

PRINCIPLES OF
Tsawalk

An INDIGENOUS APPROACH *to* GLOBAL CRISIS

Umeeek

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Yaa?akmis

Yaa?akmis is a word

Kindled by the explosion of creation

Meaning love

And pain

Yaa?akmis is *Qua*

That which is

Tsawalk ... One

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Preface

In a view of reality described as *tsawalk* (one), relationships are *qua* (that which is). The ancient Nuu-chah-nulth assumed an interrelationship between all life forms – humans, plants, and animals. *Relationships are*. Accordingly, social, political, economic, constitutional, environmental, and philosophical issues can be addressed under the single theme of interrelationships, across all dimensions of reality – the material and the non-material, the visible and the invisible. As a consequence, certain words in the text, such as “polarity,” “spiritual,” “numinous,” and “belief” are placed within the view of reality described as *tsawalk* – one. These definitions offer a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective on the nature of reality in that all questions of existence, being, and knowing, regardless of seeming contradictions, are considered to be *tsawalk* – one and inseparable. They are interrelated and interconnected.

This belief system, which served to integrate all dimensions of reality, is reflected in the Nuu-chah-nulth language. The root word *qua* is an example. It is used in the name of the Creator, K^waa[?]uuc, the first part of which means “that which is” and the second part of which means “Owner of.” The same root word is also used in everyday language in the saying *q^waasasa iš*, which means “that’s just the way it is” or “that’s just the way s/he is,” depending on the context.

The Ahousaht Dialect of the Nuu-chah-nulth Language

Pronunciation of words will vary from one dialect to another, which adds to both spelling and translation difficulties. The following word list offers an idea of approximate pronunciation of the Ahousaht dialect and indicates

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the meanings of certain words. With some exceptions, the Nuu-chah-nulth words used in this book are based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which accommodates the approximately forty-three letters or sounds found in the Nuu-chah-nulth language. The primary source for the spellings of Nuu-chah-nulth words is a dictionary published in 1991 by the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (*Our World, Our Ways: T'aat'aaqsapa Cultural Dictionary*, James V. Powell, ed.). Some words, like *tsawalk*, “Nuu-chah-nulth,” and *qua*, retain the spellings used in my first book (*Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*, 2004), but others use the IPA (“Qua-ootz,” for example, is spelled “Ḳʷaaʔuuc”). Another source for spelling is *A Concise Dictionary of the Nuuchahnulth Language of Vancouver Island* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), compiled and edited by John Stonham. An additional pronunciation guide can be found on the Internet by googling the phrase “Nuuchahnulth language.”

INTERNATIONAL

PHONETIC ALPHABET PRONUNCIATION AND MEANING

Ałmaquuʔas	Aulth-ma-koo-us: a name used by the people of Ahous for the giant woman who lived in the local mountains. Her body was discovered to consist of gum or pitch, thus her name may be translated as Pitch Person or Pitch Woman.
ciḥaa	chi-haw: a word that refers to anything strange and inevitably connected to spirit
haaḥuupa	Ha-huup-a: teachings
haḥuuli	Ha-hoolth-ee: land (and its resources) owned by a chief
hamipšił	Ha-mip-shitł: to recognize (in a relational manner)
ḥaw'it	ha-wilth: chief or wealthy one in both a material and a spiritual sense
Ḥaw'itume	Hawilth-oomee: Wealthy Mother Earth (where “wealth” includes the material and the non-material)
himwiča	him-wits-a: storytelling

hinaayil haw'it	hee-nii-yilth hawilth: where the first word means “a place above” and the second word means “chief,” which is then a reference to the Creator. The phrase combines a metaphor (a place above) with a title (chief).
hinkiic	hinkeets: chief’s dance with a wolf headdress, literally a “gift-bearing” dance
iis?ak	ee-sok: sacred respect
K ^w atyat	Kwhat-yaught: supernatural being
K ^w aa?uuc	Qua-ootz: Owner of All – Creator
k ^w atyik	kwhat-yeek: heavy (in Ahousaht dialect)
Łučhaa – łučhaa	Thluch-ha: a custom that involves members of one family, on behalf of their son, going to another family to ask for a woman in marriage
Mamałn'i	Ma-multh-ni: originally referred to the first arrivals from Europe, who came in sailing boats that seemed to have houses on them. This word has since come to mean anyone with fair skin.
Naas and naas	“naas” means day (light) and is also used as a reference to the Creator (Naas) during prayer. “Naas” is both a name (for the Creator) and a metaphor derived from the word “day.”
?aaphii	Awp-haii: to be friendly
ʕinḥtinm'it	Aint-tin-mit: Son of Mucus
ʕinaak	Aii-nawk: a nurturing, cooing sound
?uuštaqyu	Oosh-duk-yu: shaman, doctor, completed
?uusumč	Oo-sum-ich: translated as “vision quest,” although the root “?uu” carries with it the notion “to be careful”
łaaqišpiil	Klaq-ish-piilth: one of three names given to the house of Keesta. “Klag” means liquid oil, and liquid oil was a sign of wealth, both material and spiritual.

λuułhapii	Tlooth-hup-ee: go slowly
λuuk ^w aana	Tloo-qua-nah: a word that literally means “we remember reality.” Anthropologists describe it as a sacred wolf ritual, which is like describing the Christian sacrament as a sacred bread ritual. The intent of this remembrance ceremony is to regain the balance and harmony of relationships between family members and thus to reflect ancient teachings.
quu?as	Koo-us: today means “human” but originally referred to any life form
qu?ačaqstum	Ko-ats-uk-stum: that which is (alive) in a person
Qu?ušinm’it	Qu-ooshin-mit: Son of Raven
k ^w ist	kwist: to change, to turn (the page)
q ^w aasasa ał	qua-sa-sa-ulth: just the way they are
q ^w aasasa iš	qua-sa-sa-ish: just the way (he, she, or it) is
q ^w aasasa sq ^w i	qua-sa-sa-sqwee: that’s the way it was
q ^w aasasa uł	qua-sa-sa-ukl: that’s the way it will be
t’apswiis	Tups-weese: to dive into the ocean
titiičcu	Ti-teach-tsu: the life principle within a person
usma	usma: precious
wiiša?	Wee-shah: ceremonially unclean
wikiiš ča?miiłta	Wik-eesh Cha-miih-ta: imbalance or disharmony
wikiičił	wee-kee-chitl: suspend customs (momentarily)
witwok	wit-wok: a security or police force
yaa?akmis	yaw-uk-miss: love (which includes the root word for pain)
Yuk ^w at	Yew-quaht: place of wind
yuxyik	Yux-yeek: meaning “heavy” in Muwachat dialect

Acknowledgments

In 1990, when I graduated from the University of British Columbia with my doctoral degree, I was asked: Who is your role model? Who influenced you and encouraged you? Ultimately, the best answer points to my ancestral legacy, my grandparents, who influenced the formative years of my life. During a retreat on Gabriola Island just across from Nanaimo, British Columbia, I performed a ceremony to honour my father, Eugene, and my grandparents, including Keesta, my father's grandfather, all of whom embody Nuu-chah-nulth cultural lifeways. My first book, *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*, and my current work both derive from my ancestral legacy. Innumerable others, dating back to the time of Son of Raven, are included in this legacy, so to enter each name would fill several large volumes.

In addition, my partner and colleague, Marlene, particularly during our breakfast sessions, has made important contributions to the development of the ideas used in this work. My thanks to her and to several others with whom I have consulted: my aunt Trudy and her husband, Edwin; my relative Barney Williams from Tla-o-qui-aht; my long-time friend and scholar Dr. Nancy Turner from the University of Victoria; my new friend Graham Saayman, with whom I have had, and continue to have, several discussions concerning indigenous issues of mutual concern in South Africa and Canada; as well as to my brother and illustrator, ʕiismiik. Early drafts were edited by Robert Lewis and sympathetic feedback was provided by colleagues from the University of Manitoba – Yatta Kanu, Jon Young, and John Wiens.

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Introduction

Haw'ihume, Wealthy Mother Earth, the home of biodiversity, is currently under abnormal duress. Her immediate problem is a global warming that has produced a "dis-ease" evident in her convulsions in the form of violent storms and earthquakes. Other threats to Haw'ihume and her inhabitants include, but are not limited to, a looming energy crisis, rampant diseases, the possibility of nuclear war, and terrorism. What has gone wrong?

