" (ibid).

By 1492, under Spain's new Christian rulers, non-Roman religions were savagely repressed. The Jews were expelled and fled, mainly to the Ottoman expire—a catastrophe regarded as the beginning of their second diaspora. By 1500, al-Andalus was done, surviving only through its unrivalled architectural treasures, courtly water-gardens, literature, music, and cosmopolitan gift to the ages—the memory and knowledge of what a truly golden offering multiculturalism can bring.

## *III.* <u>Citizenship as a Bifurcated Ideal</u>

While traditional national identities continue to blur among many modern states, nationalism itself remains deeply ingrained. The 2005 French and Dutch voter rejections of a European Constitution, and the recent historic examples of the Philippines, Taiwan, and South Korea and achieving their own versions of popular democracy indicate how reluctant people are to surrender their own hard-won versions of pluralism and democracy to foreign, notably U.S., influence. Increased social integration in the 21st century will therefore require an architecture of security, some recognized form of ethical assurance that national disintegration does not follow as an unavoidable gravitational force exerted by one interest group or another (see Suryadinta, 2000; Clark, 2003). Political assurance will also be necessary to avoid unequal exchanges within the long shadows of multi-national corporate hegemony in the 21st century. Logically, the continued health of

multicultural civil society as a means of achieving social, economic and political goals will succeed or fail on this matter of strategic cooperation.

In this regard the Buddhist insight meditation practice of *vipassana*, or 'looking deeply' is useful. Vipassana teaches that the process of transforming things in life begins with the ability to discern things as they are, in all their imperfections (Seeker's Glossary, 1998: 529-530). Ironically, as global culture continues to expand outward from the West, a scan of recent history reveals the simultaneous eruptions of repeated Ethiopian famine, Somali wars and famine, and includes various financial crises in Brazil, Argentina, Russia, and most of East Asia, environmental holocausts at Bhopal, Chernobyl, and Three-Mile Island, the Exxon Valdes catastrophe off Alaska, disappearances of key fish stocks, oil shocks, wars in Iraq, the Congo, Palestine, Chechnya, Kosovo, bombings in New York and Bali, Zapatista Uprisings, Central Intelligence Agency involvement in arms for drugs deals…In looking deeply upon these things, surely from a rational perspective (and borrowing from Hindu-Buddhist tradition), it must be time to acknowledge that the idea of 'security' itself is an illusion; that it is anxiety about personal security which keeps the nose of El Salvadorean peasants and Chicago white-collar executives alike to the grindstone and willing to tolerate the growing excesses of Bush regime, Patriot Act-style curtailments of individual freedom and mobility.

Tellingly, even the idea that democracy itself is a safeguard against war with other democracies is now suspect. In *Foreign Affairs*, Dimitri Simes (2004) observes that, historically, when it has served their national interests democracies have not hesitated to attack each other—from the days of Athens and Syracuse, to Cromwell's England and the Dutch, to Victorian Britain and South Africa, and America's own Civil War: "The reason there were fewer such disputes in the twentieth century was partly because the democracies were united in the struggle against Nazism and Communism. With these common enemies gone, however, it is by no means certain that democracies will remain in pacific union" (p. 74).

As an effective remedy, in the view of this dissertation citizenship as a concept in the global age may necessarily become a bifurcated idea. In the way that Gary Snyder envisions the individual living and working from a bioregional consciousness that is simultaneously both local and cosmopolitan, the idea of citizenship may need to become

two-fold: children will come to know themselves as Poles, Malaysians, and Sri Lankans as well as 'planetary' citizens of Mother Earth.

This project will require education. But as the activist Mayor of the City of Oakland and former Governor of California Jerry Brown has demonstrated, education is a reliable pathway to progress. Upon his election as mayor in this economically blighted, largely Afro-American community, Mayor Brown exhibited Confucian-like ambition in 'rectifying' a dysfunctional, crony-ridden public education system. His belief was that this would set in motion tangible, long-term social benefits for the young, and reasonably achievable shorter-term quality of living targets for the larger community (Ermachild Chavis, 2000: 48-49; Carolan, 2000: 42-48). Oakland constituents endorsed Brown's efforts to promote community pride and what the Dalai Lama terms 'inner disarmament' (2001: 9), as a route to community peace by re-electing him (MacDonald, 1999; Carolan: 2001: 9-10).

Brown's vision of civic improvement was founded upon clear and achievable goals. In essence, his skill was to define what needed to be 'overcome', rather than attacked or made war upon such as 'the war on poverty', 'the war on drugs', 'the war on terror'—all of which have proven un-winnable to date. But plans, as von Clausewitz' maxim clarifies (1985), are changeable:[149] no plan, he notes, however well-founded survives first contact with the opposition. Planning, while serious, must be taken lightly—a belief subscribed to by the American ecologist Wendell Berry (1993), who suggests how plans "are useful for signifying to ourselves and to other people that we have a certain appetite" (http://arts.envirolink.org/ interviews_ and_ conversations/WendellBerry.html). As an illustration, one might wish to build a factory production centre in Chiang Mai, Thailand, or in Chilliwack, British Columbia. On both fiscal and emotional levels it is critical to learn early on whether one's appetite for this centre meets with a willingness on the part of the affected community to host its construction. Might one's appetite produce hard feelings or resistance in the community concerned? Could our appetite be modified by locating the plant in another, more receptive area—in underdeveloped Nakhon Rachasima, northeast Thailand, or in Aldergrove, British Columbia?

