



World Business Academy

Rekindling the Human Spirit in Business

VIEWPOINT

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Editor's note: Academy Fellow **Jim Channon** notes that the Academy needs to help kick-start the global voice of a new civilization that doesn't yet appreciate that it exists. "We should not be quiet and continue to allow obsolete ideologies with outdated worldviews to determine what is good for our new global civilization. We have already crossed the bridge!" We have simply become more of a global civilization than a collection of nations. Bigger things are going on than national governments. We have a new "whole" on our hands. **J.S.**

Responsibility for the Whole

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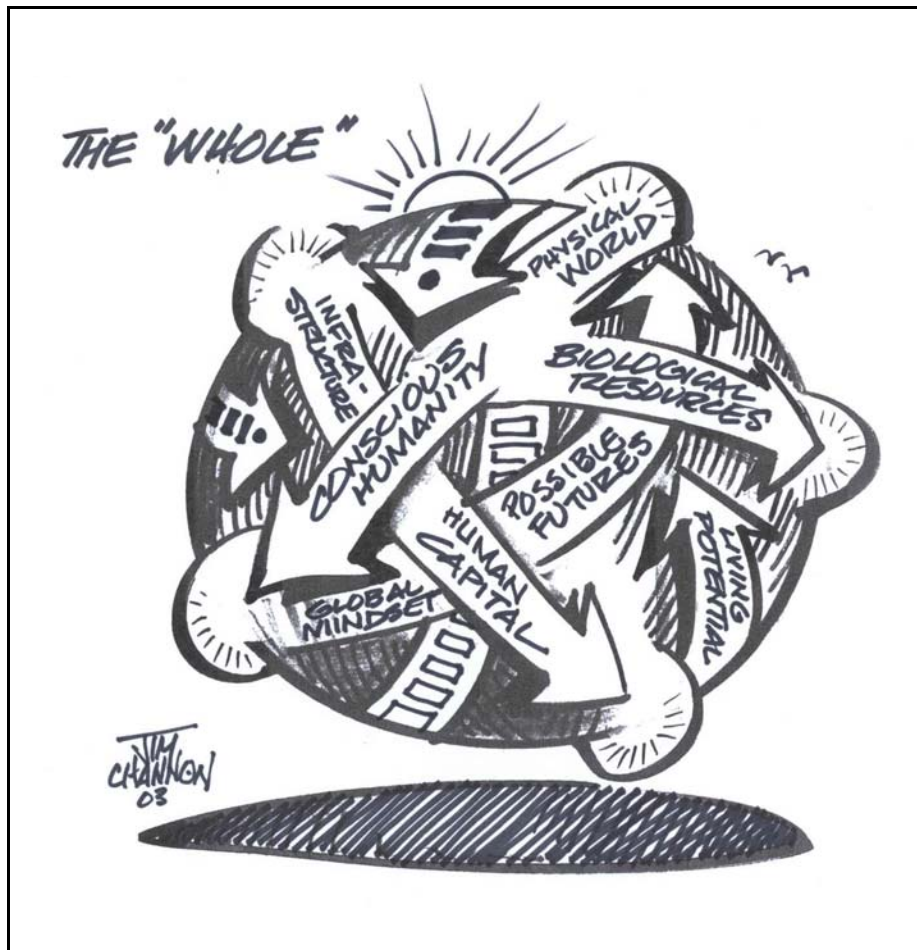
Jim Channon

As some of you know it has been my honor to help lead the Fellows of this Academy on a ten-year journey to discover a vision for the planet for the next one hundred years. The Fellows of this Academy are as qualified a group of minds as could be assembled anywhere to do this work. Our Academy mandate from Willis Harman to be responsible for the whole and to be responsible at a level of consequence has inspired us all. In the face of the current and pervasive global conversation about the unilateral, pre-emptive, full scale war one nation has decided to launch upon another, I have found no part of that conversation being related in any useful way to "the whole" we so often speak about. I also noticed that we as an Academy didn't have a global voice about the "whole" to contribute. You may have noticed that similar organizations like the Club of Budapest have made their public voices heard. We as a group don't yet have a simple unified public view on how the planet should better conduct its business.

It seems that the principal ideas associated with a concept like "the whole" are at this point in history a somewhat foggy notion in the minds of the public and the current statesmen who lead them. So, this writing is an attempt to give some flesh to that very idea so that we can expand our Academy position and stand more firmly. Then when the time comes to speak with some potency, we shall better know what to say.

To appreciate the task of describing the "whole" I offer an analogy to the self. If you were asked the question, "What constitutes your whole as a person?", how would you answer? Is it the stuff on your résumé that you would begin with? But, hold on, that's all about doing and not much about being. And what about your personal vision, potential and aspirations? Would you add that? What about the pharmaceutical value of your constitutional ingredients? The transfer value of your spare parts? And then the raw capacity of your collective experience to tackle things in the future? And then your spiritual ideas of transcending this life? And do you genuinely participate in your fantasy world? Notice the dimensions that can be considered. This is a preview of the scope and content to consider when speaking about a "whole."