It doesn't seem that long ago when certain people spread throughout the world carrying the good news about civilization and the promise of a better life. In 1860, during the time of my great-great-grandfather Haw'ih Nucmiis, it was the Englishman Gilbert Sproat who, out on the westernmost edge of Canada, promised Haw'ih Shewish of the Tsashaht peoples: "The white man will give you work." To which Shewish replied: "Ah, but we don't care to do as the white men wish ... We wish to live as we are."¹

The interpretation of what happened after this typical encounter has now become a global issue. On the side of Gilbert Sproat are those who admire contemporary civilization for its many astonishing accomplishments in numerous fields, including medicine, communications, transportation, and technology. On the side of Haw'ih Shewish are the growing number of scholars concerned that Haw'ihume, Wealthy Mother Earth, is showing distressing signs of ill health. These may yet prove, in some currently unknown way,² to be the dark side of civilization's astonishing accomplishments.

These astonishing accomplishments are based on proven methods, which are not in dispute. Even the scientific origin story, which can be simplified into three steps – bang,³ evolution, and here we are – cannot, from a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective, be an issue. This is because, typically, indigenous peoples are allowed to have their own individual perspective on

creation and the nature of reality. To the traditionally oriented Nuuchahnulth, different perspectives on creation are not a source of disagreement, confusion, or conflict; rather, they are a source of enrichment. Faced with an incomprehensible and mysterious creation, the ancient Nuuchahnulth came to believe that their ability to comprehend it, both ontologically and epistemologically, was so comparatively insignificant as to make hegemony a concept with no basis in reality. Who could begin to pretend to know and understand creation? Even the most powerful, the most gifted were perceived within a context that assumed their insignificance. One of many consequences of this ancient view of reality is that each person and each family were free to experience for themselves the nature of creation without being subjected to hegemonic coercion. For example, my grandmother Mary Little said emphatically: “Our stories are true!” This even though each had its own version, its own view, and its own perspective. Yet, each version of a story proved to be a reliable guide to living because, from the beginning, the method of testing the truth of each story generally consistently resulted in all basic needs (such as food, clothing, housing, and a measure of security) being met.

At this juncture of global history Hāw’ihome and most of her inhabitants do not enjoy the better life that was promised at the onset of colonial rule. The very foundations of the promise of civilization appear to be crumbling. Consequently, there is a suspicion that the main origin story provided by the dominant peoples of the globe, who have prevailed for the past five hundred years, may be contributing to our current global crisis. Do contemporary thinkers and scholars say with confidence, as my Granny Mary said of Nuuchahnulth stories, that the foundations of civilization are reliable? Some scholars do but others do not. The main storyline attributed to Charles Darwin has many variations, ranging from the purely biological to the socio-cultural to the evolution of consciousness; however, from its very inception the theory of evolution has been controversial.

For the Nuuchahnulth and other indigenous peoples around the world the full title to Darwin’s work – *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* – had unfortunate implications. All the more so because Darwin’s

ideas remain influential to this day. It is often said that Darwin is misunderstood, but history is clear regarding the interpretation given to the phrase “favoured races”: those of European origin were placed over those of non-European origin. Based on this storyline, it was necessary, in the words of one missionary in 1632, “to wean [indigenous peoples] from the habits and thoughts of their ancestors” and to replace these “with the acquirements of the language, arts, and customs of civilized life.”⁴ Regardless of whether or not Darwin’s theory is misunderstood, in part or in whole, there is no question that the notion of “favoured races” translated into European hegemony over the rest of the world’s peoples.

Unknown to Darwin, while he was busy developing his theory, sophisticated human societies had already evolved in various parts of the world – for example, in both Africa⁵ and the Americas – centuries before the emergence of the general practice and culture of science. Charles C. Mann’s 2005 publication *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* argues:

Today we know that technologically sophisticated societies arose in Peru first – the starting date, to archaeologists’ surprise, keeps getting pushed back. Between 3200 and 2500 BC, large scale public settlements on the Peruvian coast – an extraordinary efflorescence for that time and place. When the people of the Norte Chico were building these cities, there was only one other urban complex on earth: Sumer.⁶

Had Darwin been open to the possibility of the existence of sophisticated human societies other than those found in Europe he may have been less inclined to use the phrase “favoured races” in the title of his book. The fact that an awareness that “technologically sophisticated societies arose” in the Americas in advance of European development has only recently come to light means that indigenous lifeways and knowledge systems *remain relatively unknown and unacknowledged*. Instead, indigenous peoples have been better known through such stereotypes as the Noble Savage, which, Mann explains, dates back to the 1530s, when it is found in the writing of Bartolomé de Las Casas.⁷ However, in my view, the widely read letters of

the explorer Amerigo Vespucci, a contemporary of Christopher Columbus, likely did more to excite the European imagination regarding the indigenous peoples of the Americas than anything else.⁸ These letters may have influenced Enlightenment thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose work continues to be a subject of study. He imagined that the peoples of the Americas were instinctively childlike. As though to emphasize the continuing force of Rousseau's ideas on this subject, Mann notes: "In our day, beliefs about Indians' inherent simplicity and innocence refer mainly to their putative lack of impact on the environment."⁹

Since I have a culturally specific perspective on traditional Nuuchahnulth lifeways, which is derived from lived experience and is completely unlike the perspective that resulted in the negative stereotypical views of indigenous peoples imagined during the colonial era, I have to assume that the latter views are distortions. If they are not distortions, then how did my people come to know how to live in such a way as to inspire my Granny Mary to say with confidence: "Our stories are true!"? Not only did the Nuuchahnulth way of life provide every community member with the basic necessities of food, shelter, and clothing, but it also provided a rich cultural tradition of winter ceremonies that included stories, songs, oratory, exchanges of different kinds of gifts, dances, and feasting (some of which continue, in modified form, to the present day). How could ancient Nuuchahnulth know that, underlying the apparent inertness of much of physical reality, there is a dynamic, living world? How did they come to live, albeit not always successfully, as though personal and community well-being is dependent on, and must be inclusive of, all reality, including water, land, plants, animals, humans, and, indeed, anything that seems to be alive? How did they come to live as though there is a greater reality *beyond the surface of things*? Why is it that they considered empirically knowable reality to be an incomplete, sometimes even an unreliable, source of information?

These are difficult questions, and any answers that are contained in this book must be considered emergent and incomplete, which is to say *q^waasasa iš*, meaning "just the way it is" (in this case referring to the nature of the human condition). To the ancient Nuuchahnulth, and within the *łakišpiil* (big house) into which I was born, to say *q^waasasa iš* was not to

affect a false sense of humility but to acknowledge the natural place of the human within a universe characterized primarily by mystery, which, in turn, posed a necessary challenge to growth and maturation. The natural place of the *quuʔas* (human) within a universe characterized primarily by mystery formed a significant part of the personal identity of ancient Nuu-chah-nulth. Mystery is needed to challenge the life-long process of growth and development – in body, soul (character), and spirit.

A glimpse into how the ancient Nuu-chah-nulth may have learned to negotiate this mystery is found in my first book, *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. This is, necessarily, only a glimpse since the topic is the nature of reality, most of which remains unclear, obscure, and unknown, in spite of the fact that ideas about human knowledge systems fill large libraries. In *Tsawalk* I use the story of Son of Raven and his quest for the light to illustrate indigenous story-as-theory and its method of knowledge acquisition. This work expands on that glimpse into ancient Nuu-chah-nulth life and elaborates on story as theory and vision quest as method. Origin stories that serve the purpose of theory can illustrate, or model, the nature of reality. “Model,” in this usage, is like a parable that can illustrate certain truths about life, requiring reflection in order to penetrate various levels of meaning. For example, in the story of Son of Raven, it is not immediately clear that it contains clues regarding how to appropriately perform a *?uusumč* (vision quest). Nor is it clear that success in the venture to capture the light can be interpreted as a natural order of creation, or *qua*, which implies intent. The character who owns the light is the Head Wolf among a sacred community of wolves. One Nuu-chah-nulth name for the Creator is *Ķʷaaʔuuc*, Owner of All. Thus, it may be deduced that the Head Wolf in the story is *Ķʷaaʔuuc*.

Gradually, from the time of beginnings, from the time of Son of Raven, over millennia, after a long and difficult struggle, the Nuu-chah-nulth developed a way of life that served, for the most part, to meet all their basic needs. This ancient way of life lacked the marvels of contemporary technology (such as the computer and other advanced methods of communication and transportation), all of which are made possible by that powerful tool of science known as the reductionist method, whereby reality, for purposes of investigation, is reduced to one or two variables. However, in the

context of today's global crisis, an examination of the ancient Nuu-chah-nulth way of life may have something useful to contribute. The ideas and practices associated with it may not have been clearly understood or always successfully practised, but they can now begin to be articulated within a general framework that I discuss under several rubrics (such as constitutionalism, philosophy, worldview, political science, and even psychology), all of which come together under the general heading "Principles of *Tsawalk*."

