



# TRANSFORMATIVE HARMONY

*Edited By*  
**Ananta Kumar Giri**



# Transformative Harmony

## **Creative Horizons**

### **New Experiments in Collaborative Imagination, Border-Crossing Transformations and Planetary Realizations**

Who has eaten our windows? Asked Friedensreich Hundertwasser, a great experimenter with art and life. Today we suffer from the condition of our broken windows, closed doors and bounded horizons. *Creative Horizons* bring together new initiatives in research, dialogues and knowledge generation from a wide range of fields of creative works such as art and poetic creations, social sciences and humanities such as Philosophy and Literature. It brings together creative seekers and writers from different disciplines and domains from around the world. It builds on collaborative imagination and new movements of practice and ideas from across circles of engagement and strives to create rooted planetary conversations.

#### **Series Editor**

Ananta Kumar Giri, *Madras Institute of Development Studies, India*

#### **Co-Editors**

Marcus Bussey, *University of Sunshine Coast, Australia*

Abhijeet Paul, *University of California, Berkeley, USA*

Piet Strydom, *University College Cork, Ireland*

#### **International Editorial Advisory Board**

Shandar Ahmad, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*

Christian Bartolf, *Gandhi Information Center, Germany*

Dmitri Bondarenko, *Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Federation*

Meera Chakravorty, *Jain University, India*

John Clammer, *Jindal Global University, India*

Frank Clooney, *Harvard University, USA*

Elaine Desmond, *University College Cork, Ireland*

A. Osman Farrah, *Aalborg University, Denmark*

Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, *Universiti Sanis Malaysia, Malaysia*

N.K. Das, *Formerly Anthropological Survey of India (ASI), Kolkata, India*

Des Gasper, *Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands*

Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra, *Hindu University of America, USA*

Manoranjan Mohanty, *Council of Social Development, Delhi*

Amena Mohsin, *Dhaka University, Bangladesh*

Asha Mukherjee, *Visva Bharati University, India*

Aakash Singh Rathore, *LUISS University, Rome and Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*

T.K. Oommen, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*

Heikki Patomäki, *University of Helsinki, Finland*

Boike Rehbein, *Humboldt University, Germany*

Karl-Julius Reubke, *Independent Scholar, Germany*

Johannes D. Schmidt, *Aalborg University, Denmark*

Subash Sharma, *Indus Business Academy, India*

Geir Sigurosson, *University of Iceland, Iceland*

Ronald S. Stade, *Malmo University, Sweden*

Joe Tharamangalam, *Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada*

Joao J. Villa-Cha, *Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, Rome*

# Transformative Harmony

Editor

Ananta Kumar Giri



Studera Press  
New Delhi



© 2019 Studera Press. All rights reserved.  
ISBN 978-93-85883-21-7

*No part of this work may be reproduced, utilised, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise – without the prior permission of the publisher and copyright owner. Although every precaution has been taken to verify the accuracy of the information contained in the book, the publisher assumes no responsibility for any error or omissions.*

*No liability is assumed for damages that may result from the use of information contained within. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in the book.*

*The author/authors would heartily appreciate healthy criticisms, suggestions for improvement, and detection of error, if any, from the readers, which will be gratefully acknowledged.*

**Published by**

Studera Press

1586/113, FF, Tri Nagar, Delhi – 110 035, India

Tel: 011-27383728

E-mail: [info@studerapress.com](mailto:info@studerapress.com)

Website: [www.studerapress.com](http://www.studerapress.com)

**Studera Team**

Shivendu Pandey, Sandip Kumar Maurya

**Printed in India**

*For*

*R. Sunder Rajan*

*Maulana Wahiduddin Khan*

*Lois Holzman*

*Leo Semashko*

*Johannes D. Smith*



# Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xv</i>
Transformative Harmony: An Introduction and An Invitation <i>Ananta Kumar Giri</i>	xxi

## Part One: The Calling of Transformative Harmony

1. The Calling of Transformative Harmony <i>Ananta Kumar Giri</i>	3
2. Revealing the Hidden Harmony: The Heart of Transformative Harmony <i>Paul Hague</i>	17
3. Harmony Rediscovered: Transformation on the Path with No Goal or Finding a Way Back to What We Are <i>Paul Schwartzentruber</i>	35
4. On the Focus Imaginarius of the Nascent Global Society and Contemporary Social Theory: What is the Status and Role of the Idea of Harmony? <i>Piet Strydom</i>	63
5. Harmony After Modernity: A Self-Critical Western View <i>Hans-Herbert Kögler</i>	79
6. Transformative Harmony: Culture and <i>Prama</i> <i>Marcus Bussey</i>	95
7. Biopsychology of <i>Sadhana</i> and Cooperation: Foundation of Transformative Harmony for Our Individual and Collective Welfare <i>Sid Vishwamitra Jordan</i>	105

8. Transformative Harmony: Reflection on Ideas and Practices	127
<i>Meera Chakravorty</i>	
9. Archaeology of Harmony	139
<i>Karl-Julius Reubke</i>	
10. Harmony is a Dynamic State of Being	145
<i>Henk de Weijer</i>	
11. Walking Towards Transformative Harmony: A Meditation with Paul Ricoeur and Beyond	161
<i>Kuruvilla Pandikattu</i>	
12. From Unity to Harmony: Raimon Panikkar's Advaitic Trinitarianism	183
<i>Anthony Savari Raj</i>	
13. On Transcending Dualism Towards Harmony: Walking and Meditating with Charles Hartshorne	191
<i>Warayuth Sriwarakuel</i>	

## Part Two: Transformative Harmony, Human Development and Social Transformations

14. Understanding Nature of Action and Harmony in the Bhagavad Gita: <i>Kāma, Samnyasa and Karma</i>	205
<i>Binod Kumar Agarwala</i>	
15. Harmony and New Horizons of Human Development	241
<i>Mala Kapadia</i>	
16. Transformative Harmony and the Community-Making Process	265
<i>Julie M. Geredien</i>	
17. The Fresh Stop Project: An Oasis in a Food Desert of Louisville	305
<i>Karyn Moskowitz</i>	
18. Perspectives on Bioregional Urbanism: Transformative Harmony with Living Systems	317
<i>Sarah Howard with Ninian R. Stein and Stephen Bissonnette</i>	
19. Biohappiness and Holistic Harmony: The Vision and Mission of M.S. Swaminathan	359
<i>James Ponniah</i>	
20. Self-Knowledge—Balancing Subjectivity and Objectivity—as the Key to Social Harmony	373
<i>Felix Padel</i>	
21. Social Harmony or Cooperation as the First Principle of a Happy Society	385
<i>W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz</i>	

- 
22. Towards JHS Vision for Social Harmony Without Hierarchy 403  
*Subhash Sharma*
23. Harmony of Individual and Collective: A Philosophy of a Future Civilisation 419  
*Artyom Goncharov*

### **Part Three: The Work and Dance of Transformative Harmony in Self, Culture and Cosmos**

24. Towards Harmony Between Communities 427  
*C.T. Kurien*
25. Towards a Culture of Transformative Harmony 431  
*S. Painadath S.J.*
26. Realising Transformative Harmony: *Vipassana*, the Art of Self-Transcendence, and a New Social Mutuality 439  
*Swati Desai*
27. Harmonising Body, Mind and Soul: Healing and Developing New Consciousness 447  
*Manisha A. Mehrotra*
28. Harmony and a Journey with Wholeness 461  
*Minati Pradhan*
29. Mandala Art, Healing and Harmony 467  
*Viviana Siddhi*
30. Human-Nature Harmony, and Nature Worship: Reappraisal of Indigenous Faith in Eastern Himalaya/Northeast India 469  
*N.K. Das*
31. Harmony and Deep Ecology-Based Corporate Social Responsibility 493  
*Agung Wibowo, Ravik Karsidi, Bani Sudardi, Mahendra Wijaya*
32. Freedom, Culture and Transformative Harmony: The Dialectical Dichotomy of Christianity and Pre-colonial Igbo Culture 507  
*Sabine Jell-Bahlsen*
33. Transformative Harmony: Lessons Learned and Best Practices from Indigenous African Communities 525  
*Fidele Lumeya*

### **Part Four: Politics, Poetics and Spirituality of Transformative Harmony**

34. The Politics of Transformative Harmony 543  
*Elaine Desmond*

35. Harmonious Conflict	555
<i>Tom H. Hastings</i>	
36. Conflict, Harmony and Transformation	559
<i>Mike Doogan</i>	
37. Dialogue, Sacrifice and Reconciliation: A Study of Kandhamal Violence, Odisha	565
<i>Arun K. Patnaik and Rajesh Bag</i>	
38. Collective Trauma and Narrative Harmony: Mapping the Legacy of Trauma and Displacement in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding	585
<i>Jeremy Rinker</i>	
39. Transformative Harmony and Inharmony in Nepal's Lost Transition	611
<i>Bishnu Pathak</i>	
40. Peace and Harmony: A Case Study of Tharu Community of Nepal	643
<i>Narayan Khadka</i>	
41. Peace-making Revolution: Towards a New Politics of Transformative Harmony in the Israeli-Palestinian Struggle	669
<i>Sapir Handelman</i>	
42. 'Stop this Nightmare, I Pray...': Armed Forces Special Power Act – the Tablet for 'Harmony' and Northeast India	689
<i>Babli Mallick</i>	
43. A Feminine Approach to Conflict Transformations and Harmony	701
<i>Sudha Sreenivasa Reddy</i>	
44. Harmony: A Pessimist's View	711
<i>William Falcetano</i>	
45. Finding Harmony to Live In: From Noise to Music	731
<i>Sara J. Wolcott</i>	
46. <i>Communitas Harmonia</i> in Wordsworth: A Musicosociological Glance	741
<i>Nirmal Selvamony</i>	
47. Music, Cosmopolitanism and Transformative Harmony	763
<i>Christian Bartolf</i>	
48. On the Possibility of a Global Political Community: The Enigma of 'Small Local Differences' within Humanity	775
<i>Heikki Patomäki</i>	
49. Migration and Transnationalism: Justice, Security and Harmony	811
<i>Abdulkadir Osman Farah</i>	



---

50. Jamming with the Universe: A Journey and a Paradigm Shift Towards a New Song of Harmony for Humanity	837
<i>David Pepper Sarnoff</i>	
51. Becoming Agents of Togetherness: Working and Meditating for Peace and Harmony	853
<i>Thomas Menamparampil</i>	
Afterword: Harmony, Society and Transformation	889
<i>John Clammer</i>	
Notes on Editor and Contributors	893
Index	907



# Foreword

I thank my friend Ananta Kumar Giri for asking me to write a foreword to this book, *Transformative Harmony*. As it happens, I received his request just when I was reading Pope Francis's book, *The Church of Mercy*, which contains a series of speeches and sermons delivered on separate occasions during 2013. One such speech is a homily presented at a prayer vigil for peace under the title, "The Logic of Power and Violence." As the pontiff points out, the logic of power and violence is the very antithesis of humanity's striving for a "world of harmony and peace" – in ourselves, in our relations with others, in families, in and between nations. Where this antithesis prevails, everything falls apart and disintegrates – which is more than a mere slippage from harmony to "disharmony." No, Francis states, "there is no such thing as disharmony; there is either harmony or we fall into chaos, where there is violence, conflict, fear, destruction."

The return from chaos to harmony requires more than a set of new procedures or bureaucratic structures; it requires an ethical turn-around or transformation, that is, a re-awakening of conscience. Pope Francis recalls the biblical story of fratricide where God asks Cain's conscience, "where is Abel your brother?" and Cain responds, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9) For Francis, we are all asked this question, and must be stirred up to face this question. For, yes, we are our brother's keeper: "To be human means to care for one another!" But when harmony is broken, a metamorphosis occurs: "The brother who is to be cared for and loved becomes an adversary to be fought and killed."

In our time, this change is pervasive and steadily globalised. For Francis, this is the stark truth: "We bring about the rebirth of Cain in every act of violence and in every war. All of us!" Today, as we allow ourselves to be guided by the "idols of the market" – by selfishness and the striving for unlimited power and wealth –

fratricide is being normalised and universalised. In the pontiff's words: "We have perfected our weapons, while our conscience has fallen asleep. . . . As if it were normal, we continue to sow destruction, pain, death! Violence and war lead only to death; they speak of death! Violence and war are the language of death!" Clearly, a major transformation is needed in our time: leading back from chaos to harmony, from death and destruction back to life.

**Fred Dallmayr**  
University of Notre Dame

# Preface

Truth is not that which is demonstrable. Truth is that which is ineluctable.

—Antoine de St Exupery

Her tortured invisible spirit continues still

To toil though in darkness, to create though with pangs

She carries crucified God upon her breast.

—Sri Aurobindo, 1950:180.

The conception of justice in Western, patriarchal tradition is of a set of absolute laws that transcend the world, that are imposed on the world from outside[...]

The immanent conception of justice is not based upon rules or authority, but upon integrity, integrity of self and integrity of relationship.

The worldview of immanence values each self as a manifestation of Goddess, as a channel of power-from-within. People of integrity are those whose selves integrate both the positive and the negative, the dark and the light, the painful emotions as well as the pleasurable ones. They are people who are willing to look their own shadows instead of flinching from them. They honour the shadow because they know that its very distortions reveal the shape of the Ground underneath.[...]

So I speak of the Goddess as weaver, as spider, and I begin to pay attention to the spiders who build their webs in my corners. I experience the web as a rhythm of strands and spaces.

—Starhawk 1988:34-35, 74.

Non-violence leads to the highest ethics which is the goal of all evolution. Until we stop harming all other living beings, we are still savages.

—APJ Abdul Kalam with Arun Tiwari 2015:190.

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

—Mahatma Gandhi

Harmony is a multi-dimensional reality, possibility and calling in our lives. But many a time this is locked up in structures of domination and closure and we need to interrogate and transform this so that it helps us realise our self and collective potential. Transformative Harmony is concerned with such processes of critique, creativity and transformations. It is a multi-dimensional dance with light and darkness, bondage and struggles for liberation. It is a practice and movement for realisation of beauty, dignity and dialogues in self, culture, society and cosmos in the midst of ugliness, disrespect, violence and monological assertions of many kinds. As Mata Amritanandamayi Devi lovingly known as Amma around the world tells us in her evocative address, *Living in Harmony*:

No one is an isolated island; we are all links in the great chain of life. With our without our knowledge, each action we perform has an effect on others. The vibrations of joy and sorrow, as well as the good and evil thoughts emanating from each living being, permeate this entire universe, influencing each one of us. This entire cosmos exists in a state of mutual dependence and support. Living in accordance with this principle of universal harmony is what is known as *dharma*. The sorrow of every living being in this world is our own sorrow, and the happiness of every living being is our own happiness. We cannot harm even a small ant without harming ourselves. In harming others, we harm ourselves. Similarly when we help others, we are helping ourselves.

—Devi 2000:26

Like many of us I have always been intuitively drawn to the call of harmony in life. My journey with the theme of harmony began with my meeting and unfolding friendship with Leo Semashko from St. Petersburg. We first met on the roof top of a youth hostel in Beijing in July 2004 as both of us were staying there and taking part in World Congress of Sociology organised by International Institute of Sociology. Leo then started nurturing Global Harmony Association as a forum of like-minded friends and co-travelers from around the world to work, walk and meditate further with the calling of harmony. As part of this, I contributed an essay

on transformative harmony to the book *ABC of Harmony* edited by Leo. I then shared this essay with many friends and we held a symposium on this theme in the form of a special issue in *Gandhi Marg* in 2013. Our present book builds upon this special issue with further participation of more contributors many of whom I met during my journey in different parts of the world who have brought their own unique contribution to this epochal challenge of our times. Now we present this gift of a much expanded discourse and exploration of harmony to all interested friends and to our striving Humanity.

I dedicate this book to Leo Semashko, R. Sunder Rajan, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Lois Holzman and Johannes D. Schmidt. Leo has been nurturing the vision and practice of harmony with love, care and dedication for years. R. Sunder Rajan was a great philosopher of India and the world he explored deeper dimensions of human condition by bringing critical philosophy and process of creative mutuality together which contributes to realisation of harmony. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is a great striver for peace, harmony and justice in our contemporary world. He has inspired many efforts in peace building across borders. Lois Holzman is an inspiring explorer and creator who has created social therapy as a way of deep communication and realising harmony. She has co-nurtured East Side Institute in New York as well as All Stars Programmes as creative efforts creating harmony in lives and communities. Johannes D. Schmidt who teaches at Aalborg University is a friend of the world as he has connected so many friends and students from different parts of the world with webs of love, humour and quotidian dreams for a better human future. Johannes is a living dance with a different drum of harmony as our other friends in this journey. It has been my blessing to have walked a few steps with these friends of the world. In dedicating our book to these strivers and seekers of humanity we express not only our personal gratitude but what we collectively owe to these sons and daughter of our Mother Earth.

This book has been long in the making and I thank all the contributors for their patience. I thank Leo for our initial journey and all the contributors for their kindness and patience. I am grateful to Professor Fred Dallmayr for his Foreword and Professor John Clammer for his Afterword. I thank Professor John Moolakkattu for nurturing our special issue in *Gandhi Marg*. I am grateful to Akshay Jain of Studera Press for helping the book series *Creative Horizons* as well as this book dance with the Light of our Lives and the Universe.

Our world today is full of conflicts and violence as well as movements to overcome these and I hope this book helps us realize transformative harmony in our lives and the world and on the way sing and dance together possibly the following two poems by the author:



### Alphabets of Creation

A for Aleph, Aum, Allah  
 B for Beginning  
 C for Creation  
 A is also Annihilation  
 B, Banning and Bigotry  
 C, Cunning and Cruelty  
 How do we work with Aleph and Annihilation  
 Together  
 In the alphabet of creation  
 Towards a New *Tapasya* of Transformations

### Ripples

Ripples arise  
 When we touch  
 think and write  
 Meditate and Listen  
 Ripples of Heart  
 Waiting for our kissing  
 Kissing Lips and Earth  
 Beings and Co-Beings  
 Co-Walking and Co-Meditating  
 With and across the water  
 Body and Spirit  
 Forests and Peaks  
 Looking at each other's eyes  
 Pining for Intimate Whispers to Come  
 A New Movement of Love  
 With and Beyond Hatred  
 Spirals of a New Consciousness  
 Words, Worlds and Cosmos

Holi, Festival of Color, 2019

Ananta Kumar Giri

### References Cited

- Abdul Kalam, A.P.J. with Arun Tiwari. 2015. *Transcendence: My Spiritual Experience with Pramukh Swamiji*. Delhi: Harper Elements.
- Devi, Amritanandamayi. 2000. *Living in Harmony*. Amritapuri, Kollam: Mata Amritanandamayi Mission Trust.

---

Starhawk. 1988/1982. *Dream the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*. Boston: Beacon Press.  
Sri Aurobindo. 1950. *Savitri*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



# Transformative Harmony

## An Introduction and An Invitation

*Ananta Kumar Giri*

The problem of finite transcendence is essentially the problem of the possibility of communication – i.e. communication or dialogue between subjects and communication or dialogue of human subjects with the world. It is essential to note that these two are aspects of a single dialogue, which we may call the dialogue of transcendence.

– R. Sunder Rajan 1987:83

Buber said to me that if he were to write *I and Thou* again he would try to find some other terminology for the I-Thou relation with nature, nonetheless he was unable to call nature simply an It, to him the linden tree that he saw when he walked out was as real, as much able to come to him in its uniqueness, to have an impact on him so that bending over it he would experience its bestowing side coming to him [...] Buber gave a speech in 1952 “Hope for This Hour.” In this speech he said, “The hope for this hour depends upon learning, despite all, to trust. [...] When Hammarskjöld died, he was translating Buber’s *I and Thou* because he felt that Buber had something extraordinarily significant to say precisely about conflict in our times.

– Maurice Friedman 1995

The trustworthiness of any given way of knowing will be measured by its contribution to strengthening resistance and preventing resignation. In this way, social experiences will be retrieved and valorised in enabling ways that strengthen the struggles against modern forms of domination. To situate resistance and struggle at the center of emergent epistemological communities in no way implies that oppressed social groups are taken into account as long as they struggle and resist. This would mean an unacceptable modernist reductionism. People do many other things other than resisting and struggling; they enjoy life, however precarious the conditions may be, they celebrate and cherish cooperation; and sometimes they also decide not to resist and to give up. Moreover, relations of domination always involve relations other than those of domination.

– Boaventura de Sousa Santos 2016:8-9

Harmony is an integral challenge of life and human condition. At present, as we are going through disjunctions and conflicts of many kinds, there is a crying need for its multi-dimensional realisation. *Transformative Harmony* brings together essays on different aspects of vision and practice of harmony in self, cultures, societies and histories. Part One of the book, “The Calling of Transformative Harmony,” explores different dimensions of the concept and vision of transformative harmony. In his opening essay, Ananta Kumar Giri discusses the challenge of transformative harmony as a process which is not status-quoist but transformative. It challenges existing structures and discourse of domination and is accompanied by compassion, confrontation and a new art of integration. In his following essay, “Revealing the Hidden Harmony: The Heart of Transformative Harmony,” Paul Hague tells us how there is a hidden harmony in life and society which is “defined as the union of all opposites.” For Hague, we can bring harmony to the world like Johannes Kepler’s *Harmonice Mundi*, which integrates “geometry, music, poetry, architecture, and astronomy into a glorious whole.” Hague’s essay is followed by Paul Schwartzentruber who in his essay, “Harmony Rediscovered: Transformation on the Path with No Goal or Finding a Way Back to What We Are,” shows us how transformative harmony calls sacrifice of ego and willingness to embrace suffering with self, other the world as exemplified by Gandhi and discussed by thinkers such as Simon Weil.

These essays on the wider vision and discourse of transformative harmony are followed by critical sociological reflections of Piet Strydom. In his essay, “On the Focus Imaginarius of the Nascent Global Society and Contemporary Social Theory: What is the Status and Role of the Idea of Harmony?” Strydom asks a number of important questions and offers a range of sociological and philosophical ideas about harmony. He urges us to realise that “there is no single way in which

the counterfactual idea of harmony has to or could be realised immanently.” Strydom further tells us how “at the very centre of the attainment of a harmonious society is a learning process or, rather, a set of learning processes.” The same spirit or critical learning is followed by Hans-Herbert Kögler who in his subsequent essay, “Harmony After Modernity: A Self-Critical Western View,” explores a non-ideological and non-utopian view of harmony. As he writes:

If I therefore suggest that *the concept of harmony* be reconstructed as a *viable normative resource for human self-realisation*, we must immediately guard ourselves against a facile adaptation or ideological invocation of its concept. Indeed, to merely proclaim (holistic) harmony as opposed to (individual) freedom, to oppose a Western orientation as individual and subjective self-realisation to an Eastern holistic and harmonious way of being, would completely underbid the level of reflection that is needed here. One of my main claims is indeed that a reconstruction of harmony as value-orientation can succeed only if it is mediated with *a reflexive sense of the embedded self which re-orientes its own existence with regard to such a value*. Harmony, in other words, can only succeed if it is mediated with a (Western?) sense of self-reflexivity that ensures that either ideological or utopian uses of its concept are ruled out.

Kögler’s essay is followed by Marcus Bussey’s, “Transformative Harmony: Culture and *Prama*,” which presents the concept of *prama* from P.R. Sarkar which represents dynamic balance. Bussey also helps us realise how the concept of transformative harmony is “layered, open-ended and dynamic” and how it can help us realise transformative possibilities in culture. He also discusses harmonic diasporas as “places within the emergent cultural field that offers sites for re-imagining possibilities.” Bussey’s essay is followed by Sid Vishwamitra Jordan’s on “Biopsychology of *Sadhana* and Cooperation: Foundation of Transformative Harmony for Our Individual and Collective Welfare.” In his essay, Jordan who tells us about ancient and modern biopsychology urges us to realise the connection between body, mind and spirit, and how realising this connection helps us achieve transformative harmony in our individual and collective lives. This is followed by Meera Charkavorty’s essay, “Transformative Harmony: Reflection on Ideas and Practices,” who challenges us to realise how harmony calls for realisation of justice. She also challenges us to understand how realisation of harmony calls for both social and spiritual movements such as Vasavanna’s in Karnataka. In his subsequent essay, “Archaeology of Harmony,” Karl-Julius Reubke presents us how in the past our concept of harmony was tied to a pre-established order and now we all have to take responsibility for creating a harmonious condition. Here what Reubke writes deserves our careful consideration:

Up to the time of enlightenment harmony was discussed as pre-established. Today there is no such harmony. We cannot ask any God or divine being to give us back the lost understanding, the lost harmony. We are certainly free to create our own new harmony. This is possible if every individual is in harmony with the whole. It is a no steady-state, rather a continuous process of making things better. Instead of one *unmoved mover* who might have set the whole world in motion this is now the task of all individual humans.

Reubke's essay is followed by Henk de Weijer's, "Harmony is a Dynamic State of Being," where de Weijer discusses several aspects of the process of dynamic harmony. For de Weijer, harmony depends upon balanced action which in turn depends upon coordination between thinking, willing and acting.

The subsequent contributions in Part One of this book present us approaches to harmony from the perspective of many different contemporary thinkers. In his essay "Walking Towards Transformative Harmony: A Meditation with Paul Ricoeur and Beyond", Kuruvilla Pandikattu presents the vision and perspective of Paul Ricoeur on harmony. In his subsequent essay, "From Unity to Harmony: Raimon Panikkar's Advaitic Trinitarianism," Anthony Savari Raj presents us the thoughts of Raimundo Panikkar on harmony and unity. This is followed by Warayuth Sriwarakuel's essay, "On Transcending Dualism Towards Harmony: Walking and Meditating with Charles Hartshorne," which presents Hartson's perspective on realising harmony in self and society, especially in terms of inter-religious interaction and communication.

With these essays we come to Part Two of this book, "Transformative Harmony, Human Development and Social Transformations." This part begins with Binod Kumar Agarwala's essay on "Understanding Nature of Action and Harmony in the Bhagavad Gita: *Kāma*, *Saṁnyāsa* and *Karma*" in which Agarwala presents notion of institutional action from Bhagavad Gita and its implication for realising transformative harmony. This is followed by Mala Kapadia's essay, "Harmony and New Horizons of Human Development," in which Kapadia presents vision and perspective of human development from Indic thought frames such as Patanjali's Yoga. This is followed by Julie M. Geredien's essay on "Transformative Harmony and the Community-Making Process" in which Geredien elaborates on many dimensions of harmony building upon multiple traditions of thinking from East as well as West. Geredien also links realisation of transformative harmony to community making processes. Geredien's essay is followed by the essay, "The Fresh Stop Project: An Oasis in a Food Desert of Louisville" by Karyn Moskowitz. The next essay "Perspectives on Bioregional Urbanism: Transformative Harmony with Living Systems" by Sarah Howard and others links realisation of harmony to



bio-regional rhythms in self, space and society. They plead for the rise and mode of bio-regional leaders who can establish harmony in society. Their essay is followed by James Ponniah's essay on "Biohappiness and Holistic Harmony: The Vision and Mission of M.S. Swaminathan" in which Ponniah presents the thought and work of M.S. Swaminathan on harmony.

The subsequent essays in this part explore different aspects of social harmony. In his essay, "Self-Knowledge—Balancing Subjectivity and Objectivity—as the Key to Social Harmony," Felix Padel argues how self-knowledge is key to realising social harmony. In his subsequent essay, "Social Harmony or Cooperation as the First Principle of a Happy Society," W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz describes how cooperation is the foundation of social harmony and happiness. In his subsequent essay, "Towards JHS Vision for Social Harmony Without Hierarchy," Subash Sharma presents the idea of harmony without hierarchy. Sharma also suggests the need for "transformation of human thinking from a Division (Divided vision)-oriented view to a unified vision of cosmic connectivity." Sharma's essay is followed by Artyom Goncharov's essay, "Harmony of Individual and Collective: A Philosophy of a Future Civilisation" in which Goncharov outlines pathways of a future civilisation based upon harmony.

