

# Humanicide: From Myth to Risk

## A History and Two Possible Futures for Western Globalisation

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### Abstract

*The Fisher King myth provides an explanatory logic for reviewing globalisation: its past, present and potential.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion is twofold.<sup>2</sup> The real predicament of globalisation is simple survival. Then, the quality of that survival. Humanity is, for the first time in history, poised on multiple fronts to wilfully or negligently commit humanicide: the annihilation of our species to all but a stranded handful.<sup>3</sup> Both survival and its quality involve the whole of humanity. They speak to the consequences that are integral to any choices we make, as individuals, communities, nations, and, as a species. This Fisher King mythic interpretation of Western globalisation identifies the outlines of the risk profile for humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and, speaks to a global agenda for action.*

### Approaching Globalisation

*"Thus we arrive at today: a project of synthesis, an integral age at the leading edge...just now beginning with the dawn of the new millennium." ~ Ken Wilber*

In recent human history few topics could rival the amount of writing and diversified debate carried out in the name of globalisation. Globalisation is a topic that no voice seems to have a definitive word on, no author appears to forward the most credible knowledge about, and no mind seems to be able to grasp and communicate in its entirety. The continuing debate about how to even define the word "globalisation" is an example of the nature of the approach the topic demands. Globalisation is multi-dimensional, for each dimension there are multiple perspectives, and for each perspec-

tive multiple meanings in different contexts. (Sheil 2001: 6) Globalisation requires an approach that can embrace each of these expansive subtleties of difference.

Globalisation's most common dimensions of reference include governance, economics, security, culture and the environment. More dimensions will likely join these ranks in the decades to come. It seems as if every major system of knowledge and activity in humanity has something to say about globalisation, some way of relating to it, critiquing it, adding to it. Globalisation is, at the very least, global in its reach into human affairs. Any approach to globalisation needs to address this feature, and it is fair to say that any competent consideration will also include, or at the very least need to leave room for including, as many of these as possible. This requires of globalisation thinkers, the ability to consider

not only a single discipline of knowledge, or even systems of systems of activity seen within one paradigm, but rather to be "pluralistic", or "aperspectival" in not unduly privileging any particular partial perspective. (Wilber 2000: 159-163)

The search for simplicity on the other side of globalisation's complexity awaits human kind. Many have contributed efforts that attempt to embrace the diverse dimensions of globalisation. Few efforts are held in high regard however, across different disciplines, or in different contexts. This search for a common simplicity, for an acceptable understanding of the affairs of globalisation, is an implicit theme in most writings on globalisation. There is an inherently human desire for a map of globalisation that affords a meaningful logic to guide our thinking, decisions and actions in relationship to both global realities and potentialities. It appears any credibly comprehensive approach to globalisation needs not only to be pluralistic, or aperspectival, but also integrative. To grasp globalisation then, an approach that is "cross-paradigmatic" or employs "integral-aperspectivism" is required.<sup>4</sup>

To date, the common integrative approach taken is to focus on one dimension of globalisation, and then draw on the multitude of issues in relationships of causality and prioritisation. Many of these efforts are extremely illuminating and valuable. They do however, attract the criticism that they champion one knowledge discipline's perspective over others, or they are in some manner, and usually concurrently, derivative of other valid positions. To achieve an integral-aperspectival approach to globalisation the thinker's disposition needs to be global in its altruism. It needs to embrace concern for the entirety of humanity and its relevant concerns, and, some argue, for all sentient life. It would require therefore, a personal identity that holds an outlook of universal care and concern.<sup>5</sup>

A common theme in most writings on globalisation is an effort to define the most important predicament it presents, with its cause/s, effect/s and possible solution/s. Predicaments vying for pre-eminence include the degradation of the environment, the

inequalities and dominance of economic rationality, an international governance crisis, rising cultural hegemonies, a lack of average personal development, and new forms of security challenges among others. In light of the criteria for globalisation thinking above it needs to be asked if the discourse surrounding any of these priorities can adequately relate to, accommodate, and favourably influence the predicaments seen in the others? Is this itself the real global predicament? The implicit requirement presented by this theme is that approaches to globalisation need to address humanity's priorities. The globalisation agenda for discussion, decision-making and action needs to be set at a global level.

It is important to note that globalisation itself is not the cause, nor necessarily, a problem. It is the forms that globalisation takes, or how we as a species globalise, that counts, and where the real site of humanicide is emerging from. Many positive and viable futures are possible, although, they're not where we are currently heading. This paper does not serve to offer yet another solution to an ill conceived problem, but rather review the problems in our current forms of globalisation, and invite the reader to revisit their conceptions of solutions.

## The Fisher King Myth

*"No snowflake in an avalanche ever feels responsible" ~ Voltaire*

The Fisher King myth holds many structural similarities to the issue of globalisation, both in its rise, and current status. It also affords a useful summary interpretation and understanding of direction in relationship to it. The Fisher King myth has repeatedly been re-interpreted and communicated in Western civilisation through the centuries, including in the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> The version being re-interpreted here is from Robert Johnson's "The Fisher King and the Handless Maiden" (1993).<sup>7</sup>

Johnson (1993: 12) reasons that "the twelfth century began so many of the issues that we struggle with today. It has been said that the winds of the twelfth century have become the whirlwinds of the twentieth. Thus

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we can profitably look at the road maps of Western civilisation laid down in the formative time of our modern world to gain some perspective on the maze we encounter today." Indeed, this is exactly what this paper will be doing.