With the onset of colonization, set off in 1492 by Columbus's search for a trade route to the East, the Nuu-chah-nulth, along with other indigenous peoples, experienced what Nigerian author Chinua Achebe describes in his novel *Things Fall Apart*.¹⁰ Eventually, everywhere indigenous ways of life fell apart. The colonial project, in line with evolutionary theory, intended to create a better way of life in the world. The Englishman, Gilbert Sproat, indicated as much in 1860 when speaking to the Tseshaht chief, Shewish.

Today, the experience of things falling apart has become a global phenomenon, particularly with respect to two crises: (1) humanity's relationship with humanity and (2) humanity's relationship with the environment. The global reaction to the latter crisis has been identified by environmentalist-author Paul Hawken as "the largest movement in the world."¹¹ It is a movement in which ordinary people are not waiting for government or state action, nor are they waiting for philosophical answers. As more and more peoples witness their homelands threatened or destroyed (as is currently happening in the Republic of Maldives and in the village of Shishmaref, Alaska), they cannot afford to wait any longer.

Recently, during the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami that hit Asia, a news cameraperson filmed an Indonesian woman as she wailed: "What did we do wrong?" This cry of despair carries within it the assumption that humans and nature are intimately linked. It is as though there is one whole, within which the action of one part (the human) is related to the reaction of the other part (nature). Because an intimate connection is assumed and understood in this woman's cry, we hear no disconnect between the power of the tsunami and the living of her daily life. There is no assumption that what is happening is the result of some random process; rather, all things and all events are understood to be interrelated and interconnected.

Did the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples believe in the same kind of connections between human activities and natural phenomena as those clearly indicated by the cry of the Indonesian woman? I called my Aunt Trudy to talk about it. “Yes,” she said, “we used to have songs to sing to the earth.” That was enough for me. There remains today an indigenous understanding that humans and the environment are causally linked. Does this mean that some humans are intractably superstitious? Or does it mean that these ancient belief systems represent a plausible way of viewing reality? There is as yet no scientific proof to confirm the belief implicit in the words of the Indonesian woman, but scientists now think that the universe is a unified whole made up of energy. This does not prove a causal relationship, but it is highly suggestive of the unity of reality.

How humans integrate themselves with nature is part of the current scientific debate about climate change. But for hundreds of millions of indigenous people around the world, as for the Indonesian woman, there is no debate. Humans, ancient indigenous peoples believed, are not only an integral part of the environment but also play a prominent role in it. For most of those schooled in the scientific paradigm, however, the debate about climate change can be intense. Some in this camp believe that technology, although it contributed to the environmental devastation of the planet, will also contribute to its salvation. In other words, they believe that, as technology advances, it will be able to resolve every environmental issue, including climate change. This book is one attempt to contribute to the beginnings of an alternative answer. It does so by suggesting a form of constitutionalism that includes within its framework both humans and other life forms.

In the aforementioned story of Son of Raven, K^waa[?]uuc the Creator kept the light in a box called *Huupak^wan[?]um*. The *Huupak^wan[?]um* is a symbolic representation of a way of life, embodying the supreme constitution for all life forms. This explains why a Nuu-chah-nulth *tyee Haw[?]il* (head chief) would have a *Huupak^wan[?]um*. The metaphor of “light” is both easy to understand and a complete mystery. From this metaphor, upon which an entire way of life can be based, there arose beliefs and practices that I refer to as *Hahuulism* and that can now be articulated as an emergent form of contemporary constitutionalism.

Although the contents of *Huupak^wan'um* must remain unutterable (except as illuminated by metaphor), there is a need for a way of life that derives directly from this light. The quest for this light, made allegorically manifest in the story of Son of Raven, provided the ancient Nuu-chah-nulth with an appropriate way to negotiate reality. They found that this light enabled and illuminated as many lifeways and points of view as there are life forms without their society, dissolving into innumerable fragments. Thus, the Salmon people, the Bear people, the Eagle people, the Wolf people, the Cedar people, the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples, the Salish peoples, the Haida peoples, the European peoples, the African peoples, and the Asian peoples all have their own ways of life, their own points of view, their own written or unwritten constitutions. Is it possible, then, to begin to develop protocols such that all life forms may begin to enjoy a degree of well-being? This book attempts to begin an answer.

1

Wikiiš ča?miihta

Things Are Out of Balance,

Things Are Not in Harmony

On an ABC television news channel in March 2007, there appeared a documentary by the news anchorman Terry Moran.¹ For this documentary, Moran travelled from the contiguous United States to the tiny northern Alaskan village of Shishmaref, which is situated beside the Chuckchi Sea and north of the Bering Strait, just thirty-two kilometres from the Arctic Circle. The occasion for this trip was to investigate reports that an Alaskan village was being threatened by the effects of global warming. One can imagine that the only cultural memory of these Inupiaq people, who have lived in this area for millennia, must be one of a world covered in snow and ice for most of the year. Now it seems that the balance of ice and snow is shifting so as to affect both weather patterns and shoreline patterns.

The documentary shows a local man outdoors cutting meat and filling an old oil drum with snow. The oil drum sits on a large fire that appears determined to burn in spite of a prevailing breeze. Moran asks: “What are you cooking?”

“I got some fish and I got some seal meat.”

Nayokpuk, the cook, explains that something funny is happening to the weather. Even though the surrounding environment seems covered with the ice and cold of winter, this is a deception. This year, in January, the weather is so warm that it is like springtime.

John Sinnock, a teacher of carving and traditional crafts at the Shishmaref School,² explains: “The ocean ice has been getting a lot thinner. It isn’t as thick as it used to be. And it goes away much faster now than it did in the past when we were kids. In front of my mother’s house, we used to look out at the gentle slope. In my life time we’ve probably lost about 400 feet.” This kind of climate change in Alaska, where the fierce storms off the sea

now last much longer than they used to because temperature increases have been so great over the past fifty years, means that the village of Shishmaref is gradually being destroyed. It now appears inevitable that the community must move to a safer location if it is to survive. The documentary concludes with questions for the high school students:

“How many of you want to leave your village?” Not a single hand goes up.

“How many of you want to stay?” They all do, although one or two do not seem to be sure, so they give in to peer pressure and put up their hands.

“Why do you want to stay?” The students answer that the village is their home, that life in the village contains all of their memories, that the village is their life.

Out on the west coast of Vancouver Island, some 2,414 kilometres south of the Alaskan village, I recall my attachment to my own community of Ahousaht, which is, like Shishmaref, completely isolated. Urban people often find it difficult to understand why anyone would want to live in these kinds of places. Can they really be telling the truth when people say that they do not want to leave?

During my residential school experiences in Port Alberni, it was common for everyone to want desperately to get back home. What is it that created that longing for home, regardless of its location? What is meant today when people speak of the “comforts of home”? For Aboriginal children in residential schools, the comforts of home did not refer to technological progress, the convenience of running water, indoor plumbing, dishwashers, washing machines, televisions, radios, computers, and iPods. No, the comforts of home for Aboriginal children have, until recent history, always been associated with the pre-eminence of relationships within the context and dynamics of place.

For example, from the perspective of my Nuu-chah-nulth heritage, living in community is not taken for granted because reality’s inherent potential for creativity and destruction is accepted as natural.³ The tension between creation and destruction is taken as *qua*, that which is, a given condition or state that translates into creative or destructive lifeways. Although life can at times be peaceful and pleasant, it can also be brutal,

violent, conflicted, and destructive. It is for this reason that the sacred *łuuk^waana*⁴ (remembrance ceremony) was created. The Nuu-chah-nulth believed that, in order to maintain community, in order to maintain a semblance of balance and harmony between beings,⁵ people needed to be periodically reminded to be vigilant. The *łuuk^waana* can be considered a preventive measure performed by the community to appease the corrosive forces of reality. This preventive measure led to the common practice of *t'apswiis*, which is a form of early training for the *ʔuusumč*. This involved little children of around four years old running down to the beach before breakfast to dive into the ocean. *T'apswiis* was the first stage of training for the more rigorous *ʔuusumč*.

Diving into the cold waters of the ocean was a pleasant experience because it was always accompanied by the approval of the entire extended family. It also represented the kindergarten version of *haaḥuupa* (teachings) that were similar to contemporary mores and laws. Even during this earliest training and learning, Nuu-chah-nulth children participated in a community that went beyond the walls of their respective houses. Children ran naked down to the beach and touched the earth, clothed only by air, sometimes covered in early morning sunlight, and then were completely immersed in water.

The challenge of living in community also meant – unlike today's constitutionalism, which concerns itself primarily with human rights – the struggle to live in balance and harmony with all life forms, including a living earth that was known as *Ḥaw'itume*. The final syllable of this word, *ume* (pronounced oom-ee), means “mother.” The word *Ḥaw'it* has always been translated as “chief,” but it also means wealthy. According to this usage, wealth is always inextricably bound to spiritual power. Consequently, a wealthy *quuʔas* is any person, any life form, any being who has access to spiritual power. *Ḥaw'itume*, or Wealthy Mother Earth, is a *quuʔas* of great spiritual power who, at our current point in history, is under great duress. For the people of Shishmaref, this duress means a gradual destruction of their homeland.