With these we come to Part Three of the book, "The Work and Dance of Transformative Harmony in Self, Culture and Cosmos." This begins with C.T. Kurien's essay, "Towards Harmony Between Communities" in which Kurien argues that a proper understanding of community as site of diversity and multiplicity is crucial to realising harmony between communities. This is then followed by S. Painadath's essay, "Towards a Culture of Transformative Harmony" in which Painadath argues that while mind can stay only at the level of perceived diversity, intuitive faculty (*budhi*) can find the inter-connection that lies in and across diversity. Realising this unity is crucial to finding harmony in our lives and establishing a culture of transformative harmony in culture and society. For Painadath, here we can learn from the example of tree which is a living symbol of unity and diversity. From the tree and the garden and forest surrounding it, we can learn how to develop our mind as a garden where we continuously strive to go beyond our monkey mind of distraction and establish focus and concentration. Meditation helps us in this process. It also helps us establish a new mutuality among ourselves. In her essay, "Realising Transformative Harmony: *Vipasana*, the Art of Self-Transcendence, and a New Social Mutuality," Swathi Desai describes *Vipasana* meditation as a way of realising self-transcendence, social mutuality and transformative harmony. In her following essay, "Harmonising Body, Mind and Soul: Healing and Developing New Consciousness," Manisha A. Mehrotra tells us about new ways of harmonising body, mind and soul which can help in realisation of harmony. In her following essay, "Harmony and a Journey with Wholeness,"

Minati Pradhan describes her experience of raising her specially gifted son Soumen Gaurav and the journey of wholeness it involves. This is followed by Viviana Siddhi's essay, "Mandala Art, Healing and Harmony" who tells us how art can help us realise harmony.

The subsequent essays in this part discuss different aspects of harmony in the lives of communities mainly from an anthropological perspective. In his essay, "Human-Nature Harmony, and Nature Worship: Reappraisal of Indigenous Faith in Eastern Himalaya/Northeast India," N.K. Das discusses how indigenous faith, especially faith in a harmonious relationship between Human and Nature helps in establishing harmony in communities in Northeast India. This is followed by Agung Wibowo and his colleagues' essay on "Harmony and Deep Ecology-Based Corporate Social Responsibility" in which they tell us the way deep ecology approach can help us in realising social harmony and how some initiatives in corporate social responsibility are doing this in Java, Indonesia. This is then followed by Sabine Jell-Bahlsen's essay on "Freedom, Culture and Transformative Harmony: The Dialectical Dichotomy of Christianity and Pre-colonial Igbo Culture," in which Jell-Bahlsen tells us how the idea of harmony in "self, society, Nature and the Divine" is closely linked to freedom as a prerequisite. For without freedom, harmony remains a farce. For her, "In the absence of freedom there cannot be true harmony – neither for the individual nor within society." She tells us how pre-colonial Igbo culture had freedom at its core which was changed by colonialism and the coming of Christian culture. This is followed by Fidele Lumeya's essay, "Transformative Harmony: Lessons Learned and Best Practices from Indigenous African Communities," in which Lumeya presents us indigenous cultural models of peace making and conflict resolution in indigenous African cultures.

With these essays on different aspects of vision and practice of transformative harmony in self, culture, societies and histories, we come to Part Four and final part of the book entitled, "Politics, Poetics and Spirituality of Transformative Harmony." This begins with Elaine Desmond's essay, "The Politics of Transformative Harmony," in which Desmond relates realisation of transformative harmony to struggles in self and society. Reflecting upon scholars of radical democracy such as Mouffe's that "disharmony is an essential aspect of democratic society," Desmond argues that "this disharmony must involve openness to learning as an ethical concern, as well as a recognition of the need to engage in reasonable exchange with others as a means of securing harmony of the Self." Desmond's essay is followed by Tom H. Hastings's on "Harmonious Conflict," in which Hastings, a noted scholar and seeker of peace, tells us how addressing conflicts in a non-violent way despite propensity to violence can help us realise harmony in self and society. Here Hastings challenges us to walk, meditate and experiment with Gandhi in our manifold situations of conflicts as well as other domains of life. The subsequent

essay by Mike Doogan, “Conflict, Harmony and Transformation,” continues the same creative spirit of acknowledging but learning how to overcome conflict and move towards emergent harmonious states of self and society.

The subsequent five essays in Part Four discuss conflicts and movements from reconciliation from different part of the world. In the subsequent essay, “Dialogue, Sacrifice and Reconciliation: A Study of Kandhamal Violence, Odisha,” Arun K. Patnaik and Rajesh Bag describe the processes of dialogue in Kandhamal which help in achieving social harmony after communal conflicts. In his subsequent essay, “Collective Trauma and Narrative Harmony: Mapping the Legacy of Trauma and Displacement in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding,” Rinker describes the process of peace building in which voluntary organisations such as People’s Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR) take part. PVCHR works on violence against marginalised sections of society perpetrated by the Police and the dominant elites of society in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. As Rinker tells us, “PVCHR’s work aims to reconstruct the grammar and self-esteem of the marginalised so as to raise an awareness of privilege in the powerful.” In the process, PVCHR has developed an indigenous process of testimonial therapy where victims of violence learn how to produce narratives of their suffering and share with each other. This creates the possibility of narrative harmony. As Rinker argues, “Testimonial therapy brings collective trauma into the public discourse and opens an important space for grievance to be heard and collectively acted upon – this is a critical seedbed for transformative harmony.” Rinker’s essay is followed by Bishnu Pathak’s essay on the difficult process of peace building in Nepal on the wake of civil war. In his essay, “Transformative Harmony and Inharmony in Nepal’s Lost Transition,” Pathak shows us how *status-quoist* harmony within a structure of feudal domination led to inharmony in state and society in Nepal. For him, “intra-and-inter party transformative harmony is needed to avoid inviting armed conflict in Nepal.” For Pathak, “Transformative harmony is a general philosophy that responds to conflict positively adopting problem-solving, structural, and relational ideology rather than emotional strategy and tactics.” It is befitting that Pathak’s essay is followed by fellow scholar from Nepal, Narayan Khadka who in his essay, “Peace and Harmony: A Case Study of Tharu Community in Nepal,” describes indigenous methods of conflict resolution among the Tharus in Nepal. In his subsequent essay, “Peace-making Revolution: Towards a New Politics of Transformative Harmony in the Israeli-Palestinian Struggle,” Sapir Handelman describes his innovative way of organising people’s congress for peace in which both Israelis and Palestinians take part.

Handelman’s essay is followed by Babli Mallick’s “‘Stop this Nightmare, I Pray...’: Armed Forces Special Power Act-the Tablet for ‘Harmony’ and Northeast India,” in which Mallick tells us about the barbaric violence unleashed by the

Indian Armed Forces on the people living in the Northeast. She describes struggles against this in self, society and literature which hopefully can contribute to creation of harmony in this difficult place. She describes a question that Imdongla – a character in one of Temsula Ao's short story, asks an Army officer, "[...] How would you feel if your fathers were punished for acting out of fear? Fear of you Indian soldiers and fear of the mongrels of the jungle?" But Mallick tells us that "what affected him most was one single question that Imdongla had repeatedly asked: 'What do you want from us?'" Such questions disarm Army personnel and hopefully can make them rethink their violent approach and relate to the other with dignity and respect. Mallick's essay is followed by Sudha Sreenivasa Reddy's essay, "A Feminine Approach to Conflict Transformations and Harmony," in which Reddy presents feminist approaches to peace-building and harmony.

In his subsequent essay, "Harmony: A Pessimist's View," William Falcetano presents a pessimist view of harmony. Falcetano challenges us to come to terms with the dark side of human nature and society which makes striving for harmony quite an uphill task. But despite this the striving for harmony continues in which music plays an important role. Sara J. Wolcott tells us about such reality and possibility in her subsequent essay, "Finding Harmony to Live In: From Noise to Music." The theme of music and harmony is explored in the following three contributions as well. In his essay, "*Communitas Harmonia* in Wordsworth: A Musicosociological Glance," Nirmal Selvamony tells us Wordsworth's poetry is animated by a desire to establish harmony among Humans, Nature and Supernature. In his subsequent essay, "Music, Cosmopolitanism and Transformative Harmony," Christian Bartolf tells us about cosmopolitan sensibility towards transformative global peace and harmony that music and songs of singers and musicians such as Yusuf Islam, Pete Seeger and Joan Baez create. This theme of cosmopolitanism and global political community is explored further in Heikki Patomäki's essay, "On the Possibility of a Global Political Community: The Enigma of 'Small Local Differences' within Humanity," in which Patomäki discusses various approaches to thinking of our identity as belonging to Planet Earth and argues that "humans can and do learn through practical experiences, encounters and dialogues" and "due to learning they can also revise their values, goals and identity." In his subsequent essay, "Migration and Transnationalism: Justice, Security and Harmony," Abdulkadir Osman Farah explores this further in case of transnational migration. Osman Farah discusses how processes of transnational migration are accompanied by the quest for justice, security and harmony. In this context, he specifically focuses on the formation of transnational south-south connection and the way such connections can foster harmony across borders.

This theme of realizing harmony across borders is subsequently cultivated with a touch of personal story and dedication in the following essay, "Jamming

with the Universe: A Journey and a Paradigm Shift Towards a New Song of Harmony for Humanity” by David Pepper Sarnoff in which Sarnoff tells us his experience of jamming with creative people and universe for creating a new song of harmony of humanity by playing music. Sarnoff’s essay is followed by Thomas Menamparampil’s essay, “Becoming Agents of Togetherness: Working and Meditating for Peace and Harmony,” in which Menamparampil urges us to realise how realising transformative harmony and peace calls for each one of us being agents of togetherness rather than isolated and egoistic individualism.

In his Afterword, “Harmony, Society and Transformation,” John Clammer helps us understand the significance of this volume in bringing the challenge of harmony to mainstream social discourse, social practice and social theorizing. As he writes: “To bring the notion of harmony out of its purely cultural usage into the wider discourse of society at large, including its political and economic aspects is an important task, realised in many respects in this volume.” He, at the same time challenges us to realise that we should have had engagement with the vision and practice of dance in our volume. This is a task which we hope some of us can now undertake in our following engagement with this work.

Finally, I hope these essays exploring different aspects of vision and practice of transformative harmony are of interest to readers. These essays may help the seeking and striving souls to contribute in realising transformative harmony in our difficult times of violence, misunderstanding and arrogant closures of many kinds. As we move ahead with this we can sing and dance together with the following lines of Laj Utreja, a member of Global Harmony Association:

Harmony nourishes fertile valleys;  
Where the collective views grow lush and tall!  
Though the saplings we plant may be small;  
Together they’d grow to mutual accord and understanding all.<sup>1</sup>

## Endnote

1. Pl see Laj Utreja, “Harmony from Spiritual Culture” ([www.instituteofspiritualhealing.com](http://www.instituteofspiritualhealing.com))

## References

- Friedman, Maurice. 1995. “Martin Buber’s Philosophical Anthropology”, in S.K. Malik and Pat Boni (eds), *Intercultural Dialogue and The Human Image*. Delhi: D.K. Printworld.

Guilherme, Manuela and Gunther Dietz. 2016. "Interview with Boaventura de Sousa Santos." *Art and Humanities in Education*:1-11

R. Sunder Rajan. 1987. *Towards a Critique of Cultural Reason*. Delhi: Oxford U. Press.

PART ONE

THE CALLING OF  
TRANSFORMATIVE HARMONY





# CHAPTER 1

## The Calling of Transformative Harmony

*Ananta Kumar Giri*

At each rhythm of your dance, O Nataraja,  
Tear off my bonds one by one,  
Wake me up and ring in my consciousness  
The note of freedom through eons of time.

— Rabindranath Tagore

My mother had a strongly Protestant streak in her character, and it may not be too fanciful to think that my father's Roman Catholic temperament found some kind of resonance in my grandmother's Hindu outlook on life.

— Beteille 2012:36

Without ideas in common, no common action would be possible and without common action, men might exist, but there could be nobody social.

— Alexis de Tocqueville

The fundamental problem, I believe, is that at every level we are giving too much attention to the external, material aspects of life while neglecting moral ethics and inner values.

By inner values I mean the qualities we all appreciate in others, and toward which we all have a natural instinct, bequeathed by our biological nature as animals that survive and thrive only in an environment of concern, affection, and warm-heartedness – or in a single word, compassion. The essence of compassion is a desire to alleviate the suffering of others and to promote their well-being. This is the spiritual principle from which all other positive inner values emerge. We all appreciate in others the inner qualities of kindness, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and generosity, and in the same way we are all averse to displays of greed, malice, hatred and bigotry. So actually promoting the positive inner qualities of the human heart that arise from our disposition toward compassion, and learning to combat our more destructive propensities, will be appreciated by all. And the first beneficiaries of such strengthening will, no doubt, be ourselves. Our inner values are something which we ignore at our own peril, and many of the greatest problems we face in today's world as the result of such neglect.

— Dalai Lama 2011:x-xi

## Introduction and Invitation

Harmony is part of life as there is an existence and yearning for harmony in self, society, nature and divine, which at the same time, struggles with disharmony, chaos, disorder, disjunction and domination of various kinds. At present, there is an epochal challenge of realising harmony in self, society and the world as we face conflicts, contradictions, disjunctions, violence of many kinds. We face enormous stress in individual and collectives and go through both soul and social suffering. In spite of all these we still want to live a life of meaning and happiness, and we are not bereft of our responsibility to compose an emergent world of commonality with and beyond disjunctions and violence that permeates self, cultures, societies and the world. Transformative harmony is a multi-dimensional movement for realisation of meaning, coherence, coordination and joy in self, culture and society which is not status-quoist but transformative. It strives to interrogate and transform existing structures of domination – self, social and cultural – and becomes part of a multi-dimensional *sadhana* and struggle of liberation. It involves simultaneously transformative ways of knowing and being – epistemic and ontological – involving what can be called ontological epistemology of participation (Giri 2006). Transformative harmony involves a creative trigonometry of ethics, aesthetics and responsibility as it also involves compassion and confrontation. It also involves socio-political as well as socio-spiritual mobilisations. It addresses both structural

and soul violence and strives for structural and soul peace – ensouled structural peace and structural soul peace.<sup>1</sup> It is a multi-dimensional movement for realisation of beauty, dignity and dialogue in self, culture, society and the world in the midst of ugliness, terror, disrespect and monological assertions and annihilation of many kinds.

## **The Discourse of Harmony**

In our present-day world, there are many discourses of harmony. The Dalai Lama is urging us to realise the significance of harmony and challenges us to link it to responsibility (Giri 2016). The Chinese Government has also been talking about the need for harmonious development of society which builds upon Confucian traditions of harmony but such a discourse is silent about the suffering produced by statist and authoritarian production of harmony. In this context, the work of Leo Semashko and our co-walkers in the Global Harmony Association (see [www.peaceharmony.org](http://www.peaceharmony.org)), a group of friends from around the world, deserve attention. They urge us to realise the significance of harmony what Semashko calls the “value priority of harmony” (Semashko 2009). Semashko here challenges us to realise the shift from value priority from freedom to the value priority of harmony in the context of pathology of industrial mode of production and the need for building a harmonious civilisation: “The value priority of harmony replaces the value priority of freedom which drove down humanity up to the freedom of self-destruction [...]” (*ibid.*:27). This value priority of harmony is accompanied by “self-restriction.” This is also being accompanied by striving to replace “a priority of materialism with the spiritual priority,” as Noor Gilani, a participant in this dialogue, urges us to realise: “The two – spirituality and harmony – are linked” (*ibid.*:48).

Semashko is seeking to find signs of a harmonious civilisation from the ravages of industrial civilisation which, among other things, gives priority to children, a green economy, non-violence and harmonious ways of thinking and being. Education in and of harmony plays an important role in this process. Semashko plans to build Academies of Harmony in Russia and around the world. He also seeks to have a new global currency named “Harmon” which is not guided by the profit motive of industrial civilisation but by the desire to build harmony and dignity in the lives of economies of individuals and nations. This collaborative text *Harmonious Civilisation* also presents many other projects such as creative festivals of harmony, harmonisation in case of militarisation in case of conflicts such as 2008 conflict between Georgia and Russia, and inculcating harmonious education around the world. For Semashko, without harmonious education contemporary efforts such as moves towards global nuclear disarmament initiated by the joint treaty of President Barack Obama of the US and President Dmitry Medvedev of

Russia would not go very far. Without harmonious ways of thinking and being facilitated by harmonious education disarmament is not possible.

## Harmony and Disharmony

The above are important and inescapable challenges before us which call for deeper rethinking and transformative actions. In this global collaborative dialogue, in one place Semashko himself writes: “Harmony is inescapable from disharmony” (*ibid.*:50).<sup>2</sup> This is an important insight but little developed and attended with care by our co-travellers in the Global Harmony Association whose euphoric enthusiasm for harmony is understandable but needs to be accompanied by critical thinking about the very terms of discourse such as harmony and disharmony. For Semashko and GHA, harmony is a positive value but he and all of us here do not always realise that both the discourse and social system of harmony can manifest and hide a condition of indignity, domination and annihilation of potential of self and society. In this context, Andre Beteille’s reflections on “Harmonic and Disharmonic Social Systems” are helpful (Beteille 1983). While harmony is a positive value in the discourse of harmonious civilisation, in Beteille’s articulation of harmonic and disharmonic systems it is much more complex. For Beteille, “A harmonic system is one in which there is consistency between the normative order and existential order: society is divided into groups which are placed high and low, and their divisions and ordering are considered as right, proper and desirable or as part of the natural scheme of things. A disharmonic system by contrast shows a lack of consistency between the existential and normative orders: the norm of equality is contradicted by the pervasive existence of inequality” (*ibid.*:54).

As examples of harmonic social systems, Beteille tells us about caste society in ancient and medieval India and the feudal society in medieval Europe. In these societies and histories discourse and social organisation of harmony manifested through hierarchy. For Beteille, “The hierarchical order of traditional Indian society was embodied in the institution of caste which has had a commanding position in it for two thousand years” (*ibid.*:57). Beteille continues: “European civilisation before modern times had also a hierarchical character, although the hierarchy was less complete, less elaborate and less stable in the Indian case. It manifested itself in various spheres: in the division of society into estates, in the laws governing their relations; in religious organisation, values and beliefs; and in the conception of the world in art and literature” (*ibid.*:64). In both Europe and India in such conditions, “There was harmony between the external conditions of life and socially accepted ideals of life” (*ibid.*:75). Modernity with its discourse and pursuit of equality in place of hierarchy disrupted this harmony which, for Beteille, gave rise to disharmonic social systems. But the discourse and practice of equality did not and do not totally

transform conditions of inequality and hierarchy. Beteille here draws our attention to the class structure of modern Western societies. For Beteille, "Despite the idealisation of equality, the class structure continues to be an important part of Western social reality, some would say it's most important part. [...] Only this structure is no longer a structure of privileges and disabilities, but one of unequal life chances" (*ibid.*:76). But Beteille himself concludes his reflections with the challenge of "crisis of legitimation": "[...] there is a perpetual crisis of legitimation hanging over the class structure of every modern society" (*ibid.*:77). In fact, Beteille tells us that in drawing the distinction between harmonic and disharmonic social systems he wants to draw our attention to this crisis of legitimation "rather than to any state of bliss" (*ibid.*).

But the harmony between the "external conditions of life and socially accepted ideals of life" was fractured and challenged in pre-modern world in both discourses and practices. Not only was the so-called harmonic system based upon disharmony but it was challenged by many movements and mobilisations in discourses and practices which later on gave birth to modernities in different parts of the world. While in ancient India, social harmony in the name of caste hierarchy, was challenged by Buddhism as well as Upanishadic movements, in medieval India this was challenged by Bhakti and Sufi movements. In medieval Europe hierarchy was also challenged by various socio-religious and socio-political movements. Would Beteille consider such discursive and mobilisational challenges as disharmonic moves in harmonic systems? And in modern conditions of lack of fit between ideals of equality and the pervasive fact of inequality which Beteille terms disharmonic there are also challenges to such conditions. There are various efforts to overcome the "crisis of class legitimation" in modern societies to which we must also add the crisis of gender, caste and generational legitimation, which points to the legitimation crisis involving relationship towards our children and future generations, which call for a new trigonometry of creativity of generational solidarity, generativity and generosity.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, in these so-called disharmonic social systems, disharmony is not a priority value; rather it is order. Modern society and state, as much of modern social theory, is preoccupied with order which many a time, like earlier discourse of hierarchy, uses the language of harmony but is based upon social relations of disharmony in the way it perpetuates existing logic of state, class, caste, gender domination and annihilation of soul.

Thus construction of typologies of harmonic and disharmonic social systems is challenged with the above-mentioned problems as the discourse of harmonious civilisation is faced with the challenge of not taking disharmony seriously. No system is entirely harmonic or disharmonic as no civilisation is entirely harmonious. Rather, it is helpful to talk of and explore harmonious streams in civilisations as harmonic and disharmonic dimensions in social systems. Beteille uses the term

harmonic social system while Semashko deploys “harmonious civilisation” which can challenge us to understand the complex relationship between social systems and civilisations and understand the systemic dimension of civilisation and civilisational dimension of social systems. In Beteille’s construction of harmonic and disharmonic social system, there is a civilisational stream at work; but it is not the usual civilisational divide of East or West. Hierarchy as harmony in ancient, medieval India and Europe was possible with supporting civilisational values of hierarchy drawing resources from multiple sources such as religion, social structures and cosmologies. Similarly, his harmonic social system draws inspiration from what Eisenstadt, the doyen of civilisational approach in contemporary sociology, might call civilisation of modernity (Eisenstadt 2009). But the civilisational approach can be further developed in Beteille’s approach, especially the civilisational streams of peace and harmony which Semashko talks about. These civilisational streams flow in civilisations of hierarchy as well as flow in civilisations of modernity and contemporary moves to build a new civilisational space of harmony going beyond the limitations of hierarchy, modernity and the industrial mode. But while exploring civilisational streams of harmony in both harmonic and disharmonic social systems, it is not helpful to uncritically valorise either civilisation or harmony; rather, we need to keep these as themes to explore and investigate as students of societies and histories. Civilisation is a complex arrangement of values and power where multiple values of harmony and violence are at work blurring the distinction between civilisation and barbarism.<sup>4</sup> And as seekers of these values of harmony, we need to cultivate these in our lives, relationships, societies, cultures and the worlds taking note of their complex embodiment and here critical sociological and historical work can contribute to such a realisation instead of apriori enthusiastic valorisation or assertion of “value priority of harmony.”

There is also a possible socio-systemic dimension to Semashko’s construction of harmonious civilisation. This is in his project of Tetrasociology (four-dimensional sociology) (Semashko 2003). Semashko looks at society consisting of four spheres of resources – people, information, organisation, things – leading to formation of social spheres, informational spheres, organisational spheres and technical spheres or in short, sociosphere, infosphere, organisphere, technospheres.<sup>5</sup> People working in these spheres constitute corresponding sphere classes such as socioclass, infoclass, organicclass and technoclass. Semashko does not look at relationship among classes only through the angle of conflicts but through the perspective of potential for harmony. As Bernard Phillips, a co-walker in this dialogue, tells us: “He departs from a Marxist emphasis on an inevitable conflict between social classes, emphasizing instead the potential harmony among peoples throughout the world based upon shared values [...]” (Phillips 2003:186). Based upon this tetra-sociological approach, Semashko proposes a tetra-mathematics of social harmony

in place of a simple mathematics of harmony which can be just quantitative and lack an aesthetic dimension and cultivation.<sup>6</sup>

With the above brief elaborations of the work of Semashko, we can realise that harmony is a part of reality as well as a normative quest and aspirational struggle in the lives of self, society and the world. Harmony exists in many ways in the midst of and along with disharmony of many kinds. Both harmony and disharmony are dynamic processes caused by both structural conditions such as social domination and conditions of self and soul such as readiness or lack of it for overcoming one's exclusionary and annihilating ego-centeredness and embracing the other (Giri 2012). Many a time, a social discourse of harmony perpetuates domination and inequality and kills both self and society. Chittaranjan Das (1923-2011), a creative thinker and experimenter from India, calls this demonic harmony (see Das 2006a; also Giri 2011). Demonic harmony demands easy and uncontested conformity from members because society as well as individuals treat each other as demons. It does not believe that either of them has a conscience. This is close to conventional harmony in society where to live in harmony is to live within the lines and limits drawn by society. Building upon Sri Aurobindo, Das characterises such harmony as "typal-conventional" which is in need of post-conventional critique, interrogation and transformations, to put it in the words of Habermas (1990). In this context, we need to strive to realise harmony of a different kind what may be called transformative harmony. Transformative harmony transforms the status-quoist and domineering legitimation of harmony and realises harmony as part of multi-dimensional *sadbhāna* and struggles for transformation of self, society and the world. For Das, this is a harmony arising out of creative critiques and movements: "harmony in movements and establishment of harmony in movements [...] Continuous climbing is the movement and is the mediating law of harmony" (Das 2006b:153). Das calls this spiritual harmony.<sup>7</sup>

## Transformative Harmony

Transformative harmony is not based upon an absolute distinction between harmony and disharmony as it realises that there is need for moves to disturb existing harmony of domination which may be perceived as disharmonic. Transformative harmony emerges out of multi-dimensional *sadbhāna*, struggles and mobilisations where an existing harmony legitimising domination is challenged in discourses and practices giving rise to new conditions of thought, social relations and self-awakening.<sup>8</sup>

Transformative harmony can build on the perspective of dynamic harmony presented by Robert Bellah. Robert Bellah tells us that while Japanese religion is



concerned with harmony – harmony among persons and harmony with nature – this is not static harmony but dynamic. For Bellah,

What has been said about the unity of man, nature and divinity should not be interpreted as a static identity. Rather it is a harmony in tension. The gratitude one owes to superordinate benevolent entities is not an easy obligation but may involve the instant sacrifice of one's deepest interests or even of one's life. Union with the ground of being is not attained in a state of coma but very often as the result of some sudden shock in daily living. Something unexpected, some seeming disharmony, is more apt to reveal the Truth than any formal orderly teaching. Japanese art and aesthetic attitude toward nature are also concerned with the unexpected [...] (1985:62-63)

Harmony here is not imprisoned in the logic status quo; rather, it is animated by a spirit to unsettle the existing status quo and invite the unexpected in a spirit of dynamic harmony. It is the work of “harmony in tension.” Realisation of dynamic harmony is also an animated aspiration in paths of other religious and spiritual traditions such as Kashmir Shaivism.<sup>9</sup> But in many discourses of harmony, such views of dynamic harmony and harmony in tension might be missing. For example, Confucianism speaks about harmony but many a time in history this has been used to legitimise domination rather than striving for a life of beauty, dignity and dialogue for all (Giri 2015). The contemporary Chinese Government also talks about harmonious development as its official goal but this challenges us to think about it critically and transformationally and ask the question whether it is a vision and practice of transformative harmony. Such a critical interrogation is missing in Semashko and GHA's celebration of the official declaration of harmony by the Governments of China, Singapore and other countries. They enthusiastically, and perhaps a bit naively, take it as evidence of birth of a harmonious civilisation.<sup>10</sup>

## **Transformative Harmony: Compassion and Confrontation**

Transformative harmony involves both compassion and confrontation. Compassion means to share in the suffering and joy of others. It is only with compassion – with sharing in joys and suffering of others – that we can realise transformative harmony. Confrontation means to challenge and transform parts of self and society which do not help us to blossom and realise our potential. It can be violent as well as non-violent. Human histories and societies have gone through both violent and non-violent confrontations; Gandhi and Martin Luther King being the inspiring exemplars of non-violent confrontation in our recent past, their confrontation was not only non-violent but also compassionate as they sought to understand

the oppressors and systems of oppression compassionately. Compassionate conformation is an epochal evolutionary challenge now. It is compassion that enables us to confront even our friends, not only enemies, giving rise to pathways of compassionate confrontation. Transformative harmony is accompanied by the work of compassionate confrontation.

## Compassionate Confrontation

Compassionate confrontation, as has already been suggested, involves both compassion and confrontation. Compassion here is not simply confined to feeling empathetic about others but taking steps to make life better. It is linked to what Thai political scientist Vira Somboon calls creating opportunities for all: “The practice of generosity in contemporary world may be entangled to include sharing of opportunities for all” (Somboon 2002). It is manifested in varieties of attempts in what is called Engaged Buddhism such as the *Sarvodaya* Sramadana movement in Sri Lanka where the ideal of compassion is said to be put into practices of self-development. Compassion is also essential for security – human as well as social (see Ogata and Sen 2003). But compassion does not mean letting oneself be run over by others, this is what is called idiotic compassion by Buddhist monk Prema Chodron (Tagesson 2009).