The format for presenting the Fisher King Myth will be a selection of writings, historical events and a general social-cultural commentary recounting a globalisation interpretation of this myth. For those not familiar with the story, a short summary of the structural activity of the myth culled primarily from Johnson's telling, and a statement regarding the psychological disposition (variously the motivation, reason etc) of the character as applied to Western civilisation for each Act is provided in an endnote.<sup>8</sup>

### Act 1 – Development & Wounding

The past millennium has seen the growth of Western civilisation into its young adult stage: the fully armed, trained and expectant prince. The West's wounding in failing to integrate its foundations (and those seen in other cultures), and its persistent grasp for global dominance, that is at once noble and corrupt, idealistic and frighteningly effective, a bold grasp for a unitary vision that's been incredibly rewarding yet terrifyingly destructive, is the tale of a generatively wounded youth. Despite the fact that the successes include holding the keys to further health and fulfilment the West doesn't seem to recognise how to use them.

The early "teenage" years of the West, the renaissance, are often glorified, with the teachers forgotten, and the weaknesses rarely paid attention. In this age, Bronowski and Mazlish (1975: 19) observe Western society was "suddenly disclosed" to a "store of wealth and power in the world which they were too stunned and intoxicated to use well." Arnold Pacey (1990) highlights how the West was the inheritor of early technological advancements by others. These were gained through a "cultural dialogue" with the Chinese, Indian, and Islamic civilizations, and even from perceived primitive cultures, such as African farmers and Arctic Inuit hunters.

Building on these sources of development,

and the more commonly acknowledged ones of Greek and Roman heritage, the great Western Enlightenment began with the renaissance and moved through numerous revolutions of political and social power, based on new relationships between thought and nature (human and otherwise). (Bronowski 1975) The major power shifts can be seen in the secularisation of activities from religious domination. Rousseau "secularised the problem of evil" in human nature as "Machiavelli had done for politics and Galileo for science." (Bronowski 1975: 285) Separating, that is, the validity of different domains of life, what Ken Wilber (2000: 60) refers to as the big three "value spheres of arts, morals and science," from the mythic religious institutions and their control through theology.

Often known by the title of Thomas Paine's "The Age of Reason", the Western enlightenment's major outcome was the industrial revolution, which laid the technological grounds for today's globalisation. In what was an "age of empires" around the globe, the Western Empire rapidly advanced in comparison, because the West excelled at the codification of knowledge through empiric scientific principles and the systemisation of mass production.<sup>9</sup> (Pacey 1990)

With this rapid rise in social, political, economic, and military power came strident individualism, political liberalism, the resurgence of democracy, and the advent of free-market capitalism. (Bronowski 1975) Consistent through each of these developments is an inherited feature of the West's Christian conditioning: the notion of the right to control nature.<sup>10</sup> Hindsight shows that these social-cultural developments are the mark of a particular modern worldview: instrumental-rationality. (Slaughter 1999: 50-51, 341) The rational-instrumental worldview propelled each of these developments and revolutions, nurturing their growth into the very character of Western civilisation. The main feature of this worldview throughout this time was its increasing reliance on empirical science as the primarily valuable locus of truth.<sup>11</sup>

The cultural dominance of a narrow empirical science led to a civil society emboldened by its own achievements and, in respect of the

truth of the West's accomplishments, enabled its constituent countries to explore the entire globe beginning in the 1500's. It wasn't until the 1800's, however, that Western civilisation truly expanded to cover the globe (Curtin 2002: 1-3) and inaugurated the age of global Western Empires which continues to this day.

Philip Curtin (2002) presents how this expansion was strikingly different from the "comparatively peaceful" trading Diaspora settlements that date back to at least the "earliest urban societies of Mesopotamia." It was one of conquest and colonisation in the name of civility, progress and a god given right over the domain of nature, women and primitive cultures.<sup>12</sup>

Western Empires undoubtedly brought numerous advancements to far-flung cultures while the West gained new insights for its troubles as well. In this process the geographic, economic/trade and political steps to the globalisation of today were laid. Major changes in cultural and political consciousness accompanied in the cornucopia born of Western democracy: the abolition of slavery, the "declaration" of human rights and many significant others. Nearing the end of the Nineteenth Century the imperialist thrust gave way to an exponential prosperity for Western countries and the development of global communications and trade infrastructure.

In the Twentieth Century the horrors of industrial scientific gains, without the balance of equal moral and artistic gains influencing the socio-economic-political spheres, became manifest within Western civilisation. This past century saw the advent of two World Wars punctuated by a Great Depression which was then followed by a protracted Cold War. Industrialisation proceeded apace, with military based technology, strategy and economics becoming the main underwriter of globalisation's climb back from the three Great Horrors of modernity. Chalmers Johnson (2004: 12) observes that the United States, the bulkhead of Western civilisation, has "undergone a transformation from republic to empire that may well prove irreversible...[it] prefers to deal with other nations through the use or threat of force rather

than negotiations, commerce, or cultural interaction...A revolution would be required to bring the Pentagon back under democratic control."

The effects on other cultures, and on nature in general, have not been light. To take but one example, the very earth, with its flora and fauna that not only the West but the whole of Humanity depends upon, is being consumed, polluted and driven to extinction. As Edward Wilson (2002: 102, 43, 130) somberly concludes the West "has so far played the role of planetary killer. [We're] in a struggle with the rest of life. The issue, like all great decisions, is moral."

The young West has grown fast, travelled abroad, achieved astounding accomplishments, and yet become wounded, and fiercely repressed its foundational nature – in it self and in others. The Princely West knows something is wrong, but isn't sure exactly what – or what to do. The West has the power in almost every domain of human life to achieve anything it sets its will to. Healing development, however, hasn't come to mind. The project continues as a Princely Knight must go on to be King.