Like the Nuu-chah-nulth, the people of Shishmaref have a legacy of *himwiča* (or storytelling). Their stories are about their land, which is full of

their own histories, about the great exploits of their grandparents and the great discoveries of their first peoples. It seems that all indigenous peoples have songs, dances, and ceremonies that accompany their stories. And always they have something that Nuu-chah-nulth call *tupati*,⁶ or the empirical demonstration of spiritual power. It is this attachment to the land, Ḥaw'ihume, represented by stories, songs, dances, and ceremonies, together with a contemporary history, that is bound up with the deep and powerful sense of home felt by the Shishmaref students.

A news documentary cannot convey this kind of importance-of-place in a segment of five to ten minutes. From the perspective of the Alaskan village people, how can high school children articulate the rich social, political, economic, and spiritual heritage that is at once personal in terms of identity, communal in terms of shared historical experiences, and concrete in terms of a land base that has, until recently, provided them with a secure living? The answer is that they cannot; however, in addition, it must not be assumed that their attachment to an isolated place also means that they are unaware of trends in the larger world. Can children, regardless of whether they are urban or rural, be aware of conditions external to their social environment?

Yes, educational research conducted across a wide spectrum of urban/rural schools in the British Columbia school system found that even children in Grade 4 can be aware of external societal trends.⁷ And I have little doubt that, if the ABC news anchorman had asked these Alaskan high school students whether they understood why their village was being destroyed, they would all have shown themselves to be conscious of climate change.

The Shishmaref experience provides one example of an issue that has become a global concern. Unless the current progression of climate change is altered, the island nation of the Maldives, to take another example, may eventually disappear under a rising ocean:

To visit the Maldives is to witness the slow death of a nation. For as well as being blessed with sun-kissed paradise islands and pale, white sands, this tourist haven is cursed with mounting evidence of an environmental

catastrophe. To the naked eye, the signs of climate change are almost imperceptible, but government scientists fear the sea level is rising up to 0.9 cm a year. Since 80% of its 1,200 islands are no more than 1m above sea level, within 100 years the Maldives could become uninhabitable.⁸

Of course, one of the difficulties of the issue of climate change is inherent to the very nature of climate. There have been, over large geologic time scales, natural climate changes during which ice ages have alternated with warming ages. Even within the cultural memory of the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples, there is the knowledge that west coast weather went through a very cold period some two hundred years ago and a balmy period some one hundred years ago. However, the scale of these more recent fluctuations did not threaten life on the planet in the same way that Shishmaref and the Maldives are threatened today.

Another difficulty to add to the dialogue about the threat of climate change to life on earth is made worse by members of a community of scholars who are willing to compromise sound research principles in exchange for money. The Canadian Association of University Teachers, a national voice for university teachers, recently promoted a book about psychopharmacology that illustrates this compromise of research integrity. Professor of Medicine David Healy writes:

In any area of science, dominant paradigms exert an influence. However, as psychoanalysis demonstrated, when a science has a commercial basis, those who make a living out of one point of view seem less likely to tolerate dissent than is normal in the rest of science. In psychopharmacology the trinkets and junkets of influence are an obvious part of the culture ... Responsible adults recognize that even university departments are businesses these days and that practitioners are heavily influenced by the government and third-party payers in addition to pharmaceutical companies.⁹

According to a group in the United Kingdom called Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR), the primary research of corporate scientists has a

commercial basis.¹⁰ In a speech given to SGR on 13 March 2004, Dr. Stuart Parkinson outlined in some detail the increasing influence of corporations on science and technology. For example, in the United Kingdom the amount of research dollars that corporations now spend on their own scientists is more than twice what universities spend. Not only do corporations have their own scientists on their payrolls, but they also fund research and development at universities. One of the unfortunate consequences of this is that scientific and ethical principles may often be compromised. The “trinkets and junkets of influence” become “an obvious part of the culture,” and scientific research that strives to reveal “truths” is negatively affected. The public is confused between those scientists who seek to satisfy their corporate sponsors and those who sincerely seek to investigate climate change. For example, Al Gore points out that, in 2006, the Union of Concerned Scientists, which is based in the United States, reported that “ExxonMobil [had] funnelled nearly \$16 million between 1998 and 2005 to a network of 43 advocacy organizations that seek to confuse the public on global warming science.”¹¹

In opposition to those influenced by corporate interests are those who have become part of a global movement that Paul Hawken – environmentalist, author, and journalist – refers to as providing “blessed unrest.”¹² Since it has no overarching leader or structure, it is a movement that is immune from corporate influence. Hawken explains:

These ... individuals ... are part of a coalescence comprising hundreds of thousands of organizations. It claims no special powers and arises in small discrete ways, like blades of grass after a rain. The movement grows and spreads in every city and country ... The movement can't be divided because it is so atomized ... It forms, dissipates, and then regathers quickly, without central leadership, command, or control ... It has been capable of bringing down governments, companies, and leaders through witnessing, informing, and massing ... Picture the collective presence of all human beings as an organism. Pervading that organism are intelligent activities, humanity's immune response to resist and heal the effects of political corruption, economic disease, and ecological

degradation, whether they are the result of free-market, religious, or political ideologies ... The movement has three basic roots: environmental activism, social justice initiatives, and indigenous cultures' resistance to globalization, all of which have become intertwined.¹³

Although the phenomenon of “blessed unrest” is primarily a grassroots movement of people from every culture and continent, it may also represent a natural self-organizing principle free of any coercive hegemonic ideology. The philosophy suggested by “blessed unrest” is that creation is not governed by random selection but by something else. David C. Korten, an economist with a background in psychology who works out of Stanford University, explained in an interview with the *Sun* (magazine) that he came to a new understanding of living systems that presents a view of reality that differs from that proposed by Charles Darwin:

When I was first looking for a model for a new economics, I looked to biological systems for the needed organizing principles. Our conventional understanding of living systems is the Darwinian theory of ruthless competition. Modern biologists, however – particularly female biologists such as Janine Benyus, Mae-Wan Ho, Lynn Margulis, and Elisabet Sahtouris – have discovered that living systems are fundamentally cooperative. Obviously there are competitive dimensions; Darwin didn't make that part up. But life can exist only in cooperative, sharing relationships with other life. Energy is constantly flowing back and forth among organisms, just as it is among the cells of a single organism.¹⁴

Self-organization appears to be a universal principle applicable to all levels and dimensions of reality, from the molecular to the cosmic. Each cell in the human body works on the principle of self-organization without taking coercive direction from any specific organ, yet the well-being and health of the whole is the apparent goal. This is a scientific interpretation of a healthy system such as that found in a well-balanced and harmonious human body. When Korten says that “life can exist only in cooperative, sharing relationships with other life,” he is describing a healthy, sustainable system. For

humans, it has been, to date, an insurmountable challenge to integrate the *competitive dimensions* of reality with the *cooperative dimensions* – a process that appears necessary for sustained life.

In addition to this global environmental movement, there are thoughtful observers, scholars, and scientists who are concerned about the underlying causes of our planetary crisis. For example, author and social critic James Howard Kunstler identifies economic theory and its practice as one source that contributes to the problem:

The free-market part of the equation referred to the putative benefit of unrestrained economic competition between individuals, and because corporations enjoyed the legal status of persons, they were assumed to be on an equal footing with other persons in a given locality. Thus, Wal-Mart was considered the theoretical equal of Bob the appliance store owner, and if Bob happened to lose in the retail competition because he couldn't order 50,000 coffee-makers at a crack from a factory 12,000 miles away in Hangzhou, and receive a deep discount for being such an important customer, well, it wasn't as though he hadn't been given the chance.¹⁵

“Economic competition” is the business equivalent of Darwin's notion of “survival of the fittest.” The economic inequity between Wal-Mart's owners and Bob appears to be sanctioned by a prevailing scientific story. In keeping with this scientific view of reality, Kunstler relates an insider story about the attitude of corporate executives towards their role in life:

Colin Campbell, an oil geologist who has worked for many of the leading international oil companies, including BP (British Petroleum), put it this way: ... “It's not their job to look after the future of the world. Their directors are in the business to make money, for themselves primarily and for their shareholders when they can ... It's over! It's finished! And how can BP or Shell and the great European companies stand up and say, well, sorry, the North Sea is over? It's a kind of shock they don't wish to make. It's not evil, or there's no great conspiracy, or anything. It's just

practical daily management. We live in a world of imagery and public relations and they do it fairly well, I'd say."¹⁶

It appears that the theory of evolution and its notion of *survival of the fittest* may be reflected in the behaviour of some corporations. *It's not their job to look after the world.* In turn, the overwhelmingly competitive edge enjoyed by powerful corporations over individually owned businesses continues to result in devastation to the environment. In addition to these justifications for environmental destruction, there is also the fact of its amoral nature. David Korten, who spent five years on the faculty of the Harvard Business School, writes in his book *The Great Turning*:

Professors of law and businesses commonly teach their students that bringing ethical considerations into corporate decision making is unethical, as it may compromise the bottom line and unjustly deprive shareholders of their rightful return. It is a rather perverse moral logic ... Consequently, under current US law, the publicly traded limited-liability corporation is prohibited from exercising the ethical sensibility and moral responsibility normally expected of a natural-born, emotionally mature human adult. If it were a real person rather than an artificial legal construction, we would diagnose it as sociopathic.¹⁷

As Korten's book is entitled *The Great Turning*, it should be noted that there is some hope that what is taught in business schools will change from an insistence that ethics in corporate decision making is unethical to an insistence that ethics performs a necessary function in the business world.