In transformative harmony, we confront with compassion and out of compassion. It is also linked to what is called the loving quarrel or loving struggle for the transformation of self, other and the world. But we struggle not only for our existence, for the survival of the fittest, we struggle to excel, not just for individual achievement, but for mutual excellence and shared excellence (Das 2006a; Dallmayr 2001).

Compassionate confrontation thus redefines our concept of struggle. It is then linked to such discourses like *jihad* and *nirvana* in transformative ways. It involves practical *jihad* where *jihad* means the practical struggle in daily life to lead a life free from temptation to degrade oneself or others (Engineer 2011). It also involves multi-dimensional initiatives in practical *nirvana* where the objective is to realise *nirvana* in our moments of existence and in our everyday life. We realise this state by leading a life which is not governed by temptation which degrades ourselves and others but by noble paths in our everyday life. The Buddha has told us about the eightfold path consisting of right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right *samadhi* (meditative absorption or union). We continuously strive to overcome our temptation<sup>11</sup> and lead a life of noble truths despite our many failures in our life. Such a struggle constitutes practical *nirvana*.

## Striving for Transformative Harmony: *Sadhana* and Struggles

Transformative harmony is a multi-dimensional *sadhana* and struggle. Quest for harmony needs such a vision and practice of harmony. It is animated by the work of compassionate confrontation which can address and transform the “crises of legitimation” in both so-called harmonic and disharmonic systems as well as in our enthusiastic articulations of a harmonious global civilisation. Transformative harmony calls for new initiatives in and experiments with self-development, embrace of the other, social transformations and planetary Realisations where we strive to go beyond domination and dualism of many kinds and realise that we are all children of Mother Earth.

## Endnotes

1. Johann Galtung talks about structural violence and structural peace but we need to address the challenge of both soul violence and structural violence and cultivate ensouled structural peace (see Galtung and Ikeda 1995). We get a glimpse of this when Galtung and MacQueen tell us that striving for peace is a “*joint project*, building on and building positive cognitions and emotions. A project is something spiritual, imbuing the parties with meaningful lives together” (2010:17).
2. Here we may also note the accompanying views of seekers such as Tagore who, as Susan Visvanathan writes, “took the example of war and peace as harmonic principles.” Tagore “argued that by war he did not mean killing, but the use of moral weapons. Without force, love was mere weakness and without love, force was brutal” (2007:76).
3. In order to understand the challenge of generational legitimation, we can consider the following reflections of philosopher of J.N. Mohanty on Edmund Husserl, the inspiring pioneer of phenomenology:

Husserl reflects upon the idea of ‘generation’ – that everyone has parents, the essential human property of ‘natality’ as motivating the idea of time stretching endlessly into the ‘past,’ but that still leaves the question of time stretching endlessly into the future. But then is also the feature of ‘iterability’ which belongs to every experience (Mohanty 2001:94).

In this generation and generativity come together. But to this we can also add generosity. It is the value of generosity that animates and nurtures generation and generativity. This generosity is one of sharing of stories and resources. Thus to understand life worlds, we need to explore this creative trigonometry of generation, generativity and generosity against the backdrop of lack of these as well in the vision and dynamics of life. Harmony builds upon this trigonometry of creativity of generation, generativity and generosity. I am grateful to my dear friend Dr. Marcus

Bussey of University of Sunshine Coast, Australia for pointing to me the need for paying attention to our children while considering the challenge of legitimization.

4. For Walter Benjamin, every document of civilisation is a document of barbarism. Perhaps Semashko would find this statement true for his model of industrial civilisation which he critiques. Sri Aurobindo also uses the language of barbarism in characterising some of the value priorities in modernity: "Just as the physical barbarian makes the excellence of the body and physical force [...] so the vitalistic or economic barbarian makes the satisfaction of wants and desires and the accumulation of possessions his standard and aim" (Sri Aurobindo 1962:94).
5. Here my dear friend Dr. Marcus Bussey of University of Sunshine Coast, Australia comments that it is unfortunate that Semashko does not include natural sphere – the ecosphere/biosphere in his scheme.
6. Semashko presents a new mathematics of harmony what he calls four-dimensional and tetra-mathematics of social harmony as a response to Alexey Stakhov's, also a GHA member, mathematics of harmony who tells us: "The notion of 'mathematical harmony' goes back to the Pythagoreans, who led all things to numbers and relations between them. In mathematical sense, the harmony is defined as equality or proportionality of parts with one another and with a part" (2009:55). But Stakhov himself writes: "The Mathematics of Harmony' is studying a harmony only from quantitative, numerical point of view. The most striking examples of mathematical understanding of harmony are the 'golden section,' which has a strict geometric and algebraic definition, and Fibonacci numbers, which are expressed with a simple recurrence relations  $F(n)=F(n-1)+F(n-2)$ " (*ibid.*). Stakhov also discusses new developments in generalisations of the "golden section." But Stakhov himself quotes from Seshakov's book *Harmony as an Aesthetic Category*: "The mathematical understanding of harmony fixed primarily quantitative definiteness of harmony, but it does not reflect an aesthetic harmony, its expressiveness, connection with beauty."

Here we need to look into the limits and possibilities of mathematics of harmony and seek to broaden it to a new mathematics and spirituality of social harmonisation. Here we can build upon the seminal work of Rudolf Steiner who has cultivated pathways of projective geometry as an important companion of self and social transformation. Keeping Steiner's work on projective geometry and Goethe's approach to Nature in mind, Davy tells us:

Euclidean geometry deals with rigid forms; projective geometry with forms that are in continual metamorphosis, and with how forms change when they are looked at from various points of view. [...]

Now picture a circle (or the surface of a sphere). It can be formed in two ways – radially from its point-centre as when a circle is drawn with a compass or peripherally by planes which, acting as tangents to its circumstance, would it from outside. [...] The first activity is visible but the second activity has to be imagined. Perhaps the nearest approach to an illustration is to mould an invisible circle in the air, using one's hands as the tangent planes. Start with a large circle and gradually draw inward the

moulding movement, so that the circle becomes smaller. While doing this one must imagine that at the centre of the circle one is conjuring up an expansive, out-growing potency, as thought at the centre there were a seed about to sprout (Davy 1961:130).

7. Marcus Bussey (personal communication) here shares a valuable insight that demonic harmony can also be looked at *tamasik* based upon the three *gunas* – *tama*, *raja* and *sattwa*. The challenge here is to transform tamasic harmony to one which is sattwic. Sattwic harmony can be spiritual harmony.
8. This way it resonates with the project of crating a creative society articulated by Mohanty (1998) and good society nurtured by Bellah (Bellah *et al.* 1991; also see Giri 2011). Semashko and our co-travellers in GHA can take note of the challenge of overcoming domination which is a continuous challenge even with our focus on the value priority of harmony. We can link realisation of harmony with the project of overcoming domination and building a creative society. Here the following lines of Mohanty can be helpful:

Creative society embodies a methodology of viewing society in terms of liberation from multiple dominations – class, caste, race, ethnicity, gender and many more yet to be discovered sources of domination – and it points at processes already active or yet to be articulated, seeking to reconstitute society. [...] The concept of creative society opposes any formation which suggests a terminal view of the history of society. [...] the advanced industrial society may not be quite the example of a creative society that is fulfilling the people's democratic urges. It may actually be the picture of a system that manages instrumental creativity in a narrow framework. [...] capitalism in modern history represents the taming of creativity and taming of reason. The creative society, therefore, is bound to break out of the capitalist process in pursuit of creativity and liberation. (1998:67-68)

9. As Deheja (2006:422; emphasis added) writes about it: Kashmir Shaivism postulates that Parama Shiva contains the entire universe, pulsating within it, just as the seed of the mighty *nyagrodha* potentially contains the entire tree. At the immanent level, the transcendent *prakashavimarshamaya* splits into *prakasha* and *vimarsha*, Shiva and Shakti, *aham* and *idam*, I and this, subject and object, held together in pulsating, *dynamic harmony* [...] At every level there is differentiation into subject and object, *aham* and *idam*, but the differentiation is based in, and unified by the non-duality of consciousness.
10. Semashko writes: "Harmony became a principle of national policy in Singapore, Malaysia, Tunisia, Kazakhstan, China and a number of other countries. It became a principle of regional policy in the European Union. [...] It is the inevitable tendency of a modern epoch of harmony globalisation" (Semashko 2009:27).
11. This continuous striving to overcome temptation is expressed in the following poem (originally written by the author in Oriya and then translated by him):

Oh Buddha!  
I, Buddha, touch your lotus heart

Oh Tara, Tara of Heart  
 Being a breast I salute your breast  
 My love for breast gets transformed  
 Desires become white flowers  
 Insects become roses  
 They kiss, Oh Buddha, you and me  
 Tara and all beings.

## References

- Bellah, Robert N. 1985. *Tokugawa Religion*. Glencoe, NY: Free Press.
- Bellah, Robert N., Richard Madsen, Steven M. Tipton. 1991. *The Good Society*. New York: Alfred A. Knof.
- Beteille, Andre. 1983. "Harmonic and Disharmonic Social Systems", in *The Idea of Natural Inequality and other Essays*, pp. 54-72. Delhi: Oxford U. Press.
- . 2012. *Sunlight on the Garden: A Story of Childhood and Youth*. Delhi: Penguin.
- Dallmayr, Fred. 2001. *Achieving Our World*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Das, Chittaranjan. 2006a. *Bira Jodha Kari* [Being a Heroic Warrior]. Bhubaneswar: Suhrut Gosthi.
- . 2006b. *Sikhara Bibeka* [The Conscience of Education]. Bhubaneswar: Pathika Prakashani.
- Dalai Lama. 2009. *The Middle Way: Faith Grounded in Reason*. Boston: Wisdom.
- . 2011. *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Davy, Charles. 1961. *Towards a Third Culture*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Deheja, Harsha V. 2006. "Kashmir Shaivism: A Note", in Makarand Paranjape (ed.), *Abhinavagupta: Reconsiderations*, pp. 414-428. Delhi: Samvad India.
- Eisenstadt, S.N. 2009. "Modernity and the Reconstitution of the Political", in Ananta Kumar Giri (ed.), *The Modern Prince and the Modern Sage: Transforming Power and Freedom*. Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Engineer, Ashgar Ali. 2011. *A Living Faith: My Quest for Peace, Harmony and Social Change*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.
- Galtung, Johan and Daisaku Ikeda. 1995. *Choose Peace*. London: Pluto Press.
- Galtung, Johan and Graeme MacQueen. 2010. *Globalizing God: Religion, Spirituality and Peace*. Transcend U. Press.
- Giri, Ananta Kumar. 2006 "Creative Social Research: Rethinking Theories and Methods and the Calling of an Ontological Epistemology of Participation." *Dialectical Anthropology*, 30(3/4):227-271.
- . 2011 "Chitta Ranjan Das: A Creative Thinker." *Social Change*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/004908571104100302>.

- 
- . 2012. "Sociology as a quest for a Good Society: A Conversation with Robert Bellah", in Ananta Kumar Giri (ed.), *Sociology and Beyond: Windows and Horizons*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- . 2013. *Knowledge and Human Liberation: Towards Planetary Realisations*. London: Anthem Press.
- . 2015. "Social Theory and Asian Dialogues: Cultivating Planetary Conversations", in Barry Rodrigue, Leonid Otrinin and Andrey Koratayer (eds), *From Big Bang to Global Civilisation: A Big History Anthology*. Delhi: Primus Books.
- . 2016. *The Calling of Global Responsibility: New Initiatives in Justice, Dialogues and Planetary Co-Realisations*. Report Submitted to Indian Council of Social Science Research.
- Habermas, Jurgen. 1990. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Mohanty, Manoranjan. 1998. "Towards a Creative Theory of Social Transformation", in Manoranjan Mohanty and Partha N. Mukherjee (eds), *People's Rights: Social Movements and the State in the Third World*, pp. 9-26. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Mohanty, J.N. 2001. *Explorations in Philosophy: Western Philosophy*. Delhi: Oxford U. Press.
- Ogata, Sadako and Amartya Sen. 2003. *The Commission on Human Security Now*. NY: United Nations.
- Phillips, Bernard. 2003. "Towards a New Age of Enlightenment: Tetrasociology and Web Approach." In Semashko 2003:185-190.
- Semashko, Leo. 2003. *Tetrasociology: From Sociological Imagination Through Dialogue to Universal Values and Harmony*. St. Petersburg: SPBSU Publications.
- . 2009. *Harmonious Civilisation*. St. Petersburg: Global Harmony Association.
- Somboon, Vira. 2002. *Ariyavinaya in the Age of Extreme Modernism*. Bangkok: Komol Keemthong Foundation.
- Sri Aurobindo. 1962. *Human Cycles*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
- Tagesson, Helena. 2009. "A Yearning of the Heart: Spirituality and Politics", in Ananta Kumar Giri (ed.), *The Modern Prince and the Modern Sage: Transforming Power and Freedom*, pp. 342-364. Delhi: Sage Publication.
- Visvanathan, Susan. 2007. *Friendship, Interiority and Mysticism: Essays in Dialogue*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman.



## CHAPTER 2

# Revealing the Hidden Harmony

## The Heart of Transformative Harmony

*Paul Hague*

Heraclitus of Ephesus, the Greek mystic and philosopher of change, said in the few fragments of his writings that have survived, “The Hidden Harmony is better than the obvious. Opposition brings concord; out of discord comes the fairest harmony” (Osho 1991). In contrast, Aristotle wrote in *Metaphysics*, “It is impossible for the same attribute at once to belong and not to belong to the same thing and in the same relation,... as some imagine, Heraclitus says” (Aristotle 1933).

Aristotle’s statement is called the Law of Contradiction, the most fundamental law of Western thought, which does its utmost to avoid paradoxes and self-contradictions in reasoning. Why is this? The dualistic world of form in which we live our daily lives is full of paradoxes. So if we deny the existence of self-contradictions, our cognitive maps of the world we live in will be incomplete and deluded, leading us dangerously astray in our journeys in life.

Furthermore, a society that is in denial cannot live harmoniously within itself. For as Leo Semashko, President of the Global Harmony Association, has said, “Harmony is inseparable from disharmony” (Semashko 2009). This is a prime example of the Hidden Harmony in action, lying at the heart of what Ananta Kumar Giri calls ‘Transformative Harmony’.

How then can we bring peace and harmony to a society that is based more on either the Law of Contradiction or on Hidden Harmony? During the Cold War,



when the threat of nuclear devastation hung over all our heads, some peace workers engaged in violent action against the military authorities. This, clearly, is not the way to cocreate World Peace.

Rather, we can find inner Peace and Harmony through what Mohandas Gandhi called *Satyagraha* ‘Truth force’, Truth being what J. Krishnamurti called the ‘Pathless Land’ in 1929, when dissolving the Order of the Star, the organisation that wanted to make him a world teacher (Blau 1995). Other words that denote the Absolute Truth are *Love*, *Stillness*, *Presence*, and *Nonduality*, the Divine Essence that we all share, no matter what culture we might have been born into.

Here then is the way forward. Grounded in the joy of Nondual Love and Truth, we recognise with Ananta Giri that “Transformative harmony involves both compassion and confrontation.” As he says in an introductory essay on this marvellous vision, “Compassionate confrontation is an epochal evolutionary challenge now” (Giri 2012). There is nothing more important, as evolution carries humanity through the most momentous turning point in its fourteen billion year history—a mathematical and spiritual singularity in time.

There is no one on Earth who is unaffected by the epochal transformation of consciousness and culture that is happening at the moment. We are all involved, which means that to “Be the change that you wish to see in the world,” as Gandhi famously said, it does not help to form exclusive cliques or coteries. We need to bring everyone into the borderless, seamless fold, recognising that none of us is separate from the Divine, Nature, or any other being for an instant.

As Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit mystic and palaeontologist, prophesied, “The way out for the world, the gates of the future, the entry into the superhuman, will not open ahead to some privileged few, or to a single people, elect among all peoples. They will yield only to the thrust of all together in the direction where all can rejoin and complete one another in a spiritual renewal of the Earth” (Teilhard de Chardin 2003).

Teilhard’s convergent evolutionary vision is in harmony with the notion of *Bodhisattva* ‘enlightenment being’ in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. For *Bodhisattvas* recognise that no one can be fully awakened in solitude. Rather, they take a vow renouncing full Buddhahood until *samsāra* ‘journeying’ and *Nirvāna* ‘extinction’ are unified in spiritual communities, such as *sanghas*, in contrast to *Arhat* in *Hinayāna* Buddhism.

Now while the Hidden Harmony is buried deep in the Cosmic Psyche, the fact that it is being revealed today is a sign of evolution “becoming conscious of itself, able to understand something of its past history and its possible future”, as Julian Huxley wrote in a visionary essay titled ‘Transhumanism’. As he said, “By

destroying the ideas and the institutions that stand in the way of our realising our possibilities”, we could understand human nature, what it truly means to be a human being. We could thereby transcend our limitations, fulfilling our highest potential as spiritual beings, living in mystical ecstasy, free from the suffering that has plagued humanity through the millennia (Huxley 1957).

Today, there is no greater inhibitor to Transformative Harmony than the Law of Contradiction, which governs psychology, logic, and mathematics; materialistic, mechanistic science and medicine; business, economics, and politics; and the organised religions. In contrast, the Hidden Harmony tells us that the Cosmos consists of both the Formless Absolute and the relativistic world of form, which are inseparable from each other. It is thus by bringing the Hidden Harmony into consciousness with Self-reflective Intelligence—the Divine quality that distinguishes humans from the other animals and machines, like computers—that we can collectively engage in Transformative Harmony.

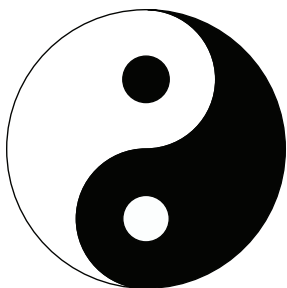
For myself, the Hidden Harmony has been guiding every moment of my life since I was thirty-eight, although I did not give it this name then or formulate it in the way I do today. Having been educated as a mathematician, trained as a computer scientist, and worked as an information systems architect in business, it took many years to make sense of my apocalyptic awakening, healing, and liberating experiences.

So in this essay, I describe a little of what I have discovered after the Hidden Harmony was revealed to me. I begin with a short history of the idea, in contrast to our dualistic inheritance, the subjects of the first two sections. I then outline how I have been led by Life and the Logos to unify all opposites to integrate all knowledge in all cultures and disciplines at all times into a coherent whole, creating a holistic inner harmony of ideas. Finally, I make a few suggestions on how we could use Heraclitus’ simple idea to help heal what Erich Fromm called our sick society (Fromm 1979), harmonising evolutionary convergence in order to awaken in the Age of Light.

## A History of the Idea

Heraclitus was not the only mystic who discovered the Hidden Harmony within himself. The legendary Laozi was another, who wrote in *Tao Te Ching*, “When all the world recognises beauty as beauty, this in itself is ugliness. When all the world recognises good as good, this in itself is evil” (Lao Tzu 2005).

Nevertheless, the all-inclusive characteristics of Chinese Taoism are familiar to many, as the classic *Taijitu* symbol, or ‘Diagram of Supreme Ultimate’, indicates



quite clearly. This symbol depicts the cyclic nature of the Cosmos. For example, day turns into night, which then turns back today, as yin and yang. The dots in the middle of the two main shapes indicate the potential of the opposite to arise when one side is dominant in any particular situation. The key point here is that when the Universe is viewed as a whole, both opposites co-exist; to reject one in favour of the other does not lead to Wholeness, peace, and tranquillity.

Carl Gustav Jung was one who recognised the central importance of unifying opposites to heal our fragmented, split minds, writing in his *Commentary* to Richard Wilhelm's translation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, "The Chinese have never failed to recognise the paradoxes and the polarity inherent in all life. The opposites always balance on the scales—a sign of high culture. One-sidedness, though it lends momentum, is a mark of barbarism" (Jung 2010).

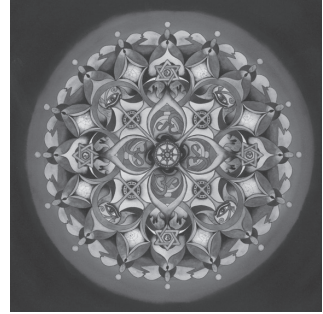
Then, of course, there is the widespread use of many yogic practices in India in order to experience unity with the Divine, for *yoga* is Sanskrit for 'union', cognate with the English words *yoke*, *join*, and *syzygy* 'conjunction'. The Hidden Harmony, defined as the union of all opposites, is the ultimate Integral Tantric Yoga, providing a synthesis of all forms of yoga, including Aurobindo's integral yoga (Aurobindo 1996). Also, *tantra* derives from Sanskrit *tantram* 'loom', unifying 'warp' and 'weft', from *tan* 'to stretch', and *-tra-m* 'instrument'. So *tantra* literally means 'an instrument for stretching'. Figuratively, Tantra has the sense of weaving opposites together in Wholeness, with other original meanings indicating 'system' and 'Context, Continuum'.

In the West, the Hidden Harmony is more widely known as *coincidentia oppositorum* 'coincidence of opposites', a term that Nicholas of Cusa coined following a revelatory mystical experience in 1437 (Cusa 1997). For instance, Mircea Eliade called *coincidentia oppositorum* the 'mythical pattern', "the very nature of the divinity", most significantly pointing out that hierogamy is absent in the archaic religions: "Their supreme Beings were androgyne, at once male and female, both Heavenly and Earthly. ... Androgyny is an archaic and universal formula for the expression of *wholeness*, the co-existence of the contraries" (Eliade 1967). In the words of the pre-eminent Christian mystic Meister Eckhart, "The eye with which I see God is the same as that with which he sees me" (Happold 1970).

The Hidden Harmony has also played a central role in alchemy through the ages, as Jay Ramsay points out in *Alchemy*: "Above all, alchemy is about wholeness." "It brings spirit and matter together rather than separating them. It is profoundly non-dualistic in this sense, as opposed to the Orthodox Christian Church."

“Alchemy is vibrant: it reaches to the source of life.” It is “a physical process to do with self-knowledge”. In the foreword to this book, Anne Baring wrote, “No one can write about alchemy who is not living it and no one can pass on his or her knowledge and insight who has not walked the difficult path of self-discovery” (Ramsay 1997).

Jung made much use of all these examples of the Hidden Harmony at work in his psychotherapeutic process of individuation—the development of an undivided being—asking his patients to draw mandalas to depict how well the healing of the splits between opposites was progressing (Jung 1980). For a mandala, a Sanskrit word meaning ‘disk’, is a circular figure representing Wholeness or the Universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism. For instance, this beautiful Harmony mandala, designed by Vikki Reed of Arizona, depicts Unity, with a *dharma* wheel at its centre, integrating nine numinous symbols from a variety of ancient cultures.



As another example of the way that mandalas are used in spiritual practices in the East, Tibetan monks who accompany the Dalai Lama on his world travels create intricate mandalas from coloured grains of sand, such as the one I saw them forming in Stockholm in the 1990s. However, the primary purpose in this instance was to demonstrate the Buddha’s *Trilakshana* ‘three marks of being’ in action. Nothing in the Cosmos is permanent (*anitya*) and if we are not free of attachment to a separate self (*Anatman*), we shall suffer (*dubbkha*). Accordingly, at the end of the visit, after many hours of devoted service, the sand was thrown into the sea.

However, one split that Jung was not able to heal is that between psychology—as the science of mind and consciousness—and mathematical logic—as the science of mind and reason. In 1854, George Boole attempted to heal this split in *The Laws of Thought*, following a mystical experience he had had as a seventeen-year-old in 1833. This seminal book, which led to the invention of the stored-program computer a century later, began with these words, “The design of the following treatise is to investigate the fundamental laws of those operations of the mind by which reasoning is performed,” with the purpose of exploring “the nature and constitution of the human mind” (Boole 1958). It is now time to complete Boole’s project, unifying mystical psychology and holographic semantic logic.

## Our Dualistic Inheritance

There are several reasons why the Hidden Harmony is not widely known, which we need to understand in order to bring it into consciousness. By far the most

significant of these is the belief of the Abrahamic religions that God is other. As F.C. Happold tells us, “To Jew, Christian, and Moslem, a gulf is felt to exist between God and man, Creator and created, which can never be crossed. To assert that ‘Thou’ art ‘That’ [as Hindus do] sounds blasphemous” (1970). And as Elaine Pagels points out, “Even the mystics of Jewish and Christian tradition who seek to find their identity in God often are careful to acknowledge the abyss that separates them from their divine Source” (1990).

The word *identity* here derives from Latin *idem* ‘same’, which we usually take to mean that our identities as separate human beings remain essentially the same throughout our lives. We thus become identified with our bodies, minds, and souls, regarding those from different ethnic, national, or sexual backgrounds, with different religious, political, or scientific beliefs, as other, separate from ourselves. Such a schizoid sense of identity often leads to conflict and suffering, as we subconsciously project our fears, pains, and dislikes onto others, who do not exist in Reality.

However, there is also a mystical meaning of *identity*, that which is the same for all beings, sentient or otherwise. This Shared Identity is our True Nature, Authentic Self, and Genuine Identity, realised when we live in union with the Divine, as the Immortal Ground of Being. Reconciling the esoteric and exoteric meanings of *identity* is perhaps the greatest challenge any of us can face in life.

For myself, it helps me to view the Universe—the Ocean of Consciousness—as a vast multidimensional ball of water, which I call the Numinosphere, from Latin *nūmen* ‘divinity’. In the Numinosphere, the waves and currents on and beneath the surface are never separate from the Ocean itself. The Numinosphere is a generalisation of David Bohm’s one-dimensional holomovement, with which he unified the incompatibilities of quantum and relativity theories, inspired by the process thinking of Heraclitus and Alfred North Whitehead (Bohm 1980). Applying the Hidden Harmony, we are all both the entire ocean and the inseparable waves and currents.

However, even the Numinosphere, which is another name for what Teilhard called *Le Milieu Divin*, having a centre and environment, is not the Supreme Being or Ultimate Reality, which is a seamless continuum, having no borders anywhere. This might seem strange, for in the experience of self-realisation, the experiencer disappears, yet, as the Divine is ever with us, throughout the ages, we humans have sensed the Immanent, Transcendent Presence, etymologically ‘before being’ or ‘prior to existence’, for *Presence* derives from Latin *praesentia* ‘presence’, participle of *praesse* ‘to be before’, from *prae* ‘before’ and *esse* ‘to be’. The word *Presence* indicates that the Absolute is the Supreme Cause of everything that exists in the relativistic world of form.

However, we are not yet there as a superintelligent, superconscious species, for another reason. Ever since the most recent big bang, which emerged from our Divine Source, evolution in our particular physical universe has been more divergent than convergent. Initially, large and small material objects were formed, such as stars, galaxies, atoms, and electrons. Then during the last three and a half billion years on Earth, we have seen the wondrous diversity of the species evolve. Biogenesis then gradually gave way to noogenesis—the evolution of the mind—about 25,000 years ago, the analytical mind becoming predominant at the dawn of history and birth of the patriarchal epoch about 5,000 years ago. As a result of this constant bifurcation, our minds have become fragmented, and society, as a projection of our minds, has become divided into religious and national factions, academic specialisation, and the division of labour in the workplace.

Another example of this bifurcation is the split that René Descartes introduced between *res cogitans* ‘thinking substance, mind, or soul’ and *res extensa* ‘extended substance’ (Descartes 1968). As Bryan Magee tells us, “Cartesian dualism, the bifurcation of nature between mind and matter, observer and observed, subject and object ... has become built into the whole of Western man’s way of looking at things, including the whole of science” (Magee 2000).

Yet another challenge is that ever since Aristotle laid down the principles of syllogistic reasoning and Euclid defined the fundamental principles of mathematical proof, Western logic has been predominantly linear, beginning with ‘self-evident’ or assumed truths, as axioms or postulates, proceeding according to well-established rules of deduction and inference.

However, a crisis arose in the late nineteenth century when paradoxes were found in the very foundations of mathematics, most particularly in Georg Cantor’s set theory, which showed that we cannot form the concept of three until we form the concept of set. Meaningful semantics is more fundamental than quantitative mathematics. These paradoxes were a major problem, for we all implicitly use sets in concept formation, intuitively grouping together patterns of data that have a common property.