## Act 2 – Wounded Existence & Temporary Relief

Enamoured with its own prestige, yet languishing in its unique pain of position, the Kingly West has all the resources needed to heal the kingdom, his very world. Many of the King's subjects are able to benefit. These are the "willing or not" of the "developing" and "third" world. The King, however, seems unable to create the solution to his wounding. The West has been unable to fully claim and exercise its own power in a transformative, healing way. The Kingly West, instead, persists on the same old track of progress or bust, scientific rational-instrumentalism or nothing, denying the value of the "primitive" nature and the feminine. The West increasingly finds relief in entertainment, the global casino of currency fluctuations, euphemistic efforts at global harmony, and similar sideways progress, rather than genuine development. In the process, other subjects suffer the consequences of the King's self-inflicted wounding.

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Due to its role in the Second World War, one country of the West, the United States, attained a unique ascendancy of military and economic power. Jonathon Schell (2001: 20) observes that more important than defeating the Nazi imperialism is the reality that "the politics of mass annihilation, even as they were going down to defeat in Hitler's bunker, were in 1945 transferred to the care of Washington." In this shadow of accomplishment the Wilsonian ideal was established in the West and still informs United States international relations to this day. Its import is one that claims that it is better to lead and control for the benefit of all if you can see "others" are less developed. Global development programs were started with the best intent of the West, on the surface, and dubious outcomes for the mainly third world countries in reality. As Chomsky (2003) continually points out the power of the West, in comparison to the rest of the world, has led to many abuses of position, hypocrisy through covert activities and coercion, and incompetence with drastic consequences.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), The World Bank, first the General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs (GATT) then The World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the United Nations (UN), all established under the auspices of, and driven by, the United States, have continued this theme in both the eyes of "insiders" and those "outside". For example, Joseph Stiglitz (2003), Nobel prize winner for economics and past chief of the World Bank, argues that "the IMF often seems to confuse means with ends, thereby losing sight of what is ultimately of concern." On the WTO Walden Bello (2001: xiv) notes that "many countries realised that in signing on...they had signed away their right to development." The Argentinean loan default, the Asian currency crisis, and the flawed transition to capitalism in parts of the former Soviet Union in the 1990s, among other instances, have been argued as examples of the failure of hegemonic institutions beholden to a "market fundamentalism." As Stiglitz summarises the situation, "Decisions were made on the basis of what seemed a curious blend of ideology and bad economics, dogma that sometimes

seemed to be thinly veiling special interests... frank discussion was discouraged – there was no room for it."

The title of Linda Polman's (2003:8) eye-witness accounts of UN peace keeping in "We Did Nothing: Why the Truth Doesn't Always Come Out When the UN Goes In," says it all. Polman's comments on the reality of the UN peacekeeping forces for example, are obvious, but disturbing none the less: "the bloodier the consequences of the UN principles, the greater the pressure [for governments] to wriggle out of responsibility. By consistently talking about the UN as if it were an independent functioning organisation, the interested parties have succeeded in making the public believe that the UN has a life of its own...[it is] jargon, familiar but meaningless." The vacuity of moral development shown by the globalised West in the face of economic global affairs is unmistakable – wounded indeed. It is so habituated to its "economic fundamentalism" and scientific "technological wonderland" that it can't even see what is in its own best interests in the long run.

The same impulse to empire that characterised the West's youth is still at play, and still lead by a naïve adhesion to unbridled rational instrumentality. Now seen mostly in the United States version of Western civilisation, the efforts at global expansion are derided, in most if not all, of the varied dimensions of globalisation including economic, corporate, legal, military, environment, culture and even in the colonisation of space.<sup>13</sup> The current political power base in the United States is well understood through their not-for-profit organisation called the "Project for a New American Century." The project is "dedicated to a few fundamental propositions: that American leadership is good both for America and for the world [and] that such leadership requires military strength."<sup>14</sup>

This hegemonic belief is driven by an arguably noble intent and a worldview that brooks no viable alternatives. In "The Lexus and the Olive Tree" Thomas Friedman's (2000: 378) presents a slightly more open appraisal, of this painful position of power from the perspective of the West, concluding that "America will use its assets wisely, and I don't think I'm alone in

this rational exuberance." The name of Friedman's book is an apt corollary to the theme of the King who is grasping for the higher technological development of the "Lexus" while needing to integrate the fundamental nature, identity, and roots of the "olive tree". The consequences are seen throughout the Western world. In the Middle East, for example, technology is leading to better ways for the Israeli and Palestinians (to a much lesser degree) to kill one another, not facilitate their needed establishment on their valued land: their olive tree grove and connection with Mother Nature. In Australia, another satellite Western state, the same wounded misjudgement is playing out. First the indigenous inhabitants were decimated through "true colonisation", then their surviving kin were destructively "managed", and now the indigenous population is a public "problem". (Bell 1998) This wound still bleeds and is only growing worse. Many more examples can be found on every continent attractive enough to the Western Empires.