Although some aspects of the issues around climate change are subject to debate, others are already historical fact. In addition to scientific predictions about the limits of the oil supply,¹⁸ which is fundamental to the maintenance of a technological civilization, there is, within local memories, widespread knowledge about the impact of climate change.

On the East Coast of Canada the cod fishery has collapsed, while on the West Coast the same can be said for the wild-stock salmon fishery. When I was a little boy, the inner harbour of my village seemed crowded with at

least thirty boats that were licensed to fish continuously for six months of the year. As of 2009, that number is reduced to four or five that are licensed to fish for one or two days of the year. Roy Haiyupis, a distant uncle of mine, now deceased, served on the Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel from 1993 to 1995. He recalled a certain bay in our traditional territory that was so full of sockeye that the collective sound they made when they finned and broke the surface of the water was like the sharp impact of a rifle. (Here, Roy would clap his hands together and, at the same time, say, “BOOM!”) The rivers, bays, and estuaries that once produced salmon abundantly are now silent.

The United Nations Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, articulated the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was then followed by other agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and Agenda 21. Each of these conventions is explained in the report prepared by the Scientific Panel.¹⁹ The panel was one initiative by one province in one country (out of at least 160 countries that were concerned with the earth’s environment). It arose as a result of concern about the depletion of coastal temperate rain forests, which comprise only 0.02 percent of the earth’s land mass. Fully one-quarter of the earth’s rain forests are found in British Columbia, including Clayoquot Sound, which is within my home territory. Besides a diverse range of scientists, the panel included three Nuu-chah-nulth elders and one Nuu-chah-nulth academic who, together, could represent traditional ecological knowledge. Like the people of Shishmaref, who possess lived-experience of climate change and its impacts on their village, the three Nuu-chah-nulth elders were, with their collective lived-experiences, able to add to the growing global knowledge base about the devastation that human activity is causing to the environment.

As a co-chair of the Scientific Panel, I was able to see and witness, in the micro-world of BC environmental politics, a reflection of the conflict in the macro-world of the global scientific community. In one confidential meeting with high government officials, the co-chairs were explicitly requested to rubber-stamp extant government forest-practice policies. We refused. We said to them that, as a government, they should take the “heat” in the short term because it was certain that any panel recommendations would severely limit clear-cut forestry practices, which might not be popular. But

they were assured that, in the long term, they would receive recognition for doing the right thing. How does this story reflect the current scientific debate about global warming?

First of all, the BC government's forestry policy and practice is based on stumpage fees. Since most of the forest area is on Crown land, the government is able to collect revenue from forest companies through a tree-farm licence system. The more trees that are cut, the more revenue there is for the government. Prosperity depends on clear-cutting the forests. As stated in earlier testimony by Colin Campbell, the only business of corporations is to make money for its shareholders and for its executives. It appears that what people and corporations want is in conflict with the environment's need for sustainability.

How Much Can Humans Know about Reality?

In terms of lifespan, humans have a recorded history of some five thousand years, but the physicist Frank K. Tipler estimates that, in terms of geologic ages, the universe is 20 billion years old and will likely exist for more than another 100 billion years.²⁰ Since physicists find no distinction between the nature of past, present, and future, our state of knowledge about the whole of this reality must necessarily be comparatively young and incomplete. What may eventually become clear about our "state of knowledge" is that humans, in our current stage, can know very little in comparison to what is not known. With respect to contemporary scientific knowledge about the climate of the whole earth system, James Lovelace, author of more than two hundred scientific papers, declares that he finds it extraordinary, "given the depth of our ignorance," that "scientists are willing to put their names to predictions of climates up to fifty years from now and let them become the basis for policy."²¹ Here, Lovelace is referring to the work of more than one thousand scientists, from many different nations, who make up the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). One of the predictions the IPCC scientists made about the melting of Arctic ice does not match current rates of melt, which indicate that the Arctic may be ice-free during the summer within fifteen years rather than within fifty years.²² Of continuing concern is the fact that some scientific

predictions are routinely replaced by new findings and so their reliability is called into question. In other words, some of the scientific knowledge that humans claim to possess is inconsistent with reality. Moreover, non-scientists are expected to accept on faith much of what they are told by the scientific community. In the area of chemistry, biophysics, and other advanced scientific disciplines, as well as in the area of philosophical study, we, the general populace, live much as did illiterate people during the Dark Ages of Europe: we depend on the few to interpret for us the nature of “truths” and “realities.” Although the gap between the knowledge held by the general populace and the specialized knowledge held by today’s scholars remains large, this gap has been considerably narrowed through the common global experience of climate change. While complex and nuanced discussions by scientists and environmental philosophers are relevant and important, so, too, is this global experience of climate change. In other words, my proposition about human knowledge in the area of climate change is that both scholarly discourse and the global, experientially based knowledge movement (which is the direct result of climate change) are of equal importance. The global nature of climate change means that the subject cannot be the exclusive domain of scholars but, rather, through direct experience, includes a great variety of interest groups from every nation and culture.

While climate change remains a question among the scientific and scholarly community, it is not a question for those with direct (and threatening) experience of it. For the latter, the evidence for climate change is clear in its destruction of homelands, in its degradation of rivers that formerly spawned millions of salmon, and in its destruction of habitat with the consequent disappearance of many species. For the scientific and scholarly community, questions of climate change are purely theoretical, lacking any hope of concrete certainty. An immediate concern for this community is its credibility, which, unless it can demonstrate its pronouncements with practical outcomes, may eventually come into serious question.

The Prevailing Story that Guides the Current World Order

In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington, chair of the Harvard Academy for International and Area

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Studies, writes: “World views and causal theories are indispensable guides to international politics.”²³ For most of human existence, the “world order” has been characterized by little contact between peoples and cultures separated by a geography made vast by the primitive level of technology. Then, in 1500, beginning with the voyages of Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci, which led to global colonization, the world order became Western. Eventually, during the twentieth century, the West became bipolar: the Capitalist West versus the Communist East. Today, in the post-Cold War era, the world order has come to be defined by cultures or civilizations. Among all the stories represented by different cultures and civilizations, there is one that predominates. That is the story of the West, represented principally by the United States.

In her examination of the story of the West, Jean Shinoda Bolen, a clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California and a distinguished life fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, writes: “The mythology of a culture, in this case Western civilization, instructs us about the values, patterns, and assumptions on which this culture is based. When we stop to examine our mythological heritage, we may be enlightened or appalled by how much it is a metaphor for what exists in contemporary reality, how much our mythology is about us.”²⁴

In *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* I tell the story that guided my people until the Europeans arrived. The Europeans came with many stories of their own, but only one story provided an “indispensable guide” to understanding the current world order. This current world order, inasmuch as it has been created by the West, is a reflection of the “values, patterns, and assumptions” upon which it is based.

“It’s All a Question of Story”²⁵

So says Thomas Berry, adding:

We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story ... The Darwinian principle of natural selection involves no psychic or conscious purpose, but is instead a struggle for earthly survival that gives to the world its variety of form and function. Because this story presents the

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universe as a random sequence of physical and biological interactions with no inherent meaning, the society supported by this vision has no adequate way of identifying any spiritual or moral values.²⁶

It is all a question of story. Although there are several versions of the evolution narrative, Berry presents the predominant one, which continues to be taught in all mainstream curricula, from elementary schools through to postgraduate programs. Berry thinks that most of the earth's current problems have been influenced by this story, which continues to predominate. It is a story that, over the past five hundred years, has reflected the principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest, according to which the powerful prevail and the weaker are either destroyed or dominated. The natural outcome – politically, socially, and economically – is an unequal distribution of wealth and political goods, a process of imbalances and disharmonies that guarantees conflict.