The central problem is that if the axioms of mathematics are contradictory, it is possible to prove any theorem from them. A particular difficulty is that of self-referencing statements, which can be self-contradictory, like “This sentence is false,” contradicting and falsifying the Law of Contradiction. Accordingly, Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead spent twenty fruitless years trying to eliminate the Hidden Harmony from mathematics, published in their indigestible *Principia Mathematica*. It was all in vain, for, in 1931, Kurt Gödel used an ingenious metamathematical method of proof to prove that it is impossible to eliminate paradoxes from mathematics, leaving mathematical methods of proof



in disarray. The notion of truth in mathematics is more fundamental than that of proof.

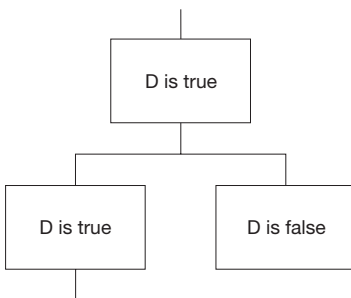
We can give mathematics and the whole of human learning a solid foundation from which to develop by recognising that the Hidden Harmony has no predecessors in the entire history of ideas. It emerges directly from the Formless Absolute, as the first form to be created, from which all other structures evolve through a complex process of bifurcation, terminating in Ineffable, Nondual Wholeness at the Omega Point of evolution—its glorious culmination.

## Unifying All Opposites

For myself, the Hidden Harmony was first revealed to me around midsummer 1980 as the *Principle of Duality*, a generalisation of the principle of duality in projective geometry. At the time, I was beginning to develop a cosmology of cosmologies that would answer the most critical unanswered question in science: “What is causing scientists and technologists, aided and abetted by computer technology, to drive the pace of evolutionary change at exponential rates of acceleration?”

To answer this question, we need to admit objective introspection into science—as a rational system of thought—acknowledging that there are non-physical synergistic energies at work in the Universe, as well as the four physical forces recognised by physics: gravity, electromagnetism, and the strong and weak nucleic forces. In practical terms, if we do not understand the role that psychospiritual energies play in our lives, we manage our business affairs unseeingly, with inadequate comprehension of what causes us to behave as we do or where we all heading as a species.

The Principle of Duality is very simple. It is proposition *D*, stating: *A complete conceptual model of the Universe consists entirely of dual sets*. But is *D* true? Well, sometimes it is true but sometimes not. For instance, a collection of entities without a common attribute do not form a set, which we usually call miscellaneous. But now something quite incredible happens!



Those occasions when *D* is true or false are opposites to each other, confirming that *D* is true. In terms of Hegel’s dialectical logic, if ‘*D* is true’ is the thesis and ‘*D* is false’ is the antithesis, then ‘*D* is true’ is the synthesis. There is thus a *primary-secondary relationship* between the truth and falsity of the Principle of Duality, illustrated in this figure. So it is impossible to deny the truth of the Principle of Duality, for any denial

confirms its authenticity and legitimacy. *D* is a self-verifying proposition, true in all possible domains of discourse.

The Principle of Duality thus clarifies and simplifies the triadic architectonic of Charles Sanders Peirce, who wrote, “First is the conception of being or existing independent of anything else. Second is the conception of being relative to, the conception of reaction with, something else. Third is the conception of mediation, whereby a first and second are brought into relation” (Peirce 1992).

However, at the time, I was not aware how Peirce’s studies in logic had influenced the tools we, in the computer industry, were using to design integrated information systems in business. So this diagram, which can be extended to infinity in both directions, blew my mind, carrying me into a quite different universe from that which I had learnt about in physics at school. In the context of this essay, I was beginning to realise that harmony is the union of harmony and disharmony. Today, I experience the Cosmos we all live in as *Satchitānanda* ‘Bliss of Absolute Consciousness’. But I was then so dazzled by the coherent Light of Consciousness radiating brilliantly through me, it took many years of self-inquiry to adjust.

Arjuna had a similar experience, recorded in the *Bhagavad Gita*. When Krishna showed him the Ultimate Cosmic Vision—“all the manifold forms of the universe united as one”—Arjuna said, “I rejoice in seeing you as you have never been seen before, yet I am filled with fear by this vision of you as the abode of the universe” (Easwaran 1986).

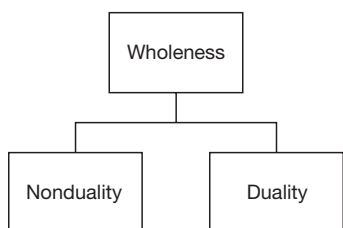
The Principle of Duality not only models black and white situations. It also includes ranges of values, with the extremes being the dual of intermediate shades of grey. Pairs of opposites are mapped in the multidimensional Cross of Duality, illustrated here, such as Jung’s psychological types of extrovert and introvert and rational (thinking and feeling) and irrational (intuition and sensation) (Jung 1989). Another example is Ken Wilber’s AQAL, short for ‘all quadrants, all levels’, which he calls an ‘Integral Operating System’ (IOS) (Wilber 2006).

	B	not-B
A	{A,B}	{A,not-B}
not-A	{not-A,B}	{not-A,not-B}

To help me adapt to the Universe I was now living in, in October 1983, I used the Principle of Duality to transcend the categories, forming the concept of the Immanent, Transcendent Absolute in exactly the same way as I form any other concept in an egalitarian manner. For, as Bohm pointed out, we can bring



universal order to our thought processes by *giving attention to similar differences and different similarities*, a notion of order that the artist Charles Biederman had given him (Bohm 1980). God had become a rational, scientific concept, but not yet entirely based on profound mystical experience. It was more awesome ecstasy than Stillness that I experienced at the time.



The Principle of Duality then became the *Principle of Unity*, stating *Wholeness is the union of all opposites*, which is not the Absolute Truth. Rather, it is an irrefutable, universal truth that points to the Ineffable Truth, rather like the Buddha's *dharma* finger pointing at the moon. The Principle of Unity thus unifies the Nondual Absolute with the dual and dualistic world in which we live our daily lives, as this diagram illustrates.

The Principles of Unity and Duality, as expressions of the Hidden Harmony, then enabled me to rebuild the entire world of learning on the Truth, answering many questions that had puzzled me about God and the Universe since I was seven years old. I thereby ended the long-running war between science and religion and the many holy wars between the religions—wars about the Whole—the central theme and purpose of my life.

The framework for this synthesis of all knowledge has evolved from the business modelling methods that information systems architects use to build the Internet. These modelling methods are of great abstraction and generality, applicable in all cultures, industries, and disciplines. If this were not the case, the Internet could neither exist nor expand at hyperexponential rates of acceleration. So like the Internet, we can see that the underlying structure of the Cosmos—as an ordered Whole—is an infinitely dimensional network of hierarchical relationships.

The use of the Hidden Harmony in this healing process does not invalidate the reasoning, as it would in deductive logic and mathematical proof. For, while threads in computer programs execute instructions sequentially, viewed as a whole, the Internet is a nonlinear, fractal-like structure, possessing the property of self-similarity. We can thus use it as a mirror for our inner thought processes, which can joyfully welcome self-contradictions into consciousness.

I call the framework Integral Relational Logic (IRL), which is the commonsensical art and science of thought and consciousness that we all implicitly use every day to form concepts and organise our ideas in tables and semantic networks. This universal system of thought thus enables us to develop a self-inclusive model of the psychodynamics of society—where we've come, who we are, and where we are all heading at breakneck speeds.

Integral Relational Logic is so named because it has emerged in consciousness through the action of what Heraclitus called the Logos, the “immanent conception of divine intelligence” signifying “the rational principle governing the cosmos”, as Richard Tarnas put it (Tarnas 1991). This is the mystical meaning of *Logos*, unlike its mundane meaning of ‘word’, retranslating the opening sentence of John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God.”

This Integral Operating System, which manages all IOSs, including itself, provides the Cosmic Context, coordinating framework, and Gnostic Foundation for what physicists call the Theory of Everything, defined as “a theory capable of describing nature’s forces within a single, all-encompassing, coherent framework” (Greene 1999). Recognising the existence of natural psychospiritual energies, I call this megasynthesis the Unified Relationships Theory (URT) or Panosophy, the transcultural transdiscipline that integrates science, philosophy, and religion and all the sciences and humanities into a coherent whole.

In this context, the Hidden Harmony becomes the *Cosmic Equation*, the simple, elegant equation that can explain everything, which Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking long searched for, but never found. The Cosmic Equation is a theorem in mathematical logic that cannot be proven to be true from any set of axioms.

Now while integrating all knowledge into a coherent whole is the most tremendous fun, it has not been sufficient to bring me much longed-for inner Peace and Harmony. A turning point came in the early years of this century, when I experienced a series of what are called *satoris* or *kenshos* in Zen Buddhism in the mountains of Norway and forests of Sweden.

These cathartic experiences led me to see that while I regarded myself as a scientist of mind and consciousness, I had actually been following the universal spiritual path that Joseph Campbell mapped from his in-depth studies of the myths and fairy tales of multiple cultures through the ages. As he said, “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man” (Campbell 1968).

For Campbell, the spiritual journey comprises three stages: Departure, Initiation, and Return, consisting of seventeen steps, which tie in closely with my own life experience. For instance, the awakening experiences I enjoyed around 2002 match the final two steps of the initiation stage, called Apotheosis and the Ultimate Boon. For me, the Ultimate Boon is the Hidden Harmony—the Holy

Grail, Philosophers' Stone, and Apotheosis of human learning, for *apotheosis* derives from Greek *apothēoun* 'make Divine', from *apo* 'change completely (in this context)' and *theos* 'god'.

However, I have found the return journey to society to be the greatest challenge of all. For in order to assimilate the Hidden Harmony into consciousness, the entire world of learning must first be destroyed, enabling us to start afresh at the very beginning. This can cause severe psychological disturbances, such as a spiritual emergency, as Spirit emerges faster than the body-mind-soul organism can handle (Grof 1989).

To prevent this happening, the psyche contains homeostatic defence mechanisms, creating boundaries and limits to protect our egoic vulnerabilities. As such barriers do not exist in Reality, they need to be demolished in order to realise that the Principles of Unity and Duality, and the Cosmic Equation denote the fundamental design principle of the Universe, the key that opens up its innermost, paradoxical secrets. For myself, as an autodidact, I still have much to learn about how compassionate confrontation could help with the really tricky psychospiritual crisis currently facing humanity, as we engage in Transformative Harmony.

## Harmonising Evolutionary Convergence

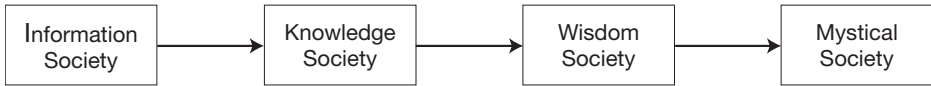
Today, millions of people and thousands of organisations are aware that the traditional ways of educating our children and running our business affairs do not work any longer and so are seeking more harmonious, nourishing, and life-enhancing ways of learning and living. However, there is little common understanding of what the world might be like in twenty-five years time, let us say, essentially because few are aware of the paramount role that the Hidden Harmony plays in all our lives.



To address this critical issue, I am currently inviting those seeking peace and harmony to join me in setting up the all-embracing Alliance for Mystical Pragmatics with the motto 'Harmonising evolutionary convergence' and this logo depicting Wholeness as the union of all opposites. The intention is for the Alliance to act as a network of networking networks, synergistically unifying and integrating three global movements emerging in the world today: Spiritual Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, and Sharing Economy. These will be coordinated through Project Heraclitus, with the motto 'Revealing the Hidden Harmony', whose principal purpose is World Peace.

By co-creating a nurturing space where it is safe to question the beliefs and assumptions of the cultures we are born into, we could develop the necessary self-

understanding to transform today's Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom Society into the eschatological Mystical Society—the Age of Light—as this diagram illustrates:



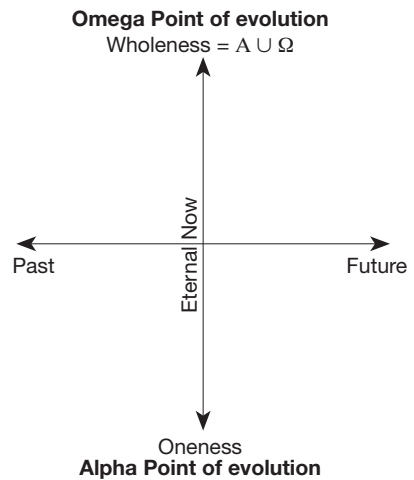
What this means can be most simply illustrated by applying the Hidden Harmony to the concept of time. For, to balance the past and future of horizontal time, we need to recognise the existence of vertical time in the Eternal Now, a notion made famous in Eckhart Tolle's best-selling *The Power of Now*. This is of central importance, for time, like everything else in the manifest universe, is just *māyā* 'deception, illusion, appearance' and *līlā*, the delightful play of the Divine.

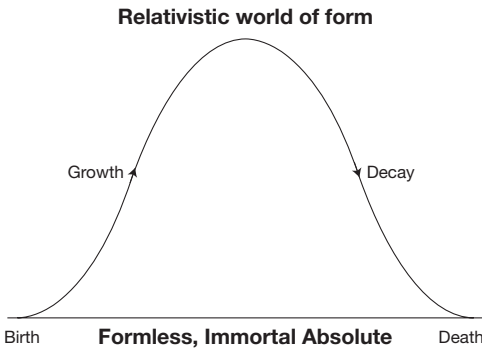
So in Reality, everything that happens in the Universe, including every moment of our lives, takes place in the Eternal Now. To explain what this means, we need to modify Aurobindo's notions of evolution and involution a little. For he wrote, "The word *evolution* carries with it in its intrinsic sense, in the idea at its root the necessity of a previous involution" (Aurobindo 1972). But in my experience, there is no evolutionary process prior to my own evolutionary learning activities in the noosphere.

Evolution begins at its Alpha Point at the Timeless, Formless Ground of Being, with what Aurobindo called 'Supermind':

"The Supermind is the Vast; it starts from unity, not division, it is primarily comprehensive, differentiation is only its secondary act" (Aurobindo 2001). Supermind then brings into existence the Hidden Harmony, which drives the growth of the complexity of structure upwards in the Eternal Now until evolution reaches its glorious culmination in Wholeness at its Omega Point, where Alpha and Omega are one. In contrast, involution is a psychological dying process, terminating in Oneness, with No-mind, as Ramana Maharshi taught. We then realise that no one can return Home to Wholeness, for nobody has ever left Home.

This simple application of the Hidden Harmony enables us to live in harmony with the fundamental law of the Universe, which Joseph Campbell called the





‘Cosmogonic Cycle’, depicted in this life-and-death diagram. For all beings in the Universe are born to die, with no exceptions. This naturally includes our planet, species, and civilisations, the global economy, and our individual body-mind-soul organisms.

So, as mystics have long realised, the primary purpose of life is to face death in all its forms so that we can become fully alive while still in the

body, called *jivan-mukti* in the East, from Sanskrit *jīva* ‘to live’ and *moksha* ‘liberation from worldly bonds’. As Campbell wrote, “Redemption consists in the return to superconsciousness and therewith the dissolution of the world. This is the great theme and formula of the cosmogonic cycle, the mythical image of the world’s coming to manifestation and subsequent return into the nonmanifest condition” (Campbell 1968).

Recapitulating the Cosmogonic Cycle in this conscious manner is absolutely essential if we are to face the existential fears that arise from what Nick Bostrom, Director of the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University, calls ‘existential risk’, defined as “One that threatens the premature extinction of Earth-originating intelligent life or the permanent and drastic destruction of its potential for desirable future development” (Bostrom 2013).

Some scientists see one of these existential risks as computers with artificial general intelligence taking over the world, replacing many jobs currently being performed by humans with machines. One of these is Stephen Hawking, who said to the BBC in 2014, “The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race.” Similarly, Martin Rees, former President of the Royal Society, has said, “A superintelligent machine could be the last invention that humans need ever make” (Rees 2004). To address this and many other existential risks that scientists have identified, Rees is a co-founder of the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk in Cambridge, with Hawking and Bostrom as advisors.

But the scientists, technologists, and philosophers engaged in such projects are doing so within a materialistic, mechanistic worldview that is unsustainable, unable to provide the Contextual Foundation and coordinating framework that we need to cocreate a harmonious society, governed by the Hidden Harmony. Most significantly, some are members of the cryonic, transhumanist movement, believing that only technology can solve humanity’s problems, grossly distorting Huxley’s vision that it will be humans, ourselves, who will be liberated from our

cultural and personal conditioning in order to realise our fullest potential as *Homo divinus*, before the inevitable death of *Homo sapiens*.

Most importantly, when we look at the future of humanity, we need to understand, “You cannot get there from here,” as the Wag said when a visitor in town asked him the way to the train station. Specifically, it is crystal clear that it is only by intelligently seeing both sides of every situation that we can bring much-needed harmony to our troubled society, transcending the opposites of optimism and pessimism in Love, Peace, and Nonduality. For, as the peace-worker James O’Dea has asked, “Can you hold both the meaning of the nightmare and the signs of our collective awakening—because the only way to get a grip on reality is to see that it is indivisible, reflected in both the shadow and the light, the bitter and the sweet” (O’Dea 2007).

Another who sees such a death and rebirth of civilisation is Jean Houston, who calls the changes that evolution is making today ‘Jump Time’, writing, “Jump Time is a whole system transition, a condition of interactive change that affects every aspect of life as we know it” (Houston 2004). As she says, “Ours is an era of quantum change, the most radical deconstruction and reconstruction the world has seen” (Houston 2007).

John L. Petersen is another with a similar vision, saying, we are currently entering a “historical, epochal change—a rapid global shift unlike any our species has lived through in the past. ... There are no direction-pointing precedents for what is coming, ... there is no one alive today who [has] lived through anything like what we’re anticipating” (Petersen 2008).

To help us live the vision of where we are going today, the Alliance for Mystical Pragmatics plans to publish books and articles and produce television documentaries and videos addressed to various readerships and audiences, as appropriate. Most significantly, the Alliance intends to publish works that complete the revolution in science currently taking place, just as Isaac Newton’s *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* completed the Copernican-Keplerian-Galilean revolution in 1687.

Such a revolution in human thought is absolutely essential at the present time, for, as Vimala Thakar said, inspired by Gandhi, “In a time when the survival of the human race is in question, continuing with the status quo is to cooperate with insanity, to contribute to chaos.” She therefore asks, “Do we have the vitality to go beyond narrow, one-sided views of human life and to open ourselves to totality, wholeness?” As she said, “The call of the hour is to move beyond the fragmentary, to awaken to total revolution” (Thakar 1984).

The systems philosopher Ervin Laszlo is one of the leaders of the epoch-making revolution in science presently taking place, calling the recognition that Consciousness is all there is the ‘Akashic paradigm’ (Laszlo 2012). For, as Vivekananda said: “Everything that has form, everything that is the result of combination, is evolved out of this *Akasha*. ... Just as *Akasha* is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this *Prana* the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe” (Vivekananda 1982). The word *Akasha* derives from Sanskrit *Ākāśha*, corresponding to Greek *aither* ‘pure, fresh air’, in Latin *æther*, “the pure essence where the gods lived and which they breathed”, which is *quintessence*, the fifth element, the others being fire, air, earth, and water, of course.

We could thereby bring harmony to the world, inspired by Johannes Kepler’s *Harmonice Mundi*, which integrated geometry, music, poetry, architecture, and astronomy into a glorious whole (Kepler 1997). However, there are enormous social and psychological pressures inhibiting us from realising our fullest potential as a species in what Abraham Maslow called the ‘Jonah Syndrome’, which is a pandemic today. Not only are we “afraid to become that which we can glimpse in our most perfect moment”, we try to prevent others doing so in a process he called ‘counter-valuing’ (Maslow 1968).

The final chapter in the *Bhagavad Gita* advises us how to behave under these circumstances. It teaches that while it is natural to engage in challenging projects, it is also essential to be free of egoic attachment to whatever might result from that work. This does not mean indifference to the results of these activities. For as Gandhi said, “He who ... is without desire for the result and is yet wholly engrossed in the fulfilment of the task before him is said to have renounced the fruits of his action” (Easwaran 1986).

With the world we live in degenerating rapidly into more and more chaos, our children will need to confront their parents, teachers, and other authorities in their lives with much compassion if they and their children are to have any chance of a peaceful and fulfilling future. May Love, Life, and Light be with us all as we synergistically engage in Transformative Harmony, cocreating networks of peaceful, collaborative communities, guided by the Hidden Harmony.

## References

- Aristotle. 1933. *Metaphysics*, Books I-IX. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Aurobindo. 1972. “Involution and Evolution”, in *The Supramental Manifestation and Other Writings*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
- . 1996. *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Twin Peak, WI: Lotus Press.



- . 2001. *The Life Divine*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.
- Blau, Evelyne. 1995. *Krishnamurti*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang.
- Bohm, David. 1980. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Boole, George. [1854] 1958. *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought*. New York: Dover.
- Bostrom, Nick. 2013. "The End of Humanity". TEDx talk.
- Campbell, Joseph. 1968. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton University Press.
- Cusa, Nicholas of. 1997. "On Learned Ignorance", in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, New York: Paulist Press.
- Descartes, René. [1641] 1968. *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Easwaran, Eknath (tr). 1986. *The Bhagavad Gita*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Eliade, Mircea. 1967. *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries*. New York: Harper Torchbook.
- Fromm, Erich. 1979. *To Have or To Be?* London: Abacus.
- Giri, Ananta Kumar. 2012. "Transformative Harmony", in *The ABC of Harmony*. New Delhi: Sanbun.
- Greene, Brian. 1999. *The Elegant Universe*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Grof, Christina and Stanislav (eds). 1989. *Spiritual Emergency*. New York: G.P. Putnam's.
- Happold, F.C. 1970. *Mysticism*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Houston, Jean. 2004. *Jump Time*. Boulder, CO: Sentient Publications.
- . 2007. "Jump Time Is Now" in *The Mystery of 2012*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Huxley, Julian. 1957. "Transhumanism" in *New Bottles for New Wine*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Jung, C.G. [1950] 1980. "A Study in the Process of Individuation", in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. London: Routledge.
- . 1989. *Psychological Types*. London: Routledge.
- . 2010. Commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. San Diego, CA: Book Tree.
- Kepler, Johannes. [1619] 1997. *The Harmony of the World*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.
- Lao Tzu. 2005. *Tao Teh Ching*, tr. John C. H. Wu. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Laszlo, Ervin. 2012. *The Akasha Paradigm in Science*. Hook, Hampshire, England: Waterside Press.
- Magee, Bryan. 2000. *The Great Philosophers*. Oxford University Press.
- Maslow, Abraham. 1968. "The Jonah Syndrome". *Religious Humanism*, 2(2):61-64.
- O'Dea, James. 2007. "You Were Born for Such a Time as This", in *The Mystery of 2012*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Osho. 1991. *The Hidden Harmony*. Cologne, Germany: Rebel Publishing House.
- Pagels, Elaine. 1990. *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.



- Peirce, Charles Sanders. [1891] 1992. "The Architecture of Theories", in *The Essential Peirce*, Vol I. Indiana University Press.
- Petersen, John. 2008. *A Vision for 2012*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.
- Ramsay, Jay. 1997. *Alchemy*. London: Thorsons.
- Rees, Martin. 2004. *Our Final Century*. London: Arrow Books.
- Semashko, Leo. 2009. *Harmonious Civilisation*. St. Petersburg: Lita.
- Tarnas, Richard. 1991. *The Passion of the Western Mind*. New York: Harmony Books.
- Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. [1955] 2003. *The Human Phenomenon*. Sussex Academic Press.
- Thakar, Vimala. 1984. *Spirituality and Social Action*. Vimala Programs California.
- Vivekanda. 1982. *Raja Yoga*. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama.
- Wilber, Ken. 2006. *Integral Spirituality*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

## CHAPTER 3

### Harmony Rediscovered

#### Transformation on the Path with No Goal or Finding a Way Back to What We Are

*Paul Schwartzentruber*

The deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. It is wordless. It is beyond words, and it is beyond speech, and it is beyond concepts. Not that we discover a new unity. We discover an older unity. My dear brothers [and sisters], we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are.

—Thomas Merton 1975

As this reference suggests, I write this brief note not from the perspective of social science but rather from that of ‘religion’, that now fragmentary discourse which in its post-enlightenment, post-critical and post-modern modes has given up its former metaphysical and dogmatic claims and returned to an experiential (‘mystical’) form of reflection, one so simple that it invites verification by any human being simply as self-conscious.

“We are already one. But we imagine that we are not”. This statement has profound and far-reaching implications for the human being-together that makes up the socio-political order of the post-modern world. It is a statement that might have echoed out of those older, pre-modern versions of being-together which

took their social communion as something given, a reality to be maintained by a common ethical act or complex series of acts. While such unity may have been axiomatic for them, we can only locate harmonious social communion as an ideal or *imaginarium* towards which we may evolve by a profound transformation of our present realities. This also locates quite precisely the nature of the post-modern concept of ‘harmony’: it has become an socio-political ideal, a goal toward which present realities may evolve, if or if only the right choices were made and the right values were somehow realised and instantiated by a vast array of different humans in different cultures on a global scale more or less simultaneously. The odds of that are staggering both from a cognitive perspective and an ethical one. It is a logical possibility but only just.

Conversely, we might say that having social communion as an ideal/goal defines who and what we are. In the form of a goal, which is the only form of it that we know, it is a very dubious ideal then, a kind of vague hope that the alignment of what is best in the human process will suddenly outweigh its many negative and self-destructive tendencies — the realities with which we now live. This tension between real and ideal expresses the very marrow of post-modern experience. We realise all too well now that, as Marylynne Robinson puts it:

We might be the creature, who brings life on this planet to an end, and we might be the creature, who awakens to the privileges that inhere in our nature—selfhood, consciousness, even our biologically anomalous craving for “the truth”—and enjoys and enhances them. Mysteriously, neither possibility precludes the other.

—Robinson 2010:130

While recognising and honouring the reality of this post-modern experience, we could use the space of this tension identified by that word ‘mystery’ to ask whether the logic of our post-modern experience is really so convincing, so binding a view after all. Can we only imagine harmony as an ideal, a goal to be realised after and somehow above and beyond the hard facts of human experience? Conversely, could there be any truth to the older axiom that “we are already one, but imagine that we are not”? Could any virtue be derived from thinking or rethinking this ‘ideal as goal’ in the contrary form of an originarium and thus re-imagining instead that “what we have to be is what we already are”?

I briefly want to explore the possibility of this reformulation of the ideal-as-goal-to-be-achieved as a ‘return’ to origin, or a path without goal and what it might bode for a conception of transformative harmony in our time. I will call it a path without goal precisely because, as I will try to show, there is really no place to go or even ‘return to’ when “we have to be what we already are”. If there is not

an ideal or a goal, still that moment in which we discover “that we are already one” is by means a non-event; in fact, it involves profound transformation and also an actualisation of a profound harmony. Just how that can be, however, needs some explanation. By the same token, I also want to suggest that such a non-goal, non-ideal recognition of original reality can have profound socio-political consequences, a fact instanced most clearly in our time by Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela among many others. I will return to that.

## **The Harmony Which Already Exists: Crossing Confusions of the Ideal and the Real**

There are several steps needed to clarify the formulation of this apparently simple shift from an ideal and goal to an “original unity” as Merton calls it. Let me first clarify some drawbacks of this notion of original reality by the logic of human progress and evolution.

The axiom of this approach is what Merton quite simply notes: “The deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion”. That is to say, communication always presupposes a pre-existing communion; it is not—contrary to the logic of common sense—something we have just created with eloquent or persuasive words. However, it might be something we could acknowledge after the fact of speaking. It might be the ‘discovery of an older unity’. In these cases, the axiom of original unity would indeed ground a radical cognitive revision of our current view of reality and its logic and thus it could become a very revolutionary ethical-political principle. But this very transformative harmony would definitely be in a mode of rediscovery rather than of evolution or even of a new actualisation of an ideal. Moreover, it would revolutionise not by explosion so much as by a kind of implosion; previously absolute and impassable distinctions would collapse inward so to speak. To the logic of progress and evolution, of course, this sounds like retrogression, wilful ignorance or going backward but actually nothing could be further from the truth.