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[149] The German military strategist Carl Von Clausewitz' text *On War*, a practical theory on the nature of armed force in International Relations, remains required reading for all students of martial training.

Ideally, plans must be considered in terms of their appropriate utility. Again: what is it one's community wants to accomplish? In the fashion of Zen koan-training this must be asked until the answer reveals itself. The simple answer to this, apart from inherent human ingenuity, comes again from Wendell Berry: "What *can* I do here," he asks; implicitly answering the obvious question also of "What *can't* I do here" [italics added] (ibid).

A second fundamental question that must be answered is: 'What is there that people *need* that I can do for them here?' Logically, this also answers the question of 'What *isn't* needed in this community.'

Political activism teaches one that initiating and building constructive community change succeeds in precisely this way. For those inexperienced in contemplating the public mood, or in having to confront an overwhelming obstacle such as tyrannical authority, an unyielding government administration, or a powerful multinational corporation, it may seem an unwinnable exercise. Understandably, individuals are likely to lose courage and few community leaders are obliged to show the bravery of an Aung San Suu Kyi from Myanmar/ Burma. In an interview with Ivan Suvanjieff (1996), this Nobel Laureate explains how the process of transforming hurtful social situations can be commenced and sustained. Once one commits to a path of action in one's own heart, Daw Aung San relates, a demonstration of that belief such as writing a letter to a newspaper automatically leads to others taking it the issue too. After one's initial demonstration of belief, the second step is "to convince a friend" (interview, p. 30), because given the trust that exists in friendships, it is always easier to convince a friend than a stranger.

Daw Aung San deepens—but only sensibly—her analysis of initiating community social action by responding to the question of, 'What brings you joy?', with the answer, "Giving joy to others—that's obvious. I think that those who are happy give happiness to others" (ibid, 30-31). From India, Arundhati Roy has recommended similar steps in opposing the spread of nuclear weapons throughout South Asia (1999). Both women stress the importance of an individual's participation in bettering the larger community, for as Daw Aung San reiterates, "every movement, ultimately, is started by one person" (ibid).

Any who have devoted themselves publically to acts of political, economic, or environmental resistance recognize Aung San Suu Kyi's words as a burning truth. As she recommends, feelings of powerlessness and helplessness truly *are* overcome through

interacting with others locally in community, for this encourages the airing and sharing of ideas—and from this springs hope:

> I've always thought that the best solution for those who feel helpless is for them to help others. I think then they will start feeling less helpless themselves (ibid, 32).

Ultimately, it is the human element that is the key.

In *The Dhammapada* (1955), the Buddha talks about overcoming difficulties, observing that the Madhyamika path—the middle way between extremes of emotion and conduct—is the one likeliest to get us with the least friction through the joys and *mayas,* the barriers, of this *samsara* world. In Buddhist and Taoist teachings alike, this is understood as a complete form of practice (Loy, 23-26). Incomplete forms of multiculturalism, community building, or political practice break down upon this matter, and as Fritjof Capra has illustrated at several points in this thesis, the solution consists of creating connections and recognizing both inner and external strengths of networks. Building upon individual initiative, overcoming cultural barriers also requires solidarity and perhaps even a long term view. Through cooperative effort, Western notions of individualism can adapt more easily toward a characteristically Asian-style appreciation of unity which derives from its ancient *sawah* rice-growing collectivism. By understanding oneself as part of a network, locally, even globally, difficulties can be transcended and extreme polarization avoided. Reimagining one's role as a citizen becomes possible.

## *IV.*  **An Integrative Possibility?**

Communities *do* change. Geographer David Ley recalls that when he moved to Vancouver in 1972, "Union Jacks routinely flew next to the Canadian and British Columbia flags. The concept of a Pacific Rim didn't really exist" (cited, Zacharias, 2003). Monolithic orthodoxies too, can be changed: the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution

and Freud's psychological theory on religion and medicine have already been noted. Likewise, cultures can be changed, or re-imagined and realized: in a contemporary instance, the English musician and musicologist John Renbourn, co-founder of the influential folk-rock group Pentangle, recollects how during the heyday of 1960s culture, "we didn't hear of 'Celtic' music, or Celtic culture back then. Now it's a renaissance" (Concert address, 2003).

As the 21$^{st}$ century progresses, some form of renaissance will be necessary in the U.S. where 22.4 million people now rely upon government food stamps, known as "the last-ditch safety net before starvation" (in Hume, 2003: C7), and where according to Department of Agriculture statistics and a Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities, 35 million Americans—including 13 million children—"now live either in hunger or on the brink of it "; and where since 1996, 88% of U.S. cities have reported "a steady increase in homelessness" (ibid). Clearly, a renaissance will be needed in a global age when the demand for basic resources increases in expanding metropolitan centres. As the American government's chaotic response to the environmental flood disasters of 2005 in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region has already shown, even in privileged nations new ideas are already in demand.

The American futurist John Naisbitt (1995) has argued that in reshaping humanity's common future one alternative to the prevailing nation-state system may be a shift toward 'networks'. Networks, he suggests, can function at a sophisticated level as borderless realms, and he offers the Overseas Chinese diaspora as a working model. His thinking is that, "the more universal we become, the more tribal we act" (p. 2). In other words, the more politically cosmopolitan humanity becomes, the more local are its cultural signifiers as well.

