International Education Journal Vol 4, No 4, 2004
Educational Research Conference 2003 Special Issue
http://iej.cjb.net

Existentialism, Globalisation and the Cultural Other

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Globalisation is not a new phenomenon but the world has never before been subject to global forces that are characterised by such extensity, intensity, velocity and impact. Modern technology and communications effectively compress human time and space and we regard the world as a smaller place. One outcome of this has been greater contact with the 'Cultural Other'. No longer can we think of 'strangers and the strange' as dislocated entities that are peripheral to our own lives[1]*. For this to be a positive experience for all parties, there are some shortcomings to acknowledge and some hurdles to overcome. Concisely, we have been inconsistent in our efforts to connect with the Cultural Other. Furthermore, current neo-liberal globalisation agendas would not seem to augur well for improving on this record. This paper examines our contemporary engagement with the Cultural Other from an existential perspective and introduces the idea of the 'fear of the unknown' as a foundation of our difficulty in accepting Otherness. It also offers a way forward by means of the internationalisation of the self.*

Existentialism, Globalisation, Cultural Other, 'Known Unknown', Internationalisation

INTRODUCTION

This paper was originally going to focus on the impact of world events on tertiary education in Australia. The more thought that was given to the foundation themes it dealt with, however, the more it was realised that they are neither new nor exclusive to education, yet they are at the same critical to it. Perhaps by examining the big picture issues, something valuable might be produced for use in education *per se*. So, rather than focus on curricula or other aspects of higher education, it was decided to consider issues to do with culture and identity as they manifest themselves through our cultural contestant; the Cultural Other. These foundation themes reflect, and belong to, age-old challenges related to culture, politics and power, writ large by contemporary globalisation, which is the catalyst forcing humanity to revisit them. From a cultural point of view, it is 'unfinished business'.

Whilst it may be true that the present milieu is unique in terms of the scope and nature of human activity that is present around the globe, there is a certain 'kitchen table' wisdom in the adage that "there is nothing new under the sun". By this, it is meant that despite the technological, economic and other advances that are features of our world, it is inevitable that our humanistic advancement must sooner or later rely on progress being made in the area of basic principles that relate to understanding each other and acknowledging the legitimacy of other ways of 'knowing and

[1] The use of 'we', 'us' and 'our' throughout this paper pertains to the author's association with Anglo-Australian culture and its historical regard for Otherness. Whilst not setting out to lambast Anglo-Australian culture, it is recognised that its roots cannot be disassociated from an Anglo history of self-styled "cultural pre-eminence" which, as put by Said (1995, p.7) and Hall (1997, p.21), constructs itself as superior to others. Some critical introspection is, therefore, both unavoidable and necessary. Further, it is acknowledged that connectivity between cultures is a two-way street and the best outcomes will be achieved when all parties engage openly and honestly with each other.

being', metaphysically speaking, which may not necessarily be similar to, or consistent with, our own.

This period of 'globalisation', therefore, presents itself like other discernible epochs in which revolutions in social and scientific thought have had profound impact on the ways in which we interpret ourselves, our interactions with others, our surroundings, and our place in the universe. It is an opportunity for change, similar to those leveraged by the material advances of the Bronze and Iron Ages and the Industrial Revolution, and the intellectual vigour which characterised the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Such paradigmatic shifts in our perspective on material, social and spiritual matters have historically charted the course of human endeavour and presently, we stand on the cusp of an era in which the processes of globalisation look to dramatically influence the transition of human society into the third millennium.

In anticipation of the challenges and opportunities associated with such a transformational period, this paper provides an existential treatment of two topical and related themes; *globalisation* itself, given that is presently the overarching force of change in the world, and the *Cultural Other*, that 'awkward entity' which is increasingly projected into our midst as a result of global forces. Initially, an outline of the main characteristics of existential thought is provided to familiarise the reader with its claims. By establishing key elements such as the basic nature of Existenz[2], Free Will, Angst, the 'They', and Authenticity, the foundation for paper is provided. This allows a contextualised account of the individual as an existent in a rapidly changing and uncertain world. After this, the idea of the Cultural Other is considered in light of current global processes, which allow greater visibility, portability and contact with Otherness. This leads to the 'fear of the unknown' being advanced as a basis for our reaction to the Cultural Other, especially through the realm of the 'known unknown'. Finally, the idea of 'existential internationalisation' and the way this promotes 'globalisation from below' is briefly put forward as a preferable and positive way to bridge the gap between 'us' and 'them'.

EXISTENTIALISM AND GLOBALISATION

Existentialism

As an introduction to existentialism, consider the summary of the views of Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche, as put by Davis and Miller (1967):

> …there is much that is wrong with human nature. Man is an existential being whose life is more than logic and who must discover the meaning of existence. There are no answers to the human predicament to be found in the back of a book; Philosophy is to be lived, something to be proven in action… (p.206).

Existentialism is referred to as a philosophical trend, tendency or attitude, as distinct from a particular dogma or system. Baldwin (1995) indicates that it is a 'loose term' used to describe a diversity of thinkers who resonated with Kierkegaard's rally against Hegel's abstract rationalism in the early 1800s (p.257). Whilst the deliberations of existentialist philosophers do not necessarily sit neatly with each other at all times, writers from the 19th and 20th centuries such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Camus and Sartre would be in agreement with the singular notion that 'being' has to take precedence over (rationalist) 'knowledge' in philosophical investigations. Existentialists maintain that human existence is 'basic'. It is, therefore, best studied from inside a subject's experience rather than outside.

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[2] The Danish and German word from which the idea of the 'existing individual' is derived.

The approach takes a first-person or subjective consideration of ultimate questions and believes each self-aware individual understands their own existence in terms of their experience and their situation; their 'station' in life. Much value is placed on the idea of the 'aware self' as a thinking being which has beliefs, hopes, fears, desires, the need to find a purpose, and a will that can determine their actions. With such a brief, it can be clearly seen why existentialism is generally opposed to rationalist and empiricist doctrines that understand the universe as a determined, ordered system in which rationality and natural laws govern all beings and guide human activity. Despite their eschewal of rationality, however, most existentialists have held "that rational clarity is desirable wherever possible, but that the most important questions in life are not accessible to (sic) reason or science" (Encarta 2003).