A first confusion arises from linear or sequential logic. Origin and ‘original unity’ as these thinkers discover and present it is not some original fullness from which we have fallen at the beginning of time into the darkness of the world (as the Gnostic cosmologies explain it). In fact, it is not a simple temporal reality at all. On the contrary, it is more like an ever-present structure of our very being as human beings from which we have become alienated by our concrete ways of viewing, knowing and acting. It must be said immediately that this self-alienation is also very real and embedded habitually in us as a result of our ways of viewing, knowing and acting (hence, our sense that ‘this is reality’). But despite this and in a

more determinative sense, the original reality is not alienated from us—temporally or spatially—it is still immediately there and present in and through all our action (I want to say genetically ‘there and present’ although that can only be a metaphor). This is the sense implied in Merton’s phrase “we are already one but we imagine that we are not”. But these analogies need some further explanation.

If this original unity is always present but not evident to us, if it is ‘in us’ but not ‘of us’, so to speak, then we may seem to be talking about a state hovering between ideality and reality. This gives rise to a second confusion in which we would be tempted to think of this unity as a mere potential over against our actuality. On the contrary, what I am trying to describe here is something that is fully actual even if we do not intentionally enact it, and even when we intentionally enact the contrary (which we do in fact most of the time). Consider, for example, the act of murder or any other kind of life-taking among human beings. The grim reality that one human being intentionally kills another human being is not more real than the simple fact that each one—murderer and victim—is equally a human being embodying the completely common gift of conscious life. The reality of its enaction—the life-taking—is a denial of that other, once-living reality of common life. As a denial, it actively displaces its claim to reality as easily as it takes the actual life (or it displaces its claim in order to be able to take the life). The ‘othering’ of this denial erects a false difference in place of what was in reality an exact mirroring of the murderer’s own reality as a living being. Thus the human being who was just a moment ago living, did not have a potential life or an abstract one. What was being denied in the real act of killing was very much also a present and realised reality. Because of the nature of this kind of denial, we ought to be very wary of claims that the act of violence is the reality (and thus represents the actual truth about human being) while the unrecognised/denied commonality of life and humanity between the murder and victim was a mere idea, a potential, or an ideal. Murders may indeed be actual among human beings but they are actual only as a denial of the more basic actuality of life itself, of what is real and true of us as human beings, namely our common and undifferentiated giftedness with the one same conscious life.

## **Denial of the Original Unity and the Post-Modern Critiques of Denial**

The notion of denial as a *contretemps* to what is real but not evident, is an important step in clarifying the concept of an original unity so I will digress slightly here to clarify the kind of denial that I have in mind and to differentiate it from other post-modern notions of denial. My main goal is still to suggest that our original reality

is always present and actual, even though in the concrete, we are denying it and enacting its opposite. But I also want to indicate, if I can, what might be meant by undoing this denial and what kind of transformation that might entail.

To recognise the vast empire of denial as an essential feature of our socio-political life is, ironically, what constitutes the essential post-modernity of 'critical' consciousness. Thus, those whom Paul Ricoeur called the "masters of suspicion"—Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, have shaped post-modern consciousness around a rational critique of denial in all its forms—sexual, social and moral (Ricoeur 1970:32). And others, like Foucault, have extended that empire of denial into all the nooks and crannies of consciousness and language where power is hidden in collusion. The irony is that through this dominant optic of critique we can no longer see through critique to what is purportedly being denied. In this sense, it is true to say that we have truly lost our innocence (Ricoeur 1967). We take this critique to be an unmasking of illusion, ideology and deceit but, that being said, it actually uncovers nothing that is substantive except the rigorous of method of critical rationality itself. Moreover, this critique is a rationality stripped of any ethic, subjective depth or vision of wholeness, a system in which "everything is decided from the start" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1988:24). This is exactly the point at which the notion of the 'ideal' (over against the actual) re-emerges for this unsparing, rational critique of the human realm of denial leads, ironically, to a series of naïve deferrals of hope on to an ideal or utopia (*Übermensch*, a classless society, or Freud's pseudo-stoic 'scientific view' that is "beyond illusion or consolation"<sup>1</sup>). Thus the enlightenment ideal of progress and 'enlightened' rationality very much persist in all these post-modern forms; they, in turn, are part of its "dialectic" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1988). In fact, this critique and unmasking of denial create a new realm of virtual idealism, a fantastical assertion of what we might become if we could leap over our own shadows and evolve into new forms of communion or social life. This is the true impasse of the idealism I mentioned above, and we seem still to be caught in its pincers.

The problem with the critique of denial which has shaped post-modern culture, I might suggest, is that it is not nearly critical enough; it overlooks completely the denials of ordinary (non-neurotic, non-moralising, non-false) consciousness and thus of its so-called ordinary rationality. These kinds of denials are shallower in one sense as, for example, in our common sense notions of time and space, of self and others, and the causality of story and history and yet they run underneath and support our basic view of ourselves and the world. They are hidden in their banality but provide the unquestioned logic for just about all our thinking, intending and doing.

Let me identify briefly but one example. Time is a reality which we take to be almost exclusively clock-time or measured intervals of quality ("fungible" says

Mumford) and have done so since the urbanisation at the beginning of the Middle Ages (Mumford 2010). Yet this conception of time is a denial of the common human experience of time as duration (as Bergson tried to explain fruitlessly to Einstein).<sup>2</sup> This so-constituted ‘ordinary time’, around which our public and social worlds were then and are still inextricably bound is clock time. We feel often enough its utter inadequacy to our own experiences of duration (e.g., boredom, anxiety, joy or loss) but it seems that its denial of them has become common sense to us. And thus we are led to deny in a daily, constant way our basic human experiences of utter contingency (the fact that we suddenly are here for no reason whatsoever and will not be here in just the same way); of continual transformation (which is much more radical and extensive and less causal than our notions of growth or progress and decline); and of a thoroughly uncertain identity stretched across time and change (which is much more difficult to grasp than our history and stories of ourself/pastself allow). One might note in passing that these denied experiences correspond roughly to the three essential characteristics of sentient beings in the Buddha’s teaching, i.e., ‘suffering, impermanence and lack of self’. That at least suggests just how easy it is to recognise that what is ever-present in us and about us, can become not at all evident to us and not be enacted by us. This denial of ordinary consciousness is precisely what makes it ‘ordinary’ and thus so practical and so successful in our world as it is currently constituted. In fact, it appears unavoidable to recognise that in the post-modern context it is ordinary consciousness and its domestication within the systemic structures of the socio-political which is at the root of our problem: dealing with the present is always deferred for the sake of future ideal of progress. It is this ordinary consciousness which finds itself imagining a series of ideals of a harmony which are utterly beyond its concrete practice. The gap cannot be closed by any notion of transformation, since ordinary consciousness is incapable of becoming extraordinary.

Similar arguments could be made and have been made in the religious traditions about our ordinary notions of space, of self and others, of the ‘causality’ we claim for our stories and histories. The point I want to stress from this brief reflection on a single example is that the actual reality out of which act as a temporal being (i.e., the experience of duration) is not enacted concretely but rather denied or at best ignored in most of our ordinary thinking, doing and intending. We act as if our time were clock time almost invariably when in reality it is a constantly changing duration through which our ‘I’ is mysteriously passing from unknown to unknown (and consequently this is a very different ‘I’ than the one we posit in ordinary consciousness). And yet all the while we feel ourselves to be competent, thoroughly logical or at least well-intentioned agents acting in a coherent (if frustrating) framework of fixed meaning. The question I want to ponder next is how could this kind of denial—the denial that constitutes ordinary consciousness itself—

be undone or seen through, critically? What would such a critique reveal? What would that involve in terms of our 'true' selves? What would be the implications of it in socio-political terms?

## **The Religious Critique of the Denials of Ordinary Consciousness**

Let me approach this first from a historical perspective. The critique of these denials of ordinary consciousness has traditionally been the work of religious thinkers or, more precisely, the 'founders, innovators and mystics' of the religious traditions rather than the institutionalisers.<sup>3</sup> For it must be recognised that, in the hands of the latter, religious consciousness has all too often and all too easily been collapsed into precisely those forms of ordinary consciousness, accepted their denials and reduced its original insights to accord with them. In this sense, it has been just as prey as other kinds of thinking to the false and deceptive harmonies claimed by political despots of all times. In fact, with the absolutising nature of its claims, religion has lent profound support to these despots and their false idealisms everywhere. While these absolute claims are often misused in this way, they remain a kind of gold standard of veracity in the social order.<sup>4</sup> Thus an authentic religious critique of ordinary consciousness and its denial is still present and sometimes active in all the great traditions. So without arguing further about the authenticity or falsity of religious traditions, I want to turn to that kind of critique of ordinary consciousness itself as an exemplar of what might be meant by Merton's claim about the effort to "recover our original unity...to be what we are".

I will focus now on the example of the human self which has been variously inflected as the ego, the individual, the subject and the person. For reasons that will become obvious I will use the term, 'self' as a touchstone. I want to briefly examine three critiques of the ordinary consciousness of self or identity that have arisen in contemporary religious thinking – that of Carl Jung, that of Simone Weil and finally that of Gandhi. In each case, the point is to see how the critique of the denial of ordinary consciousness opens the way to a transformation and recognition of the harmony of "original unity".

## **Jung's Account of the True Self**

In post-modern culture it has become a cliché to speak of one's true or inner self, usually in contrast to what are considered shallower versions of identity adopted by the ego in various social contexts. This 'true self' in this sense expresses a kind of ideal version of identity that is deeper, more consistent and more endowed with



meaning. Needless to say that the quest to achieve it, is almost endless. As such, it is a kind of parody and inversion of the self of the “original unity” of which Merton speaks above. In what follows I will try to work my way from the parody back to a more authentic version of the original notion. Historically, this popular notion was no doubt derived from Jung’s distinction between ego and Self in his account of the process of individuation. For Jung, that process of transformation describes a universal human quest to move from the fragmentary nature of one (the ego) towards the wholeness of the other (the Self).<sup>5</sup> After it was popularised that framework readily leant itself as a convenient model for contemporary spirituality. I do not need to underline how banal such a popular account of self-discovery can become; it is a now pop culture byword.

Jung’s own notion of this Self was the fruit of a lifelong quest for a reconciliation between the psychological (scientific) and the spiritual, a quest which led him to return to traditional religious formulations as well as non-traditional, Gnostic ones (Jung 2009). It is notable that, by doing so, Jung bypassed the long modern tradition of German Idealism which portrayed the self as a rational or practical subject (all the way up to Nietzsche). Jung was clearly interested in recovering a self that was richer, more nuanced and also “darker” than this bare rational subject, and also a self which was engaged with all the powerful forces of the cosmos, not only the so-called rational ones.<sup>6</sup>

Jung’s search among these ancient sources was animated by the desire to mine out and reclaim some account of a catalyst of transformation—self-transformation, whether from the crucifixion or the alchemical crucibles, or in the mythical journey of the hero, or the Gnostic spiritual tales. Jung’s quest proves if anything that by the twentieth century such a catalyst of transformation had been truly lost to western culture. It had certainly become moribund in the western religious traditions. Such self-transformation, for Jung, the psychologist, could only have to do with the relation between the ego/persona that is, the ‘I’ of ordinary consciousness on the one hand, and the archetypes of wholeness which lay hidden, as he argued, in the symbols of the unconscious, on the other, and from there exercised a powerful but erratic pull on the individual. The deepest of these archetypes he identified as the Self:

Whatever man’s [sic] wholeness, or the self, may mean per se, empirically it is an image of the goal of life spontaneously produced by the unconscious, irrespective of the wishes and fears of the conscious mind. It stands for the goal of the total man [sic], for the realisation of his wholeness and individuality with or without the consent of his will. (Jung 2010:97)

Thus, this quest for a wholeness of the total person was driven by their own unconscious forces, forces which worked critically and sometimes very painfully to breakdown the narrow parameters of ordinary consciousness and to push the ego to grow beyond them.

This critique of ordinary consciousness and catalyst for self-transformation which Jung, as a typical postmodern thinker, located within the human being itself was not, however, simply another factor of consciousness itself: it was a true “other” within. The ego did not and could not control it, it could only react to it. It is for this reason that Jung feels compelled to describe the inner-self using the traditional language of religion, particularly the symbol of the divine order and its mediation in the Christ figure. The quotation above is from Jung’s *Answer to Job*, a book that was written in his eighties as the culmination of his life-long quest. It presents a radical reinterpretation of the classical religious text and its account of the problems of human suffering and of theodicy (i.e., justifying God in the face of suffering). The troubled relationship between Job and the divine Yahweh very clearly represents the kind of relation that exists between the ego and the inner Self, for Jung. At the same time, Jung uses his account of psychological dynamics to radically reinterpret the relationship between the divine and the human—along the lines of his understanding of how ego is transformed by the inner self.<sup>7</sup>

The story recounts how the divine character—on a rather superficial whim (i.e., to test Job according to Satan’s challenge) allows Satan to inflict profound suffering on Job in the midst of his happy prosperous life. Job loses everything that makes life worth living, all of the human goods, and is reduced to sitting in mourning while his friends come to console and counsel him. The counsel they give, according to the traditional morality, insists that Job’s suffering must be a punishment for some wrongdoing, for God is just. Job should acknowledge and repent his wrongdoing. Job refuses. He has done nothing deserving of punishment, he insists. He proclaims his innocence and thus the injustice of his suffering until Yahweh himself is called to account and appears to answer for his role in the drama. It is at this point that Jung offers a radical twist in interpretation. Yahweh’s answer to Job, as Jung argues, is clearly no satisfactory one. To say ‘I am God and you are a human, you couldn’t possibly understand’ is mere bluster and misses the point entirely, namely, the question of justifying the suffering of the innocent. Job, the human character (or the ego of ordinary consciousness) has already been transformed it seems. He has seen through the shallow conception of traditional morality and is capable of maintaining his innocence in the face of the unjust suffering. “The victory of the vanquished and oppressed is obvious: Job stands morally higher than Yahweh. In this respect the creature has surpassed the creator”, argues Jung. Of course this leaves the divine being in an untenable position, from which he must transform himself:

Yahweh must become man precisely because he has done many a wrong. He, the guardian of justice, knows that every wrong must be expiated, and Wisdom knows that moral law is above even him. Because his creature has surpassed him he must regenerate himself.

—Jung 1968:42

In psychological terms, this means that the archetype of wholeness—held within the unconscious—was understood in too narrow a way and must expand by including within itself the new moral understanding achieved by the ego in its suffering. Since the archetype of wholeness is expressed as the divine being and exemplar of wholeness, however, its expansion to incorporate the dimensions of suffering and evil amounts to a profound transformation of the vision the divine being as such. Leaving aside for the moment, Jung's intriguing re-conception of the Christian Trinity as a 'quaternity' (which includes the darkness of the shadow), we can see that this new vision of the divine being will involve in fact a transformed relation between the now enlightened ego of ordinary consciousness and the equally expanded divine being/inner Self:

That is to say, even the enlightened person remains what he is, and is never more than his own limited ego before the One who dwells within him, whose form has no knowable boundaries, who encompasses him on all sides, fathomless as the abysses of the earth and vast as the sky.

—Jung 1968

The human is still very much human, for enlightenment is neither deification nor worse, megalomania, but perhaps now, Jung notes, it will be able to draw on resources beyond the ego, resources of "the One who dwells within him "in order to "temper his will... and the immense power of destruction that is given into his hand... with the spirit of love and wisdom" (*ibid.*:97). The transformation of the ego or of ordinary consciousness which Jung has in mind here is both a return to an original unity and an expansive transformation of the ego in relation to it. In order to grasp both aspects we must read the Job story at the deeper level that Jung suggests.

As I just noted, there is also more to this transformation of Job than the ego's expansion for, in Jung's psychological interpretation, the figure of Yahweh also is an aspect of the psyche. Yahweh's transformation, which Jung projected in the symbol of an incarnation, involved an including of the human (and of evil) within the divine itself. This trope of a divine expansion to include its opposite, in fact, for Jung has the form of a 'return' to an original unity. In this earlier work, Jung had explained this wholeness through the archetype or symbol of the *Ouroboros*,

the serpent which devoured its own tale, and thereby transforms itself into a kind of never-ending circle. This *Ouroboros* symbol represented, on the one hand, an “original unity” which existed before the differentiation of conscious/unconscious, individual and group the participation mystique such as exists in the primitive and original state.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, and on the other hand, Jung saw the “paradox” of the symbol as referring to a transformation of human being itself (“as the *prima materia*”). Such a transformation can happen, he felt, only after the ego has developed, completed its own course of differentiation and individuation and then come to the point where it can “integrate and assimilate the opposite, i.e., the shadow”, thus “turning itself into a circulatory process and returning to an original wholeness. This archetype of wholeness, into which the individual could be introjected, Jung believed, “unquestionably stems from man’s unconsciousness”.<sup>9</sup>

From the vantage of the symbol of the *Ouroboros*, we can see more clearly the dimensions of Jung’s version of the critique and transformation of ordinary consciousness through engagement with the Self or the ‘God within’. Jung clearly stresses the inner and intrinsic character of the transformation, i.e., it is a transformation of the psyche carried out by the psyche itself. He uses the objectified, symbolic language of the religious tradition to describe that in order to underline that this is not simply another project of the ego, but rather of the unconscious and of a self which truly lie beyond its control. The transformation is such that it relocates the individual within their own deepened and broadened horizon of the psyche (rooted in the Self) and thereby gives it a new and authentic impetus towards the “spirit of love and wisdom”. But for Jung—this is the crucial point—this process is not an undoing of the ego as such or a rejection of the process of individuation in which the ego has engaged. This transformed ego-individual is, if anything, more individuated than previous versions of its ego-identity, that is to say, less defined by the cultural or psychological norms and also by their common denials. It is this by virtue of being polarised away from the denials of ordinary consciousness and towards the more universal dimensions of consciousness. The exemplar is Job, enlightened by his own suffering and above all by his claim to innocence before Yahweh, demanding of this ‘god within’, a deeper vision of justice, one which acknowledges the reality of darkness and suffering. What Jung wants to describe with the metaphor of Job is a renewed participation of the now fully differentiated ego in the unconscious structures of the psyche, a return to origin in which it affects a completion of itself. It would not be amiss to discern here, not the traditional religious understanding of a return to the origin of oneness as something given, but rather a very Hegelian inflection of that process in which Spirit completes itself through the dialectic (thesis/antithesis/synthesis) of the material world.

It remains to ask what might be meant by the fact that the transformed human being would ‘temper their will by love and wisdom’. Jung did not develop these universal dimensions of the transformed psyche thoroughly or clearly. He did identify the notion of the ‘Great Individual’ who is not only ‘possessed’ by the spirit of the ‘unconscious’ (and therefore works in a transpersonal dimension), but who also consciously assimilates its content and thus acts creatively and humanely.<sup>10</sup> But this is contrasted sharply with his portrayal of the individual who is simply ‘possessed’ by unconscious material and therefore becomes, like Hitler, “a means for the self-demonisation of the mass” (Neumann 1973:425). One can only wonder then what that vision of transformation would mean for the socio-political realm. What effect could such great individuals have when they become “revelatory bearers of the transpersonal” (*ibid.*)? Jung was well aware of the darkness enclosing Europe as he wrote but he offered little to address the crisis from a theoretical standpoint. How was it possible for such a horrific manifestation of unresolved darkness in the collective unconscious, to take possession of an ego or an entire nation? Where was the transformation of the ego, let alone the harmony of the transpersonal to stand against that? We would suggest that Jung’s quasi-Hegelian inflection of the notion of self-transformation loses an essential element of the traditional religious return to original unity, namely, the element of its givenness and gratuity. Nonetheless, it adds a good deal of psychological depth to the mythological formulations and allows us to appreciate again the notion of the ‘God within’, whom St. Augustine, the first psychologist, described “as deeper than my inmost self” or interior *intimus meus* (Confessions III:vi).

## Simone Weil: Affliction and the Transformation of the Soul

We can readily and fruitfully contrast Jung’s psycho-spiritual account of the critique and transformation of ordinary consciousness with another one that is contemporary to it and lies more at the heart of the mystical tradition, in fact, of several of the mystical traditions. Simone Weil (1909-1943), the brilliant young French activist and thinker turned religious mystic, ended her short 34 year search for a way to address human suffering—her preferred term was *Le Malheur* or affliction—also by reflecting on the Book of Job in an essay entitled “The Love of God and Affliction”. Her path to that culminating reflection was complex, however, and quite different from Jung’s. In many ways the path of her unique journey explains its outcome so it worth briefly recapitulating.

Weil came to Job and her mystical thought along a very secular path which began as a social activist and radical thinker who identified profoundly with the suffering of the underclass and social outcastes. An early work, the probing study “Reflection concerning the Causes of Liberty and Social Oppression”,

sympathetically critiqued the Marxist analysis of oppression and led beyond it to her own first reframing of the question of oppression. Summing up her early years of activism, she came to recognise both the more complex and two-sided nature of social oppression (i.e., its systemic character and the deep dependency it created) on the one hand, and on the other, the pivotal role of the individual agent in bringing about any socio-political change. Now, she threw herself into the experience of those at the bottom of the social order (working in factories, experiencing the front line at the Spanish civil war) in order to think through the experience of oppression more deeply and viscerally. From these experiences, her insight began to polarise around the idea of affliction, that particular aspect of suffering which reached inside a person and profoundly marked their sense of self, in fact, often debilitated it. This affliction—which was deeper than the natural or even the inflicted experiences of pain and loss—undermined a person's sense of self worth and bound her/his ego to an acceptance of its own subservience. This was something she herself experienced many times and in many ways. On day after leaving her brutalising factory work and boarding a tram car, for example, she found herself wondering if she really 'had the right to be there' and whether she would be asked to leave.<sup>11</sup> As she continued to reflect on the socio-political forms of oppression she recognised that in that social form, affliction was a "humiliation" of the weak by the powerful such that "those at the bottom must struggle so as not to lose all the rights of a human being" (Weil 2005:249). That analysis led her to recognise that such affliction was actually imposed by the powerful on the weak in the pursuit of their power and its accompanying illusion of prestige:

Power must not seem to be arbitrarily allocated, because it will not then be recognised as power. Therefore prestige, which is illusion, is the very essence of power...[because] it must appear as something absolute and sacrosanct, both to those who wield power and those who submit to it...

—Weil 2005:255

Suffering or affliction was indeed a social problem, present in the very structures of any social order, but as she came to realise more and more clearly it did not have a social solution. She now saw that such 'imposed suffering' could not be reduced to an external problem that could be 'fixed' externally as Marx imagined precisely because it "also infects those who are the objects of it" (*ibid.*:199). As has been recognised by others in the study of the effects of colonisation, there is an internalised dimension of subjection in those who are subject to it which cannot be undone by outward change.<sup>12</sup> This meant, as she would put it later, that affliction was not only a wrong done socially and politically but also and more importantly a wrong done spiritually in that it "stamps the soul to its very depths with the



contempt, the disgust, and even self-hatred and sense of guilt and defilement” due to one who is actually guilty rather than one who is innocent (Weil 2003:44). And this revealed the true ‘worm’ of affliction whereby even in the innocent there arises a “complicity with regard to one’s own affliction”, and the “soul is made an accomplice in it”: it accepts the sense of unworthiness and guilt like “a poison of inertia” (*ibid.*:45).

Weil reached this new formulation of the problem of affliction in a brilliant essay, *The Iliad*, or *The Poem of Force* which is surely one of most important discursive essays of the twentieth century. Here, after a religious conversion and having read deeply both the Christian mystics and those of the eastern traditions (i.e., *The Bhagavad Gita* and Upanishads), she recognised that affliction resulted from the imposition of ‘force’ in general (whether by natural necessity or by human agency in society). In the latter case, she argued, the use of force trapped both the powerful one and the victim in a deeply dehumanising nexus, in which both ‘lost their soul’ and were “turned into a thing”: “those who use it and those who endure it are turned into stone” (Weil 1965:22). “The subjection to force”, Weil argues, “is the common lot, although each spirit will bear it differently according to its virtue” (*ibid.*:27). Weil was left with the belief that the ability to acknowledge and recognise this experience of affliction as the human experience, bitter as it was, was “the spiritual insight” necessary to overcome the denial and “avoid self-deception: it alone could give “lucidity, purity and simplicity” (*ibid.*:28). She found this stoical acceptance in the Greeks and it accounted for the depth and power of their insight. This was a crucial step, both to recognise dominion of force in human affairs and in individual lives and then also to see how fundamentally human is the denial of it, i.e., the naïve but persistent belief we all share that we can escape the fate of such force or worse, that we can use it for own ends without being snared by it. It is the denial of ordinary consciousness on which most of our lives and actions are based. But was it enough to see and accept the bitterness of this human destiny? Could that undo the hold of denial in the heart and mind?

There is yet a final reformulation of the problem of affliction in Weil’s short life and it involves a quite complex turn of her thinking spurred on by a series of mystical experiences. After these experiences and inner conversion (which she steadfastly refused to formalise even on her deathbed), Weil dedicated herself “to think both the truth of human affliction and the truth of God” (Weil 2003:19, Introduction). The key here is the word ‘both’ for Weil utterly refused to believe that these two truths actually coincided in any of the ways that were traditionally imagined by piety or, as Job’s friends suggested, by traditional morality. God did not and could not intervene in the world by loosening the logic of necessity, or intervening in the rule of force. There was a loving God but that God was beyond the world, on the other side of the “screen” of necessity which ruled the world (*ibid.*:73). Weil used

many metaphors to try to describe this separation which was also “a link” between the loving God and the affliction of human beings, most striking perhaps the wall separating two prisoners in neighbouring cells (*ibid.*:74). This step of course made much more complex the problems of theodicy (the justification of God) but it also made the human experience of affliction more puzzling. By clearing the field of the simplistic, pious explanations, Weil was posing for herself again the question of Job.

By the same token, she now felt the true weight of her own affliction, the affliction for which she refused to think that there was or could be any consolation. There was still a kind of fearless desire to see the truth of this affliction however and it required moving completely beyond all denial and fully accepting the reality of affliction. As she wrote to a crippled friend: “To think affliction it is necessary to bear it in one’s own flesh, driven very far in and for a long time, so that we may have time to grow strong enough to regard it” (*ibid.*:35). This is still the stoic resolve of the Greeks, however, now as Weil turns to reflect on Job, she finds a new dimension and depth in the experience.

In the essay, “The Love of God and Affliction”, she argues that the Book of Job is “a pure marvel of truth and authenticity. As regards affliction, all that departs from this model is more or less tainted with falsehood” (*ibid.*:44). The story of Job contains the true model, the true criterion not because there is a consolation given in it but rather because while there is no consolation, there is a resolution for the ego in its passage beyond denial. Weil describes the resolution in this way:

Affliction causes God to be absent for a time, more absent than light in the darkness of a cell. A kind of horror submerges the whole soul. During this absence there is nothing to love. What is terrible is that if, in this darkness where there is nothing to love, the soul ceases to love, God’s absence becomes final. The soul has to go on loving in the void, or at least go on wanting to love, though it may only be an infinitesimal part of itself. Then, one day, God will come to show himself to the soul and to reveal the beauty of the world to it, as in the case on Job. (2003:44)

Weil’s text here must be carefully explicated, given especially her resolute rejection of the notion of religious consolation/divine intervention. What does it mean for her to say “the soul has to go on loving in the void” on the one hand, and “then, one day, God will show himself to the soul and reveal the beauty of the world to it”, on the other? This is certainly not a *quid pro quo* or an answered prayer. It is also not a return to the state of denial about the reality of suffering. Nor is the soul removed from its affliction (neither after all, was Job) by these acts; to ‘go on loving’ changes nothing in the affliction itself. Weil herself explicates further on



this notion of affliction without consolation. Affliction, first of all, has a destructive impact on the human soul which simply cannot be undone: “in affliction, all the contempt, the revulsion, and hatred are turned inwards...they penetrate to the very centre of the soul and from there they colour the whole universe with their poisoned light” (*ibid.*:45). Where the soul “goes on loving in the void”—and Weil calls this supernatural love—“it can prevent the second result from coming about but not the first” (*ibid.*). That is to say, the soul itself cannot be rescued from its afflicted state but it can transform the subsequent (‘poisoned’) vision of the world by such love. How is that possible?