Naisbitt's data concerning the Chinese diaspora as an economic force reveals an ethnic network that punches fiercely above its weight. Comprising 57 million souls, all but three million of these still live in Asia where their entrepreneurial might is colossal, cumulatively representing an annual gross GDP of between $2-3 trillion. This makes it the third largest in the world behind only the United States and Japan (p. 3). Geographically, the diaspora encompasses ethnic Chinese living and working apart from mainland China and Hong Kong in Taiwan and Singapore, as well in significant Chinese communities in

Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar/Burma, Korea, and in such keystone cities as San Francisco, Vancouver, Sydney, New York, Toronto, London, and various Latin America, Caribbean, South Pacific, and African locales (ibid).

The network power this represents is phenomenal. More than 80 percent of foreign investment in mainland China itself is fuelled by overseas Chinese. Strikingly, Naisbitt asserts that while highly competitive amongst themselves, "all the key players among the overseas Chinese know each other. Their businesses stay singularly apart, but they work together when necessary" (p. 4). Structural communications remain flexible, horizontal, ostensibly tribal, and avoid top-down vertical chains of command. They remain healthily creative and are open to renewal. Similarly, the Indian diaspora numbering 10 million that is located primarily throughout the Commonwealth and the United States generates an astonishing $340 billion annually, "equivalent to the whole of the income of India's 900 million people" (p. 5).

In this fashion Naisbitt draws a number of coaxial approximations between the overseas Chinese diaspora network and the Internet. "Just as the Internet is a network of about 25,000 networks, the overseas Chinese have tens of thousands of networks networked together," he argues: "the other general characteristic [they share] is that no one is in charge, or the marketplace is in charge" (ibid, 5-6; see also Loong Wong, 2003). This is Naisbitt's essential point: "All powerful networks have one thing in common: each of the parts functions as if it were the centre of the network" (ibid). The power of this interrelated structural phenomenon is obvious, sounding like Varela's and Maturana's concept of autopoesis, where each participant is singular, unique, yet linked reflectively with the greater connectedness of the global whole. Socially and economically, it is a mutually responsive manifestation of the potentiality of Taoism's 'uncarved block', and of the intuitive Buddhist recognition of the *pratitya samutpada*. In contemporary scientific terms it is an actualization of dynamic systems theory.

Inherently tribal, autonomous, and synchronous, this networking impulse Naisbitt is convinced, will emerge as "the organizational model for the 21$^{st}$ century" (ibid, p. 5). If so, it constitutes a reconceptualized dynamic system for sharing authority and responsibility. As neo-liberal economic doctrine intensifies and is reflected in the downsizing of governments at regional and national levels, with equivalent economic

restructuring through privatization and deregulation, political leadership too will be redefined. What will be required of leadership in a mature, decentralizing political era Naisbitt believes is, "the moral authority and guidance for citizens to create their own environments and opportunities" (ibid, 2). In this one intuits a return to simpler democratic times with leadership being expressed in moral, or ethical norms, a situation that compels a matching participatory involvement by the citizenry; hence the need for a new educational dynamic also.

Interestingly, the network structure bears close similarities to the complex of communities linked within communities that the itinerant political consultant Confucius once advocated—but free of any one sacred monarch or oligarchy. The role of the people in this interactive process is paramount, and one can hear the echo of the Master's words in what is expressed of the individual 'under heaven': "I used to listen to what people said and trusted they would act on their words. Now I listen to what they say and observe whether they act on their words…It was within my power to do this" (*Analects,* V.10). The beauty here is that the sage understands he or she does cannot count on people doing as they promise. They can only see for themselves whether or not people do as they say.

Perhaps idealistic, this position is also inherently realistic—the will of Heaven rests upon such ethical hinge-points, and as in the case of Mayor Brown in Oakland the system can work  Like Maxine Hong Kingston's experience in Hawai'i, it may be a matter of 'making up meaning as the community goes', and there may be trepidation in moving into political unknowns, but the advantage is that one keeps emotional responses out of decision making: 'the cool heart', as the Dalai Lama calls it, prevails (2001: 9-10). In this regard, Confucius also says, "People make mistakes according to their individual type. When you observe people's errors, you can tell their human character" (ibid, IV.7).

Whether one calls it the *demos*, the populace, or the electorate, the full sharing of responsibility for such traditional thorns that Tu Weiming observes, of 'authority, obedience, hierarchy, status, and gender differentiation', rests upon the community. In re-thinking the ideas of citizenship and community for a global age, the *dharma* that must inevitably emerge for this new world, individually and collectively, has little baggage room for apathy. Its obvious replacement condition obliges a wider societal embrace of a pair of antique virtues shared by most religions and humanists alike, *altruism* and *reverence*.

Explaining how these work, June Callwood paraphrases Nietzsche, observing, "moments when a useful contribution can be made by taking action almost never wear a name tag" (1998: 192). As an individual one is 'part of the solution or part of the problem'. Once, a well-loved political leader had the courage to proclaim this virtue publically: "…Ask not what your country can do for you," U.S. President John F. Kennedy enunciated at his inaugural address to the nation; "ask what you can do for your country" (1961). It became the rallying-cry of a generation who brought forward the social justice revolution of the 1960s. With the minor adjustment of a single noun, substituting 'community', or even 'Mother Earth' for country, this simple phrase summarizes the action plan for the *new world dharma* remarkably well.