John Pilger (2003: 2-3) argues that the "global economy" is a modern Orwellian term...beneath this gloss, it is the globalisation of poverty. Those with unprecedented resources to understand this...suppress their knowledge publicly." For each positive dimension of globalisation there seems to be someone ready to argue the same injustice and lack of moral fibre by those who can know better. Many, without the same privileges, have taken it further than mere dialogue. Terrorism is arguably the new catch cry for the necessity of Western imperialism in the 21st Century. While the causes are numerous the same wounding is at play. Philosopher William Irwin Thompson (1996: ch1) contends that "terrorism is amateur government...[as the] nation state undergoes an electronic meltdown in which archaic forms surface in new formations." The repressed, "othered" of instinctive and "primitive" societies and sub-cultures are symptoms the Kingly West can't seem to ease. In seeking to explain these symptoms, Sardar and Davies (2003) in "Why Do People Hate America", point to the Kingly West's method of relief arguing that "the power of the American media works to keep American

people closed to experience and ideas from the rest of the world and thereby increases the insularity, self-absorption, and ignorance that is the overriding problem the rest of the world has with Americans." From another perspective, that of the United States' foreign policy driven by militarism, Chalmers (2004: 9) warns the West that "the blowback from the second half of the twentieth century has only just begun."<sup>15</sup>

In "The Unfinished Twentieth Century" what troubles Jonathon Schell (2001: xi) most, in the context of blowback, is that there are still "some 30 000 nuclear weapons in the world." Schell argues that continued proliferation of nuclear arms, and other weapons of mass destruction, is directly related to American foreign policy. In light of this Schell (2001: 105) concludes that the real danger for humanity is if the West's "response to the growing new threat of annihilation is war, the result will be new acts of annihilation. The world is sick. It cannot be cured with America's new wars." Repeating the same mistake expands the same wounding.

The Kingly West has made some progress, however, within itself and in helping other cultures. The West has gradually been fulfilling the promise of democracy with, for example, the rise of the feminist movement and the move of their avant guard into a more healthy post-modernism. Many other countries have also drunk of the West's cup of plenty. Philippe Legrain (2002: 52) argues that to reduce poverty, and the many other ills now seen in the glare of globalisation, "economic growth through trade is the only answer." Legrain (2002: 49) insists it has already proven itself, observing that "everywhere you look in countries that have opened up to the world [the Western world of free market liberalism] there are signs of hope: poor people scrambling to make a better life...the crucial thing is they are better off than they were before." In similar fashion the famed Indian economist Jagdish Bhagwati (2004) also argues strongly that economic globalisation is helping to not only alleviate poverty but also improve worker conditions, human rights, gender equality, and much more, around the globe.

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Indeed, it is just this success in rapid industrialisation and modernisation that the West had prided itself on that is making, for Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilisations" the main shape of the early 21st Century. For Huntington (1996: 121), it is the economic globalisation of other countries, and their "youth bulge" in contrast to declining fertility rates in Western countries, that will lead to "deeply destabilising effects on the Western-dominated established international order." No doubt many shortcuts have become available to developing countries because of the Western pioneering effort with the enlightenment project. The West's unhealthy emphasis on rational instrumentality, however, is dangerous warns Huntington (1996: 154): "the Western virus, once it is lodged in another society, is difficult to expunge."

The insight is that it is Westernisation that causes the problem not modernisation per-se. In failing to "organically" modernise, developing countries risk "infecting" their cultures, and repeating the wounding of the Kingly West. As Amy Chua (2003: 7-9) demonstrates wholesale Western styled modernisation has generally concentrated "enormous wealth in the hands of an "outsider" minority." These "market minorities" in developing countries "produce highly unstable and combustible conditions." This is especially so when Western "global populist and democratic movements give strength, legitimacy, and voice to the impoverished, frustrated, excluded masses of the world." Blowback from acting persistently in a wounding way.

The wounding of the West is seen clearly in the way its culture seeks relief. According to the Global Policy Forum global trade is "approximately \$1.5 trillion per day...\$50 trillion per year (about 17 percent) of foreign exchange trading takes place with futures, options and derivatives to hedge against future exchange rate fluctuations...exchange rate speculation accounts for the remaining transactions, at least 80 percent." (Hayward 2000: 3) Welcome to the "global casino", where money comes from money, an abstraction on an abstraction, a highly imaginative or subconscious impulse driven affair, where the wounded King gains relief and drives

economic globalisation. This is emblematic of what Clive Hamilton (2003: xvi) calls the West's "Growth Fetish", the belief that "to find happiness they must be richer, regardless of how wealthy they already are." Not only does the West suffer a "media amnesia" of history, both ancient and modern, and thus blindness to its own discovered facts about happiness, health and evolution, but so too the majority of its constituent population and any other cultures who "Westernise". The West's politics, media, and society wide value-schema is beholden to this conviction, one that sees people with more wealth and possessions than any human in history, still "needing" more.

A large part of this "more" is the enormous focus of westernised people's time and resources "spent" on the entertainment and fashion industries where William Thompson (1996: ch1) says every "citizen who is "morphing" into the loyal subject of the media demands participation in the pageantry." The Kingly West's relief through fascination with the fish of transcending "ordinary" reality, through media quasi-celebrity participation, has done little to reveal the healing insight it holds, if only in metaphor, where "the medium is the message."<sup>16</sup> Instead, another Marshall McLuhan claim seems to be the way the West lives out its obsessive distraction from reality, sadly "every media extension of man is an amputation."<sup>17</sup> Thompson concludes that "fast-fame takeouts litter the information superhighway strips of the new electronic America," and argues that "now perhaps we can appreciate the [terrorist] cults. Paranoia is one reaction to living in an informationally supersaturated solution in which the media never tell the truth and never really discuss the cultural options at stake."

In symbiotic opposition to the Kingly West's wounding, by impaling itself on the "flatland" of rational instrumentality, is the relief gained through a "fantasia" of hyper-consumerism, celebrity based credibility, imaginative immersion and media amnesia.<sup>18</sup> The King is wounded indeed, and pushing on with the same old plan, while it has benefited some of the worldly subjects, is now starting to hurt even more for both. A healing is required – if

only there were someone with the insight to help. But only the desperate or the foolish would challenge the King, right?