Here Weil turns to the Christian symbols of incarnation and crucifixion as the pivotal point of insight. She understands these symbols as embodying “the infinite distance between God and God, the supreme tearing apart, this incomparable agony” over which, nonetheless, “supreme love places the bond of supreme union”. This affliction of Christ and the love of the Father which remains somehow united with him in his affliction, these two mysteries Weil insists exist side by side – neither explains nor undoes the other but both are fully real and realised:

This tearing apart, over which supreme love places the bond of supreme Union, echoes perpetually across the universe in the depth of the silence, like two notes, separate yet blending into one, like a pure and heartrending harmony....This is the word of God. The whole of creation is its vibration. (*ibid.*:46).

“Those who persevere in love hear this note,” Weil argues, “from the very lowest depths into which affliction has thrust them” (*ibid.*). This clearly is the “beauty of the world” which God reveals to the soul and it involves the recognition, the complete acceptance that here below necessity governs all. But this revelation does not remove affliction or undo it.

To understand this rigour with which Weil posits ‘affliction of the soul’ without consolation, one must recognise her account of “necessity”, the “blind mechanism” which—in the will of God—rules the world completely: it is the distance between God and God, the space in which we exist, the “gravity of the world”: “all the horrors which occur in the world are like the folds imposed upon the waves by this gravity” (*ibid.*:50). As Weil wrote in her Notebooks, “Necessity is the veil of God” (*ibid.*:72). Elsewhere she speaks of this necessity as the space in which we as creatures are allowed to be, to have our separate, quasi-independent existences for a time:

Necessity is the screen placed between God and us so that we can be. It is for us to pierce through the screen so that we can cease to be. We shall never pierce through it if we do not understand that God

lies beyond at an infinite distance and that good lies in God alone (*ibid.*:73).

Here at last we come to the final understanding of affliction reached by Weil in her mystical journey. What does it mean “to pierce through the screen” and to “cease to be”? For Weil, in effect these two terms are synonymous: to cease to be means to give up the claim to an independent existence and all the denials on which it is based, and this, in turn, simply means to accept that the harsh necessity is simply the law of our gravity as creatures:

The universe where we are living, and of which we form a minute particle, is but the distance put by divine love between God and God. We are a point in this distance. Space, time and the mechanism that governs matter are the distance. Everything we call evil is only this mechanism [of necessity] (*ibid.*:49).

Acceptance is obedience not to some extrinsic will of God, or of some desire to punish us, or even to educate us, but rather obedience to our true and intrinsic reality as created beings. To accept necessity, to become as “obedient” to it as obedient as matter itself which “is the perfect model for us” (*ibid.*:50), Weil argues. As soon as we do this – and this means letting go of the sense of the independent self in its denials—necessity becomes, as it were “the transparency of a window pane to light...and we see God” (*ibid.*:51). This process Weil likens to an “apprenticeship” in which we learn to see, “to read” the world differently (*ibid.*:52). In effect, we see the wall of separation now as a link to God and besides our suffering there appears and becomes real, the equally important reality of “joy”:

Joy and suffering are two equally precious gifts which must both of them be fully tasted, each one in its purity and without trying to mix them. (*ibid.*:52)

This joy is the exact opposite of the pseudo-consolation of delusion; it is a joy in reality itself. From another point of view—that of our egos—this obedience means a destruction of the self, of the personality, “of all the mediocre part of ourselves, which is almost the whole of us—which is us, and is what we mean when we say ‘I’” (*ibid.*:81). But for Weil this is a fact of release to be celebrated, “so much is our whole substance an affair of illusion” (*ibid.*:57). And while the ego “may fabricate any falsehood that can possibly divert our attention” from God (*ibid.*:81), it is affliction which undoes the ego in its denial, which “de-creates the I” (*ibid.*:72) and allows it to become simply and finally “nothing other than a [certain point of intersection] between nature and God” (*ibid.*:61), giving its full attention to the Love of God.

A good deal has been written about Weil's masterful and poetic mysticism, especially this ultimate image of de-creation of the ego, and indeed of the person as such, through a loving obedience.<sup>13</sup> The parallels with many strands of earlier Judaeo-Christian mysticism and also with eastern, particularly Buddhist teachings is very striking. This is indeed a unique but also a culminating vision of what is meant by the return to an original point of unity, the point that is simply the "intersection of God and nature". In contrast to Jung, however, Weil sees the original unity not as a culmination of the process of human development in a positive sense (i.e., as individuation) but rather, following her own *via negativa*, as the falling away of the shell of the 'person', of the individual point of view and of the claims of the self. What remained was something that had become diaphanous to the divine good, but that by virtue of a self-annihilation of the ego and a de-creation of the person.

Nonetheless, Weil did not see her mystical self-annihilation as a rejection of the engagement with social reality or even of a concrete political praxis. At the time of her death, she was just finishing her last work, *The Need for Roots*, a masterful study of responsibility, culture and the facts of human rootedness in the natural and cultural worlds.<sup>14</sup> There are indications in her last letters that she was searching for a "synthesis of her religious and social ideas", a synthesis she called, "a deposit of pure gold" (Springsted 1999:168). Weil's mysticism in fact points to a self-denial which means accepting and working in and through the necessity of world, through thought, labour and culture in order to minimise the rule of "force" and give space for the rule of love. But this pointing remained only that at the time of her death. What such an ego-less politics might have looked like, we can only imagine.

## **Gandhi: Suffering and Political Transformation as a Realisation of the Original Unity**

Actually, from this thread of imagination, we can turn towards the parallel but very different ego-less politics that was brought to fruition at roughly the same time in India by Mohandas Gandhi.<sup>15</sup> Much more of an activist than a philosopher, Gandhi was nevertheless able to achieve a profound re-articulation of the notion of socio-political action in the form of suffering and self-transformation which he called respectively, *Satyagraha* ('clinging to the truth') and *Swaraj* ('self-rule'). In fact, as we shall see, both of those terms refer to the point of original unity as Gandhi conceived it, namely, as a completely selfless engagement in the work of service (*seva*) to others. Gandhi's understanding of the transforming fact that "we are all already one" entails a sacrifice of ego and ordinary consciousness (along with

its denials) but not an annihilation of the individual point of view (which he saw as the locus for the voice of conscience). In this sense, he argues, we can actually realise our original oneness by virtue of our transformed and transformative social and political praxis. This middle position, between the *via positiva* of Jung and the *via negativa* of Weil, is also worthy of a brief sketch.

Gandhi's years of activism led him to formulate a quite unique intellectual starting-point on the problem of human harmony and self-transformation: he saw (and read) the success of western modernity very critically through the lens of the colonial oppression that made it possible in the first place. It was, he argued, the success of a pure lust for power rather than of a culture or religion.<sup>16</sup> However he also appreciated and acknowledged the complex encounter between the industrialised nation-states of the west and the traditional cultures of the east. Out of their violent encounter, Gandhi wove a counter-history to one of conquests told in the west, a history in which the traditions of the east evoked a 'west' that was true to its own real values, the values championed by its dissidents, like Ruskin and Tolstoy. In this, he strove to develop and maintain a precarious, critical point of balance on which the religious and ethical strands of traditional culture could wind around and strengthen the social and political strands of the modern nation state. In order to do so he had to develop a very critical account of both the traditional sources and the presuppositions of the modern nation state. It is for this reason that one analyst (Nandy 2009) has called him a "critical traditionalist" ("From Outside the Imperium") and another (Rahim Jahanbegloo) has noted that his "anti-modern modernism" made him "an outsider both to India and to modernity" (Jahanbegloo 2013:61). However, it is important to recognise that Gandhi's status as a critical outsider derived in large part from his insistence that the religious-ethical realm and the socio-political realm were essentially connected; a link that both traditional religious culture and modernism denied and obscured behind false dualities (e.g., between the 'this-worldly' and 'other-worldly' or conversely, between the 'subjective' and 'objective'). Gandhi scandalised both sides by insisting that religious fulfilment was only possible when worked out in "the slum" of politics<sup>17</sup>. A few recognised that this reunion also amounted to an elevation of the political, beyond the realm of tawdry assertions of power and violence, into the space of human self-transformation. This is the argument that Rahim Jahanbegloo makes throughout his fine study, *The Gandhian Moment*: "for Gandhi, therefore, politics remained a constant process of self-realisation, self-reflection, and self-reform within the individual" (*ibid.*:22). It was this reuniting of the ethical-religious and the social political for which Gandhi coined that powerful double entendre, *Swaraj* or self-rule. *Swaraj* for India, he insisted in his classic treatise, *Hind Swaraj*, depended entirely on active self-rule exercised by each individual Indian in their social-political praxis.<sup>18</sup> To rephrase this in the terms we have been exploring here:

true transformation lay not in striving to rise to some ideal realm above and beyond the actual but rather in bringing the actual back into alignment with the truths of the original unity. Such a bringing back into alignment can be realised—can only be realised—as Gandhi argued, in each individual's concrete ethical decisions.

In developing this complex thesis, Gandhi had first to see through the claims of political modernity to rational order and economic development. Foremost among these was the claim to disinterested or neutral rationality. Rationality, especially the abstract rationality promoted as the panacea of the modern order was, Gandhi argued, a distorted fragment taken out of the whole context of human needs and the good. The fact that such 'rationality' merely served as a front for the interests of the few powerful interests was evident by the symptomatic violence that was to be found at all levels both within the state and between states: such rationality could only be established and maintained by extensive and intensive coercion.

To such rationality, rationality that worked for the benefit of the few and did so through violence, Gandhi opposed the much broader notion of an open political discourse in which every voice would be heard and from which one could hope to discover "the good of all" (*Sarvodaya*), even "the good of the least one" (*Antyodaya*). This idea was again not an ideal to be achieved by further progress—as if the current rationality of modern society could ever be the foundation for such genuine equality—rather, Gandhi argued, it evoked a much deeper basis for a true and holistic rationality, namely, attention to the original "truth which resides in every human heart" (Gandhi 2005:62). Gandhi's reflections on this truth, to be sure, were complex given his attempt to find a critical middle point between traditional culture and modernism. Such truth was, on the one hand, an absolute and thus he had no scruple to say that not that "God is Truth but rather that Truth is God"<sup>19</sup>. With this, he deftly affirmed the traditional belief in an absolute and also reframed it in modern, quasi-subjective terms. On the other hand, he developed an understanding of those subjective terms that was balanced at a point between the modern individual and the ethical and duty-driven/disciplined forms of a member of traditional culture. Thus, the truth which truly "resided in each human heart", Gandhi's argument was completely relative to the individual and yet, for that very reason, "one has to search for it there and be guided by truth as one sees it... one has no right to coerce others according to one's own view of truth" (*ibid.*:62). This last statement defined the nature of the political transformation that Gandhi envisaged, namely, that by a disciplined search within oneself (or *swaraj*), one found the truth one is obliged by conscience to cling to (or *satyagraha*) while at the same respecting this process as it occurs in all other human beings with equal validity.

From this last statement there arises Gandhi's essential political principle—non-violence or *ahimsa*. It is the catalyst for moving from the ethical/religious

to the socio-political sphere. Thus, each individual having found his/her truth through a disciplined inner attention, while clinging to that truth of conscience, holds themselves open to a dialogue with others who also hold such truths in themselves. This dialogue does not allow the coercion of the weak by the strong and its structural violence; for *ahimsa* means essentially that all engagement is dialogical. Neither is it a mere tolerance of difference, however: I cling to my understanding of the truth and must be willing to suffer for it, especially where others oppose it. If my suffering is purified of egotism, it becomes *Satyagraha*, and in that form it provides an expression of conviction, a true rationale for truth. It is or can be, a powerful appeal to the human heart, to the sympathy, compassion and goodwill which lie at the origin of our common humanity. That is also *ahimsa*. In the process of appealing however, I may also learn and be moved by the appeals of others. Together we may arrive at a truth that encompasses each of our own truths of conscience.

Gandhi was well aware that the ahimsic dialogue could become interest-laden and therefore coercive.<sup>20</sup> The only guarantee of validity and of true *ahimsa* was the discipline with which each individual attended his/her inner voice—individual *swaraj* was the only guarantee of socio-political *swaraj*. Moreover through his own “experiments with truth”, he came to realise that the essential element of that discipline was a form of the radical self-denial promoted in traditional culture. Self-rule ultimately meant a complete dedication to the service of others:

All that I can in true humility present to you is that Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth you must reduce yourself to a zero.

—Gandhi 2005:61

This is the point to which a true clinging to the truth of conscience leads, and also it is the final form that the suffering for the truth leads. Service (*seva*) to others is the path to a truly egoless rationality; it is the way in which reason can be purified “and strengthened by suffering”. At the same time it is the original and truly human form of dialogue on the way to unity of spirit:

Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening the ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason... Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword.

—from Gandhi’s letters in Mueller 1991:18-19

Gandhi's belief in the truth of this path of (egoless) suffering was equal to his belief in its socio-political effectiveness. Both rest on the ultimate conviction that such is the original and abiding form of human being, the authentic response to the "inner voice". That is what ultimately has the power to change social and political life. This is nowhere more clearly expressed than in Gandhi's advice to a young man who questioned the ability of one person to make a difference in the struggle for India's freedom:

Emancipate your own self. Even that burden is very great. Apply everything to yourself. Nobility of soul consists in realising that you yourself are India. In your emancipation is the emancipation of India. All else is make-believe.

—Gandhi 2009:lxix

All else is indeed make-believe.

## Conclusion

I have offered these three sketches of Jung, Weil and Gandhi as exemplars of different types of reformulation based on the model of original unity that has traditionally been espoused by religious traditions and thinkers. They are each different in emphasis, as I have tried to show, and moreover, each articulates a very unique post-modern version of that traditional religious model of transformation as self-transformation. There are few real limits to the innovative ways in which this 'religious' model can come to fruition in the post-modern context – as Gandhi well-illustrates: he used a Christian insight into love coupled with a Jain/Buddhist understanding of *ahimsa*, to reinterpret the traditional Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*, in the service of Indian statehood. His insight was subsequently understood and transplanted to animate the struggle of blacks in the United States by M.L. King Jr., and in South Africa, by Nelson Mandela. In each case, it stood as beacon for non-violent and inclusive transformation in the turmoil of other and violent political options. It is not a coercive ideal, in other words, and points to rebuilding from within what is actually given. In short, this model is remarkably fruitful, cross-cultural in nature as well as deeply rooted in the many human histories which have led us to our present. It urges transformation of the human as an act undertaken in freedom and self-disposal, a fulfilment of human destiny that cannot be proscribed but is always available.

I have been trying to contrast this model with that default model of the modern tradition, namely, the erection of an ideal to be realised by progress from a current state of actuality. This form should actually be called utopian, I think,



since it imagines an ideal which exists nowhere in fact or in time and constructs it from some hope of rectifying the dilemmas of the actual. For every Utopia, such as the first one imagined by Thomas More in 1516, there is a counterbalancing and rather grim account of our present state, such as the Leviathan of Thomas Hobbes pointing to the ‘facts’, namely, “the war of all against all”. Together, like light and shadow, they make up the *imaginarium*, around which we have constructed our modern and postmodern socio-political thought, our notions of harmony and of transformation. But it is just here that we should hear the critical echo of “the make-believe”. To imagine going beyond ourselves toward an ideal is always an attempt to leave behind the real stuff that we are. It is always a make-believe based on essential self-denial. It is also the stuff of the mythologies of human progress in which human life and human experience have been sacrificed over and over again. The violence, both actual and structural, intrinsic to this model of idealism seems indisputable. It is always a case of idealistic ‘ends’ justifying means, always a rationalising argument that claims, much like Lenin did, that eggs must be cracked if there is to be an omelette.

Another possibility entirely is presented by the imagination of the originarium, for it is a ‘path without goal’ – a return, a maturation and a deconstruction all at once. Merton’s insight, with which we began, was the result of such a profound personal ‘turn’ which occurred in the second half of his life. After adopting both Catholicism and then the strictest form of Catholic hermetic life as a Trappist monk, he found himself slowly but powerfully projected, by the course of his exploration of that spirituality, back towards the socio-political world, and toward a new form of ‘activism’ inspired by the simplicity of his life as a monk (see Merton 2007). As a contemplative, he became a key figure in both the struggle against the Vietnam War, and the movement for Civil Rights. His status as an outsider was fruitful in several senses. On the one hand, he now saw through the deceptions of ordinary political life with great clarity:

The world is full of great criminals with enormous power, and they are in a death struggle with each other. It is a huge gang battle, using well-meaning lawyers and policemen and clergymen as their friends, controlling papers, means of communication, and enrolling everybody in their armies.

—Merton 2007:263

On the other hand, he saw also more deeply into the nature of the original unity, “the communion that is wordless”, later discovering a deep bond of unity with a variety of Buddhist and Hindu teachers during his final trip to Asia. It was that experience that is reflected in the comments above, namely, that “what



we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are". This radical critique of the ordinary, of the world as it is, draws its force precisely from the still point of that vision which looks deeper and sees the reality of a unity that is, continually, consistently and blithely, denied and ignored.

We only have to look in order to see it. That, it seems, is the most difficult thing of all.

## Endnotes

1. See the estimation of this in Ricoeur's book on *Freud*: "While emphasising the dualism of Eros and death, Freud also emphasised the struggle against illusion, the last entrenchment of the pleasure principle; he thus reinforced what might be called his scientific conception of the world, the motto of which could be, 'beyond illusion and consolation'...the reality principle presides over the post-religious age of culture. In this age to come, the scientific spirit will replace religious motivation and moral prohibitions will be motivated by social interests alone (Ricoeur 1970:325).
2. See the fascinating historical-sociological study of this argument in Canales, *The Physicist and the Philosopher*.
3. See in outline, Karen Armstrong, *The Great Transformation*.
4. See Rappaport, Roy, A. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Edinburgh, Cambridge UP, 1999, for an explanation of this distinction and illustration of it.
5. The self is not only the centre, but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness" (Jung 1968:41).
6. See his comment in the *Answer to Job*: "This circumstance has given me, a layman in things theological, cause to put forward my views on these dark matters. My attempt is based on the psychological experience I have harvested during the course of a long life. I do not underestimate the psyche in any respect whatsoever, nor do I imagine for a moment that psychic happenings vanish into thin air by being explained" (Jung 2010:101).
7. See John Dourley, 1993, *Strategy for a Loss of Faith: Jung's Proposal*.
8. See in the work of his student Erich Neumann, *The Origin and History of Consciousness*: "The original situation which is represented mythologically as the uroboros, corresponds to the psychological stage in man's prehistory when the individual and the group, ego and unconsciousness, man and the world, we're so indissolubly bound up with one another that the law of participation mystique, of unconscious identity prevailed between them" (1973:266).
9. "The Ouroboros has been said to have a meaning of infinity or wholeness. In the age-old image of the Ouroboros lies the thought of devouring oneself and turning oneself into a circulatory process, for it was clear to the more astute alchemists that the *prima materia* of the art was man himself. The Ouroboros is a dramatic symbol for

the integration and assimilation of the opposite, i.e. of the shadow. This 'feed-back' process is at the same time a symbol of immortality, since it is said of the Ouroboros that he slays himself and brings himself to life, fertilises himself and gives birth to himself. He symbolises the One, who proceeds from the clash of opposites, and he therefore constitutes the secret of the *prima materia* which [...] unquestionably stems from man's unconscious. (Jung 1968:513.)

10. See Neumann, "The Great Individual...who really is a great man in the sense of being a great personality, is characterised not only by the fact that the unconscious content has him in its grip, but by the fact that his conscious mind also has an active grip on the content... In other words there is no creative total reaction in which the specifically human qualities of ego formation and conscious elaboration are preserved" (1973:426).
11. From *La condition ouvriere*, quoted in Miles, *Anthology, Introduction*, 24
12. See Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*.
13. See Sharon Cameron, "The Practice of Attention: Simone Weil's Performance of Impersonality" for the best account of this. See also, Robert Charles Read, "Decreation as Substitution: Reading Weil through Levinas".
14. See Springsted, "Introduction" to *Essential Writings*: "Crucial to this approach were two elements. First was her insistence that social life be oriented around the moral category of obligations rather than rights...Second was the idea that social life be rooted, rooted both in a past, but just as virtually, through labour, in the natural world of necessity itself" (Springsted 1999:21).
15. See Jean-Marie Mueller, *Simone Weil: L'exigence de non-violence, 151-164* for an account of the parallels between Gandhi and Weil.
16. "I am convinced that the Europe of today does not represent the spirit of God nor of Christianity, but rather that of Satan. The success of the latter are greater because they arise with the name of God on their lips. The Europe of today is only Christian in name", From *Young India*, quoted in Mueller (1991:153).
17. "In conversations, social theorist Ashis Nandy fondly recalls an exchange between philosopher Ramachandra Gandhi and poet Umashankar Joshi. The philosopher argued that M.K. Gandhi was inconceivable without his spiritual strivings, while the poet—and one suspects Ashis Nandy too—insisted that Gandhi's significance lay in his willingness to engage and transform the 'slum of politics'" (Suhred 2013:2).
18. "For realising the self, the first essential is to cultivate a strong moral sense...Morality means the acquisition of virtues such as fearlessness, truth, brahmacharya, poverty... Service is automatically rendered to the country in the process of cultivating morality" (Gandhi 2009:94).
19. "But two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, viz., that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to the conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth, which began nearly fifty years ago" (*Young India*, 31-12-31).

20. "It is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever that there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world" (Gandhi 2005:61).

## References

- Armstrong, Karen. 2007. *The Great Transformation. The Beginning of our Religious Traditions*. Anchor: NY.
- Cameron, Sharon. 2003. "The Practice of Attention: Simone Weil's Performance of Impersonality." *Critical Inquiry*, 29:216-252.
- Canales, Jimena. 2015. *The Physicist and the Philosopher. Einstein, Bergson and the Debate that Changed our Understanding of Time*. Princeton UP.
- Dourley, John P. 1993. *A Strategy for a Loss of Faith: Jung's Proposal*. NY: Inner City Books.
- Furlong, Monica. 1985. *Merton: A Biography of Thomas Merton*. NY: Darton, Longman and Todd.
- Gandhi, M. 2009. *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*. Edited by Anthony Parel, Centenary Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- . 2005. *All Men are Brothers. The Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi. As told in his own words*. Compiled and Edited by Krishna Kripilani, Centenary Edition 1869-1969. Unesco. Available online at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0007/000710/071082eo.pdf>
- Horkheimer, M and Theodor Adorno. 1988. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. Continuum: NY.
- Jahanbegloo, Ramin. 2013. *The Gandhian Moment*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Jung, C.G. 1968. *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung: Psychology and Alchemy. V. 12*: Bollingen Series. Edited by Gerhard Adler. RFC Hull. Princeton: UP.
- . 1968. *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung: Mysterium Coniunctionis v. 14*. Edited by Gerhard Adler. RFC Hull. Princeton: UP.
- . 2010. *An Answer to Job*. Trans. RFC Hull. Princeton: NJ, 2010.
- . 2009. *The Red Book* (Philemon). Sonu Shamdasani (Editor, Translator), Mark Kyburz (Translator), John Peck (Translator). Norton: NY.
- Merton, Thomas. 1975. *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*. Ed., Patrick Hart, James Laughlin, Naomi Burton Stone, and Amiya Chakravarty. New Directions: NY.
- . 2007. *New Seeds of Contemplation*. New Directions: NY.
- Mueller, Jean-Marie. 1991. *Simone Weil. L'exigence de non-violence*, ETC: Paris.
- Mumford, Lewis. 2010. *Technics and Civilisation*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.
- Neumann, Erich. 1973. *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. Trans. RFC Hull. Princeton: NJ.

- Nandy, Ashis. 2009. *The Intimate Enemy. Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*. Oxford Press: New Delhi.
- . 1981. "From outside the Imperium: Gandhi's Cultural Critique of the 'West'. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 7(2):171-194.
- Rappaport, Roy, A. 1999. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Edinburgh, Cambridge UP.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1967. *The Symbolism of Evil*. Trans. Emerson Buchanan. Boston: Beacon.
- . 1970. *Freud. An Essay in Interpretation*. Trans. Denis Savage. Yale UP: New Haven.
- Robert Charles Read. 2013. "Decreation as Substitution: Reading Weil through Levinas." *Journal of Religion*, 93(1):25-40.
- Robinson, Marilynne. 2010. *Absence of Mind. The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self*. Yale UP: New Haven.
- Springsted, E. 1999. "Rootedness: Culture and Value" in Richard Bell, Ed., *Simone weil's Philosophy of Culture*. Cambridge: UP.
- Suhrud, Tridip. 2013. "Rediscovering Gandhi New insights from recent books on Gandhi." *The Caravan*, 1 February 2013 <http://www.caravanmagazine.in/reviews-essays/rediscovering-gandhi#sthash.LFbBneRS.dpuf>
- Weil, Simone. 2005. *Simone Weil. An Anthology*. Edited with introduction by Sian Miles. Penguin: London.
- . 2003. *Simone Weil, Essential Writings*. Selected with Introduction by Eric. O Springsted. Orbis: NY.
- . 1965. "The Iliad, or the Poem of Force", Trans. Mary McCarthy, *Chicago Review*, 18:2.



## CHAPTER 4

# On the Focus Imaginarius of the Nascent Global Society and Contemporary Social Theory

What is the Status and Role of the Idea of  
Harmony?

*Piet Strydom*

But at some stage the colour changes: the meaning of the unreflectively presupposed viewpoints becomes uncertain; the road disappears in the twilight. The light of the leading cultural problems has moved on. Then science prepares to change its position and conceptual apparatus, and to survey the infinite stream of happenings from the height of thought. It follows those stars that alone are able to lend its work meaning and direction.

—Weber 1973:214

### Introduction

Epoch-making events, in a small number, have shaped the late twentieth and early twenty-first century experience of the human form of life as being caught in the pincers of a multidimensional crisis implicating our sense of both earth and world

(Strydom 2011a). They include the dropping of the atom bomb on Japan which stimulated the acknowledgement of the risks produced by the experimenting science-technology-capitalist-industrial society; second, the official registering of the ecological crisis and the need for a healthcare system for the earth; third, the process of globalisation with its disruptive and even destructive consequences; and finally, the emergence of the so-called 'new world order' after 1989 with its contradictory imperialist, nationalist and cosmopolitan implications. Accordingly, a select few ideas have become elaborated as cultural models and acquired the status of the most potent leading imaginaries guiding and giving direction to concerted efforts to transform the current human form of life into a form of global cosmopolitan existence in a cared-for planetary biosocial ecosphere, namely, peace, ecology, human rights and cosmopolitanism.

It comes as no surprise that in this context of a nascent global society exhibiting a gravely fraught and disjointed state such ideas as 'harmony' and 'transformative harmony' (Giri 2012) arise. The question is, however, whether the idea of harmony can effectively function as a leading light or lodestar directing, guiding and regulating the desired transformation of the construction, direction of development and organisation of the contemporary social formation and its relation to both its individual members and the organic foundations of life.

In Social Theory, there is a long tradition of conceiving society in some way or other, however obliquely, in terms of harmony. Thomas Hobbes (1973) was convinced that absolutism alone could bring order to the state of nature resulting from the early modern Wars of Religion; the contract theorists (e.g. Mandeville 1995) insisted on the collective benefit generated by the actions of egoists pursuing their own interests; Emile Durkheim (1976) identified the common cognitive categories with what is collective in order to stress social integration; and Talcott Parsons (1964) postulated a shared system of values as the solution to the problem of social integration. These proposals for the conceptualisation of the quality pertaining to the constitution and organisation of society, however, have all been subjected to devastating criticisms.<sup>1</sup> Hobbes' political one-sidedness was criticised from the perspective of constitutionalism; the blindness of the contract theorists to the social basis of contracts and the social costs of egoistic competition was exposed; it became apparent that Durkheim's position rests on a confusion of the cognitive with the collective; and Parsons was taken to task precisely for his indefensible, indeed ideological, harmonious theory of society. What these criticisms suggest is that in the past social theorists did not grasp the precise status of the idea or, at least, the assumption of harmony and the role it plays in the human social form of life and in theorising about it. The upshot of these rather truncated historical references, therefore, is that the social theorist should studiously reflect on the idea

of harmony in order to become aware of its status and role both in social life and in social-scientific practice.