## *V.* <u>**Conclusions and Implications**</u>

This dissertation began by asking how, in a global future, humanity is to comprehend the singularity of the place, the biosphere it calls home. Will communities, nations, and the earth itself, for example, be regarded as 'one' place in which many live, or as the product of many separate, but linked compositional elements—the 'many in the One', or the 'One in the many'? Must greater 'integration' at the local political level necessarily imply 'homogenization' at larger intercultural levels, or might the conditions of existence in a global future be understood rather as the universalization of certain key values and practices that respect the diversity of distinct regional differences? Throughout, it has endeavoured to define the cultural signifiers of what self and community-identity must come to mean for a reimagined global citizenship in the 21$^{st}$ century. In constructing a concept of 'literacy of place,' it has sought to explain what it is precisely that gives an one a sense of belonging to a community and a territory, and how that bond may be claimed or reclaimed even one does not dwell in the land of one's ancestors. Despite the fact that a clear understanding of self-identity and a sense of belonging are essential to fundamental human happiness, throughout Occidental civilization, a crisis of faith and search for meaning is now a part of everyday reality.

Historically, humanity has sought answers to these existential questions of faith and meaning through ritual and ceremony; through the knowledge and awareness of community.  Yet for large numbers of citizens currently, these very societal rituals—coming of age, marriage, parental responsibility, necessary public participation, the experience of death—have become unfulfilling and empty of meaning.  Nor is this phenomenon confined exclusively to the fashionable parts of North America, where as the actor Michael Caine has observed, "you're weird if you're not seeing a psychiatrist" (1993).  As the instances drawn in this thesis from Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and China suggest, this challenge of finding meaning is also growing substantially in contemporary Asian societies.

As Fritjof Capra and other searching thinkers have concluded, contemporary popular culture too often leaves the individual without a meaningful web of connections and interdependencies that customarily gave zest to the lives of their immediate forbears.  This is no trifling matter, for as Jeffrey Sachs articulates, "interconnectedness on the planet is the dominating truth of the 21$^{st}$ century" (2002: 3), and a distinguished roster of interdisciplinary scholars are cited demonstrating support for this argument throughout this dissertation.  If  it is to mean anything substantial, real progress in the global age, in the century that is still new, will require a redefinition of what it means to be an *individual*—as citizen, member of a community, and of a nation—and this redefinition must respond to the needs of the time in which we live as a global collective.  As the scholars and spiritual teachers who have been cited demonstrate, it will entail a renewal of personal accountability.  It will mean reconciling oneself as an individual with larger environmental forces over which one has no control, and learning to live in balance with all that surrounds each of us.  In short, it obliges the human collective to forge a new ecology of citizenship in effecting what William Irwin Thompson calls, "a shift from followership to fellowship…[from] 'us' and 'them'" (1985: 30-31), to an ecology of  consciousness in which "the shapes of opposites" (ibid, 38) emerge in forging Sam Keen's idea of a 'compassionate commonwealth of all peoples" (1994: 236).

Similarly, Gary Snyder has argued that this new sensibility, or commonwealth, must be one that strives to integrate traditional Aboriginal and Asian notions of earthly sacredness into the complexities of the West's modern technological culture.   At the heart of this idea

lies the notion of the individual as an integral component of the natural world—an almost religious awakening to the idea that everything, including the individual human heart, is an interactive component of the earth's sacred presence.  As demonstrated in chapter three of this thesis, this sense of wholeness which is accrued through deep knowledge of a particular place constitutes a new bioregional 'eco-civics' for the 21$^{st}$ century.  Grounded in an enlightened Western, Asian, and aboriginal intercultural ethos, it can be seen as a form of citizenship that is committed to place and community—a reform world-view nourished by spiritual, though not necessarily denominational religious wellsprings. Representing a renewal of reverence for the sacredness of creation, it acknowledges the fundamental nature of interconnectedness, the *pratitya samutpada*, which in the *Vinaya-Pitaka* the Buddha himself explains *is* the dharma.[150]

As a renewed way of intuiting and imaging who 'we' are as a collective, this 'dharma' for a new world of the 21$^{st}$ century's global age also offers an opportunity, as Islamic scholar Farhang Rajahee has outlined, of imagining a multi-narrative 'one world-many civilizations' construct in which many assumptions are shared, and in which each exhibits a variety of its own manifestations.  One may be local *and* cosmopolitan, regional *and* planetary.  Politically, and in terms of systematic approaches to peace, conflict resolution, and to the economic and social patterns out of which conflict arises, this multi-narrative concept of self and community identity provides a cultural ecumenism for the global age; one that bridges the social justice concerns of the Southern hemisphere with the growing cyberdigital communitarianism of the West and Asia that is being made possible by the internet.  Could the *new world dharma* be a form of the 'new Pythagoreanism' alluded to by William Irwin Thompson?  Certainly it offers a basis for transmuting Asian contemplative traditions with the West's archetypal Christian yearning to overcome obstacles through science.  The inherent 'action-compassion' grounding of such a meeting suggests a plausible ethic for tackling the elimination of Southern hemispheric poverty in this century.