The whole of you, I suggest, is just way bigger than a résumé. And, I offer that our living planet with a ten thousand-year-old civilization on it ... is way bigger than any present day institution's concept of reality even if they think they speak for the "whole." Excuse my typeface here, but WAAAAAAAAAAAAAY bigger. No short description is likely to encompass the "whole" in any adequate way. But, indulge me first with some brief verbal cartoons of the "whole." After that, I will return to the question of our global voice:



OUR PHYSICAL WORLD. We live upon a geological wonderland. First, let's just acknowledge that, for as far as we can see with our astronomical eyes, there is no other celestial body within range that has the particular composition of our earth. It is a precious combination of interpenetrating elements that assures the life of billions of sentient beings. In the crudest of terms it can be summarized for our more political discussion, as the planetary commons. It is our atmosphere, our oceans, our reefs, our forests, our soil, our fresh water, and the seeds that insure our bio-diversity and the continued growth of our food. You get the idea. This is the real bank. This is the real savings account for our continuation as a planet. This is stage upon which our future stands.

OUR BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. The biosphere is host to many billions of life forms. The composite of the life forms on this planet. The exquisitely deeper nature of their contributions to all that we experience. The way they inter-relate. The orchestra they play at dusk. The incredible way they have chosen to exchange with each other to continue the existence of the greater mix. The way they continue to improve themselves and their capacity to survive. At the level of whale or at the level of microbe, they all have intention and they all contribute to the daily drama that makes life interesting in their own unique way.

OUR HUMAN CAPITAL. We are the fabulous diversity that is humankind. We are the unfathomable number of individual ways we know the universe of life that surrounds us. We are the fragile unity that builds our common institutions and support systems. We are the knowledge base that allows each generation to build upon the last with more confidence and versatility. We are the minds that can grow at lightning speed, especially when the ideas for the future are packaged in increasingly more holistic ways. There is a breadth of understanding and action that comes with the human archetype just as it is.

OUR CONSCIOUS HUMANITY. As a civilization of ideas we are years ahead of our institutions in our knowing about what is needed. We are already functioning as a planetary civilization. It just isn't obvious because our reporting institutions are still reporting on the "nations" who organized their focus. We are already functioning beyond nations even as hemispheres and regional interest groups like the European Union. And further, when people in sixty-five nations take to the streets on a given day to make their voices heard ... we are functioning real time at the level of planetary civilization. National governments are at the moment at least two paradigms behind the forward edge of our current world dynamic.

OUR SOCIAL FABRIC. We are our history. The thousand tribal rituals and costumes. We are also the many new styles, modes, venues and colors that have grown so quickly with our creatively wide-open interpretations of life. The reach and range of imagination, play and participation in the wonder for the average young person today dwarfs the options available in the first half of this century. We can now enter the Internet virtual reality world and play "live" with people from around the world in an environment that is totally original and where those who are playing make up the world as they go. In your mind, fly over the earth and see the constructed landscape of thousands of spires and steeples and new city buildings that are looking more and more like the flowers in our best gardens. See this layer of life at the level of social architecture.

OUR GLOBAL MINDSET. Notice the planet is laced with connectivity. There is such a thing as global presence and world opinion. We can have a tragedy like Princess Diana's death or 9/11, and within an hour almost half the globe knows what has happened. Our most admired athletes and dramatic players are known and loved worldwide. A rally can be organized on the Internet one day and be executed the next. You can ask a search engine for news on a given subject and get the report from a dozen planetary news sources. You can find anybody of note on the web and any subject that has ever been documented within a second of your request. This is tantamount to having a collective cultural library on a planetary scale. Every click in is like the synapse of a global brain. This further demonstrates how institutional leaders, by definition, are several steps behind reality, and that problem is getting worse by the day.

OUR GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE. We have built a grand system of exchange. The numbers of people normally found in a city of over two hundred thousand people are now in the air and bound to other zones at any given time. This global exchange of people is a function of aircraft and landing cities that make boundaries less and less relevant. Land travel and mobility of people and goods via truck and ship again have few real limits at this stage of development. Our technical inventions to harvest natural energy are real and ready to go to work now. The capacity to replant the entire earth's surface within a decade exists and can be delivered by the nations' military forces as soon as we announce that we are a planet and release them from their fear-based security duties.

OUR LIVING POTENTIAL. We are a collection of waiting ideas. The collective efforts that took us to the moon. The global array of places to relax and play. The blinding array of stories at the tip of an Internet click that shape our understanding and grow our capacity to participate in life. The chance to live in the garden again. The chance to muse in a thousand ways about our continuing life in the grand universe. The chance to create a global metabolism that sources all the life that is supportable. The opportunity to launch ourselves into space to inhabit new worlds.

OUR POSSIBLE FUTURES. In the track of time on this planet we have never had anywhere near the potential we now have at this moment. It is more potent by a thousand times than ever before. Collective intelligence as a resource may not exist in a physically measurable form; nevertheless, it is a very real thing. And it is precious and here now. It may have more reality to you if you think of it as being taken away. Our genuine capacity to engage in a New World where the connectivity and resources are optimized thoughtfully is pregnant with life.