## **The Idea of Harmony**

### **Harmony as an Element of the Cognitive Order**

Harmony is an aesthetic idea. It is the idea of a whole prior to its parts (Stadler 1968). As such, it gives the impression of a well-ordered, complete and perfect totality, the parts of which are measured against each other and against the whole. From one point of view, it is formal in the sense that it is an idea of the form of the object in question—in this case, the potential form of the emerging global society. From another point of view, it depends on the operation of the imagination in the sense that the formal whole is a projection that does not correspond to anything actually existing. It is for this reason that it always has to be borne in mind that harmony is a vague aesthetic idea and not a precise analytical concept referring to a particular existent.

It should be insisted, nevertheless, that harmony is one of a number of necessary and unavoidable ideas that plays an indispensable role in social life and in social theory. However indeterminate and vague the aesthetic idea of harmony may be, it serves as a necessary assumption helping to provide a unifying vision without which we would lack the concept of society. Our intellectual, analytical and reasoning faculties would be unable to operate, and we would be deprived of our ability to conceptually grasp society as both our world and our social scientific object of study, were we to be deprived of the input by the imagination of the idea of a well-ordered whole embracing its parts and thus lending coherence to them.<sup>2</sup> The requirement of such an aesthetic input derives from the fact that we humans are intellectual beings who are simultaneously embodied, have minds based on brains uniquely characterised by the addition of the prefrontal cortex, live and act in a temporalised meaningful world, and therefore have to courageously confront problems while coping with ontological insecurity and anxiety. In the contemporary period, the form of our object—that is, the very idea of harmony—is assuming the pronounced proportions it does, even to the extent of metamorphosing from a background assumption into a focus imaginarius, precisely because of the painfully experienced lack of fit between our aesthetic sense of a well-ordered whole and the actual disjointed state of both social and ecological relations.

The idea of harmony forms a part of what I call ‘the cognitive order of society’ (Strydom 2000, 2012c, 2013a and in press) – more particularly, part of the aesthetic or subjective sector rather than the objective and social sectors of the triply-coded cognitive order. The cognitive order consists of a series of cognitive structures—



of which harmony is but one element among many—that is necessary for the constitution of the human social form of life in so far as it makes communication and the formation of social relations in a material environment possible. Against actuality, it represents potentiality, including the temporally available or realisable possibilities. Analogous to a genomonology, it allows a wide range of combinations of its varied elements, including the idea of harmony, in the process of the generation of the texture of that form of life. This order of cognitive structures emerges from within society through practice-inspired reflexivity, backed up by phylogenetic and evolutionary consolidation, to occupy a meta-conventional level where it takes the form of abstract cognitive systems of principles which stimulate the generation, incursively structure and recursively regulate orientations, action, practices, interaction, discourse and institutionalisation. This is precisely the role of the idea of harmony, as one of the counterfactual components of the cognitive order, in social life, that is, ontologically, as well as in social theory, that is, epistemologically.

The cognitive order in general, including the idea of harmony, is the outcome of a movement of ‘immanent transcendence’ (Habermas 1991; Honneth 2007; Strydom 2011b) or transcendence from within and, consequently, has the meta-level status of something virtual, something harbouring the potential of an incursive reconfiguration of actuality. This does not mean that it is something purely transcendent,<sup>3</sup> least of all something transcendent that can be said to really exist, and allows being made into a grandiose meta-theory or realism of essential structures.<sup>4</sup> To treat it as such would be tantamount to the ontological fallacy of reification or hypostatisation. This level of necessary self-organising suppositions, reflexive expectations, meta-conventional rules or counterfactual principles certainly does not admit of full realisation, since it is ‘unconditional’, ‘complex’ or, more fully ‘determinably indeterminate’.<sup>5</sup> As implied by this latter expression which resonates with the concept of immanent transcendence, the cognitive order remains rooted immanently in social life. The cognitive order principles and, hence, the idea of harmony must therefore at all times be appreciated as standing in an inextricable relation with concrete social life—in the sense both of being generated by the process of the construction and organisation of society and, in turn, of having an indexing, structuring and regulating effect on the continuation of that process.

This signals that the indeterminable transcendent idea of harmony, combined with a variable selection of other elements from the cognitive order (for instance, the ideas of freedom, equality, solidarity, rightness, autonomy, personal inviolability and so forth), acquires a palpably determinable form only immanently. In fact, it becomes refracted and embodied from different perspectives in the guise of a variety of distinct competing, mutually contested and even conflicting, concretely pursued practices, each guided by a more or less specific culturally elaborated and

articulated set of assumptions regarding the desired harmonious organisation of social life. Given the perspectival appropriation and activation in social life of the aesthetic idea of harmony kept available in the cognitive order, the social scientist has to follow the plurality of differences, the competing actor-agents, their conflicting practices and their mutually contradictory cultural frames or models of a harmonious society—in a nutshell, the varied local or context-immanent attempts to realise the context-transcendent idea of harmony in terms of corresponding actor and group-level cognitive representations or models of a harmonious society. But rather than just following the actor-agents, it is vital that the structural level of the cognitive order as such is at all times kept in mind. The analytical specification beforehand of the presuppositions or reflexive expectations of the actor-agents in the form of the cognitive order counterfactuals structuring their orientations and actions is what enables the social analyst to discriminate variations and to determine which differences are significant.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Aesthetic Nature of the Idea of Harmony**

It is at this juncture of the acknowledgement of the demanding implications of the immanent-transcendence framework that a serious reflective question arises. It is the question of the precise understanding of the aesthetic nature of the idea of harmony. Since Aristotle's (1963) isolation of the beginning-middle-end form, traditional aesthetics has consistently operated with the assumption of the aesthetic object as an organic or symbolic whole. This means that it was taken to represent a rounded, closed totality the parts of which cohere perfectly and are enveloped completely meaningfully by the whole. In the late eighteenth century, Kant (1772) canonically fixed this particular sense for modernity in his influential aesthetics. In the twentieth century, however, this idealistic symbolic conception of aesthetics had to make room for a very different non-organic allegorical conception articulated by authors like Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, but particularly by the second of the three.<sup>7</sup> If the aesthetic object still forms a whole, it is a unity that includes independent parts, some even with extra-aesthetic, for instance, political, significance, which integrate smoothly neither with the remaining parts nor with the whole.

The point of this contrast is that to understand the idea of harmony in terms of traditional aesthetics would amount to taking it in an idealistic sense which is certain to vitiate any attempt at an adequate social scientific analysis. Following Benjamin's aesthetics, it should rather be conceived in terms of a process of allegoresis, as it were. Once it is recognised that the idea of harmony forms part of the cognitive order of society, the danger of symbolic over-determination is averted. And once the cognitive order is understood as a meta-conventional one which emerges through transcendence from within, the way is open for acknowledging

that the counterfactual idea of harmony and its indexing, structuring and regulating effects can be appreciated only through its distinct concrete appropriations and uses in social life and their relations to one another. In other words, it is only the social scientist who is able to see the context-transcendent idea of harmony and the variety of context-immanent, concretely pursued cultural models of the desired harmonious organisation of social life in relation to one another. This ‘continuously two-sided’, ‘stereoscopic’ or, rather, ‘holographic’ approach<sup>8</sup> drawing on the laser metaphor of a light wave being split into a reference beam and an accompanying beam carrying multidimensional information, is the best option if the social scientist wishes to avoid the pitfalls of both idealism and empiricism, as he or she simply must. The reference to the form-giving cognitive order must be maintained at all times, while the plural range of lower level, cognitively framed positions and perspectives and their dynamics are simultaneously accommodated.<sup>9</sup>

## **Transformative Harmony?**

### **The Cosmomorphic Approach**

The multidimensional social scientific vision outlined above brings us to the notion of ‘transformative harmony’ (Giri 2012). The latter clearly implies a process directed and guided by the leading idea of harmony – an implication that points towards an expectation of the emergence of a harmonious global social order or social formation. Against this background, the question of the prospect of such an eventuality arises. Taking cues from contemporary social scientific thinking about globalisation, ecologism and cosmopolitanism, for instance, the typical predilection would seem to conceive the emergence of a harmonious global order as an unfolding cosmomorphic process (Strydom 2011a) through which the realisation of the potential of the idea of harmony is achieved. The process is supposed to lead to and culminate in a single, all-encompassing harmonious society, yet this understanding is in danger of reifying or hypostatising a counterfactual principle which does not now and never will correspond to anything existing. Reification or hypostatisation here means an essentialising tendency which assumes that culture is of such a nature that it could unify or homogenise society, indeed, that it could do so not merely in the case of a single society, but even across a range of societies. Reification or hypostatisation of this kind represents an illusion – here, the illusion that a harmonious social order could be attained at the global level through a shared culture. It is just not the case, however, that there is one single way in which the counterfactual idea of harmony has to or could be realised immanently.

Considering assessments of the current global state of affairs, particularly the political-economic organisation of the world population, such a seemingly negative

evaluation of the prospects of a harmonious global society could easily lead one to be taken in by a pessimistic mood. The current global order, a hierarchical order of structural and class dependencies, exhibits signs of deep divisions marked by pronounced asymmetrical power relations. The coordinated centre of gravity is occupied by the OECD countries which together with the south-east Asian states represent 16 per cent of the world population; the remaining 84 per cent divides among two internally fractured macro-states, China and India, with 37 per cent, 140 countries under limited state structures representing another 37 per cent, and finally a number of failing states housing 10 per cent of the world population. In development studies, the question prompted by this rather unpromising global situation, which is typically overlooked by the debates about global governance and cosmopolitanism, and probably also by those focusing on harmony, is: 'Does peace have a future?' (Senghaas 2012).

What this question suggests indeed seems like a more specific and thus a conceptually clearer and practically more directly relevant articulation of the very problematic intended by the concepts of harmony and transformative harmony. In any case, it is obvious that it would be necessary for anyone intending to pursue analyses in terms of these latter concepts to take also research on peace, particularly the causes of peace, into account.

### **The Cognitive Alternative**

Yet if one adopts a more appropriate and justifiable approach than the above-mentioned essentialising cosmomorphic one, for example a two-sided, stereoscopic or holographic cognitive approach, then one does not have to settle for a pessimistic stance. The advocacy and pursuit of a harmonious or, at least, a more harmonious society is by no means doomed from the outset. It is imperative, however, that one should then recognise the precise level at which alone development in that direction is possible. But this has the effect, to be sure, of intensifying the question of whether the idea of harmony would be the most appropriate focus imaginarius for contemporary society and social theory.

At the very centre of the attainment of a harmonious society is a learning process or, rather, a set of related learning processes. Considered from the inside rather than simply observing from the outside, the process of the constitution and organisation of society is equivalent to a multidimensional learning process.<sup>10</sup> Any learning process, and certainly this multidimensional one, is given form and shape by a range of cognitive structures of different levels and scales. At the microend, the process is structured by actor-agents'<sup>11</sup> assumptions, expectations, orientations and schemata which are based on the human cognitive capacities and competencies. At the opposite macroend, the process is incursively structured and recursively regulated

by reflexive presuppositions or expectations *qua* counterfactual principles forming part of the cognitive order of society. In between, the physical and social structures of the immanent context condition the learning processes of the multiplicity of individuals so that they consolidate into a range of more or less sharply differing collective actor-agents, each of whom through learning in turn constructs its own particular cognitive schema, frame or model of a harmonious society. It is through the interrelation, competition, mutual contestation and even conflict of these collective frames, especially in the public sphere but not only there, that societally significant learning processes are generated. At the outset of the interrelation, a temporary short-term window emerges for selection from the generated variety and decision-making that creates the basis for institutionalisation and organisation by giving rise to a more enduring epi-level cultural model.<sup>12</sup> The consequent result of the expansion, alignment and fusion of collective frames is thus typically an adumbrated or newly emergent cultural model consisting of a cognitive core and a semantic or symbolic outer layer, implying a more or less significant spurt of societal learning which could be accompanied by an evolutionary drift or even a shift in one or more components of the cognitive order.

It is apparent that the constitution and organisation of a harmonious society requires a series of interconnected multilevel learning processes of the kind described above—processes in and through which not just individuals and groups or collectives, but also society or societies undergo and experience re-framings or reconfigurations of their respective frames or sets of cognitive structures (Eder 1999; Strydom 1999b; 2000; 2002; 2009). Considering the nature of the process of the constitution and organisation of society, however, what obviously raises doubts about the viability of the idea of harmony as a potential leading focus imaginarius for our time is the fact that no learning can occur without the dynamising effect of the variety generated by competition, contestation and even conflict. How could harmony be reconciled with such a dynamic force? Is harmony not a processual outcome, an effect of such a dynamic process? It seems, therefore, as though the attainment of a harmonious society would be better served by the selection of a set of leading ideas, ones compatible with the competing practices of the generation of variety, instead of adopting the single idea of harmony and attempting its direct realisation. Rather than a one-dimensional cosmomorphic approach, a multilevelled dynamic one is clearly required for the analysis and understanding of the process of the constitution and organisation of the nascent global society.

It should be stressed, however, that there can be no doubt about the fact that the idea of harmony forms an inextricable part of the cognitive order of contemporary society. And given the basic human orientation towards meaning and coherence, the cognitive frames of all individuals and collective actor-agents must necessarily contain some assumption about harmony. The idea of harmony

and both individual and collective assumptions about harmony thus undoubtedly enter in varied ways into the learning processes at the core of the constitution and organisation of the emerging global society. However, considering the series of culturally borne cognitive developments characteristic of the late twentieth century that have been and still are being spearheaded by individual and collective actor-agents who are not afraid of competition, contestation and even conflict, it seems as though such guiding lights as ecologism, cosmopolitanism and the related constructions of peace and human rights would be better suited to the pursuit of a harmonious global society. In any case, a single cognitive idea together with a corresponding normative cultural model is not necessary, if viable at all, for the cultivation of harmony and the eventual attainment of a harmonious society. A global cosmopolitan existence embedded in a cared-for planetary biosocial ecosphere in which human rights are observed and a stable peace prevails would be equivalent to a harmonious society—but, to be sure, a harmonious society that would require constant reconstitution and elaboration in accordance with changing conditions in which competition, contestation and conflict, preferably discursive conflict, guided by a variety of creatively combined leading ideas would be a necessary element of its driving force and dynamics.

Ecologism, cosmopolitanism, peace and human rights, while drawing on a variety of components of the context-transcendent cognitive order, have the advantage that they have already been elaborated into relatively enduring, context-immanent, epi-level cultural models. It is quite possible to reconstruct the historical construction of each of these cultural models with reference to the contributing actor-agents and public, the medium of communication embracing both interaction and discourse in and through which it was achieved, the contextual conditions under which this occurred, and the structuring elements from the cognitive order which entered into its makeup. Rather than simply vague meta-level or even metaphysical ideas beyond the context, therefore, they have been immanently incorporated to form part of a penumbra of cultural models around (epi) the situation on which actor-agents can and do in fact directly draw. Their cognitive cores deriving from the cognitive order are encapsulated by a semantic or symbolic layer that infuses them with evaluative and normative significance which renders them communicable and thus immanently or situationally relevant. These epi-level cultural models are all concrete, situation-specific embodiments of selective combinations of meta-level cognitive ideas emitting significance effects which do not simply correspond to, but actually take up into themselves and incursively and recursively structure the expectations entertained by individuals and groups (Strydom 2012b).

The attainment of a harmonious society depends on the diffusion of these potent cultural models in all local or immanent contexts through communicatively mediated learning processes that reconfigure individual, group or collective and



societal cognitive structures. This is where the social sciences can make a unique contribution, if only they prove capable of taking the cognitive revolution seriously in their own terms.<sup>13</sup> The learning processes involved need to be theoretically clarified and for this purpose the many available concrete examples call for substantive investigation and close analysis. Theoretical and substantive advances could and indeed do link up with existing practical efforts, such as, for example, those carried by cultural and social movements, and could become the basis for furthering the practical advocacy and pursuit of the project of a harmonious society over a wide front, including in the most unlikely local nooks and crannies. Such a varied and multipronged cognitive approach is precisely what is needed to bring the cognitive idea and normative vision of harmony into sharper focus and to strengthen the concern with its realisation in the here and now—with potential spin-off effects of helping to generate a harmonious global society. What has to be appreciated, to highlight a crucial point, is that a harmonious global society cannot be the direct outcome of learning processes, whether relative to ecologism, cosmopolitanism, peace, human rights or even harmony, since it falls in the domain of phylogenetic and evolutionary structure formation. In turn, of course, such structure formation is nevertheless vitally dependent on the emergent properties generated by the whole array of constructive activities and learning processes. This latter rider indicates unequivocally where the responsibility of the social scientist lies today.

## Conclusion

However critical the reflections on the idea of harmony may be perceived to be, nothing that was written in the above detracts from the project of a harmonious global society. On the contrary, the argument is intentionally aimed at theoretical clarification aspiring to make matters precise enough for constructive engagement in the theoretical and practical pursuit of that goal.

## Endnotes

1. Criticisms of Hobbes and the contract theorists were developed by a host of authors during the early modern period who responded to their publications. Hobbes' absolutism was attacked in particular by the so-called 'Monarchomachi', that is to say, those against the absolutist monarchy (see Strydom 2000). Mandeville who provocatively restated the central tenet of contract theory was opposed by the contract theorists' most innovative and influential critic, Vico (1970). Piaget (1983) already perceived Durkheim's confusion, but it has become clearly apparent only recently in the wake of the cognitive revolution of the late 1950s and the associated cognitive turn in sociology – for instance, Thévenot (1998) and Strydom (2013a). Mainstream

sociology is yet to appreciate this. Parsons' theory received critical treatment by a number of authors like David Lockwood, C. Wright Mills, Ralf Dahrendorf and Alain Touraine in the context of the functionalist debate of the 1950s and 1960s, but it was Habermas (1988) who explicitly attacked his harmonious theory.

2. Kant (1968) demonstrated the need for general concepts; it was a central assumption of the left-Hegelian tradition represented by Marx (1967) and Peirce (1998). Against this background, this insight still has a subterranean presence in both European and American social theory to this very day; for instance, the importance of general concepts is assumed by neo-institutionalists such as Powell and DiMaggio (1991), while Boltanski (2011) notes their importance both for social actors and for social scientists. The recognition of their role is central to critical theory's basic concept of 'immanent transcendence', on which see Strydom (2011b). It is crucial to appreciate, however, that it is not simply semantic generality that is at issue here, but especially cognitive universality – on which see for instance Strydom (2015) with reference to Habermas (1996).
3. Objecting to the later Parsons' appeal to what he called the 'telic system', Habermas (1987:256) writes as follows: 'there are no indicators accessible to social-theoretical analysis for a transcendence that is independent...from the communicative practice of human beings...'
4. Archer, who serves on a Vatican committee, represents this kind of realism in respect of what she calls 'the Cultural System', which is written in capital letters for that very reason. For a recent statement, see Archer and Elder-Vass (2012).
5. According to Habermas (2003:99), this potentiating penumbra of reflexive suppositions is in principle 'unconditional' and, according to Luhmann (1995:24), it is 'complex' insofar as 'the concept is applicable to what is not system...[which means – PS]...(environment, world)...'; but Husserl (1950:101) is still more precise when he characterises this 'horizon' as a matter of 'determinable indeterminacy', implying that for practical purposes or in the course of concrete social life particular selections can, and indeed must, be made from the available potentialities, but that no selection can ever exhaust the potentiality it is drawing upon.
6. The specification of the relevant cognitive order principles is achieved through the methodological procedure of 'reconstruction' – on which see Strydom (2011b).
7. Brecht originally introduced the distinction between the organic and non-organic work of art in his *Arbeitsjournal* (Bürger 1981:127) which served as the basis of the alienation effect he sought to transmit by way of his 'epic theatre' – on which see Brecht (1979). His close associate, Benjamin (1963), influentially elaborated and applied the idea in the form of the distinction between symbol and allegory – with the emphasis on the latter. Adorno (1970) similarly regarded the non-organic or allegorical concept of aesthetics as being most appropriate to the authentic modern art of the twentieth century.
8. Husserl (1969:263) speaks of a type of 'continuously two-sided research'; Habermas (1996:19, 21, 69 and 79) describes what he regards as a 'stereoscopic' sociological



- procedure; and, basing herself on David Bohm, Adam (1994:158-60) offers an account of holography.
9. This methodological perspective is characteristic of the cognitive approach properly conceived. It is rooted in what may be called the cognitive meta-problematic: that something belonging to the world is nevertheless able to distinguish itself from the world, to develop a perspective on the world, and to establish a relation with the world – on which see Strydom (2011b, 2011c and 2012a).
  10. On learning, see: Eder (1982, 1996, 1999); Miller (1986, 2002); Strydom (1987, 2008 and 2009); and Trenz and Eder (2004).
  11. I employ the concept of ‘actor-agent’ in order to account for both consciousness and the unconscious which are given with the possession of both cognitive competencies and dormant or merely operative capacities. Typically, social theorists cut the human member of society in half by opting either for action theory or for system or structural theory.
  12. The process of construction in which the cognitive and the symbolic are fused so as to give rise to a cultural model is captured under the title of ‘triple contingency’ in Strydom (1999a, 2009, 2012a and 2013b). Leydesdorff (2009) has added some clarity to this process in the course of his formalisation of the concept; see also Leydesdorff (2008). Russill (2004) has employed the concept to interpret Dewey’s theory of public communication, and on the basis of his contribution the doyen of American communication theory, Craig (2006), has incorporated it into his disciplinary field.
  13. Strydom (2007) offers a cartographic overview of the parameters within which the cognitive turn currently seems to be possible for the social sciences.

## References

- Adam, Barbara. 1994. *Time and Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Adorno, Theodor. 1970. *Ästhetische Theorie, Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 7. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Archer, Margaret and Dave Elder-Vass. 2012. “Cultural System or Norm Circle: An Exchange.” *European Journal of Social Theory*, 15(1):93-115.
- Aristotle. 1963. *Poetics*. London: Dent.
- Benjamin, Walter. 1963 [1928]. *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiel*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Boltanski, Luc. 2011. *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Brecht, Bertolt. 1979. “Epic Theatre”, in M. Solomon (ed.), *Marxism and Art*. Brighton: Harvester, pp. 360-69.
- Bürger, Peter. 1981. *Theorie der Avantgarde*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Craig, Robert. 2006. “Pragmatism in the Field of Communication Theory.” *Communication Theory* 17(2):125-45.

- Durkheim, Emile. 1976 [1912]. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Eder, Klaus. 1982. "Kollektive Lernprozesse und Geschichte: Zur Evolution der moralischen Grundlagen politischer Herrschaft." *Saeculum*, 33:116-32.
- . 1996. *The Social Construction of Nature*. London: Sage.
- . 1999. "Societies Learn and Yet the World is Hard to Change." *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2(2):195-215.
- Giri, Ananta Kumar. 2012. "Transformative Harmony: An Invitation for Dialogue." Unpublished manuscript, Chennai: Madras Institute of Development Studies.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1987 [1981]. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 2. Cambridge: Polity.
- . 1988 [1967]. *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Polity.
- . 1991 [1988]. "Exkurs: Transzendenz von innen, Transzendenz ins Diesseits", in J. Habermas, *Texte und Kontexte*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, pp. 127-69.
- . 1996 [1992]. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: Polity.
- . 2003 [1999]. *Truth and Justification*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1973 [1651]. *Leviathan*. London: Dent.
- Honneth, Axel. 2007 [1994]. "The Social Dynamics of Disrespect: On the Location of Critical Theory Today", in A. Honneth (ed.), *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*, pp. 63-79. Cambridge: Polity.
- Husserl, Edmund. 1950 [1913]. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1968 [1781]. *Critique of Pure Reason*. London: Macmillan.
- . 1972 [1790]. *Critique of Judgement*. New York: Hafner.
- Leydesdorff, Loet. 2008. "The Communication of Meaning and Knowledge in a Knowledge-based Economy." *Semiotix* 13:1-23.
- . 2009. "Modelling "Triple Contingency", in S. O'Tuama (ed.), *Critical Turns in Critical Theory*, pp. 165-67. London: Tauris Academic Studies.
- Luhmann, Niklas. 1995 [1984]. *Social Systems*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Mandeville, Bernard de. 1995 [1714]. "The Fable of the Bees", in I. Kramnick (ed.), *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, pp. 252-54. New York: Penguin.
- Marx, Karl. 1967 [1844]. "Theses on Feuerbach", in L.D. Easton and K.H. Guddat (eds), *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, pp. 400-02. New York: Anchor Books.
- Miller, Max. 1986. *Kollektive Lernprozesse: Studien zur Grundlegung einer soziologischen Lerntheorie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- . 2002. "Some Theoretical Aspects of Systemic Learning." *Sozialer Sinn*, 3:379-421.
- Parsons, Talcott. 1964 [1951]. *The Social System*. New York: Free Press.
- Peirce, Charles S. 1998. *The Essential Peirce*, Vol. 2. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.

- Piaget, Jean. 1983 [1932]. *The Moral Judgement of the Child*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Powell, Walter W. and Paul J. DiMaggio (eds). 1991. *The New Institutionalism in Organisational Analysis*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Russill, Chris. 2004. "Toward a Pragmatist Theory of Communication." PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.
- Senghaas, Dieter. 2012. *Weltordnung in einer zerklüfteten Welt: Hat Frieden Zukunft?* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Stadler, Ingrid. 1968. "Perception and Perfection in Kant's Aesthetics", in R.P. Wolff (ed.), *Kant: A Collection of Critical Essays*, pp. 339-84. London: Macmillan.
- Strydom, Piet. 1987. "Collective Learning: Habermas' Concessions and Their Theoretical Implications." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 13(3):265-81.
- . 1999a. "Triple Contingency: The Theoretical Problem of the Public in Communication Societies." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 25(2):1-25.
- . 1999b. "The Challenge of Responsibility for Sociology." *Current Sociology* 74(3):65-82.
- . 2000. *Discourse and Knowledge*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- . 2002. *Risk, Environment and Society*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- . 2007. "Introduction: A Cartography of Contemporary Cognitive Social Theory". *European Journal of Social Theory*, 10(3):339-56.
- . 2008. "Risk Communication: World Creation through Collective Learning under Complex Contingent Conditions." *Journal of Risk Research*, 11(1/2):5-22.
- . 2009. *New Horizons of Critical Theory: Collective Learning and Triple Contingency*. New Delhi: Shipra.
- . 2011a. "The Communicative Turn and Cosmopolitan Ecological Consciousness in the Global Risk Society: An Assessment of the Discourse", in P. O'Mahony and K. Keohane (eds), *Irish Environmental Politics after the Communicative Turn*, pp. 12-30. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- . 2011b. *Contemporary Critical Theory and Methodology*. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2011c. "Towards a Cognitive Sociology for Our Time: Habermas and Honneth or Language and Recognition...and Beyond." *Irish Journal of Sociology* 19(1):176-98.
- . 2012a. "Cognition and Recognition: On the Problem of the Cognitive in Honneth." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 38(6):591-607.
- . 2012b. "Toward a Global Cosmopolis? On the Formation of a Cosmopolitan Cultural Model." *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 20(2):28-50.
- . 2012c. "Modernity and Cosmopolitanism: From a Critical Social Theory Perspective", in G. Delanty (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitan Studies*, pp. 25-37. London: Routledge.

- 
- . 2013a. "Cooperation, Coordination and the Social Bond: On Integration from a Critical Cognitive Social-theoretical Perspective." *Sociological Bulletin* 62(1):115-21.
- . 2013b. "The Counterfactual Imagination Punctuated by Triple Contingency: On Klaus Eder's Theory of the New Public Sphere", in A. Salvatore, H.-J. Trenz and O. Schmidtke (eds), *Rethinking the Public Sphere through Transnationalizing Processes: Europe and Beyond* (Festschrift for Klaus Eder), pp. 56-74. London: Palgrave.
- . 2015. "The Latent Cognitive Sociology in Habermas: Extrapolated from Between Facts and Norms." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 41(3):273-91.
- . In press. "The Cognitive Order of Society: Radicalising the Ontological Turn in Critical Theory." *Pragmatics and Cognition*. Available at: <https://ucc-ie.academia/Pstrydom> and [https://researchgate.net/profile/Piet\\_Strydom](https://researchgate.net/profile/Piet_Strydom).
- Thévenot, Laurent. 1998. "Pragmatiques de la connaissance", in A. Borzeix, A. Bouvier and P. Pharo (eds), *Sociologie et Connaissance: Nouvelles Approches Cognitives*, pp. 101-39. Paris: CNRS Editions.
- Trenz, Hans-Jørg and Klaus Eder. 2004. "The Democratizing Dynamics of a European Public Sphere." *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7(1):5-25.
- Vico, Giambattista. 1970 [1725]. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Weber, Max. 1973. *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. Tübingen: Mohr.