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[150]  See Mahesh Tiwary,  "Pali Tipitaka as the Source of Vipassana" ("Whoever sees Dependent Arising, sees Dhamma; Whoever sees Dhamma, sees Dependent Arising). http://www.vri.dhamma.org/research/94sem/pali2.html

Historically, as this thesis has illustrated, the literature of resistance that coalesced from diverse North American literary, spiritual, political, anthropological, scientific, and social justice concerns, grew to become the delivery conduit for alternative visions intent on 'reimagining' the pervasive consumer culture orthodoxies of North America. From its contributing poets to the revolutionary insights of the scientists, mathematicians, communications and culture theorists who gave it shape, came the intimation of a new cultural paradigm for the future, and with it, a new voice. Inevitably, many of its most desirable characteristics have since entered mainstream culture—air, water and soil protection, recycling, anti-nuclear proliferation, civil rights equality, sustainable development, forests and wildlife protection, and the like. Secure now as political ideas, each of these initiatives came as the result of compassionate action by relatively small, courageous groups of individuals who, one may be sure, were initially dismissed by entrenched social and political interests of the day. The importance of their sacrifice is lucidly explained by the German Green theorist Rudolf Bahro who observes, "when forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure.' (in Wheatley, 2003, p. 23).

Change is possible. Accordingly, the growing numbers of those who now embrace formerly-countercultural ideas and practices, and who are themselves currently advancing the further evolution of new forms of cultural identity for the global age ahead, are inheriting, mingling and practicing wisdom traditions from both the past and from the modern scientific method—a renewing vision that embraces the fruitful cultivation of both feminine and masculine, yin-yang complementarities in the dynamic balance of everyday experience—a new Western awareness which appreciates the need to cultivate the biosphere as a form of *feng shui* ecological practice.

Reflecting Joanna Macy's idea of the 'greening' of community in which identity becomes the transactional involvement of 'each in all', this reimagined idea of cultural identity—Gaian, or planetary-based citizenship—will serve as Chuang-tzu's 'hinge of the way.' For as individual citizenship becomes ever more deeply linked to overall community sustainability, with the universal mirrored in the local, citizenship will possess a bi-furcated nature in reflecting both its micro-social and macro-global identities.

This then shapes the *new world dharma* as an epistemology for the global age.  Not as a bland, homogenized one-size fits-all ideology, but as a palette of universalized Earth-centered values and aesthetics integrating traditional wisdom paths from the West and Asia to shape a new pattern of ideas for humanity's 'common-wealth.'  In the Animist view of North America's first nations aboriginal peoples, dharma of this nature comes as a 'medicine', one needed to save humanity as a species, mentally and morally.

As a set of practices it also leads toward recognition of planet Earth as another sentient system, and in the context of the Gaia Hypothesis, conceivably toward further re-emergence of the feminine Divine, the archetypal Goddess, a development resisted by institutional religions for centuries, but one that already finds welcome among Western seekers to whom compounding their Christian or Jewish faith with eco-feminism is not anathema (Spretnak, 1992, 2004; Valpy, 2005: F4-8; Weyler, 2005: 14).  A striking religious development in the West, where sharp divisions between the sacramental and the 'secular' have been the rule since the early days of Rome's anti-Christian progroms,  this emerging path of compound-faith bears strong parallels with Asian traditions in which individuals and families may follow several religions—China's Three-In-One amalgam, Japan's Shinto-Buddhist, Korea's Confucian-Christian, or India's complex interweave of Hindu-Buddhist-Jain, and so on (Oxtoby, 2002: 450-52).

For those who do not, or cannot dwell where their ancestors once did, Maxine Hong Kingston and Gary Snyder have explained how developing one's own community can become synonymous with creating a wisdom path.  As Snyder says, those who are best able to speak for their place will be those who have the "capacity to hear the song of Gaia at that spot" (1995: 190).  Echoing this view is Sam Keen, who notes the human need to slow down 'internal dissonance' by "thinking out of a place" (1988: 43)—a metaphoric reprise of Snyder's "knowing who we are and knowing where we are, are intimately linked" (ibid, 185).  Without the advance of a spiritually, ecologically sustainable direction of this kind, further psychological dislocation, anxiety, and alienation can only increase.

What is important here, of course, is an appreciation for the personal responsibility of being *somebody* and being *somewhere,* a fact not lost upon William Irwin Thompson who insists that "conscious purpose derives from conscious identity" (1985: 79).  Indeed, in moving toward a truly global citizenship the key lies in waking up, and as China's literary

masters have long instructed on this subject, language is significant.  The Taoist masters Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu have long clarified how humanity's shared reality is created by naming things in language.  Yet language is not exact as Chuang-tzu's ironic parables of the useless and the useful point out, and one is easily snared by its imperfections.  For language to communicate effectively its usefulness must be translatable in manifold fashions, hence the value of both scholarly discipline and documentation, such as this dissertation's presenting the formative ideas, characters, and rationale underlying the evolution of the *new world dharma* for academic readership*;* while requiring less complex language to convey many of the same ideas in a lay context for a more informal audience.  Ultimately, it is through language that ideas are exchanged and that change can be effected in our communities and in the world: hence, as Marshall McLuhan claimed, the traditional visionary role of writers and artists within cultures.  Their role is that of cultural transmitters, for as Fritjof Capra's remarks in chapter 2.II of this dissertation affirm, leadership in the role of transforming culture cannot realistically be expected from orthodox political, religious, and economic institutions alone, for they benefit handsomely from the status quo.