### Act 3 – The Fool & The Healing

One of the virtues of Western civilisation is the recorded history of heretics and critics of "the powers that be" in any age. As the West has matured, its ability to provide for "freedom of speech" has enabled these questioners to flourish, relative to its past habits of gruesome death penalties. Having their space to speak, however, doesn't always mean they are heard. Perhaps, like the young Fool, they were too softly spoken or a solitary voice against the din of the Kings progress. As the King has aged, however, so has the Fool. Tiring of a life and kingdom without more transcendence, the obvious place to go is to see the King, the ruler of the Fool's world.

Richard Slaughter (1999: 341) observes that while the King's wounded persistence with instrumental rationality "seems unquestioned, unstoppable, hegemonic...[it] was never fully convincing. From the earliest days there have been protests, counter-currents, critiques and traditions that held out other possibilities, the seeds of quite different futures."

Even in the genesis of the "Age of Reason", one of its fathers Niccolo Machiavelli, John Ralston Saul (1992:42) points out in "Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West", was recognised as coming from "the dark side". Saul notes that the "humanists of the renaissance attacked him violently" and quotes Diderot, a contemporary, who describes his efforts as "a detestable political system which can be summed up in two words – the art of tyranny."<sup>19</sup>

Most of the voices of dissent and alternatives were written out of easily accessible records of history, as the now common adage explains, because "the winner writes the history". In the full-blown industrial revolution Karl Marx is remembered most. Yet his criticisms stayed within the realms of the economic system, and while insightful, amount to little more than a debate internal to rational instrumentality. To be fair it was a debate pitting differences

in value dispositions. In a world where values were never invested in dialogue to the extent the assumptive empirical science was, however, (and still is to a large extent), despite the rhetoric and ideals, the reality of "might equals right" held the day.

Yet the voices grew more populous and louder in the Twentieth Century. Slaughter (1999: 342) reminds us that the famous novelist, journalist and historian H. G. Wells's critical "A Modern Utopia" became, at the end of his life, "Mind at the End of its Tether". Fast-forward to the turn of the 21st Century and "George Soros on Globalisation". Soros (2002) is acknowledged as one of the richest players of the "global casino". Yet even a King of Kings now recognises the wounding, and, levelling criticisms at "market-fundamentalism", is warning that the West can't afford to ignore "globalisation's discontents" and their message any longer.

The Western cultural experiments of the nineteen sixties was, of sorts, just that. Minor and less violent in comparison to history's revolutions, its opening to the contextualisation of knowledge and post-modernism, the growing of equality of women in Western societies, and a push for alternative values, amongst other focuses, hasn't, unfortunately, gone far. It did, however, till the soil for an increasing number of social justice movements at the turn of the 21st Century. Nomi Klein collects the eclectic critique of the dominate forms of globalisation, effected by the Kingly West's wounding, in books like "No Logo". Klein (2002: xxi) argues that Western "globalisation is now on trial because on the other side of these virtual fences are real people...locked-out people, whose services are no longer needed, and whose lifestyles are written off as "backward." The King can't repress the "nature" of his subjects without there being some kind of blowback.

Many others have deconstructed and exposed how the wounding of the Kingly West is playing out. A multitude of robust and detailed critiques abound. Saul reminds us in lengthy tomes that the West has become "addicted to a particular set of illusions in order to avoid coming to terms with its own reality." (1993: 13) Jose Ramos reminds us that the field

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of Critical Futures Studies was pioneered by Slaughter in response to the hegemony of the King's wounding. Quoting Slaughter, Ramos (2003: 15) highlights that "Western people have, on the whole, become alienated from the Earth which supports them, to the waste and destruction associated with the expansion of the industrial system and to alternative values, ideas and ideologies...[the critical approach] challenges prevailing notions of 'progress,' and rescues the debate from ethnocentricity and technological determinism."<sup>20</sup>

It is becoming clearer, book by book, community organisation after international non-profit organisation, and novel activist action after political protest, that the population of the West is waking up like the Fool and growing tired of the wounding. The Foolish are rising from their embeddings in nature and seeking a healthy integration with the Kingly West's progress, an integration of the scientific, with the moral and artistic spheres of value. All importantly, they are asking the crucial questions of the King, and even proposing viable alternatives to the West's current growth strategies.

John Cavanagh (2002), and others from the International Forum on Globalisation, in "Alternatives to Economic Globalization", point out that there are real alternatives which can heal the West and serve the health and continued growth of the world. Numerous other pathways are also presented with, for example, Paul Hawken et al. (1999) proposing in "Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution" that integrations without major losses for the West, without that is the King losing his throne, are indeed possible. The Fools can see how to use the Holy Grail of development.

Indigenous cultures, the "primitive Fool" in colonial Western eyes, are also gaining some measure of voice. In Australia, for example, one initiative at integrating the indigenous wisdom of the Aborigines with the gains of Western enlightenment is the "Bush University" where youth from both cultural civilisations are schooled in each other's societies and guided to healthy integrations along the pathway to fur-

ther transcendence and growth. (Bell 1998) Such efforts appreciate the predicament of both the wounded King and the nature embedded Fool. Their weaknesses are overcome through their integration of strengths.

Yet, as Peter Singer (2002) argues in "One World: The Ethics of Globalization", "there is one great obstacle to further progress in this direction. It has to be said, in cool but plain language, that in recent years the international effort to build a global community has been hampered by the repeated failure of the United States to play its part." And Michael Mazarr (1999) concludes "fate has provided us with the raw material of a new renaissance in human society, but it is up to us to make that renaissance a reality."

To enable this responsibility taking, many who contemplate globalisation deeply point to evolving a universal worldview, a global consciousness, as the crucial imperative. Without it, writes Ervin Lazlo (1997), "entering the 21st Century with the consciousness that hallmarked the 20th century would be like entering the modern age with the consciousness of the Middle Ages. It would not only be inappropriate, but dangerous." Indeed, continuing the wounding, would be suicide.