The idea of free will is central to existentialism and this is the source of both *liberation* and *trepidation*. With regard to the former, it means that people can make choices in their pursuit of a worthwhile life. Not so much for one of indolence and self-indulgence as in *la dolca vita*, but an ethical life which, in line with the thoughts of Kierkegaard, will enable people to "survive the vicissitudes of fortune" (Baldwin 1995, p.259). In a world where no objective universality exists, individuals are supposed to passionately strive for their own realisation of morality and truth (Encarta 2003). With regard to trepidation, many existentialist writers view the changing world as a potentially dangerous place (Pomjam 1992, p.528; Speake 1979, p.115), through which there is no guaranteed safe passage. This is augmented by the notion of the 'They'; a faceless and anonymous power that by deception constantly wears away an individual's personal identity and, according to Heidegger, actively denies a person's authentic existence. By giving way to the 'collective' one's existence becomes depersonalised and inauthentic (Feisner 2003b). At this early stage, we can begin to see how existential considerations have relevance in an era of globalisation where many individuals feel they have little control over their lives.

It is around these two poles that existentialist thought largely revolves, that is, an engagement of free will to make one's way (virtuously) in an insecure world. To this end, existentialists also speak of the *Angst* (translated as 'anxiety' or 'dread') that characterises people's lives on such a journey. Not only is this attributed to the menacing nature of the world. It comes also in that defining moment when one makes the shattering realisation that it is indeed your own choice and your own responsibility to make something of your own self! Kierkegaard holds that it requires a personal commitment to develop 'human love' and 'success' out of the generally 'unsatisfactory nature of life' (Baldwin 1995, p.259). The ultimate outcome of this passionate engagement, for many existentialists, is gaining a sense of one's own identity by living an 'authentic' life. The antithesis of this realisation is to lead an 'inauthentic' existence, likened to an object and not a free person. For some, the transcendence from an inauthentic to an authentic existence is based on individual effort. For others, authenticity is based on recognising and communicating with other free individuals.

Existentialists, in eschewing traditional philosophic and scientific methods, have opened themselves to criticisms over the years. It is reported that they are "deliberately unsystematic in the exposition of their philosophies, preferring to express themselves in aphorisms, dialogues, parables, and other literary forms" (Encarta 2003). Kierkegaard, for example, is considered an "outsider in the history of philosophy" due to his peculiar authorship which "comprises a baffling array of different narrative points of view and disciplinary subject matter" (Feisner 2003a). Heidegger, too, is castigated for having an ontology that was not deductive or systematic in form and "proceeds at times by the exegesis of poetry or the more aphoristic fragments of the pre-Socratic philosophers" (McIntyre 1967, p.543). Another existentialist, Sartre, is accused of skimpy argumentation lacking in rigour and seemingly unaware, or unconcerned by, the metaphorical character of many of his leading ideas (Olafson 1967, p.288). Given these criticisms,

it can be understood why metaphysical speculation has been considered by some to be highly abstract and a flight from reality. Existential and phenomenological philosophers tend to 'write from the soul' and their style is very subjective.

In their defense, existentialists would claim that it is not they who are flying from reality. That aspersion should be cast at those whose detailed observations of the world are blurred by a reductionist methodology that fragments reality in a bid to understand (and control) the 'whole' by determining the essence of the various parts, and the parts of parts, and so on *ad infinitum*. The criticisms against existentialism notwithstanding, existential analysis is valuable in terms of understanding the role of humans as agents in a fluid social setting. In the uncertain, early days of the third millennium, engagement with writers such as Kierkegaard and their "arsenal of rhetoric [that is] designed to deepen the reader's subjective passionate engagement with ultimate existential issues" (Feisner 2003a) provides a useful perspective.

Globalisation

Globalisation "is a reality" (Callinicos 2001, p.19) and is the catalyst for many of the changes currently being experienced by people, social institutions and nations around the world. On an existential level, Rothkop (1997), suggests that it is "the first time in history that virtually every individual at every level of society can sense the impact of international changes. They can see and hear it in their media, taste it in their food, and sense it in the products that they buy" (p.1). The manifestation of this is splendidly portrayed by Hansford (2003), a travel writer who visited the remote Mongolian region north of the Tien Shan mountains, in search of the traditional, semi-nomadic life of the Mongols. After driving for eight hours across "endless country" (p.58), he chanced upon a small outpost of Mongolian yurts (tents) and stayed a night with the nomads. He describes with gusto the deep-seated traditions and social etiquette associated with the way of life of the Mongols and, after enjoying the shared dinner and intense cultural contact, he retired to bed. What happened next shattered Hansford's idealised view of traditional Mongolian culture:

> I sat up groggily .... I had awoken to a nightmare. The bastards had a karaoke box. Whoever was attempting *Shake Your Booty* was murdering it in their second language … it was a tragic, cross-cultural cacophony … worse, they had more 70s classic hits [and] worse still, there were only a few, so that the assault came in a sort of random repeat selection from hell. I remember precisely when I lost it. It was 1.17am, and the song was *YMCA* … West hasn't only met East; it has got it drunk and talked it into bed. There is no corner of the world, no matter how remote, that the consumer culture, the infomercial, the sound byte, the rock video cannot reach. (p.60)

To demonstrate its pervasiveness into our everyday lives, we need only to appeal to common usage of 'global', where it fits quite logically before words such as politics, business, industry, crime, culture, language, education, community, terrorism, communications, music, cuisine, company and environment. There is even a call for the global person; the 'global me', a hybridised, cultural 'mongrel' and a true citizen of the world (G. Pascal Zachary 2000). Neither is there a passive neutrality about globalisation. It is contentious and debatable, as demonstrated by the various camps, which are either for or against it. Depending upon your point of view, globalisation is the phenomenon that will either make or break humanity's ability to survive beyond the next few hundred years. As Goldmark (2002) states succinctly, "the future is open and little is certain. The stakes are enormous" (p.59).

This paper circumvents a detailed description of globalisation per se. The subject is too slippery and labyrinthine to pursue in the scope of the present argument. It needs to be pointed out, however, that a distinction must be drawn between globalisation as a *process* versus the *agendas* that are presently driving much of the global activity. With regard to the former, the writings of

Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton (1999) are most informative and suggest that the present period of 'global transformations' is historically unprecedented. They usefully describe the essence of globalisation as:

> a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power. (p.16)

With regard to the agendas driving the above process, Singh (2002) uses 'neo-liberal globalism' to describe the force behind much of the present global activity. It is the extension of power by the powerful for their own vested interests. In doing so, the polarisation between, for example, 'rich' and 'poor', 'winners' and 'losers', and the 'included' and 'excluded' is reinforced. On a global scale, this perpetuates the increasingly disproportionate gap between the 'over-developed North' - which 'globalises from above' through corporations, multilateral agencies, policy experts, and national governments - and the 'under-developed, over-exploited South'.