Without action, "words are simply words, a 'cool' medium, as McLuhan argues" (Hong, 2000), and as 2,500 years of mystics have taught, inspiration is not gained purely through the medium of words, but through example, practice and perseverance which provides an opportunity to rediscover the simple pleasures of 'right livelihood, right work'.  This is what Sam Keen understands in suggesting that "what meditative disciplines do, is merely to watch the way in which thought is produced…[that] the way to make a mind more creative is to slow it down.  The essence of paranoid thought is always that there's all noise, all signal, and no silence" (1988: 43).  Underscoring this recognition is a return to the contemplative tradition with its awareness that sacredness and meaning are found even in the execution of ordinary tasks, affording the 21$^{st}$ century writer, scholar and artist a rich lineage by which to work towards the preservation of ethical, intellectual, cultural, and ecological integrity in the global age.

As greater popular awareness arises of the nature and scope of interdependence, it seems reasonable that the bi-furcated notion of citizenship this thesis proposes will itself expand from that of local and cosmopolitan natures, to an understanding of the

innerconnectivity of one's own individual, community, nation-state, and planetary affiliations—a genuinely global vision; one too, that owes much to the cognates established by Confucious more than two millennia ago. Holding to such an interconnected regard for life is only feasible within the context of a daily practice of mindfulness, but with the reawakening of the contemplative tradition in Western life that has been detailed in this thesis, this process is becoming well-established and will continue to flourish as it progresses deeper into mainstream awareness.

Regarding new forms of politics that can be expected to emerge from this ethical stewardship, Gary Snyder holds that:

> What I suspect may emerge in the political spectrum is a new kind of
> conservative, one which is socially-liberal, in the specific sense that it
> will be free of racial or religious prejudice…A political spectrum that has
> respect for traditions, and at the same time is non-racist, and is open and
> tolerant about different cultures, is an interesting development. I'd be
> willing to bet that it's in the process of emerging, similar in a way to the
> European Green Parties that say, 'We're neither on the left nor the right:
> we're in front' (1996: 24).

For the goodness it can bring, and as a way of avoiding conflict with one's own children, endorsing openness of this kind to the Other, instead of fear of the Other—still the root of human conflicts—would be a salutary step toward a type of genuinely compassionate commonwealth.

### *Epilogue:* **Reclaiming the Banished Children of Eve**

How though does one make sense of the world at this present moment; comprehend the complexity, unpredictability, violence, perversions, and astonishing beauty of human existence?  Evidenced by the growing rejection of institutional religious faith throughout the economically developed world, contemporary life is riddled with uncertainties.  With

the ever greater focus on material wealth that Zbigniew Brzezinski has alluded to, and with a relentless shift toward global economics and borderless, integrated cultures, many are left unclear of their existential purpose, unsure of their own community and bioregional dwelling place, and uncertain of their stake in its citizenship—of the very social contract codifying their rights and obligations. This dissertation has affirmed how the special freedoms of democracy oblige particular responsibilities, notably the commitment to remain informed. The beauty of democracy compels a certain minimum of participatory engagement, for not even the power of science and technology is capable of producing the transformations that are becoming necessary global-wide. There must still be a motivating idea, a *dharma* that speaks to the new world of the global age if humanity is to "peacefully coexist with the cosmos [in which] we will cease to be a cancer and become, perhaps like stomach flora, still an insignificant part of the cosmos, but a symbiotic entity rather than a parasite" (Teicher, 2004).

In a demonstration of hope for such an engaged form of practice and belief—in a *new world dharma* posited in the possibilities of faith and of collective human justice and progress—this is what took place on November 30, 1999 in Seattle, Washington. There, 50,000 individuals opposed to the grand designs of the World Trade Organization's talks in that city marched together for days, shutting down negotiations that they believed paid no heed to their individual, but linked concerns regarding unfettered multinational corporate exploitation of themselves and their fellow human brothers and sisters as farmers, workers, students, people of faith, trade unionists, parents, small manufacturers, environmentalists, indigenous aboriginals, the elderly, and representatives of developing world poverty. Organizational planning for the event was reminiscent of the mass anti-Vietnam War gatherings of the late 1960s, or the mass anti-Iraq Invasion rallies of 2003. As a manifestation of participatory engagement par excellence, its anti-corporate 'globalization from above' nature had much in common with the birth of Greenpeace in Vancouver twenty-five years previous—an event that crystallized the international environmental movement as a moral force. Rex Weyler (2004), an author and Greenpeace founding member, describes that first grassroots voice of resistance as a mix of "Native American spiritual mythology, Ghandhi's *satyagraha*, ecology, and the Quaker philosophy of 'bearing witness'" (481). Both events launched revolutionary action world-wide, and to

paraphrase the historic words of U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong, each became 'one small step for man, a giant step for humanity.' As a result, civil society around the world has grown empowered to speak and organize against predatory, corporate social-irresponsibility.

