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Seeing the Global Physical Context of Wholeness

Hamid Rafizadeh
University of Dayton, hrafizadeh1@udayton.edu

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Proposal for the 2020 Learning and Teaching Forum, “Educating the Whole Person”

Seeing the global physical context of wholeness

Hamid Rafizadeh

Adjunct Professor

Department of Engineering Management Systems & Technology

Abstract

The pursuit of the whole person through models like 3H (head, heart, hands) may miss a critical physical aspect within which the wholeness develops and exists. One such aspect originates at the earth's two versions. Humankind has a good understanding of one version and little if any of the second. Such lack of knowledge would adversely affect the development and maintenance of human wholeness. This proposal considers a workshop at the 2020 Learning and Teaching Forum to address this knowledge deficiency in University of Dayton's community through participative knowledge processing and systems thinking.

Starting at the very beginning, the “whole person” is a suitcase word,¹ indicating that by itself it carries little meaning and any higher level of meaning can only come from knowledge placed into the suitcase. For example one can add meaning through 3H model. This model brings in head, heart, and hands into the suitcase of the whole person. But then, head, heart, and hands are also suitcase words. A higher level of meaning is achieved by seeing “head” as search for meaning, search for purpose, search for values and other similarly important things. Heart would encompass things like “love, inner peace, resilience, and connection.” Along the same line of reasoning we can fill the suitcase of “hands” with behavioral aspects that relate to “outward expression of spiritual needs, such as life choices, behavior toward others, rituals, and practices.”² Note that each of these levels of meaning enhances our view of wholeness but at the same time introduces more suitcase words whose meaning we must address by adding new knowledge into their suitcases.

The 3H model is primarily inner-focused and only slightly extends into the human interactions with others or considers the earth as context. There are other models that go beyond the 3H model. For example, the BMSEST model has body, mind, and spirit similar to the 3H model but also adds environment, social, and transcendent.³ I will not spend time here to fill the suitcase of each word in the BMSEST model but only point out that the suitcase of the word “environment” could contain “critical to existence”

¹ Hamid Rafizadeh, *The Sucker Punch of Sharing* (Archway, 2018), pp. 74-75.

² Gowri Anandarajah, “The 3 H and BMSEST Models for Spirituality in Multicultural Whole-Person Medicine,” *Annals of Family Medicine* 6 (5), 448-458 (September/October 2008), p. 450.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

physical aspects that we must seriously consider if we are to maintain the type of wholeness defined by models like the 3H. In the rest of this proposal I will consider one such critical physical aspect of earth that must be included in any consideration of wholeness.

What is a critical, physical aspect of wholeness? Let us start with a simple example in the form of a *thought experiment* in which humankind faces two types of weather: a 75-80 °F summer and a -10 to -20 °F winter. In this thought experiment humankind has been in the summer condition for so long that it has totally lost the memory and knowledge of winter. All it sees and prepares for is summer. There is no knowledge or consideration of things like “heating” to counter cold. Instead, the human focus remains solely on “air conditioning” to counter heat. Similarly, there is no knowledge or consideration of “winter clothing” and all that humankind knows is t-shirts and shorts.

How should one view human wholeness when all that is known is summer and winter is nonexistent as a human concept or idea? In this thought experiment assume that the transition between the summer and winter is sharp. One day it is summer, 75-80 °F, and the next day the summer ends and a very long winter begins, -10 to -20 °F. What happens to human wholeness in such transition? How many cities, how many societies will freeze and cease to exist as humankind finds itself in a situation for which it has not prepared? Under those circumstances no one would know how to heat houses and buildings. No one has clothes to stay warm. No one has a concept of *antifreeze* as all vehicles become dysfunctional in the bitter cold. In short, what are the chances that humankind, lacking the holistic understanding of summer and winter, would be dying out and going extinct and with it the death of wholeness, however we might choose to define it?

This thought experiment may sound a bit harsh and not in line with the traditional views of wholeness that often focus on the inner aspects of the individual than also the external and physical aspects. But this thought experiment is not without its real counterpart. In fact, earth does come in two versions and the two differ radically. We have been so long in the first version that we have very little individual and societal awareness of the second version. We almost have no knowledge of what it takes to prepare for it even though it will arrive suddenly and abruptly without warning.

I hope by now I have your attention on the need for physical wholeness in relation to what earth does in its two versions. Let me walk you through humankind’s progression of developing the knowledge of earth’s two versions.

The first physical observations of earth’s second version came in the form of “erratic blocks,” large boulders that noticeably differed from the rocks native to an area.⁴ For a long time they were theorized as outcomes of a



⁴ The picture is from Colin Smith, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=68019876>, downloaded October 7, 2019.

catastrophic flood or actions of giants and trolls. Only in the first half of the 19th century did we understand the relationship of the erratic blocks to glaciation of earth where ice sheets carried the boulders over very long distances to deposit them where they did not belong. This was the first piece of the puzzle that humankind identified for the earth's second version.^{5,6} At this point let me become more specific and local. In this piece of the puzzle of the earth's second version, what would be happening to Dayton, Ohio? It may come as a surprise that in the last transition from the earth's second version to the current first version almost all population centers of Ohio—Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, etc.—were under a mile-high ice sheet.⁷ Should one consider that information relevant to the idea of wholeness of the University of Dayton and its students? Note that the picture I am drawing is just about one piece of the puzzle and many more pieces are to be discovered and understood if we are to remain physically whole in relation to the earth's two versions.