Singh (2002) is not alone in this view and a search of the literature uncovers a deal of scepticism about the motives underwriting current global processes (Appadurai 2001; Arnove and Torres 1999; Bauman 1997; Beare and Slaughter 1995; Burbach, Orlando and Kagarlitsky 1997; Callinicos 2001; Currie 1998, p.2; Dudley 1998, pp.24-25; Keegan 1992; Marginson 1999/2000; Pilger 2002; Slade 1998; Slade 2002; Soros 2002; Stiglitz 2002; Tikly 2001). Much of the discontent is a response to the neo-liberal doctrine which appreciates human identities and relationships in terms of the instrumental value they have for capitalist economies (Marginson 1999/2000, p.5). With the collapse of communism, however, there is presently no ideological worldview which can offer an alternative to the preponderate West, riding on the wave of 'US triumphalism'. This is not to suggest that communism, as we have seen it practiced, is the answer. It shows, however, a different worldview can be entertained which might challenge the idea that 'democracy' necessarily entails the prevailing form of 'capitalism'. For the moment, the reality is that globalisation is based on a worldview of Western capitalism. This being the case, whatever liberating capacity that globalisation (as described by Held et al [1999]) has for the idea of 'culture' is presently subject to how useful this is in terms of the neo-liberal ideological paradigm.

Globalisation and Existentialism

The idea that 'existence is basic' is apt in an age of the global reach of capitalism, competition and consumerism. We tend to be swept up in fads and fashions that steer us away from making deep connections with ourselves, one another, and to the planet which sustains us. Blainey (2000) cautions us against relying more and more on science and technology which, he suggests, is increasingly dislocating us from traditional understandings and activities which have the capacity to give us a thorough and meaningful existence (pp.583-601). As if to herald the arrival of post-structuralist thought, three decades ago Fink (1972) spoke of our age as "characterised by the noise of the machine" (p.73) whilst Jaspers (1972) painted a dim view of modernity as suppressing individuality (pp.118-120). Hyland (1972) lamented of the infinitude of life in a world where "our day-to-day lives are shot through with incompleteness" (p.94) and Harper (1972) despaired over the oppressive nature of contemporary society (pp.99-101). These themes are equally as evident today as they were in the 1970s. In fact, it could be argued that they have been exacerbated.

As mentioned, existentialists have an acute interest in the individual as an 'existent' as they engage with the challenges that daily life throws before them. The contemporary world is one that has the capacity to extend people in both positive and negative ways; more correctly, it is our personal response to the world that is positive or negative. The current milieu can elicit a range of

responses from individuals. It can simultaneously be exciting, rewarding and complementary as well as depressing, disenfranchising and debilitating. Furthermore, it is logically possible for an individual to entertain both optimistic and pessimistic psychological poles at once. For example, one can be excited at the work potential that a globalised world offers, but uncertain what the workplace may become in terms of skill sets that may be required, as well as ideas associated with expectations, effectiveness, organisational support, security and promotion. In our lifetime we have gone from the concept of "jobs for life" to one of no such certitude. Most likely, for many it will mean having to pursue disparate 'contract' careers over a working life to remain gainfully employed. Whilst the former is not necessarily a natural state of affairs, it was *the* state of affairs until recently.

The point is that things have changed and regardless of the anecdote that "change is the only constant", most people gravitate to the security of what they know because its familiarity, comfort, and predictive certainty represents a safe haven from their opposites. As Appadurai (2001) suggests, however, far from being a period of certainty, for many the processes and outcomes of globalisation promote the opposite feeling (pp.1-2). To elaborate, when thinking of the implications of operating in a global setting, the Chinese talk of *xiahai* - plunging into the ocean (of the risky business world), and *yu shijie jiegui* - linking up with the rail tracks of the world (Zhang 2001, pp.131-132). Whilst these market-related associations hold promise for growth, what if you are fearful of (metaphorically) drowning in the vast ocean, running off the rails, or having the currents or tracks take you to places you don't want to go?

Whilst it is true that life itself is unpredictable and that 'risk' and' reward' often go hand-in-hand, for many people the world is presently a place that is moving ahead too rapidly, on a scale that makes them feel that they no longer have control of events that impact on their lives[3], let alone making a difference in society at large, whether at a local, regional or global level. As Giddens (1999) puts it, ours is a transformative, "runaway world" in which little-understood global processes are affecting almost every aspect of what we do "for better or worse" (p.1). Singer (2002), too, indicates that globalisation is "out of control" (p.11). Whilst the developed world entered the twentieth century with huge expectations and excitement, the same ebullience did not characterise our transition into the twenty-first century. Enter the existential component to our lives in the sense that it is timely to talk about the problem of simply 'being' in a universe that seems to be less determined, less ordered and less controllable than what rationalists and empiricists would have had us believe in the past few hundred years.

This is particularly so in terms of our present 'social' universe which is comprised of ever more complex interactions between human beings at a time in which there are more of us, going more places, exchanging more ideas and things in more ways, and aided by increasingly sophisticated technological means. It is understandable that there exists an uncertainty in our lives because of our increasingly 'moment-to-moment' existence which places life as a promissory note that seemingly can be cashed only if one runs faster and longer to embrace the means that are required to deliver contemporary ends. As Giddens (1999) suggests, the implications of more than a trillion US dollars changing hands on world markets each day is an indication that we are living not just in a new era, but in revolutionary times (p.2). How, then, does one regard one's 'existence' in times like this? Especially given that the 'superhighway' vision of life in the new millennium is juxtaposed against a 'collapse of certainty' whose roots lay in a 'cultural crisis' that appeared in industrialised countries at the end of the 1960s, and was based on a disappointment that neither

[3] The question might be asked if we *really* ever have had such control (especially of the physical world)?

science and technology, nor middle-class values, were providing general peace, wealth, and happiness (de Landsheere 1997, pp.13-14).

The path to 'authenticity', then, is not clearly laid out. Moreover, confusion exists because of the asynchronous state of affairs between the Cartesian-Newtonian philosophical framework that still underwrites our society, and the need to embrace new ways of thinking to meet the demands of the globalising world. Here we can see the foundations of the existential Angst. There is also the compounding effect of the 'They'; not only the faceless transnational corporations and government instrumentalities, but also the Cultural Other, looming close as a threat to our individual economies (through internationalised labour forces and markets) as well as in terms of the gradual disappearance of many traditional national cultural identities through changes in the dynamic and make-up of the nation-state[4] (Hall 1997, p.22). Our interactions with the Cultural Other is the 'unfinished business' alluded to in the Introduction and we are being forced to address this issue because of current global forces.