VIEWPOINT

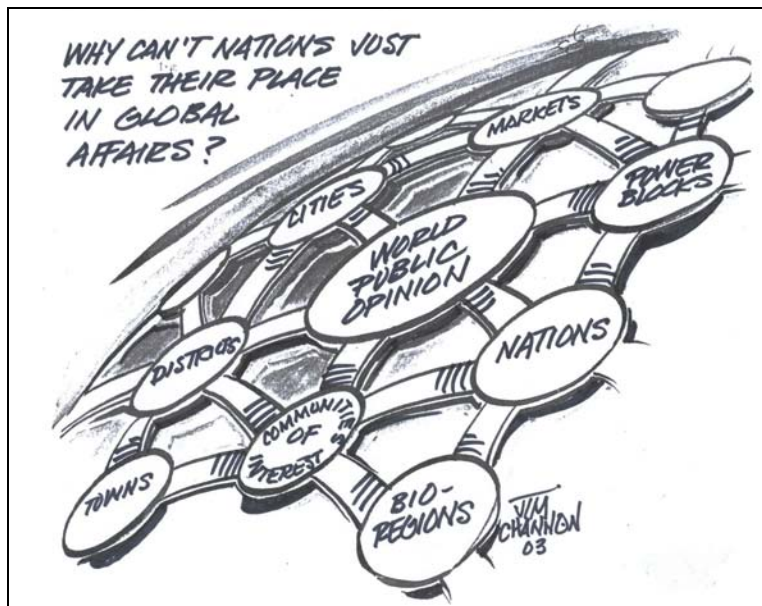
So, what's really at stake here? For those out there who want to ask the institutional players in our present world crisis what they should consider when they begin a possibly escalating conflict in one part of the world without the broadest consideration of the "whole," well, this paltry written accounting is only a partial and very tiny compendium of what's really at stake. We should not be quiet and continue to allow obsolete ideologies with outdated worldviews to determine what is good for our new global civilization. We have already crossed the bridge!

Our present national leaders are not bad people. They are doing what they learned to do before things changed. They are simply overcome by the rush of evolution, as are we all. We have simply become more of a global civilization than a collection of nations. It has happened overnight. Nations are now just a smaller layer of the real "whole." Unfortunately, they think they are still in charge and have the capacity to determine more of our total reality than they deserve. We have to patiently ask them to take a new and more respectful place in the world dynamic.

Our point of view or viewpoint as an Academy must expand to better encompass the "whole" and speak for it. We need to help kick-start (or click-start) the GLOBAL VOICE of a new civilization that doesn't yet appreciate that it exists. We need to encourage the present leaders to empower the exchange that is now civilizing us at a new level because of our new global info-structure and connectivity. We need to encourage them, as Hazel Henderson suggests, to have a bigger scorecard.

We could well encourage the world to take a moratorium on war for ten years to pause to better examine our vision and reconstruct the planetary commons. We dearly need the time to get our global feet under us before we reconstruct an old paradigm over a new reality that has in its very essence the means to govern more naturally. Free information exchange is to conflict resolution what the free market is to progress. Future shock is here, and we need to stop and reflect on how to proceed in a new global way.

So, don't ask Washington or Baghdad how much the next war will cost. Ask them to sit down and think about things at a larger level of consequence. Ask them to be as big as the Soviet Union when they decided under Glasnost to look deeply at the consequences of their past actions and get out of the way. This is not Washington's or Baghdad's world to stomp about in. Bigger things are going on than national governments. We have a new "whole" on our hands.



The global dynamic has accelerated several paradigms beyond our national strategy. Who will speak up about that? Who will say, let's give our relentless push into the future a break; let's pause as a world and catch up with reality. Who will say, sit down and notice the consequences of doing things the same old way? Who will say, repair the planetary commons using the best Global Reconstruction team available--the military. Who will say, don't use a national budget to rent strips of sand in Turkey for \$28 billion to launch a war and spend \$1.8 billion on hydrogen development that is meted out for four years when it is ready to launch now?

Well, I say, we, the Academy, can say those kinds of things and should say them as loudly as we can. We have a small and very thoughtful flag planted firmly on the side of the planet. It says we are "responsible for the whole." What say we add a small marching band to go along with that flag, blow our horns a bit louder, and see who comes to the parade? Let's be a global voice with a global vision in tow. It is false modesty to be worried about being competent enough to do something if you are among the few who are doing it all.

We may have all gone to sleep as citizens of nations but we will all soon wake up as citizens of the planet! Let's start thinking that way.

Go, planet!

Jim Channon

May I hasten to add that this thinking has been inspired by recent Academy publications and the particular thinking of fellows: Hazel Henderson, the Rays, the Tarklows, Terry Mollner, Bill McDonough, Verna Allee, Academy Editor Joe Simonetta and Academy President Rinaldo Brutoco. Thank you all.

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