Building a collectively more secure future requires the deciphering of bad choices from the good. In the foreword to a remarkable anthology of interdisciplinary essays on Buddhism and ecology entitled *Dharma Gaia* (ed. Badiner, 1990), The Dalai Lama explains one useful strategy for discerning right paths of action:

> It is important that we forgive the destruction of the past and recognize
> that it was produced by ignorance. At the same time, we should re-examine,
> from an ethical perspective, what kind of world we have inherited, what we
> are responsible for, and what we will pass on to coming generations.

The Dalai Lama terms this approach the cultivation of 'a secular ethics' (2001: 10). In a similar light, Mikhail Gorbachev who now spends much time with leading-edge thinkers organizing internationally for reform of the U.N., advocates for a 'global humanism', explaining it as:

> a new conceptual vision of the future…a civilization of mutual tolerance,
> with cultures and nations becoming increasingly open-minded, and diversity
> understood and used as a factor of progress…a civilization that assures
> harmony and creative co-existence between man and the rest of nature (1995:
> 21).

Sam Keen rephrases this as a "science of the sacred", calling it "the emerging myth of the 21st century that is at the heart of the spiritual renaissance of our time" (1994: 215). At bottom, it is a synthesis of environmental conservation and sustainable economic development acted out on a personal level within community. An Earth-centered spirituality, it represents a value system not unlike Asian wisdom paths or Islam that are

seen as all-inclusive (Oxtoby, 2002: 450-51)—and that pre-Industrial Christianity once enjoyed itself.

"The biggest obstacle to interfaith tolerance" Rex Weyler observes, citing The Dalai Lama, is that of "a bad relationship with one's own faith tradition" (2005: 14). But healing is possible. Significant cross-pollination between Christianity and Buddhism is now in its third decade of progress internationally and sees them "penetrating one another, talking to one another, learning from one another" (Johnson, 1979: 1). Direct examples of how Western Christian tradition is already being renewed at its heart from Asian-influenced interfaith sources include the Earth-centered Cosmic Mass created by former Dominican theologian Matthew Fox, or the feminist-Catholicism of Charlene Spretnak which returns honour to Mary the Queen of Heaven (Weyler, ibid; Spretnak,2004). Unsurprisingly, both spring from California's incubatory San Francisco Bay-area.

The Jesuit theologian William Johnson (1979) proposes that key problem of interfaith dialogue could be usefully addressed by deliberating the concept of 'ultimate reality', more as a philosophical than theological debating point:

> …we Christians could explain what we meant by 'God,' pointing out
> that we did not believe in an anthropomorphic being 'out there but in
> the supreme source of existence in whom we live, move, and are"
> (12; see also 1994: interview, pp.18-20; http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-EPT/william1.htm)

Tellingly, this Jesuit questioning tradition bears a close proximity to R.S. Slaughter's essay remarks in "Beyond the Mundane: Reconciling Depth and Breadth in Futures Inquiry", noted previously in this thesis, that suggest: "it has become clear that our ability to understand the world 'out there' depends on an underlying world reference that is 'in here" (2002: 1). It bears familiarity too, with the Tao, with both Buddhism's and Hinduism's primal 'spaciousness', and Jalaluddin Rumi's wholistic Sufi vision of Islam.

Thus, in an age of uncertainty there is a need to find regenerative links within the tapestry of existence—the thread of connection transcending 'we and them', to the interdependencies of 'each in all.' One possibility is through rediscovery of the prime

Confucian qualities of goodness, conscience, reverence, and knowledge, and John Ralston Saul has raised the question of whether these virtues can be cultivated again in North American culture (public address, 2005).  In the Zen Buddhist sense this would mark an important 'beginner's place' with its opportunity of combining humanism with an ecology of interpenetrating values and aesthetics.  Combined with the self-awareness accruing from a growing sense of keener literacy of place—a fundamental teaching task for educators in the 21$^{st}$ century—this would offer a bona fide set of ethical practices from which to shape a new vision of citizenship: from fragmentation to unity, from the science of divisions to a science of interconnectedness.

Why this need to push beyond postmodernist fragmentation?  As psychologist, former academic, and journalist, Sam Keen has documented the West's inexorable cultural shift toward new paradigms for the past 35 years.  In his view,

> World citizenship is being thrust on us, ready or not…but there is yet little *commitment* to it. The universal community to which we essentially belong exists only in memory and hope.  The great spiritual challenge of our time is to mount an expedition to make it actual.  This has become our new calling, our spiritual-political vocation."  (1994: 236)

This is the *new world dharma,* a spiritual-political-ecological wisdom path for the global age in which even difficult things can be put to use in progressing towards intercultural harmony, and toward Andrew Schelling's idea of 'Jataka Mind' cross-species contracts of kinship with larger natural systems.  Change is possible.

In *The Fifth Book of Peace,* Maxine Hong Kingston (2003) discusses the need to consciously make something constructive out of pain, unhappiness, distress, even from the suffering of war.  "The images of peace are ephemeral," she writes. "The reasons for peace, the definitions of peace, the very idea of peace have to be invented, and invented again" (260).  She concludes by reminding:

> Children, everybody, here's what to do during war: In a time of destruction, create something.  A poem.  A parade.  A community.  A school.  A vow.