GLOBALISATION AND THE CULTURAL OTHER

Goldmark (2002) sets the scene for this section by suggesting that two themes are presently intersecting to "make the crossroads at which we stand uniquely fateful" (p.53). On one hand, we have a trend which he says is as old as human history itself and takes the shape of 'cultural ways' which, through long-standing beliefs, have defined and differentiated various groups of people for millennia. The other trend has been building for about one hundred and fifty years and culminates in the form of contemporary globalisation, underwritten by Western technology and systems of economic activity and marketing. It is the space which is created by the meeting of these two notions which is of interest to Goldmark and this paper. The idea of the Cultural Other is intimately associated with globalisation, for it is about who *we* are and who *they* are and what happens when the two meet. It is about *our* world and *their* world and what happens when they both collide. It is about me and you, the colonists and the colonised, the cultured and the barbarian, the familiar and the strange, the in-group and out-group, A-groupers and B-groupers, the North and the South, G. Pascal Zachary's (2000) 'family and foreigners, native and exile, friend and foe' (p.278), Said's (1995) 'us and them' (p.43), Singh's (2002) 'insiders and outsiders' (p.5), and Mahbubani's (2002) 'West and the Rest' (p.13).

Worldwide economic, political, cultural and technological activities have had the effect of taking the global to the local and vice versa (Dudley 1998, p.25). Not only has neo-liberal globalism taken McWorld[5] to countries and cultures all over the Earth, but first world nations, too, are being exposed more intimately and frequently to what once lay at the periphery; other people and other things. Non-Western ideas, images, artefacts, bric-a-brac, peoples and cultures, which have been on the whole spatially and cognitively separate from us are now projected into *our* midst. The (fast becoming ubiquitous) Cultural Other takes on many abstract and concrete forms. It can be a theme or an image from a story, a book or a movie. It can be a food, a fad, a festival, or a religion. It can be a currency, an investment, a development, a product, or a competitor. It can be an immigrant, a tourist, a sports competitor, or a student. It can be a military force. In the eyes of nation states (increasingly concerned with ideas of sovereignty in terms of 'territory' and 'citizenry' in light of recent ideological activities), however, whilst the Cultural Other may be

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[4] Whilst one may be forgiven for thinking that existentialism is negatively reactive because of a seeming predilection for angst, dread and a belief that the world is an inherently sinister place, keep in mind that existential writers see it as an individual's responsibility to be passionately engaged with life and attempt to rise above all of this.

[5] 'McWorld' is used by Barber (2001) to represent the Americanisation of 'world culture'.

among us to greater extents, it is not without some tension, for essentially they are unlike us. They are not us.

Traditionally, Otherness has been of instrumental value vis-à-vis *novelty*. It might be a curio or a showpiece of something acquired out of interest or through travel or conquest. For example, just as platypuses and echidnas were send back to England to show what a strange and exotic place the new outpost was[6], so too was Bennelong, a member of the Wangal people, sent by Governor Phillip to England in 1793 to be presented to King George III (Barani 2003). Not as a traditional native, but gentrified in English apparel and speaking English, as depicted in Figure 1. A black man made white through having been civilised; an experiment in "softening, enlightening and refining a barbarian" (Barani 2003). Otherness contained, controlled and sanitised. An adornment of the powerful. A piece of the collection, which demonstrated the reach and control of, in this case, Britannia. Bennelong would have been aware of his marginality, "by the nature of the 'English eye', the all-encompassing 'English eye' … strongly centred; knowing where it is, what it is, it places everything else" (Hall 1997, pp.20-21).

Figure 1. An undated portrait, believed to be of Bennelong (Barani 2003)

When non-menacing, Cultural Others can be tolerated by virtue of their instrumentality. What, then, of the Cultural Other "out of the box"? This would be an aberration in the scheme of things and a threat to the status quo. Imagine if Bennelong had intimated to King George III that he so loved England that he would like his people to live their traditional life there. In fact, he so loved the grounds in the vicinity of Buckingham Palace that he would like to camp there! In fact, he was so smitten with Queen Charlotte that he would like to take her as his (third) wife! The reason that this starts to come across somewhat humorously is that it demonstrates where the boundaries lay which ultimately separate insiders and outsiders. Should Bennelong have pursued these interests as in *seriously* pursued them, he quickly would have been made aware of his place. 'Humorously' would have become 'humorlessly'! A modern day example of 'culture-out-of-place' is provided by Hall (1997) who emigrated from the West Indies to Britain. His observation is of the migration of outsiders from the periphery to the centre, and it infers the consternation that this caused in

[6] Compare this remote, fascinating appreciation with the way that many convicts and the overseers of their incarceration viewed the new land; not as Utopia but Dystopia. A harsh, unforgiving, foreboding, alien landscape and environment (Hughes 1987, pp.1-2).

'old' Britain by the transformation of a previously sacred touchstone for most nation-states; that of a national cultural identity:

> There is a tremendous paradox here which I cannot help relishing myself; that in the very moment when Britain finally convinced itself it had to decolonise, it had to get rid of them, we all came back home. As they hauled down the flag, we got on the banana boat and sailed right into London … they had ruled the world for three hundred years and … when they had made up their minds to climb out of that role, at least the others ought to have stayed out there in the rim, behaved themselves, gone somewhere else, or found some other client state. No, they had always said that this was really home, the streets were paved with gold and, bloody hell, we just came to check out whether that was so or not. (p.24)

Sans instrumentality, tolerance is abandoned and the veil is lifted; Cultural Others are not entirely welcome or trustworthy, let alone accepted and understood. They are more commonly regarded with a "traditional, latent mistrust a Westerner feels towards the Oriental" (Said 1995, p.286). It has to be said that such a view is an imperially-derived false position 'from afar and above' and is borne from circumstance, privilege, arrogance and prejudice. It smacks of insecurity and extends to xenophobia and an aggressive, race-oriented nationalism based on a fear of a change in power relations.

The challenge for the West, then, is how to respond to the increasingly omnipresent Cultural Other given that our worldview (the way we think about ourselves and Otherness) is not surprisingly determined by our western ideology, ontology and epistemology. How does this affect the way in which we deal with people from cultural backgrounds different from our own, in a period that is challenging the view of a "supposedly stable binary opposition" (Said 1995, p.334) of a (submissive) East and a (dominant) West? In addition, if it is popularly held that there is nothing that can be learned from the Cultural Other, what possibilities are there for transformative encounters to open our identities to change? To also see the world through their eyes and in doing so, become something more than we presently are (Marginson 1999-2000, p.5), whether at the level of an individual, an institution, a nation, or a civilisation.

This challenge would seem even more pertinent, given the prediction that "the 21st century is forecast to be the 'Asia-Pacific' century" (Jones 1996, preface). Implicit in this view is the ascendancy of the Orient, led by China's burgeoning economy. "The Chinese dragon, asleep for a century or so, is now awakening with a vengeance [and is] on the verge of becoming a Superpower, if it is not already one" (Murray 2000, p.259). The implications for the West of a vastly more powerful East (in the broadest sense and including the resurgence of Islam) in our lifetime are stark and all parties will be tested by their ability to achieve more than a superficial interconnectedness. This is one of the challenges for education in the twenty-first century; learning to live together (International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century 1996, pp.91-94). Of crossing barriers rather than maintaining them (Said 1995, pp.336-337). Indeed, of dismantling barriers in the process of crossing them. The question remains, however, of whether or not we have the genuine desire, interest, and fortitude to do this, or whether our actions will be stalled by an inability (or unwillingness) to evaluate, then embrace, the requirements for a positive relationship with Otherness.