Let me continue with the discoveries and improvements that have led to better understanding of the earth's two versions. By 1999 the science community had acquired the evidence for the past four cycles of the earth's two versions.⁸ By this time the two versions were given names. The first version, the one in which humankind currently lives, was given the name "interglacial" while the second version was called "glacial." By 2004 the data had expanded to the past eight such cycles.⁹ Yet, despite such knowledge of the earth's two versions there has been little individual and societal awareness of the earth's second version and what it means for personal and societal wholeness. From the perspective of humankind's wholeness in relation to both versions, there is even less, almost nothing, in societal preparation for the transition to the second version.¹⁰

From this perspective, my proposal for the 2020 Learning and Teaching Forum, "Educating the Whole Person," will focus on creating awareness of the earth's two

⁵ One of the first pioneering scientific analyses of erratic boulders: L. Agassiz, Études sur les glaciers (Jent & Gassmann, Neuchâtel, Switzerland, 1840).

⁶ For a history of the discovery of ice ages see: A. Berger, A., "A brief history of the astronomical theories of paleoclimates," In: Berger, André, Mesinger, Fedor, Sijacki, Djordje (Eds.), Climate Change: Inferences from Paleoclimate and Regional Aspects (Springer-Verlag, 2012), and Didier Paillard, "Quaternary glaciations: from observations to theories," Quaternary Science Reviews 107, 11-24 (2015).

⁷ For a more detailed view of Ohio glacial boundary seer Richard P. Goldthwait, "Scenes in Ohio During the Last Ice Age," Ohio Journal of Science 111(2-5), 2-17 (January 2013), https://kb.osu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/1811/4623/V59N04_193.pdf?sequence.

⁸ Petit, J. R. et al., "Climate and atmospheric history of the past 420,000 years from the Vostok ice core, Antarctica," Nature 399, 429–436 (1999).

⁹ EPICA Community Members, "Eight glacial cycles from an Antarctic ice core," Nature 429, 623-628 (June 10, 2004).

¹⁰ Hamid Rafizadeh, The First Rung (Archway, 2018).

versions and the challenges to be faced when in the near future the earth abruptly switches its versions.

At present we are most familiar with the earth’s first version. For the earth’s second version there are two theories. The two differ in the choice of their base data. The first theory relies on modern scientific information and it assumes that except for the extent of the ice sheets, the second version is largely similar to the first version and that the increase in greenhouse gases produced by humans would lengthen the first version and thus result in ample time to recognize and react to the transition that would take place between the two versions.¹¹ The second theory also uses the modern scientific information but it includes the knowledge of the ancient observations of the second version.¹² How many opportunities did ancient humans have to observe the transition between the earth’s two versions? According to the science community’s data, the last transition between the two versions had multiple alternations before the second version firmly settled into the first version (see table). This allowed multiple possibilities for humans to observe and record the events associated with each version and that knowledge is available for modeling the earth’s second version about which we otherwise know little in detail.

Version alternations in the last transition¹³		
(years BP: years before present)		
Holocene	First Version	11,500 years BP to present
Younger Dryas	Second Version	11,500-12,650 years BP
Bølling-Allerød	First Version	12650-14700 years BP
Last Glacial	Second Version	14,700 years BP and earlier

In conclusion I note that this proposal is not about limits of knowledge or about comparing and contrasting different theories or about highlighting the role of ancient knowledge in today’s life but about how “wholeness” can be critically missed through knowledge deficiencies not identified and addressed. In 2020 Learning and Teaching Forum I would like to address this aspect of wholeness through a workshop which will focus on participative knowledge processing and systems thinking.

¹¹ As an example of the logic that argues the length of the first version would be extended because of the greenhouse gases see EPICA Community Members, “Eight glacial cycles from an Antarctic ice core,” *Nature* 429, 623-628 (June 10, 2004).

¹² For a review of the science behind ancient observations see Hamid Rafizadeh, *The Unexpected Unseen* (Archway, 2018), a science novel that addresses the significance of ancient observations in developing a view of the earth’s second version.

¹³ The chronology of the transition alternations is from: S. Björck, M. C. Walker, L. C. Cwynar, S. Johnsen, K.-L. Knudsen, J. J. Lowe, B. Wohlfahrt, and INTIMATE members, “An event stratigraphy for the Last Termination in the North Atlantic region based on the Greenland ice-core record: A proposal by the INTIMATE group,” *Journal of Quaternary Science* 13, 283–292 (1998).