A moral principle. One peaceful moment" (p. 402)

From the fragmented, even environmentally-broken world of the present, this is how the *new world dharma* will be shaped, out of mindfulness, from intentionality, from adherence to moral and ethical principles of the nature outlined in this dissertation and reprised in these concluding remarks.

What then might a successful planetary-minded community model look like, one that responds to the redefined ideas of citizenship, community and reverence for the sacred discussed in this dissertation?  One that is of, and enlightened by, and contributes interactively to the *new world dharma*?  Experience suggests it is improbable to expect the arrival of a leader in the Taoist tradition who governs skillfully for the good of the people and the land through non-action and who does not covet pomp and ceremony; however, one possibility that Gary Snyder proposes seems achievable in its modesty.  This could be,

> A non-nationalistic idea of community, in which commitment to pure
> place is paramount…Here is perhaps the most delicious turn that comes
> out of thinking about politics from the standpoint of place: anyone of any
> race, language, religion, or origin is welcome, as long as they live well on
> the land…[this] sort of future culture is available to whoever makes the
> choice, regardless of background.  It need not require that a person drop his
> or her Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Animist, Atheist, or Muslim beliefs but
> simply add to that faith or philosophy a sincere nod in the direction of the
> deep value of the natural world and the subject of nonhuman beings
> (1995: 233-34).

As a set of modestly achievable practices that could contribute positively toward such a community-planetary model, the *new world dharma* speaks to the feasibility of medicine such as Snyder's for the neuroses of the global age which, unless repaired, one intuits will be far greater than the untidy psychological, political and ecological detritus of the present.

The late-Alan Watts had a theory that civilizations find a way within their predominant religious impulse to counter the predominant neuroses each experiences.  Ancient India's

world of human suffering created Hinduism with its idea of salvation through the acceptance of suffering. Japan, with its complex social hierarchies in which the mind must constantly hold and balance all the possibilities of one's own role and place, adopted and then refined Zen Buddhism with its annihilation of mental distraction. Christianity, with its appeal to the poor and outcast is a faith of triumphancy, overcoming obstacles through love until, in the shape of its prophet, it overcomes death itself (1975; see also Ralston Saul, 2001; 219). As a pivotal new age of awareness, the global age of the 21st century will require its own new epistemology to speak to its neuroses and its own special brand of suffering.

As the Western world's current omnipotent political and cultural star witnesses the rise of China and India as inexorable forces economically, politically, and culturally, inevitably its own venerable Judeo-Christian tradition forged from the ancient intellectual cauldrons of Eygpt, Sumeria, Greece and Rome, is due for further convergences. As this dissertation has explained, a new Western eco-spiritual reformation is already well underway with the support of its own science, and informed to a significant extent by the deep and antique wisdom paths of Asia. Already, the ocean of the dharma for a global age is being nourished by both Eastern and Western rivers, as well as diverse devotional brachiaries. In a global village there is no stopping their progress.

The question for Futures Studies in International Relations is unlikely to be whether globalization necessarily entails the disintegration of centralized nation-states, but rather what becomes of national and regional identities in a cosmopolitan environment when centralized human concerns become more important. As such, the *new world dharma* is likely to evolve less as a political-theological dynamic, but rather as a reformed spiritual and social vision that indeed has been evolving as a countercultural alternative from the late 1950s and 1960s onward—and that itself has been part of the perennial human continuum which reaches toward the light of a more compassionate and equitable future.

Changing worlds and transforming institutions is a staggering challenge for anyone and for any group. Yet throughout history it has taken place repeatedly. Religious masters have done it. Political revolutionaries have brought it about. Women have achieved it politically. Greenpeace did it. The Battle-In-Seattle's anti-globalization demonstrators have begun it. Change *is* possible. Aung San Su Kyi has stated that it begins by

convincing one friend.  But before that it begins by illuminating oneself regarding what is to be done.

Grace Slick, an iconic figure of the 1960s counter-culture as a vocalist with San Francisco's Jefferson Airplane bands, simplifies Daw Aung San's prophetic message even further, cutting to the core of how truly meaningful change in social consciousness is brought about:   "I thought that with an incredible amount of media blitzkrieg and books and knowledge, you could change people…But you can't," she concludes. "The only person I can change is me" (in Hoskyns, 1997: 219).

Healing is possible.

<div align="center">***</div>

Similar to a poetic ode, in Buddhist tradition, a sutra—literally "a thread on which jewels are strung", or a prose recital of the dharma must begin with a conventional salutation--"*Evam me sutam*: Thus have I heard…"[151]  This dissertation arises from lengthy research and privileged access to interview subjects.  It does not purport to be a sutra.  Yet in the East Asian sense that a committed poet's, or potter's, or stonelayers's work comes to shape itself through long years—*orare est laborare*—as the Japanese ecological poet and activist Nanao Sakaki explains,[152] when work and prayer become annealed as one, in a distant way, for some, it may be regarded as such.  Here ends this dissertation on the origins, nature and inspiring streams of the emerging *new world dharma*, and the on the ways it is practiced and will further evolve.

With nine bows to all those who have graciously shared their wisdom and advice during its accomplishment,

<div align="center">Thus have I heard…</div>

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[151] *Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism*, 593.

[152]  See "Becoming the Landscape", interview with Nanao Sakaki. In *Not Turning Away: The Practice of Engaged Buddhism*, ed. Susan Moon (2004).

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