AN EXISTENTIAL BASIS FOR THE CULTURAL OTHER: FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

> We come into the world with deep, gut fears ... we fear the unknown, we fear the unfamiliar, and we are hostile to whatever we fear. (DJ Westbam 2002, p.94)

This section of the paper introduces a fundamental idea as a reason why we have struggled to engage with the Cultural Other. By no means is it the only reason, but it may well be one which underwrites others which manifest themselves as prejudice, bias and bigotry towards Cultural Others. It is the 'fear of the unknown' and it is basic. It is also existential, for it speaks to the way that individuals relate to their world. To introduce the idea, consider the statement "Everything is known; even the unknown". On the face of it, this seems paradoxical, for how can you know that which you do *not* know? Philosophically, to understand its meaning and import for how the West, in particular, constructs a foundation for the Cultural Other, we must enquire about the way we view our 'reality'. It is a metaphysical question relating to the study of existence itself and, therefore, an appeal to the ontology of a Western world, which, over the past few centuries, has increasingly given privilege to mechanistic science as the most legitimate way of 'knowing'.

A Western individual would seem, upon first inspection, to have a worldview, or *weltanschauung*, which gravitates towards, largely revolves around, gives precedence to, and is granted substance by things which are 'known' in a formal, structured (empirical) way. Through the complex processes of socialisation in the broadest sense, each of us over the years constructs a view of our surroundings in terms of its material and non-material parameters. We hold such belief systems, comprised of our conceptions of value and fact, very close. They are both a badge and a touchstone for our individual and collective identities and a means to make sense of things that happen around us. From an interpretive and phenomenological point of view, 'our world' is that which we figuratively own and with which we are most intimate, and whilst intimacy does not necessarily imply acceptance or contentment, critical understanding or enlightenment, it does indicate a deep familiarity and affinity with constructs that give meaning to our life.

For contemporary Westerners, the environment in which this social conditioning takes place is underwritten to a large extent by great reliance on the methods of natural scientific enquiry to authenticate what exists and what does not, what is useful and what is not, and what should be believed and what should not. Our organised, empirical science is seen as a paradigm of human rationality and one of the best accredited candidates for letting us know what 'knowledge' is (Speake 1979, p.319). It defines reality in terms of what can be empirically substantiated and has put its stamp on 'grand Western themes' over several centuries. Indeed, such has been its influence over the years that it has given rise to the traditionalist belief in many quarters that science transcends any set of social conditions and, therefore, its methods are applicable to all areas of human activity (Charlesworth 1982, p.36).

It is no surprise, then, that this 'instrumental rationality', in which practical problems can be viewed as technical issues and solved by a Weberian means-ends scheme, has become pervasive in the Western worldview (Lakomski 1997, pp.168-169). Normal science is technological, reductionist and compartmentalised and our lives reflect this 'realist ontology' where, "if it can't be seen or measured, it is not meaningful to talk about" (Phillips 1987, p.39). For many rationalists, anything else (for example, intuitive and qualitative ways of knowing) is just the "folklore of unjustified assumptions … [which uses] woolly armchair philosophising" (Burns 1999, p.4) to provide its knowledge claims. It is the stuff of sewing circle conversation. 'Knowing our world', then, would appear to be a fairly cut and dried exercise using a Cartesian-Newtonian philosophical framework. We empirically know the whole through the component parts *ergo* for us it exists.

Logically, however, our reality *has to be more* than made up of what we know, for in having an idea of this, it necessarily follows that we must also admit the existence of its antagonist, the 'unknown'; things that lie beyond the immediacy of our senses, our understanding or our comprehension. Whether these are phenomena of the material world, the intricacies of our social interactions, or noumena relating to spiritual realms, there are areas which are profoundly

challenging for our Western selves in terms of the difficulty we have in discerning their substance through physical perception and intellectual processes within our philosophical framework. Classic examples would be, respectively, questions dealing with the origin and extent of the Universe, moral and ethical behaviour, and the existence of God. For most individuals, however, the 'unknown' need not be on the scale these primary questions. It is more likely to be existential in nature and arises from the business of going about daily life; "What is it really like?", "What is meant by that?", "Why did they do that?", "What is happening to me?", "What do they want?", and "Can I believe it?". Regardless of the gaps in comprehension and appreciation that we may have for first order questions or daily life matters, the voids which constitute them *still contribute* to the wholeness of our substance.

It follows that our world is synthesised from both the 'known' and the 'unknown'. It makes little sense to talk about reality as simply what we empirically know, for even with a battery of technological tools and scientific prowess, at this stage we do not have explanations for all things by empirical means. Moreover and most importantly, how we regard what we do not know and the place that this occupies in our psyche plays a big part in the way we carry ourselves. To demonstrate this, consider an example from history. As recent as 600 B.C. the entire universe "was but a patch of flat ground, and not a very large patch either" (Asimov, 1967, p.1) The Earth was flat[7] and one of the implications of going beyond the horizon was that eventually you would fall off the edge and into oblivion!

> …people could not approach the end [of the Earth] unless they boarded a ship and sailed out of sight of land; far out of sight. As late as the time of Columbus, in fact, this was a very real fear for many seamen. (Asimov 1967, p.3)

Here we have an example of the limits of our landscape being 'known' in an empirical sense and anything past that reference point being 'unknown' in that it was out of the reach of experience and measurement. It might sound as if the latter was an 'emptiness', but it was far from that, thanks to our fertile imagination. Both the 'known' and the 'unknown' had character and substance and both contributed to the worldview of the people of that time.

The 'flat earth' example makes it clear that the 'unknown' can be 'known'; not empirically, but more as an abstraction through the cognitive process of imagination. If a boat did not return, the inductive generalisation that the world ends 'out there in the distance' would have been legitimised. But what was the 'beyond' and what happened there? If they fell, how far did they fall? Forever? Or a short distance onto jagged rocks? Perhaps it was a fiery place, inhabited by demons and monsters. Most likely, for they would be the sorts of things that are found in places like that. Collective conjecture and popular consensus made this a real place; a 'known unknown' which would have been very real for the people of the time. It is no use saying that the 'unknown' did not form part of their reality. They knew it well and the psychological and physiological responses of the press-ganged unfortunates or soon-to-sail intrepid adventurers and the onlookers bidding them farewell from shore would have affirmed this. The 'unknown' is not neutral, nor a void or a vacuum. It is a fecund place which is replete with all manner of things. It is the monster under the bed, the 'min-min' light of the outback, the yowie in the bush, and the bunyip in the billabong. The 'known unknown' puts the dragon in the cave, the monster in the loch, the bigfoot in the forest, the UFO in the sky and their alien pilots at Roswell. Applied to culture, it both defines and makes us fearful of the 'marauding' Japanese, the 'inscrutable' Chinese, the Aboriginal 'savage', the 'fanatical' Muslim, and, as of late, the 'dangerously unpredictable' North Koreans.