Drawing on the most advanced findings of physics, Fritjof Capra, physicist and systems theorist, has this to say about why and how we have ended up with our current global problems:

My starting point for this exploration was the assertion that the major problems of our time – the threat of nuclear war, the devastation of our natural environment, our inability to deal with poverty and starvation around the world, to name just the most urgent ones – are all different facets of one single crisis, which is essentially a crisis of perception. It derives from the fact that most of us ... subscribe to the concepts and values of an outdated worldview, to a paradigm that is inadequate for dealing with the problems of our overpopulated, globally interconnected world.²⁷

Moreover, Capra points out that the current version of this scientific story

consists of a number of ideas and values, among them the view of the universe as a mechanical system composed of elementary building blocks, the view of the human body as a machine, the view of life as a competitive struggle for existence, the belief in unlimited material

progress to be achieved through economic and technological growth, and – last, but not least – the belief that a society in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male is one that is “natural.” During recent decades all of these assumptions have been found to be severely limited and in need of radical revision.²⁸

In other words, the main story no longer appears to support certain assumptions about the nature of reality and is thus “severely limited,” resulting in a “crisis of perception.”

The nineteenth-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche appears to have understood this “crisis of perception” when, in 1882, he wrote:

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market-place, and cried incessantly: “I am looking for God! I am looking for God!”

As many of those who did not believe in God were standing together there, he excited considerable laughter. Have you lost him, then? said one. Did he lose his way like a child? said another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? or emigrated? Thus they shouted and laughed. The madman sprang into their midst and pierced them with his glances. “Where has God gone?” he cried. “I shall tell you. We have killed him – you and I. We are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained the earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not perpetually falling? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing?”²⁹

On 8 April 1966, *Time Magazine*’s front page carried the question: “Is God Dead?” The issue of God’s existence remains as controversial now as it was in Nietzsche’s day.³⁰ Nietzsche’s narrative is exquisitely ironic: “How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained the earth from its sun?” Metaphorically, these abilities are God-like because they imply the capacity

to create or reorder the nature of the physical universe and, by so doing, to impose purpose and design on creation. For Nietzsche, then, it makes sense – in the context of this new order of creation as interpreted by science – to ask: “Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not perpetually falling? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing?”³¹

According to David B. Allison, Nietzsche declares that God is dead because: “His function as creator ... was replaced by another agency, namely, by *science*, and by another faith – the faith and belief in an omnipotent *technology*.”³² Erich Heller, in *The Importance of Nietzsche: Ten Essays*, writes: “The death of God he calls the greatest event in modern history and the cause of extreme danger. Note well the paradox contained in these words. He never said that there was no God, but that the eternal had been vanquished by Time and that the Immortal suffered death at the hands of mortals: God is dead.”³³ Walter Kaufmann, a German-American philosopher, maintains that, on the one hand, Nietzsche is misunderstood in the English-speaking world and, on the other, that Nietzsche can be contradictory. According to Nietzsche:

That we find no God – either in history or in nature or behind nature – is not what differentiates us, but that we experience what has been revered as God, not as “godlike” but as miserable, as absurd, as harmful, not merely as an error but as a *crime against life*. We deny God as God. If one were to *prove* this God of the Christians to us, we should be even less able to believe in him.³⁴

Although Nietzsche is famous for saying “God is dead,” the irony inherent in this statement seems to indicate that, in denying the existence of God, humans have cut themselves off from an important source of knowledge. This differs from the position of the early twentieth-century philosopher Clement C.J. Webb, who holds that civilization could not have begun until humans stopped believing in spiritual stories.³⁵ According to him, God and a belief in a spiritual reality are a barrier to knowledge.

Nietzsche's question is about who we are, about the nature of human existence, in the same way as is the scientific storyline. Thus, the interpretation of human nature can be approached from the perspective of the scientific story of evolution or from the perspective of the stories that preceded it. Riane Eisler, a cultural historian and evolutionary theorist, asks the following questions:

Why do we hunt and persecute each other? Why is our world so full of man's infamous inhumanity to man – and to woman? How can human beings be so brutal to their own kind? What is it that chronically tilts us toward cruelty rather than kindness, toward war rather than peace, toward destruction rather than actualization?

...

Yet, if we look at ourselves – as we are forced to by television or the grim daily ritual of the newspaper at breakfast – we see how capitalist, socialist, and communist nations alike are enmeshed in the arms race and all the other irrationalities that threaten both us and our environment. And, if we look at our past – at the routine massacres by Huns, Romans, Vikings, and the Assyrians or the cruel slaughters of the Christian Crusades and the Inquisition – we see there was even more violence and injustice in the smaller, prescientific, preindustrial societies that came before us ... Is a shift from a system leading to chronic wars, social injustice, and ecological imbalance to one of peace, social justice, and ecological balance a realistic possibility?³⁶

These are valid and timely queries. Why *is* this inhumanity an apparently “chronic” condition that seems to thrive today, regardless of ideological persuasion, the same way as it did in earlier times? Is change possible? Eisler is an evolutionist as well as a feminist and social scientist, and she believes that the current “male dominator” model can be changed. In 2007, she published *The Real Wealth of Nations*, in which she proposes one avenue of change: “Failing to include caring and caregiving in the economic models is totally inappropriate for the postindustrial economy, where the most important capital is what economists like to call *human capital*:

people.”³⁷ Eisler’s dissatisfaction with, and concern for, the human condition is echoed in the writings of Patricia Marchak, a sociologist, and Jerry Franklin, an ecosystem analyst, who observe:

We inherited a model of society in which all is subordinate to economic growth ... The economic model that has guided western [sic] society for several centuries offers no lasting basis for sustainability.

...

Perhaps the greatest challenges of all lie in the realm of the social contract. Old understandings seem to be null and void: who, today, would champion the traditional role of a professional “priesthood” entrusted with resource management? Who would turn to science and technology as the ultimate sources of wisdom?³⁸

If the “model of society” is one in which all is subordinated to “economic growth,” it is not surprising that this poses a great problem for the social contract. The economic model, based on free enterprise and, by extension, on natural selection and survival of the fittest, seems to have created not only an environmental crisis but also a social crisis, in which the wealthy become wealthier and the poor become poorer. The economic model does not fit the social contract and, in fact, seems to weaken and even destroy it. Since science and technology, in their very brief history, have contributed to the current environmental crisis and lack of renewable energy, and since no solutions to these problems have yet been presented, one must indeed ask: “Who would turn to science and technology as the ultimate sources of wisdom?”³⁹

Not the Story but Its Interpretation

In defence of the scientific enterprise, Richard A. Posner, a graduate of both Yale and Harvard, a prolific author, and now a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago, maintains:

But unlike science, metaphysics lacks agreed-upon criteria for the evaluation of its theories. As a result, in an open, diverse, competitive culture,

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the kind a pragmatist, being a Darwinian, tends to prefer, metaphysical disputation is interminable. This does not mean that the pragmatist “rejects” metaphysics. He rejects the possibility of establishing the truth of metaphysical propositions a priori; and it is in the nature of metaphysics that its propositions cannot be established empirically.

...

If, as his [Darwin’s] theory implied, man had evolved from some ape-like creature by a process of natural selection oriented toward improved adaptation to the challenging environment of earliest man, human intelligence was presumably adapted to coping with the environment rather than to achieving metaphysical insights that could have no adaptive value in the ancestral environment.⁴⁰

Posner’s view, then, is that metaphysics is beyond any hope of systematic investigation because its propositions cannot be established empirically and do not have any adaptive value when placed within a Darwinian evolutionary context. From this point of view, God’s death is irrelevant because science has no means of reliably investigating the issue.

The English environmentalist and author Jonathan Porritt thinks that the problem is not the scientific story but, rather, people’s interpretation of that story:

Populist interpretations of evolution, from Hebert Spencer and Thomas Huxley onwards, have accustomed people to the idea of nature being “red in tooth and claw,” with all life forms engaged in endless titanic struggles to ensure “the survival of the fittest.” So what could be more “natural” than the history of humankind (both before and after the Industrial Revolution) being cast in the same metaphorical framework? This rationale of social Darwinism has been taken up with unbounded enthusiasm by the politicians and academic economists most centrally involved in the new-liberal revolution of the last 25 years.⁴¹

When considered as a classical scientific paradigm, the theory of evolution is an accurate description of the workings of nature. Nature has every outward appearance of being “red in tooth and claw,” ensuring the survival of

the most savage and barbaric. The wolf and lion do take down and devour their quarry; the eagle does swoop silently and swiftly to kill its unsuspecting prey; the strongest animals do get to mate so that their genes can be passed to the next generation. These are all empirically observable and scientifically testable, and they form an important part of human knowledge. However, this knowledge base, as implied by Thomas Berry, also assumes that these animals exist without conscious purpose, that their actions are performed within a context of non-communication and non-relationships.⁴² It seems that Porritt's assertion that one of the causes of our global problems can be traced to "populist interpretations of evolution" must thus apply to the progress of human development and, by logical extension, to the social contract.