The alternatives, including integrations and the disposition of responsibility in relationship to the Holy Grail of Western progress, are being taken up. They are also available to all in the West who want healing. One name for many of these approaches is "integral" because they openly integrate each of the value spheres separated in the age of reason along with the fundamental wisdom of nature and the significant wisdom of transcendence and continuing evolution.<sup>21</sup>

With the emergence of Integral studies the West has a means for answering the question of responsibility. The questioning Fools have always been present. But now in middle age, and having come into their power, and with the King getting older and still playing out the same wounding, the Fool is even more instinctually sure of needing to help the Kingly West by pointing to the inherent responsibility for healing. Only time will tell, however, if the King and

his court heed the message and use the Holy Grail of the gains of the Western enlightenment, and its gift of the "information age", to heal and whole himself and his world on the way to a viable, sustainable globalisation.

### Envisaging Humanity's Future

The remainder of the Fisher King myth plays out positively. Yet in this paper's re-interpretation it represents only one alternative ending: an alternative future history for humanity at the dawn of the 21st Century. At least one other possibility, an "opposite" ending, is also suggested by the myth. Other myths would certainly provide different interpretations, and pose different future alternatives. In keeping with the mythic Fisher King story, however, structural outlines and psychological interpretations are offered for both main alternative futures in endnote.<sup>22</sup>

### A Positive Future History

There are enough Fools who have come into their own power, and are instinctively asking the questions, for each King in the West. This future history sees the West either make gradual or dramatic, changes in international relations and domestic policies that affect the whole of humanity. Although not without war, diseases, other calamities, reversals, and pauses along the way, the West provides the leadership that integrates their own relationship with nature (and the three value spheres of arts, morals and science) in a healthy way: achieving balanced development. This integration is reflected outwardly in their relationship with other countries and cultures. Humanity is, through new forms of consensus and leadership, able to avert many of the potential disasters looming in the West's hard won progress, start corrective action for much of the damage done (namely in order to prevent more), and generally increase the quality of life for humanity as a whole. The West has to make many sacrifices to do so, and is no longer the dominate power in global affairs, but the benefits as the

21st Century plays out are well worth it. A truly sustainable globalisation is achieved.

### A Negative Future History

Despite the instinct of the Fool, the Kingly West ignores his questions and continues on. Gradual changes do occur, but not fast enough. The wounding of the Kingly West has become so critical that without healing he may fatally disrupt the international order of development. This future history sees the Kingly West fail to make sufficient changes before its societies start to crumble from the inside out. Concurrently, due to the continued perception, if not reality, of imperialistic activities by Western countries, particularly the United States, the enraged Fools of less developed countries (and its own internal "minorities") increasingly, violently, attack. The wounded West can't see how to adequately bring healing and defeat, or at least to calm, the Fool. In persisting with an instrumental rationality led imperialist drive, the West either inadvertently or suicidally brings about the destruction of human society as it is currently known, sacrificing much of a millennia of "expensive" progress.

### The Risk of Humanicide

The current situation of globalisation can be seen in light of both of the possible alternative future histories outlined. It is the possibility of the negative alternative, however, that holds the risk profile for humanity in the 21st Century.

While the Kingly West's lack of heeding the Fool's question has been the problem, for hundreds of years, the possible consequences now are radically different. If the King fails to heed the Fool, and integration is not achieved, further development may become wholly untenable. The wounding could prove fatal. Writ large in a heavily interconnected world, delicately poised on numerous critical systems, the collapse of this empire could easily bring about the near extinction of humanity. This could be the century of Humanicide: the annihilation of the majority of humanity.

## HUMANICIDE: FROM MYTH TO RISK

Within Integral theory it is acknowledged that there are two forces acting on setting Integral priorities. The first is that of "fundamentals" – the things that affect the whole: the basic building blocks and the influences thereof. Second is that of "significance" – the highest quality features that the whole serves to support. If the significant features are lost the whole continues on with the possibility of "regrowth". If the fundamentals are lost, the whole is destroyed.

Each of the problems that various Fools have brought to the attention of the King can generally be seen as either fundamental or significant. They have each, in one way or another, been labelled as a predicament of globalisation. Most of the predicaments mentioned in the globalisation debate fall into the category of significant: it would be good if incomes were relatively balanced, for example, or if there was a fairer global system of governance, justice, and democratic participation. The key features mentioned in the mythic interpretation above, however, are ones encroaching on being fundamental in nature. Many significant features were also mentioned and there is room for the inclusion of many more. It is the fundamental features, however, that vie to qualify as the real predicament of globalisation in the 21st Century. These could lead to Humanicide. The other predicaments are a matter of quality, and while significant, they are inherently open to debate.

### Setting the Global Agenda

The fundamental predicaments, if subjected to a threshold or tipping point analysis, would sort the contenders down to a ranked list of "most likely to occur". The predicaments on such a priority list, if not attended to swiftly, could cause Humanicide. Without averting these, there is no possibility of debating the merits of the other "quality" category of "significant" predicaments.

The contenders are the likes of nuclear holocaust, dramatic increases in global warming, a bio-tech experiment gone wrong in the

food chain or in humans, a nanotechnology device that wipes out the human food supply or even unstopably attacks human lives, or a toxic spill of unprecedented proportions that wipes out sufficient marine life to irrevocably destroy humanity's food chain. There are many similar possibilities but what they all have in common is three things:

- They could all lead, quite swiftly, to the eradication of the majority of humanity: Humanicide;
- They are all the responsibility of humanity – they will, or won't, occur depending on what humanity does; and,
- They are each increasingly more likely as the "wounding" of the Kingly West continues to become more critically pronounced and the instinctive Fool becomes increasingly enraged.