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[7] Some people still hold this to be a truth. See http://www.flat-earth.org/

The categories of the 'known' and the 'unknown' are fluid and this is a simple way to portray the way our Western societies have expanded their knowledge base over the centuries. When the 'unknown' is experienced, thought to be understood, and held to be a 'truth' by those invested with the power of ratification, the view that people have of their world adjusts accordingly. To continue with the maritime example, when sailors consistently returned from ventures far from over the horizon and brought back evidence of other lands, their peoples and flora and fauna, it demonstrated that old ways of thinking about things had to make way for new realities. By no means did this make redundant the realm of the 'unknown'. It simply shifted the boundaries. Even when beyond the horizon was recognised as not being the end of the world, there were still unexplored territories that the League of Cartographers illustrated as uncharted spaces inhabited by giant, terrible, ship-swallowing sea beasts, as depicted in Figure 2. The maxim of the mapmakers was "where lies the unknown, there put the terrors" and the various monsters they portrayed patrolling these nether regions indicated "here there be dragons".

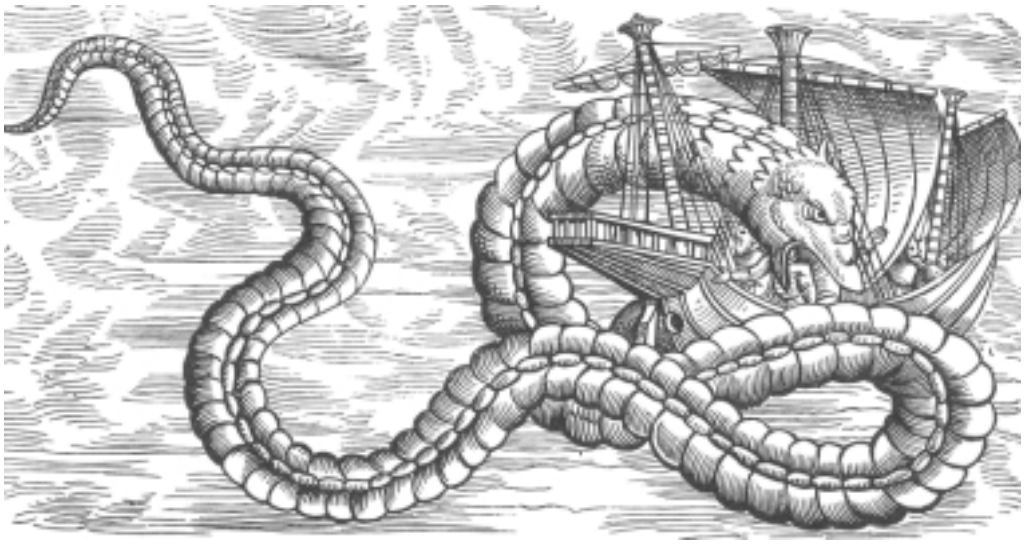

Figure 2. Sea-serpent attacking a vessel (Gould 1886, p.266)

In a sense, this vivid, visceral apprehension of the 'unknown' continues to have import for many of us today. People may scoff at the idea of falling off the edge of the world in a ship, but they might reserve their judgment on what a black hole in deep space might do to stellar explorers. Or closer to home, and therefore more relevant, what implications a hole in the ozone layer, global warming, increasing salinity, genetically modified foods, biological terrorism, and radioactive waste all might have for our lives. Whilst the unknown does not necessarily have to conjure up images of terror, the nautical example serves to illustrate how we often regard it as potentially intimidating, ominous, threatening, dangerous, harmful, malevolent, malicious and uncontrollable.

Although there is no denying that some may view the 'unknown' quite differently and ascribe to it a sense of wonderment, awe, amazement, admiration and mystery, its darker side lies foremost in the majority of modern, secular Western minds. As a result of profound and increasing dislocation from our natural environment and a sense of social disintegration due to holding onto an anachronistic philosophical framework which is dependent on "a narrowly conceived, outdated interpretation of the mechanistic worldview of Cartesian-Newtonian science" (Slade 2002, p.29), we in the West resonate more with a 'fear of the unknown' than anything approaching an inquisitiveness about it, a reasoned assessment of it, an integration into it, or a veneration for it.

The 'Known Unknown' and the Cultural Other

The import that the 'fear of the unknown' has for our image of the Cultural Other is profound. It sets us on the back foot immediately and creates a protective buffer between what we know and what we do not know. The distancing effect keeps us from *really* knowing the unknown. By the same token, the distance provides the space for our imagination to go about its business, thereby creating the 'known unknown'. To be sure, we may not know 'them' but at the same time we know *'them'* intimately. This is not a play on words, nor illogical or nonsensical. For example, in the late 1800s, most Australians would not have known much about the country or the people of Russia. Yet, as rumours grew that the Russian Fleet was going to invade the south coast of Australia (of all places!) in 1877–78 and again in 1885, the Russians *became* known to us. Who were they? No longer were they just inhabitants of a large country in the northern hemisphere. They were the potential expansionists, the invaders, the occupiers, and the plunderers. Obviously a callous race that wanted our place in the sun; the home that we had worked so hard to build for ourselves; the Utopia we created out of Dystopia. Doubtless, they would enslave our men, take our women for their own, maltreat our children and rewrite our history with theirs. (Paradoxically, although this is fearsome for us, Anglo-Australian culture did this very thing to the Aboriginal populations in Australia).

We may not have *really* known much about the Russians but we knew them well enough for the perceived threat to prompt moves for the states of Australia to join together in a federation for protection (Endersbee 1999). South Australians knew this well enough to construct coastal forts with artillery cannons that pointed offshore to halt the invaders as they sailed up the Gulf of St Vincent[8]. The same 'knowing of the unknown' can be said of the Japanese in World War II, and the communists who followed in the 1950s, and the spectre of Islam that emerged after the end of the Cold War. Adams (2003) captures the Australian angst over fear of invasion when he recounts a conversation he had with Kim Beazley, a former Minister of Defence in the federal government and longstanding member of the Australian Labor Party:

> Beazley is obsessed with Australia's vulnerability and, shortly before the election, told me: 'Australia's future is not secure. We are an anomaly and nature abhors an anomaly just as it does a vacuum'. Not convinced that Australia as we know it will exist in 20 or 30 years, he seems to seek security in defence rather than diplomacy. (p.13)

Whilst these invasion-related examples might represent the extreme end of what constitutes the 'unknown' (as in a sense of 'threat', imaginary or otherwise), they do serve to make the point.