A Declaration of Triumph for Liberalism

Francis Fukuyama, professor of international political economy at Johns Hopkins University, presented the principles of liberty and equality that frame the social contract: "With the American and French revolutions, Hegel asserted that history comes to an end because the longing that had driven the historical process – the struggle for recognition – has now been satisfied in a society characterized by universal and reciprocal recognition. No other arrangement of human social institutions is better able to satisfy this longing, and hence no further progressive historical change is possible."⁴³ In other words, history comes to an end when the struggle between liberalism and other "isms" for political pre-eminence has been settled. To substantiate this claim, Fukuyama writes that, of "the different types of regimes that have emerged in the course of human history, from monarchies and aristocracies, to religious theocracies, to the fascist and communist dictatorships of this century, the only form of government that has survived intact to the end of the twentieth century has been liberal democracy."⁴⁴

If Hegel's notion is taken to refer to universal history, and if this notion of history is placed within an evolutionary context in which life is believed to be continuously evolving – from simple to complex, from barbaric to civilized – then the aftermath of the French and American revolutions should have led to a world in which it could be said, as does Fukuyama, that

“no further progressive historical change is possible.”⁴⁵ Humanity is evolving towards a general state of liberalism that will be expressed in many languages, in many cultures, and in many worldviews, all of which will provide a framework for the social contract, for an agreement on how people will live together.

However, according to Noam Chomsky, history seems not to have come to an end, for the relationship of the United States – the pre-eminent superpower on the planet – to the United Nations (and, indeed, to many individual nations), like its “war on terror,” is neither liberal nor democratic. Chomsky makes the following observations:

Among the most salient properties of failed states is that they do not protect their citizens from violence – and perhaps even destruction – or that decision makers regard such concerns as lower in priority than the short-term power and wealth of the state’s dominant sectors. Another characteristic of failed states is that they are “outlaw states,” whose leadership dismiss international law and treaties with contempt. Such instruments may be binding on others but not on the outlaw state.⁴⁶

Could it be argued that the *idea* of liberalism has triumphed but not necessarily the *practice* of liberalism? Can it be said that liberal states are characterized by an inability to protect their “citizens from violence” and even “destruction” or that such concerns are “lower in priority than short-term power and wealth”? Isn’t an “outlaw” state the very antithesis of liberalism? On the one hand, there is Fukuyama’s triumphant declaration that history has come to an end, and on the other hand, there is the United States, the most powerful liberal state, which, according to the basic principles of liberalism, is a “failed state.” At the same time as this failed state violates fundamental liberal principles, it also represents itself as the champion of democracy: “No one familiar with history should be surprised that the growing democratic deficit in the United States is accompanied by declarations of messianic missions to bring democracy to a suffering world. Declarations of noble intent by systems of power are rarely complete fabrication, and the same is true in this case.”⁴⁷ If Fukuyama’s declaration refers to the triumph of the principle of liberalism and Chomsky’s analysis

indicates failure in the practice of liberalism, then one may conclude (as do Posner, Eisler, and other scholars) that the ideas generated from the Age of Enlightenment (also known as the Age of Reason) are not incorrect but merely incomplete.

Samuel P. Huntington, an American political scientist now deceased, provides further insight into the notion of incompleteness from the perspective of US foreign policy: “Religiosity distinguishes America from most other Western societies. Americans are also overwhelmingly Christian, which distinguishes them from most non-Western peoples. Their religiosity leads Americans to see the world in terms of good and evil to a much greater extent than others do.”⁴⁸ If one of the most scientifically oriented and advanced states is also overwhelmingly Christian, perhaps the phenomena of “failed states” can be understood in terms of this apparent contradiction. Because the United States is an overwhelmingly Christian state with a declared moral mission, it presents itself to the world as a pre-eminent democratic role model, despite being, at the same time, a scientifically oriented state. In other words, accepted scientific theory is the story of who and what we, as humans, are, in the same way that Enlightenment ideas of liberalism is the story of what we think we are or should be. However, these stories are not in agreement with practice, and this is reflected in the foreign policy of the United States, where “short-term power and wealth” are given priority over principles of equality and freedom.

A Constitutional Issue

Apologists for and defenders of democracy and liberalism often reference two (*liberté, égalité*) of the three (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*) words that arose from the French Revolution and formed the basis of the French Constitution. Given the current conflicted state of the globe, the cry of *fraternité* appears to be just another Utopian and Enlightenment form of romanticism. Anthony J. Hall, founding coordinator of globalization studies at the University of Lethbridge, finds the contradiction between what is implied by *liberté, égalité, fraternité* and the current state of US foreign policy to have disturbing implications. According to Hall: “[In] mounting its War on Terrorism in the wake of the September 11, 2001, tragedies, the

regime of George W. Bush drew heavily on the evangelical impulse of the West's old civilizing mission ... to describe the real, illusory, or manufactured enemies of the American way of life."⁴⁹ Part of the problem is that the global conflicts involving the world's contemporary superpower appear remarkably similar to the conflicts that wrought so much destruction in the recent colonial era. To make this point, Hall draws on the specific wording of the US Declaration of Independence:

The War on Terrorism has deep roots in American history that cut far beneath the events of September 11. While the labels of the demonized other may have changed over time, the imagined attributes of the stigmatized foes of the American Dream have remained remarkably consistent since the era of the founding of the United States. In their very first act of self-justification, the founders carved out in 1776 a special category to encompass a class of humanity deemed bereft of inalienable rights, a class of people thought to embody such potential for unpredictable violence and anarchy that they were placed outside the assertions of equal rights proclaimed as the *raison d'être* of the revolutionary republic ... The War on Terrorism gave renewed force and legitimacy to prejudices similar to those that once induced the authors of the Declaration of Independence to refer to the Indigenous peoples of North America as "merciless Indian savages" ... From the beginning of this ascent, those distinct peoples who stood in the way of the United States' territorial ambitions were dehumanized and criminalized in the text of the Declaration of Independence.⁵⁰

Is it of any significance that, underlying the terminology of the twenty-first century, are meanings and constructs relating to the "other" that have their roots in the Enlightenment? On the one hand, from these roots come declarations of freedom; on the other hand, from these same roots come the dehumanization, criminalization, and enslavement of the peoples of an entire continent. This historical fact is so recent that its negative impact in the form of socio-economic dysfunctions within indigenous societies continues to the present day. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant asked rhetorically: "What is Enlightenment?" To which he replied: "Enlightenment

is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage."⁵¹ Kant then makes clear what he means by "man": "And then will not the European population in these colonies, spreading rapidly over that enormous land, either civilize or peacefully remove the savage nations who still inhabit vast tracts of its land?"⁵² Enlightenment ideas of freedom and equality were limited, which is one way of saying that they were incomplete.

It is difficult not to conclude that the manufacture of the current world order in terms of a "war on terror," in terms of "us" and "the other," derives directly from ideas developed during the Enlightenment. This war on terror appears to be the outcome of a colonial agenda, the point of which is to civilize the peoples of the world. Instead of freedom and equality there is global conflict.

A Human Development Metaphor

The psychologist Chellis Glendinning, who is also a pioneer eco-psychologist, questions the problems of humankind from a human development perspective: What is the presenting symptom that characterizes the current world order? Chellis declares that it is *separation and divisiveness*.⁵³

The context of human health in which the question is asked can be described in terms of three dimensions of consciousness. The first is the I-in-We dimension, which provides a necessary sense of belonging, security, trust, and faith in the world. Without this, children have been known to die. During the thirteenth century, the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II, wanted to determine humankind's original language, and he attempted to do this by ensuring that the children he was raising would never hear human speech. All the children died.⁵⁴ They were not allowed to experience the I-in-We dimension of consciousness.

In their discussion about love, three long-time collaborating psychiatrists, Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon, explain what happened to those children under the care of Frederick II:

But because human physiology is (at least in part) an open-loop arrangement, an individual does not direct all of his own functions. A second person transmits regulatory information that can alter hormone levels,

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cardiovascular function, sleep rhythms, immune function, and more – inside the body of the first. The reciprocal process occurs simultaneously: the first person regulates the physiology of the second, even as he himself is regulated. Neither is a functioning whole on his own; each has open loops that only somebody else can complete. Together they create a stable, properly balanced pair of organisms. And the two trade their complementary data through the open channel their limbic connection provides.⁵⁵

It seems that an *I* cannot develop and grow outside the context of a *We*. The second dimension of consciousness becomes possible as a direct result of a nurturing I-in-We environment. It is characterized by a struggle for healthy growth that results in a sense of personal integrity, a sense of value and worth, and a sense of purpose. Finally, the third dimension is the capacity to draw vision and meaning from non-ordinary states of consciousness. In terms of these three interrelated dimensions of consciousness, which complement each other and together make a unified whole, the presenting pathological symptom of the current world order is separation and divisiveness. This symptom, according to Chellis, can be traced back to at least the 1500s, when religious persecutions intensified into witch hunts. Hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women, mothers, and healers, were hanged, drowned, or burned in the town squares all across Europe.