These fundamental predicaments, then, define the edges of Humanicide that are the fundamental global predicament in the early 21st Century. The primary cause of these is the failure of the Kingly West to apply a healthy definition of growth and development to the setting of the global agenda for humanity.

It is the causal influences upon these types of fundamental predicaments that need to be attended to. This is the global priority. Armed with the insight, of needing to combine instinctive nature and the three value spheres into a higher-order integration, and thus redefining growth and development, a rigorous list of possible Humanicide causes needs to be identified. Then, in each dimension of human activity, the activities contributing to them need to be "healed". Only then can humanity move on to the more significant predicaments of globalisation. Move on, that is, to healthy development, to improving the quality of human existence in the 21st Century, one free from the probability of Humanicide.

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## Notes

1. This paper was developed in response to a request for an Integral theory analysis of globalisation. The integral methodology underpins the identification of the criteria for approaching globalisation, and situates the value of using myth as a mass communication educational device. To review the methodological basis for this essay, see its first unedited draft here: <http://www.emergence.net.au/articles/humanicide.pdf>
2. There is a very real risk that because a Westerner is using a Western myth to analyse Western dominated activities, that typical Western biases may usurp any certainty that the analysis is sound and applicable across numerous cultural perspectives and contexts. While an attempt is made to keep the analysis openly critical, the very nature of a civilisationally relevant myth being used as its analysis is that any blind spots could very well remain blind to both the author and Western readers. This is, unfortunately unavoidable in this format. Any insights readers from different cultural backgrounds may have are invited to be sent to the author for any future revisions of this paper.
3. Appropriately (fortunately?), for this statement of Humanicide being a relatively new phenomena, the term has little recorded use and in that, contested meanings. The meaning in this paper is one taken from a review of definitions of mass murder, in a transcend and inclusion fashion: homicide (one or more people), genocide (a race of people), democide (a politically, often state sponsored murder, of a group of people), humanicide (murdering the majority of the human species), and omnicide (the death of the majority of all earthly sentient species). For an exterior reference to this usage see Heater (1996).
4. Wilber (2000:167-8). For a definition of cross-paradigmatic see Commons et al (1998); for the relationship of cognitive abilities to a global perspective, or a global holism see Wilber (2000a:44). A brief introduction to cognitive hierarchical complexity thinking can be found online at: <http://gseacademic.harvard.edu/~hcs/base/HC.shtml>
5. Wilber (2000:206/208). See entries for Kohlberg's "moral judgement," Gilligan's "female hierarchy of moral stages" and Wilber's "moral span."
6. The Fisher King myth is part of the Holy Grail myths associated most popularly with King Arthur's court, and may easily be analysed according to Campbell's archetype hero's journey. It has been cast into operas, stage plays, poems, Hollywood movies and many other forms.
7. Johnson is a noted Jungian analyst, and author of a dozen books on human psychology and mythology. One major weakness of this myth is that it suits a predominately masculine plot. A feminine companion is presented in Robert Johnson's psychological interpretation of this myth, called "The Handless Maiden." While it too might offer many insights into our experience of globalisation, it is not as well suited. This is because the majority of globalisation's activity, and targets for ameliorating action, is dominated by masculine efforts. Masculine here does not necessarily refer to male and female, but rather the principle of masculine energy as understood within psychological typologies of gender.
8. THE FISHER KING MYTH – ACT 1  
A young prince yet to come into his power, beset with all the outer symbols of prestige, sets out in the name of love and high ideals to claim his knighthood through the experience of demonstrating it. The prince finds a camp in his kingdom, and discovers a brutish, un-titled knight returning victorious from battle in the "holy lands." Switching dramatically from high ideal, to youthful impulse, the prince kills the brutish knight, but is "generatively" wounded in the process. Or, in another telling, the prince eats of a salmon fish cooking on a fire in the empty camp, and is thus wounded "generatively" by its scalding heat. The Prince continues home, having acquired the Holy Grail of development, yet doesn't know what its significance is.

## ACT 1 PSYCHOLOGY

Our young hero is driven by the need to find his place in the world, to claim his power and the status he was brought up to believe are inherently his. He has all the expectations and the outward signs of being a knight, being one of power, but he is yet to earn it, and thus anxious to do so. In encountering the brutish Knight, or eating the salmon, the

## HUMANICIDE: FROM MYTH TO RISK

Prince denies the value of the previous level of development in growth – in others, and himself. He rejects the instinctual manhood grounded in nature and wisened experience, or the basic rules of nature in the scolding fish, because of desire and self-righteousness. For the same reasons, the Prince is also grasping beyond his level of development before he is ready. He is thus generatively wounded and his creative development is distorted. He discovers the very key to his healing, development, but because of his wounding, doesn't understand its value accurately, or how to relate to it authentically so that it can help heal him.

### THE FISHER KING MYTH – ACT 2

Our young prince in time has become King. His wounding remains however, even affecting his subjects. The King languishes wounded in his castle, now the keeper of the Holy Grail. He holds the secret to healing. All his kingdom can drink from the Holy Grail of growth, plenty, and wisdom of experience (transcendence and integration). All that is, but him. The only relief the King finds is in fishing alone.

### ACT 2 PSYCHOLOGY

Development is distorted. If persistently followed in the same direction it will only make matters worse. The schism of repression of the lower, from the evolving higher, becomes increasingly untenable. Relief is found in immersion in distraction, in the subconscious, in dreams and fantasies. Others around the King can benefit from his distorted development, but are keenly aware of the wounded aspects, even if they don't know what to do to help (if they're interested that is, and in emulating the King's character of development, they're not likely to be). The subjects may also reflect the King's wounding, or suffer the consequences of his misguided judgement. The salmon fish of the wounding is now the focus of relief. The focus on the fish also holds a key to what is required for healing development. The fish reflects 'Christ' consciousness, a message of integration, balance and transcendence. The King sees it, but doesn't understand what its significance.