A contemporary example is the 'known unknown' associated with living in a society such as Australia with many cultures, and being confronted with difference. How many Anglo-Australians have an appreciation of Muslims *as people* with hopes and dreams who, like us, aspire to lead worthwhile and productive lives? Instead of getting to know Muslims at this level, the majority of us go little further than to understand them in their capacity as the 'known unknown' which most likely is generated by the media and social intercourse that leads "outsiders [to] perceive the religion as irretrievably wedded to terrorism" (The Australian 2003, p.26).

What is missing here is the recognition and acceptance of different groups of people pursuing broadly common goals, but in different ways (Burbules 1996). From the outset, this is unproductive and obstructs the way forward. It leads no further than the stereotyping of groups, the outcome of which is perhaps the central tenet of Said's (1995) treatise on Orientalism. Of stereotypes, Said puts the question "Who are the Arabs?" and continues with a common Western

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[8] Fort Glanville and the guns at Fort Largs still stand in evidence of this.

assessment of them (as portrayed in movies) as lecherous, bloodthirsty, dishonest, "oversexed degenerates, capable, it is true, of cleverly devious intrigues, but essentially sadistic, treacherous, low. Slave trader, camel driver, moneychanger, colourful scoundrel" (pp.286-287). When the 'known unknown' defines the Cultural Other, no ground is gained. Instead, defences are erected and there is a galvanising of the "opposition between 'us' and 'them', resulting in a sense of reinforced, deepened, hardened identity that has not been particularly edifying" (Said 1995, p.335). This is the sort of thinking that leads to such social paralysis as evidenced by the recent incident where a New South Wales council was accused of racism when they overwhelmingly rejected an application for the construction of a mosque in the Baulkham Hills Shire in late 2002:

> Council rejected the application 10-2 on the grounds it was not compatible with the area, not in the public interest and not considered to be in accordance with the shared beliefs, customs and values of the local community. The councilors also claimed residents expressed fear that if the application was approved it may not meet sewage and wastewater requirements. (Ninemsn 2002)

Clearly Muslims are intolerable because they have a *different* architectural aesthetic, have *different* beliefs, do things *differently*, and have *different* values. As if this is not distressing enough, it is also intimated that they have different standards of personal hygiene! Hardly an enlightened approach in a country that is supposed to celebrate many cultures harmoniously living in one place and patriotically proclaiming "We are one, but we are many. And from all the lands on earth we come. We share a dream and sing with one voice: I am, you are, we are Australians"[9]. Is it, as the second last line of the chorus suggests, just a dream to "sing with one voice"?

EXISTENTIAL INTERNATIONALISATION AS A WAY FORWARD

This section briefly offers a way forward, but one not without a challenge. The caveat is that seeing humanity is still struggling with issues of understanding, acceptance and tolerance of *each other* as the Cultural Other after thousands of years, it is not expected that the panacea will be found in a few paragraphs here. Nevertheless, it is useful to consider how, if only as individuals, we might make some progress in this area. If enough people do this, some social momentum may be transferred into meaningful change and a more productive regard for Otherness. The fact that we have not spontaneously and collectively embraced it yet, whether as individuals or societies, indicates that it has not been consistently on the agenda, for one reason or another. Furthermore, this has probably been exacerbated since the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 which ushered in the idea of the sovereign, nation-state and packaged national cultural identity with geopolitical realities. The way forward is no secret. It is to internationalise our personal selves in a bid to produce a very different relationship between internationalisation and globalisation than the biased, instrumental one offered by neo-liberal globalism.

Internationalisation and globalisation are two concepts that are poorly understood. Most people struggle to understand the meaning of each as separate phenomena. Little wonder, then, that the relationship between them is a further source of confusion. Whilst acknowledging that there are manifold complexities involved, put simply, internationalisation is both a response to, and an agent of, globalisation (Knight 1999, p.14). The former happens because of the latter and is also a contribution towards it. Most of the time, the discourse around internationalisation is concerned with the structural adjustments and initiatives that institutions (universities, for example) take on board to respond to global forces. Nevertheless, an analogy can be made between 'change' in

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[9] The chorus from "I am Australian", a song written by the Seekers in the 1960s and sung these days to celebrate our 'multiculturalism'. Full lyrics are available at http://www.srosurf.com/austant2.html

institutions and 'change' in individuals. An existential notion is leveraged by the Japanese word 'kokusaika' which means a process of "self-change" or "self-reform". For the Japanese, 'kokusaika' implies that they change something about themselves due to international influences (Horie 2002, p.65). Whilst 'themselves' in the Japanese context may actually refer to 'the self' as a collective (as in 'we Japanese'), it still has utility when applied to the idea of personal, individual change.

The reason why change is necessary should be abundantly clear by now but in case a reminder is needed, Goeudevert's (2002) claim that "encounters with the unfamiliar, concrete experiences of difference, incongruities and inequalities will continue to increase, not despite, but because of globalisation" should suffice (p.45). After all, this is the time of Marshall McLuhan's 'global village' where "time has ceased and space has vanished" (McLuhan and Fiore 1967, p.63) and Bauman's (1997) "Alterity (sic) is here today and here to stay" (p.30). Individuals or organisations who choose to ignore this will be a "lonely lot" who will "grow lonelier still" (G. Pascal Zachary 2000, p.278). To stand still is to risk becoming an anachronism. To fail to move forward is to play with the same old deck of social cards which contain a suite of prejudice, bias and bigotry that struggles with notions of connectivity, interdependency, reciprocity and plurality.

In response to the need for change, whilst it was said that the way forward is no secret, it does actually contain a secret. To internationalise the self, one needs to have some understanding not only of the Cultural Other but also of oneself. It is manifestly clear that as much as we need to engage with ideas of Otherness, there is a necessity to *dis*-engage with one's own identity and self-reflect on its construction. This prerequisite is acknowledged by a number of writers; "…before we can recognize the 'Other', we have to know ourselves well" (Stromquist 2002); "Only when we have clearly defined our own person and identity are we able to understand other identities" (Breuer 2002, p.15); "Respect for the other presupposes that a person has considerable self-awareness" (Djebar 2002, p.229); "…if one is to understand others, one must first understand oneself" (International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century 1996, p.93); "…a degree of confident self awareness is not necessarily to be seen as a conservative force in society. It can be a pre-condition for a sustained program of social or economic revival" (Milner 1996, p.17).