Mass murders indicate a detachment from God-consciousness (a version of Nietzsche's "God is dead"), a separation of the human psyche from the compassion of soul and spirit. This psychic detachment and isolationism travelled to the Americas, where, given the previous practice and training in mass murder via the witch hunts, it produced a slaughter of numerous life forms – indigenous peoples, plants and forests, wildlife, and creatures of the sea – so immense that the pain of Ḥaw'itume, Wealthy Mother Earth, seems now no longer bearable.

If humankind is experiencing a crisis of perception, as Capra states, and a problem of recognition, as Fukuyama suggests, then another significant part of the problem may lie with the human capacity to attain a sense of superiority. George Soros, whose credentials in this area stem from his experience as a very successful businessman and stock investor, which made

him one of the world's richest people, writes: "Mankind's power over nature has increased cumulatively while its ability to govern itself has not kept pace."⁵⁶ He argues, moreover, that "the Age of Reason ought to yield to the Age of Fallibility. That would be progress."⁵⁷

Son of Raven would agree. It appears that technological progress has been equated to, and mistaken for, human development.

A Nuu-chah-nulth Perspective

With regard to the lived-experience of the Nuu-chah-nulth and our consequent perspective on global issues, it is an understatement to observe that the planet is confronted with a crisis of perception, a problem of recognition, and a question of story, or to observe that there may have to be some rethinking of the social contract. We are, after all, continuing to suffer the tragic consequences of contact. In 1860, the Englishman Gilbert Sproat promised H̄aw'it̄ Shewish of the Tseshaht people that the English were coming to improve the Nuu-chah-nulth way of life.⁵⁸ But a better quality of life for the Nuu-chah-nulth has not materialized.

I think that my great-grandfather Keesta, if asked about global issues, would thoughtfully comment that *wikiiš ča?miihta* (things are out of balance, things are not in harmony). This is a phrase that can refer to any part of creation, including people, forests, animals, and all other life forms – the river, estuary, inlet, or ocean. Within Nuu-chah-nulth culture, the idea of balance and harmony is derived from origin stories.

Each story typically illustrates an aspect or interpretation of the nature of reality. The story of Son of Raven indicates that all of reality, the physical and the non-physical, is a unity. In the language of quantum mechanics, *nothing is separate from anything else*. In *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth World-view*, I explain the trial-and-error process that Son of Raven and his community undergo in their struggle to secure the light. What becomes clear from this process is that they do not at first know that creation is a unity. Their first assumption, made clear by their methods, is to assume that the community of wolves that owns the light has no interest in sharing it. After several failures to secure the light, it is Wren, the one who always speaks

rightly, who provides the solution. It is a solution that I refer to as the *insignificant-leaf approach* or the *humble-stance approach* towards the non-physical or spiritual realm.

Origin stories help us to recognize that the unity of creation is diverse rather than hegemonic. Raven, Deer, Wren, and the entire diverse community of beings cooperate and work together, recognize each other, and practise the democratic principles of mutual consent and consensus building without compromising personal integrity. They are able to do this in spite of the fact that, on the surface, reality appears to consist of fragmentation, opposition, contradiction, and numerous mysteries and ambiguities. It was on the basis of this surface appearance that Son of Raven and his community first approached the Wolf community. They knew about the spiritual realm, that it was the domain of the Wolf community, even though they could not physically see it. And it was natural for them to assume that what could not be seen was separate from what could be seen.

The Nuu-chah-nulth discovery of the unity of all creation determines the nature of questions about the state of reality. Whereas scientists must ask why,⁵⁹ Nuu-chah-nulth peoples, confronted with the unutterable wonder of creation, are compelled to ask how? How does anyone describe the indescribable? How does one live and negotiate this creation? Since there definitely appears to be a kind of order, a method to the madness, how do we fit into the scheme of things? What can be said about those things that are forbidden to human knowledge systems, except to say that there are some *?uusumč* (vision quest) experiences of the non-physical that are not to be revealed, explained, or articulated? But how does one navigate what it is permissible to know? How does one balance and harmonize the disparate and contradictory elements of reality? How does this wondrous creation work?

In theory, the knowledge acquisition process of the *?uusumč*, which allowed the Nuu-chah-nulth to see beyond the purely physical reality of nature, also allowed them to discover that creation is a unity in spite of its apparent fragmented appearance and contradictory nature. For example, although deer, wolf, and salmon are scientifically classified as animals within the biological dimension of existence and therefore as separate from

humans, Nuu-chah-nulth peoples also know and experience these animals as *quu?as*, as people like themselves. The same is true of trees and the multitude of other life forms.

What this means is that Nuu-chah-nulth peoples had to find some way to live with these other *quu?as* who were recognized as life forms, as living beings who were originally part of one language and community. Until the arrival of Europeans on Nuu-chah-nulth shores, the task of achieving balance and harmony between various life forms – between wolf and deer, between Nuu-chah-nulth and salmon, and between Nuu-chah-nulth and Nuu-chah-nulth – had been hard won through the development of protocols. Living in balance and harmony with diverse life forms is one way of describing a mature ecosystem. This principle of balance and harmony is necessarily applied to every dimension of existence.

For example, the story of Son of Raven and his community can also be interpreted as the development of a protocol for dealing with the physical and the non-physical. It was learned that access to the storehouse of the non-physical realm can be achieved not via the egotistical approach but via the insignificant-leaf, or humble, approach. Insignificance here translates into both a moral dimension (defined as humility) and into a natural description of human identity in relation to an infinite universe. A natural identity, when realized and enacted, can also translate into a key capable of unlocking mysteries or capable, like a well-focused lens, of revealing that which is. Son of Raven indicated this natural identity when he became an insignificant leaf, which became the key to gaining access to the storehouse of the non-physical domain. This discovery of a natural identity enabled the process of growth and development towards a completeness-of-being known to psychology as maturation. Just as any mature ecosystem will attain balance and harmony between its different life forms, so, too, people may attain balance and harmony between the physical and non-physical domains. But only after a purposeful struggle and only after the key is found: without a key the alternative is imbalance and disharmony.

When an earthquake erupts it can create the suspicion of *wikiiš ča?miihta* (imbalance or disharmony). In other words, as a force indivisible from the rest of nature, an earthquake is a sign of imbalance and disharmony. It is for

this reason that the tsunami of 26 December 2004 elicited from that Indonesian woman the cry: “What did we do wrong?” In this cry, she recognizes the integration of human behaviour with the behaviour of the earth and its environment. These kinds of beliefs were labelled superstitious by early scientists and, perhaps, are so labelled by most contemporary scientists, although things may be slowly changing in some parts of the scientific community. For example, in a study of the discovery of the universal laws of advanced physics, Brian Greene notes:

Physicists describe these two properties of physical laws – that they do not depend on when or where you use them – as symmetries of nature. By this usage physicists mean that nature treats every moment in time and every location in space identically – symmetrically – by ensuring that the same fundamental laws are in operation. Much in the same manner that they affect art and music, such symmetries are deeply satisfying; they highlight an order and a coherence in the workings of nature.⁶⁰

The context for these symmetries is, of course, the quantum field that is present everywhere in space. These observations about the nature of our universe do not confirm the truth of the words of the tsunami victim who asked: “What did we do wrong?” But they do provide a sound theoretical basis, from a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective, for the view that, since there are universal symmetries with respect to physical laws, there may also be universal symmetries between the physical and the non-physical realms. Given this symmetry between the different domains of reality, there may be a direct relationship between the behaviour of people and the behaviour of the earth. Experiences derived from the *ʔuusumč* indicate that, since reality is a unity, what befalls one part of this unity must befall the whole.

The Nuu-chah-nulth worldview, in keeping with the utterance of the Indonesian tsunami victim, sees the cause of the global crisis in relational terms, in terms of a creation filled with mutually interdependent life forms that require mutually acceptable protocols in order to maintain balance and harmony. From this point of view, the global crisis is one of relational disharmony. One life form, the human, has critically disrupted the balance

between other life forms and systems: the animals, the air, the forests, and the seas. Ḥaw'ihume, Wealthy Mother Earth, like any wounded life form, now seems quite naturally to be in the throes of fighting back, of roaring in severe pain and anger, in response to the behaviour of the human life form.

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