### THE FISHER KING MYTH – ACT 3

Enter the Fool. The young Fool is a Knight brought up as a commoner by his widowed mother. A revealing fight leads him to travel to claim recognition of his birthright from the King. Entering the castle, and being disappointed at the sight of the wounded King, he travels on to develop his Knightly skills alone. All the while the Fool remains cloaked in his mother's home spun tunic. The Fool, in middle age, has claimed his Knighthood through experience. Weary of a Knight's tasks, he once again searches for the King's guidance and recognition. He enters the castle, and this time, seeing the Holy Grail serve health to all but the King asks him "whom does the Grail serve?"

### ACT 3 PSYCHOLOGY

While the fool is too young, and has yet come into his own personal power, wisdom and need for transcendence, he can recognise the paucity of the wounded King. The young fool is, in contrast to the King, overly embedded in nature and instinct. The Fool instinctually has the questions to ask the King, if only he believes he'll be heard. Sometimes, the Fool will ask the questions the first time he sees the King, however, generally it's done too quietly and leaves little impact. The Fool moves on to learn alone through experience, without guidance. The Fool has less pride and expectation about how to be a true Knight. Thus, in contrast to the expectant King when he was a young Knight, the Fool comes into his own power while honouring those who enable him to have it.

The Fool, tired of the lonely quest in middle age, and upon next seeing the King, having not lost his connection to nature and instinct, immediately asks the obvious question.

### THE FISHER KING MYTH – ACT 4 – ALTERNATIVE #1

The King realises he holds the solution to his pain! If he claims the right and responsibility, and makes the effort to drink of the Holy Grail, it shall serve him. He does and is healed. He dies three days later, a successful and honoured King who will be remembered for the achievement of his healing quest.

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### PSYCHOLOGY

The Fool reminds the King of his responsibility, of the need for him to make the effort to connect with balance and transcendence in the form of the Holy Grail. Once the King does claim his power and humbly accepts the help of the Holy Grail, his life is complete. A healthy and happy life and heritage can then be shared with his peers and succeeding generations.

### THE FISHER KING MYTH – ACT 4 – ALTERNATIVE #2

The King fails to hear or heed the question of the Fool, and continues lamenting his wounding. The Fool, dismissed, leaves the King's immediate realm and goes on to seek transcendence alone. Living without the guidance of the King, the Fool remains mired in nature. Without healing the King's wound grows worse, and eventually kills him, bringing the destruction of the court and the very Kingdom.

### PSYCHOLOGY

- Ignored or rejected by the King, the Fool sees no recourse but to be as far away from the King's influence as possible. Without the guidance of the King's experience in transcendence however, the Fool is unable to differentiate himself from his basic nature. The Fool, if he can't find a place without relief from the King, a place to become his own King even, he will undoubtedly attack the King with the anger of the repressed. The King, unwilling or unable to heal himself because of the humility of sacrifice involved, finds his wounding all consuming and insufferable. The kingdom, his life, collapses into disarray, and the King could become suicidal.
9. It was the age of empires, Fernand Braudel reminds us in "Civilisation & Capitalism: The Perspective of the World." Along side the growing Western civilisation was the "Mogul Empire in India, the Chinese and Persian Empires, the Ottoman Empire, and the Empires of the Tsars in Muscovy." (Braudel (1985:54)
  10. For more on this theme, see Wilber (1999).
  11. A recent example of this is the accessible chronicles of the successes of this age by Bill Bryson (2003) in "A Short History of Nearly Everything." This book is concerned pre-
  - dominately with Western science, its people and discoveries, with hardly a mention of the artistic or moral dimension of these times.
  12. There was "true colonisation" by sheer numbers of inhabitants in what are now Canada, the United States and Australia. A smaller, but no less aggressive, British "territorial empire" was established in countries like India and Nigeria. And, in many instances the creation of "plural societies" through minor settlements occurred in countries like "South Africa, Algeria, some South American countries, such as Peru or Guatemala, and many parts of the former Soviet Union." Colonisation, control and subjugation of the primitive societies encountered, was undoubtedly the order of the era of the rise of Western Empires. (Curtin 2002)
  13. On the new "space race," the current United States "National Security Space Architects" vision of "pioneering America's space pre-eminence," is seeking, in unveiled practicalities, to contribute to "full spectrum dominance" by the United States "defence" forces. (Chomsky 2003: 229-30), and NSSA website: <http://www.acq.osd.mil/nssa/> )
  14. Organisation's website, see: [www.newamericancentury.org](http://www.newamericancentury.org)
  15. Chalmers (2004) p 9. The term "blowback" was coined in this context by Chalmers in his book (2000) *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, Metropolitan Books, New York, USA.
  16. Thompson (1996) ch 1., quoting Marshall McLuhan (1965) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, McGraw Hill, New York, USA, p 45.
  17. Thompson (1996) ch 1., quoting Marshall McLuhan, unknown source.
  18. I am indebted to a personal communication with Rommel De Leon for this wording of "fantasia", November 2003.
  19. Saul (1992:42), quoting Diderot, *L'Encyclopedie*, vol.2, p 200.
  20. Ramos is quoting Richard Slaughter (1982) *Critical Futures Studies and Curriculum Renewal*, PhD dissertation, University of Lancaster, England.
  21. For an example of this integral approach in the field of psychology see Wilber (2000).
  22. see note 8.