The message seems clear. This is the initial and necessary step in comprehending, accepting, and working with Otherness. It is a personal "turn"; a change of focus, analogous to the turns that Heidegger made from theology to philosophy and then into phenomenology to help interpret Aristotle's works (Fieser, 2003b). It is taking a step back from how we have seen our place in the world and asking "Why do we think like we do?", "Why do we react like this?", "Why do we see you like that?", and "What discourses and narratives have led us to respond to you like we do?". It is looking out through looking in. Knowing what is outside by knowing what is inside. It is perhaps the fundamental activity that Said (1995) would have us undertake to understand Otherness. Honesty in inspecting one's personal philosophical framework is not an easy task and it requires openness and detachment, underwritten by a self-referential consistency and a willingness to step outside what is acceptable, even fashionable, and perhaps expected (Gibbons and Sanderson 2002, p.4). The challenge is well made and committing to it might possibly give us a lens through which we can see the unknown, in this case the Cultural Other, for what it is and allay the fears that we have had of it.

Equally challenging, however, is Slade's (2002) reminder that the kind of philosophical self-awareness and critical self-reflection required for such introspective engagement is neither a feature of contemporary life in Australia, nor the current focus of education at any level (p.25). Our rhetoric may be that of openness, pluralism, tolerance, flexibility, and transparency, but the litmus test is to see how this is reflected in practice. As Goeudevert (2002) suggests:

> If we brush aside the buzzwords, we discover that most of us live 'in one spot', that we have remained what Schlegel once described as nothing but – more or less – rational oysters. Immobile and inward-looking, rigid, tight-lipped, and tormented by fears of loss, we hide our 'pearls' away without realizing that the value of these riches can only truly be appreciated through the eyes of others and in dialogue with them. (p.44)

Again, there is a way forward but it is not easy. Individually and collectively, we may not want to do it and we may not like what we find. This sort of internationalisation entails a risk, but no greater risk than that posited by 'short-sighted populism' which, according to Kalantzis and Cope (2000), is a political reaction reaction against the effects of globalisation which translates to "let's go back to the certitudes of the Aussie past" (p.32). This sort of retreat from internationalisation, suggests Slade (2002), puts Otherness at the "mercy of circumstances" (p.26). It would promote a national identity in Australia that is based on fear; "fear of others, fear of ideas, fear of a future different from the past … is what is basest in Australians" (Flanagan 2002, p.5).

Quite remarkably, this personal journey of *de*construction and *re*construction turns current conceptions of internationalisation and globalisation on their head. It is a revolutionary way of thinking about things and equates to 'strong' internationalisation, which globalises from the 'bottom up'. Appadurai's (2001) notion of weak and strong internationalisation, although specifically directed at the enterprise of academic research, is relevant to the internationalisation of the self. The former is essentially a superficial engagement with the issues whilst the latter is a laborious, even contentious, deeper, more sophisticated and genuine desire to explore what it means to become internationalised (p.16). In turn, strong internationalisation of the self would be congruent with Appadurai's (2001) notion of "grassroots globalization"; a way of 'globalising from below' (p.3). It represents an opportunity for humanistic advancement in the face of the domination of present neo-liberal, neo-conservative, and implicit neo-colonial agendas influencing politics, economics and culture. Whilst it may not solve the great antinomies of power that characterise the world, it might help level the playing field (Appadurai 2001, p.20).

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined several themes that relate to our contemporary engagement with the Cultural Other. From the outset, the platform of existentialism was used as a reference point to investigate globalisation and the way that global forces are leading to increased contact with Otherness. The rationale was that an existential consideration is useful because it takes into consideration how individuals go about constructing their lives in uncertain times. The 'dangerous' world in which they live is filled with obstacles not only from the far-reaching effects of neo-liberal globalism, but also the way in which global forces project Otherness, especially in the form of the Cultural Other, into the West. After considering the nature of globalisation and the Cultural Other, as well as some existential relationships between them, the 'fear of the unknown' was advanced as being fundamental to an explanation of the difficulty that we have had in regarding Otherness. From this, the idea of the 'known unknown' was put forward as a way that we commonly regard Otherness through stereotyping, rather that making a concerted effort to know and accept its substance. Finally, existential internationalisation was offered as a means by which individuals and communities could move forward in terms of understanding Cultural Others through taking the initial step to understand themselves. It is through the deconstruction of our own identity that we can begin to appreciate what we stand for and how we see the world, including how and why we construct Otherness as we do.

As much as the paper stepped back from notions of education per se, its deliberations nevertheless inform the bigger picture of the sorts of things that would be useful when considering what we should be educated *for*. That is, the argument throughout clearly supports a call for curricula that

prepares people for life in a world that is changing rapidly. To be sure, education needs to make us competent in terms of vocational skills and technical proficiency, but it also needs to equip us better for life and work in a world where the dynamic associated with traditional national borders, whilst still a powerful agent of separation and regulation, is itself subject to change. This is particularly so with reference to the cross-border flows of culture, people and ideas. If our education does not take up this challenge, then all we will do is create more efficient and technical ways of extending hegemonies and partitioning pockets of people from each other. That is, 'difference' will become more accentuated, more complete, more institutionalised, and more divisive. By no means, based on present indications, is it a *fait accompli* that we are heading in a direction that is any different from this.

When it was suggested earlier that the next few decades would be critical in terms of the survival of humanity as a species, it initially might be taken that such a statement is overly sensational. Perhaps each generation that passes thinks the same thing. The difference between now and a few hundred years ago, however, is the means that various groups have at their disposal to inflict widespread destruction around the planet (in the form of nuclear and biological weapons; not to mention our own unsustainable and rapacious *growth-as-development* mentality) is now part of our reality. Whilst not wanting to be alarmist or pessimistic, it is worth heeding the message that serious thinking needs to be done to ensure that globalisation does not spell the end of humanity's journey because we, collectively, could not engage with the Cultural Other in a way that would have us rise above "ancient hatreds" (Goldmark 2002, p.53). Perhaps Goldmark's (2002) thoughts can provide adequate closure to the paper, where he reflects on what is needed to move forward in a constructive manner. Fittingly, it is an existential exhortation to become something greater (as in more wholesome and authentic) than our present condition by 'visiting places' that we have yet to spend much time:

> We must search within ourselves, we must think generously, we must react prudently and gently, and we must empathize with daring imagination. We must be respectful and measured in the assertion of our own beliefs … Above all, we must listen with compassion and reflection. We must listen to new voices, and we must listen to old voices in new ways … We must bend ourselves to this task because we do not have as much time as we once thought we did. And we must approach these sensitive subjects carefully and thoughtfully, because if we rush and do not devote to it as much time as it requires, then we will achieve nothing. (p.59)

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