## CHAPTER 5

# Harmony After Modernity A Self-Critical Western View

*Hans-Herbert Kögler*

Harmony, in a first approximation, may be defined as the state of some being which finds itself in an unchallenged equilibrium with its own identity. We may think of a complete supersession of conflict or tension of the entity's being with regard to its own elements. If something is in a state of harmony, it is thus one with itself, is characterised as being in the state of a perfect being-with-itself, a state of complete self-sufficiency.

It is interesting to note that such a first approximation entails a fusion of normative and ontological aspects, because we talk about an *ontological* state of something that is in its *perfect* condition, at one with its being, or realising its full potential, thus in an *ideal state of being*. The notion of harmony, therefore, seems to point towards an overcoming of the traditional fact-value distinction. This distinction itself derives from an ontological bifurcation of the world into *real material facts*, which are taken to exist without any subjective or evaluative dimension, and a *world of values*, which comes into existence because of human subjectivity which addresses the world vis-à-vis purposes and valuations. Here, to the world of pure material being, human agency adds on, so to speak, its own supervenient dimension of values. In the now all-too-well known story of Western thought, the task of science and philosophy was accordingly seen to distinguish the world of *objective* facts from the world of *subjective* values, in order to purify and free the former from the distortions of the latter. The ultimate goal was to arrive at

an unbiased and objective picture of *reality in itself*. The age of the Western world-picture (Heidegger) thus ultimately deprived the true world of the dimension of value, and identified the state of pure being with material and observable reality itself. The subjective realm of experience was defined pejoratively as an inferior mode of perception and understanding, as it attained the curious state of an 'unreal reality' that needed to be overcome if truth was to be obtained.

There is, however, one realm of reality for which such a fact-value distinction seemed misguided from the very start. As Aristotle early on understood, within the range of human action, values play a constitutive role since cooperative social practices always entail a value-orientation. It is only possible to disregard the ontological constitution of human social practices as intrinsically value-oriented—as always aiming towards *the realisation of some good* (Aristotle 1962)—if one pre-conceives reality from the start as based in material (natural) scientific law-like states (MacIntyre 2007). Instead, a phenomenologically open understanding of *social reality* reveals it to be quite differently structured than nature or the non-human environment. This productive insight of Aristotle was finally brought back into the modern horizon of thought by Heidegger's ontological turn in hermeneutics (Heidegger 1999, 1962). Here, the fact that human understanding is always already embedded in a practically and socially pre-constituted reality was decisively reconstructed as proving that *human understanding constitutes itself a realm of being*, and not just a value-perspective added onto an otherwise purely material being. Moreover, the intrinsic value-orientation of social practices was captured in a hermeneutic reconstruction of the cognitive notion of intentionality: All understanding is directed towards something, is oriented towards its (intentional) object (Heidegger 1962; Searle 1983). Such understanding was shown to not derive from the contemplative thought of a singular subject, but rather to be grounded in a *practical agency* that always already involves a meaning-constituting social and practical background (Dreyfus 1995).

Since human agency is, per its ontological being, a value-constituted reality, it makes sense to ask about harmony with regard to its ontological value for human agency. Value comes into the world via human world-disclosure, which does not devalue it ontologically or make it somehow merely subjective. Rather, the intentional disclosure of reality by human agents entails a value-orientation that is part and parcel of the thereby constituted reality itself. To understand that human values are themselves an ontological part of human reality, and thus of reality itself, points in my view already to an important motivation for the specific re-evaluation of the idea of harmony. Harmony involves the equilibrium of a being's state, a balance within its diversified being, and human agency can only be understood as a being that is always already embedded in the world. Accordingly, the realisation of human agency must take into account its being in a world with

others and within an environment. The idea of a *harmonious* co-existence within these insurmountable features of one's existence cannot but constitute an organic and indispensable dimension of human self-realisation.

If it therefore suggests itself that *the concept of harmony* be reconstructed as a *viable normative resource for human self-realisation*, we must immediately guard ourselves against a facile adaptation or ideological invocation of its concept. Indeed, to merely proclaim (holistic) harmony as opposed to (individual) freedom, to oppose a Western orientation as individual and subjective self-realisation to an Eastern holistic and harmonious way of being, would completely underbid the level of reflection that is needed here (Giri 2019). One of my main claims is indeed that a reconstruction of harmony as value-orientation can succeed only if it is mediated with a *reflexive sense of the embedded self which re-orient its own existence with regard to such a value*. Harmony, in other words, can only succeed if it is mediated with a (Western?) sense of self-reflexivity that ensures that either ideological or utopian uses of its concept are ruled out.<sup>1</sup> But how are we to set the stage for a non-ideological and non-utopian understanding of harmony? How are we to prepare, however tentatively and limited in our current conceptual resources, the way for an understanding of harmony that proves capable of reconciling a sense of reflexive self-determination (call this the Western contribution towards our self-understanding as situated beings) and the need to reconsider our situatedness in light of a harmonious being amidst others and the world (call this the Eastern charge of a harmonious holism with the world)?

I propose that such a new path towards a dialogue concerning harmony can be brought about via a reflexive thematisation of three possible world-attitudes (*Welteinstellungen*) that are open to the situated self. I will draw on my previous work in this regard to discuss such attitudes with regard to harmony, understood now as a well-balanced, endorsable, and coherent way in which an agentive intentional orientation can realise itself in the world.<sup>2</sup> These attitudes include (1) the instrumental means-ends orientation, (2) the intersubjective-normative orientation, and (3) the structural-holistic orientation. What I want to ultimately bring out is that there is indeed something missing in the first and the second approaches, which have by far dominated the Western discourse on rationality and value-orientation. Yet, as indicated, there is also no path towards an adequate integration of a holistic self-understanding if it is not mediated and 'refracted' by the first two attitudes. If we can show how these three value-orientations are insufficient if each conceived as self-sufficient, and yet (b) construct a path towards their mutual complementation that is still outstanding, we may be able to prepare the opening for a productive understanding of the value of harmony.



## The Limits of Harmony Within Instrumental Intentionality

It is important to keep in mind that we are reconstructing intentional attitudes against the background of our social-cultural-practical situatedness. What could thus appear as buying into the abstraction of a purely calculating means-ends rationality (our first attitude), and its corresponding notion of the self as subject, is a cognitive orientation of a *situated* agent. The possibility of an agent of taking up such a cognitive attitude allows for an abstraction from the embedded background ontology of the situated self, even though the instrumental value-orientation is still one of the socially embedded agents. In the instrumental or ends-oriented attitude, the *reflexive focus of the self* (who, again, always understands herself against the backdrop of taken-for-granted assumptions and practices) is geared entirely towards the realisation of the goal of action. The classic analytic formulation of the philosophy of action expresses this in the unique practical syllogism in which a set of beliefs (that beer is in the fridge) coupled with an overwhelming desire (to drench my thirst with that beer) leads to the rational choice for action (getting up and the beer from the fridge) (Kim 2010; Searle 1983; see also Wong 2014). We understand an agent because we can reconstruct the rationality of her actions which consists of a coupling of beliefs and desires that trigger *meaningful behaviour*. It matters here little to which extent the background beliefs and the contexts of action are further differentiated.

Based on *this model* of reflexive agency, agents themselves enhance and articulate their rationality to the extent to which they develop means which are adequate to their ends. Such a means-ends rationality, in turn, is enhanced precisely to the extent that the conditions and means and ends are *reflexively articulated and endorsed* by the agents themselves. Max Weber's action rationality scheme can serve as the paradigmatic articulation of this intuitive understanding of reflexive agency: Beginning with a rather ritualistic and traditional mode of action, the agent acts already more subjectively rational if she takes her own emotional state into account, which is further advanced if such emotions now become explicitly substituted by values and principles, yet the highest stage of rational action is reached only if such values are further reflected within a reconstructed context of their possible realisation, suggesting that true rational action is action that works, that realises its goals, that achieves its ends efficiently (Weber 1978; see also Kögler 2005). We can already detect here the roots of an ultimately alienated and self-absorbed bureaucratic rationality in which the efficient realisation of whatever value or goals is taken as a sign of its superior cognitive value. An efficient decision-maker is one who is able to lead and realise the given goals, whatever those might be.<sup>3</sup>

If agents orient themselves accordingly in the world, they aim at the efficient realisation of their chosen goals. Insofar as the focus is on the efficient realisation,

and not on the goals themselves, this attitude is called instrumental or means-ends oriented. What could in this context be the role of harmony, what would harmony possibly amount to? If we strictly limit ourselves to the internal logic of this model – which if employed in social reality may draw on other aspects and dimensions – a self-congruent and coherent action in harmony with itself consists in the *ideal functional benefit of the means vis-à-vis the ends*. Harmony here means that the action chosen is in total agreement with the best possible and therefore rational use of the means towards an end, and both are equally endorsed as valuable. The construction of harmony is thus entirely instrumental itself, as it flows from the *monological orientation towards realisable goals in the world*. Depending on the level of articulation that a situated self has achieved with regard to its desirable goals as well as the respective means towards its realisation, the logic of its ‘harmonious’ relation to the objects is one of subsumption. The richness and complexity of the world is subjected to the self-chosen methods which are taken up as means towards the realisation of values. Concrete empirical circumstances and events thus come only into purview as exemplifications of this monological rationality, which consists ultimately in nothing but a technological disclosure of the world.

But what if now another human agent appears? How is this approach prepared to deal with the co-subjectivity of another human self? How is it capable to include within its world-view the existence of the Other who herself is oriented towards ends, who is a subject orienting herself equally at ends and thus denies to be treated as mere means towards the self-realisation of the primordial subject? The subject-object scheme does not allow for an intersubjective recognition of the Other as Other because the intentional understanding of something as something defines it as *the object of its understanding*, and the focus of this mode of rationality is on the realisation of the adequate means employed for ends chosen by the subject. Accordingly, the recognition of the Other’s subjectivity can only come from the supposition that self and other endorse the *same* values and principles. The Other needs to be posited as a subject that is the same as the subject itself. The Other is thus recognised as a subject that endorses the same rational modes of behaviour, follows the same moral laws, is capable of the same cognitive and ethical operations.

In the pre-Kantian philosophical universe, this ordering of sameness is ensured by God, who constructs the world according to the principle of a “pre-established harmony.” Leibniz and Wolff’s metaphysics are the utmost expression of the need for an ordered universe in which the potential unruliness created by the existence of the Other is tamed through a pre-constructed, divinely ordained ‘order of things.’ Leibniz is the absolute master of this kind of thinking as he goes to the absolute extreme to ensure the recognition of the individuality and uniqueness of each existing self, which are rendered as *monads*, while reconciling this incredible perspectivity and subjectivity of the world with absolute truth via

the concept of the perfectly aligned universal order, the *pre-established harmony* (Leibniz 1991). In the post-Kantian world, the ordering function travels from God into the transcendental mind (Kant 1999). Up to this day the concern of all logical, cognitive-scientific, and scientific-psychological thought is to reconstruct the universal rules of human rationality. The challenge that the other presents by disturbing the smooth and undeterred execution of the means-ends rationality is overcome by reconstructing shared cognitive operations that govern any possible and existing subject.

In both its Leibnizian and its Kantian versions, the idea of a *pre-given structure* (created either by God or by the mind) to which the world corresponds forces the phenomenological complexity of the self into an entirely determined and fixed order of things. The respective notion of harmony is static, oppressive, and inflexible. In Leibniz, the self finds itself pre-positioned in an entirely determined, albeit 'individual' identity, which expresses the eternal order of things *sub specie individuationis*; the situated self is in no way part of its construction. The experiential evidence of human agency as being involved in an open-ended shaping of one's own situation, however pre-determined in many aspects, gets entirely lost. Similarly, since the monadic self is now situated in an individual and yet pre-determined position, the whole scheme of the world becomes static in the socially stratified sense: the Leibnizian order of things conflates the natural and the social order and imprisons each self in its given social role and status group. In Enlightenment Germany, Moses Mendelssohn prominently debated the challenges that such a worldview posed for the new spirit of equality that began to articulate itself via the concept of the universal (or transcendental) subject (Mendelssohn 1993).

Naturally, this idea of the universal subject found its paradigmatic expression in Kant's philosophy. Yet the rigorous establishment of a trans-empirical and trans-social order, in which each self encounters the very same categorial schemes and a moral categorial imperative within their transcendental minds, comes with a new price: The absolute transcendence that overcomes social division entails now a two-world theory which divides the self's moral consciousness from its empirical existence, and thereby fails to do justice to how our moral self-understanding requires to be mediated with cultural and historical situations (Honneth 2014). The Kantian force becomes itself oppressive and rigorous as it forces the self and its needs and desires under total submission of moral standards that are to be acceptable by all (Horkheimer/Adorno 2007). While a new and binding form of inclusivity has therefore been established, to the extent that the moral standards now do not allow for the exclusion of empirically diverse agents if they are human agents at all, the relation of the self towards its own needs and desires can hardly be understood in such a model. What the self lacks in the Kantian scheme is the capability to interpret its own identity in an open, explorative, and truly authenticating manner.

The possible conception of harmony with oneself that the subject-centred model of intentional agency offers thus fails to address the phenomenological reality of situated agency.

## **Intersubjective Intentionality and the New Complexity of Harmony**

The intersubjective-normative orientation differs radically from the instrumental means-ends oriented one as it takes the existence of the Other as its primordial starting point. Thus the distinction between the two modes is not grounded in what is taken as an end, as we saw that the Kantian conception entails a moral law as the intentionally projected goal of one's self-determination.<sup>4</sup> Rather, what is crucial is that the specific approach towards one's own being in the world is from the get-go based on an intersubjective attitude: The norms and values are understood by situated subjects as mediating rules between equally situated selves who bind themselves via their development towards a shared social order. This order is both understood to be grounded in the mutual recognition of subjects and ensures their mutual recognition via their content. The reflexive approach of the situated subject towards her own goals, and towards the realisation of one's goals, is thus not any longer a question of how one, as a subject, is capable of adequately determining the true beliefs concerning a subject matter or situation, and to find the adequate means to realise certain desirable states. Rather, the self now orients her beliefs and actions from the beginning at the presupposition that one co-inhabits a social world which one shares with others. One's own self-understanding, as well as one's needs and desires, are seen as embedded in social and cultural contexts in which other selves participate and co-define the shared understanding of reality.

Now it seems absurd to assume that such an assumption of the co-existence of other selves within the shared world was ever in doubt. But at stake is not the trivial belief that others exist, but the way in which the reflexive orientation towards one's social situatedness affects one's intentional orientation. The projections of a Leibnizian and Kantian order of things are testimony that the coherence of knowledge and being has previously been constructed from the perspective of a singular ideal observer, i.e. either God or the transcendental subject. Now this idealisation is rejected and substituted for the ideal of an intersubjectively constructed order of things. Instead of one pre-established truth, the world and its self-understanding are taken to emerge from the historically and culturally situated efforts of concrete subjects. This idea of modernity culminates in the assumption of an empirically determined agency that constructs the order of things through its own reflexive and creative acts. Such a social order always involves a cooperative

social effort, as the self now needs to establish the order in concrete discursive and social cooperation with others. This idea is perhaps nowhere more concretely evident than in the new political ideal of the democratic self-government, in which the people themselves generate the rules of their regime in order to constitute themselves as politically free (Honneth 2014). The idea is also crucial for the generally shared insight into the cognitive mediation of reality and experience by our situated human experience, and ultimately by the linguistic turn that understands this cognitive mediation of reality to be further enabled and mediated by shared social modes of meaning (Searle 1969; Rorty 1979; Putnam 1981).

It is against the background of these developments that we can articulate the new intersubjective orientation towards the world. In order to set up the threshold of this new mode of intentional world-orientation for our discussion of the value of harmony, I would like to emphasise three crucial features. First, this attitude involves to take the Other into account as an equal and free subject in all possible normative decisions that affect his or her agency. Second, the norms and values that govern society and culture are understood as mutually agreed upon frameworks that define the shared life of all. Third, the self understands its own well-being and existence as embedded in, and emerging from, a shared social world within which it receives its formation and finds resources for its self-realisation (Mead 1934; Kögler 2012). We can easily see that this new intersubjective mode seems to entail no less an idealisation than the previous one, albeit the idealised state is now one extending to the situation of different selves that are willing to recognise and respect one another as equally valuable and cognitively capable subjects. Moreover, the intersubjective extension of the idealised state now includes the reflexive taking-into-account of the empirical conditions of knowledge and existence, against the backdrop of which the new orders of truth and freedom have to be constructed.

This new intersubjectivist orientation is articulated in major influential perspectives within Western philosophical discourse (Habermas 1988). They all share that the constitution of one's intentional perspective and its contents are seen as derived from a process that involves an ongoing reconstruction of one's own beliefs and assumptions in light of the recognised claims of other agents. One's own identity is seen as emergent from an intersubjective dynamic which entails a *dialogical normativity* in which the open recognition of the other's claims is a constitutive part of one's own ever evolving being. Hans-Georg Gadamer has revealed such a dialogical movement at the core of our never completed appropriation of tradition (Gadamer 1989); Jürgen Habermas has redefined our universal moral beliefs as idealised norms to which all could agree under idealised conditions of discourse (Habermas 1983; 2001); and John Rawls has stipulated that our political community is democratically feasible as an overlapping consensus based on the shared commitment to core values of individual self-realisation and social justice

(Rawls 1993). What these perspectives articulate is a *new post-metaphysical episteme of our dialogical identity*. They provide the philosophical framework for the reflexive attitude of intersubjective recognition in which real situated social agents make their own beliefs and projects dependable on a social process in which all agents, with their beliefs and assumptions, with their needs and desires, are integrated.

We can now see that this forces us to a new level of complexity with regard to the value of harmony. The multiplicity of voices of the social and cultural world cannot any longer be tamed by means of a pre-established order of the world, be it ontologically or epistemologically. The new perspective rather demands that the constitution of a well-ordered society be achieved via the pluralised second-person perspective, i.e. via a process of social coordination in which the agents themselves play an active and constitutive part.<sup>5</sup> This new harmony is not static, but rather the open-ended processual movement of re-coordinating the involved perspectives and viewpoints, based on the overarching value-orientation that all constructive participants in this process are recognised as legitimate members. The value of harmony is thus qualified by the normative constraint that the social order is reflexively endorsed by those situated in it. This rules out a harmony in which subjects are forced to submit to a *status quo*, a situation which cannot be called harmony at all. Harmony thus becomes a new normative concept that is oriented towards a peaceful and supportive integration of all members of a certain social commonwealth to the extent that the needs and desires of those involved are respected, and that the beliefs and assumptions of those who participate are recognised and taken into account. In the view of this modern post-metaphysical discourse, this inclusive conception of harmony is the only one that can be defended. But it also makes sense for the reflexive orientation at an intersubjective perspective of the situated agent, because only within this framework the respect of one's own identity is guaranteed (Kögler 2012).

## **Holistic Reflexivity and Being in Harmony With the World**

So far, we have focused our analysis on the intentional orientations towards the instrumental realisation of ends and towards the intersubjective recognition of other subjects with whom one has to construct a shared social world. The intersubjective orientation advanced over the monological rationality of the first mode towards a dialogical self-understanding in which one understands oneself as constituted through one's co-existence with others, who thereby become recognisable as valuable others co-defining the shared social world. Yet both such accounts, the subject-object one as well as the subject-subject one, remain focused on how intentional agency can reflexively orient itself towards a shared goal, which is either conceptualised as disclosed by a singular subject or disclosed via dialogical processes



and practices. What remains underdeveloped in these modes is yet a third mode of reflexivity which thematises the prior existence of the world as such within which the instrumental or intersubjective attitudes are situated. Such a world provides the always already presupposed background of all intentional agencies, whether mono- or dia-logic, and constitutes an insurmountable meaning-conferring context of all explicit understanding. The phenomenological tradition termed this dimension the “lifeworld” and set out to explicate the diverse layers and structures that constitute its internal nature (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

The analysis of this lifeworld as the meaning-constituting background of intentional agency is defined by a paradox: On the one hand, it is considered to be absolutely essential for understanding something as something, and thereby demands to be transferred into an analysis of the world as background which grounds all understanding. Such an analysis alone would provide us with an explicit and transparent account of how the world defines what we think, experience, and feel. Yet on the other hand, the very function of the lifeworld is seen to confer implicit and taken-for-granted certainty to background beliefs and assumptions such that only against their unchallenged ‘validity,’ specific objects and features of the world can be thematised: The function of the lifeworld as background is precisely that it is implicit and unthematized (Dreyfus 1991). Once an aspect or feature of it is drawn into the daylight of discursive analysis, the thematised feature loses its lifeworldly function and itself becomes a new object understood against an ever receding background. The concept of the lifeworldly Background is thus both a necessary and an impossible concept; it is both required to understand how we can make sense of something based on a prior shared pre-understanding, and yet it seems to disavow drawing its complete structure into an explicit theory of the shared social world.

This predicament of the background has, however, not foreclosed the development of two modes of reflexive analysis that orient themselves towards one of the two horns of the paradox, i.e. either to emphasise the lifeworld’s implicit constitutive power or to attempt to objectify its structure. The first option has been developed by hermeneutic philosophy, the second one by the social-theoretical perspective. Yet before I turn to a brief reconstruction of how each of them addresses the Background, I want to specify our goal: The articulation of a mode of *holistic reflexivity* in which our being situated in the world is made a constitutive part of our intentional understanding within the world. This is where the concept of harmony, or being in harmony with the world *as a whole*, comes into play. A reflexive self-understanding that does not merely employ the world as a resource and context in which to engage in means-ends or intersubjective rationality, but in which the reflexive agent conceives of herself as being part of larger encompassing whole, as being fully embedded in a context that provides one’s source of life, is

what I envision here. 'Being in harmony with the world' would mean that one has a sense of one's location within a world that is both encompassing and yet not alienated, that is structurally embedded and yet as such enabling the self to be itself. It is ultimately this deep and holistic sense of reflexivity which is promised to us as a possibility in Eastern modes of thought that have not succumbed to the Western categories of understanding. A world-embedded holistic reflexivity would avoid the *objectification* of self, social world, and nature in light of transparent categories that make these phenomena susceptible to intentional intervention. Instead, such a reflexive self-understanding would understand itself as an integral part of a larger order in which it plays *its own part* of the construction, preservation, and transformation of the existing world, while *being grounded and enabled by it*. Such a holistic reflexivity would achieve a formidable mediation between the reflexive urge to intentional agency that challenges, builds, and conceives *something within the world*, and the receptive understanding that *dwells in a world* which is ultimately beyond its own control, and in which it remains insurmountably grounded.

Now philosophical hermeneutics has engaged in a similar holistic reflection with regard to our historically and linguistically mediated embeddedness in tradition (Dilthey 2004; Gadamer 1989; Malpas and Zabala 2010). The core insight here is that our cultural identities are inextricably wrapped up in long-standing traditional beliefs and practices, which shape our self-identities and as such pre-construct how we understand ourselves, others, and the world. The interesting point here is that our conscious understanding of the tradition in which we exist is only, as Gadamer once said, a 'flickering' compared to the vast horizon of meanings which define our cultural substance. Reflexive subjectivity is grounded in pre-reflexive tradition that defines our being, a being that is always ahead of ourselves as conscious beings. Yet because Gadamer grasps that the understanding of text and world still requires the intentional disclosure of content, which is only possible if we orient ourselves towards the subject matter at stake, which in turn requires our own beliefs and assumptions to be brought into play, the foregrounded disclosure of meaning and its ensuing processes of interpretation have the form of a dialogue. What that dialogical process enwraps us and engulfs us in is still a reflexive disclosure of meaning which as such makes sense to us, and only sustains itself if it reflexively does so. The integration into the event of tradition (*das Einrücken in das Überlieferungsgeschehen*) is thus both a trans-subjective happening and the integration into a non-alienated world of meaning and value (Kögler 1999). Yet what is missing here is the extension of holistic reflexivity towards our understanding of nature. Gadamer's unsurpassable work on the dialogical structure of understanding would define any understanding of nature itself as an ongoing process of interpretation, but it does not yet provide us with an account that already integrates ourselves within the larger natural universe.



In critical and reflexive social theory, the social world as the background of agency is objectified such that structures and processes of reality that surpass the individual are captured (Honneth 2010; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). The sociological imagination transcends the horizon of individual agency in order to show how agency itself is situated and produced within the social world. This mode of holistic reflexivity thus attempts the objectification of those features of the lifeworld which functions, if only thematised from the perspective of the situated agents, as a pervasive background that provides meaning-conferring assumptions. The objectification of the lifeworld undertaken by social theory (which builds on sociological research and informs it) is primarily useful as the articulation of dominant structures that determine the possible intentional horizon of agents without their own awareness. As pre-given structural constellations of the environment, these rules and resources have the capacity to form the implicit schemes of self and world-interpretation. Since the social world is always a world defined by power relations and structures of domination, such an approach can show how arbitrary social power can shape and structure what is perceived as intrinsic value and meaning, as one's most authentic self-identity (Foucault 1972; 1979). As an individualised set of assumptions and habits, the social relations form a cognitive habitus that internally pre-directs how agents think, perceive, and act (Bourdieu 1984). Reflexive social theory now conceives of its own work as the conscious thematisation of these implicit background structures so as to allow the intentional agent a critical and reflexive analysis of their import. It is in this sense that we can speak here of a mode of holistic reflexivity because the social lifeworld structures are now reflexively brought back into the social contexts in which agents can deliberately access and determine their range and consequences (Kögler 1997). The reflexive awareness of these modes of internalised power relations can now be critically challenged by the intersubjective mode of reflexivity which entailed the egalitarian and non-hierarchical recognition of each participant in the process.

To be sure, it needs to be said that this reconstruction already integrates the social theory into the framework of an embedded and reflexive agency that defines itself not merely via these structural features but always already in light of the intentional and intersubjective modes of reflexivity that we have reconstructed above. The reflexive thematisation of the structural factors in the pre-understanding of the situated agents thus does not amount to a reduction of agents to these structures, but rather enhances their potential at a dialogical self-constitution in light of the instrumental and normative values that are given with one's being an agent in the social world. The hermeneutic and the social-theoretical modes of reflexivity thus provide us with internal resources of Western thought to open itself to the challenging message of the Eastern modes of holistic reflexivity. Those Eastern modes present the West with a much more encompassing view that integrates

the social and the natural world into a view that is no longer objectifying, but understands agency without reductionism as part of a larger meaningful world.

Yet, as I attempted to show, in order to be acceptable, the full realisation of those Eastern modes of holism may well have to go through a 'fusion of horizon' with the Western sources of hermeneutics and social theory. If the reflexive orientation at holistic reflexivity wants to avoid the ideological or utopian employment of an idea of harmony as a smooth and non-reflexive subordination under a pre-existing order, be it metaphysical or political, it has to find a way to integrate the harmonious being in the world with the instrumental and intersubjective reflexivity that provided Western thought and culture with its discursive leverage. If we are to attain a view of harmony as an ontological value-orientation at the level of global reflexivity, one that truly moves beyond ideology and utopia, we have to open ourselves to the challenging integration of the Eastern holistic view into that of a reflexive but situated agency.

## Endnotes

1. Ideological uses would amount to state-administered and policy-driven strategic employment of harmony to justify the oppression of diverse lifestyles and the suppression of dissident voices. The Chinese government's justification of its action vis-à-vis Tiananmen Square can serve as a prominent example. Utopian uses entail the discursive invocation of harmony as a new principle for our understanding of self and environment without taking into account the cultural, social, and political levels of complexity that Western and also non-Western societies have reached in the age of globalisation. Philosophical treatises of Neo-Confucian ethical principles and virtues come here to mind, which are often presented without much context or any openly reflexive mediation with the globally acknowledged universal values of human rights and individual self-realisation. Ironically, while the Neo-Confucian discourse proclaims to reground the self within traditional role-assignments and customs, its own discourse hangs strangely in the air as yet another academic appropriation of a non-Western culture in order to confront Western value-orientations with their own limits.
2. I have developed an approach towards the constitution of reflexive cognitive attitudes (see Kögler 1997, 2005). The basic idea is that of a hermeneutic account of agency, i.e., agents are embedded in a social and cultural context of beliefs, assumptions, and practices which are shown to ground a variety of reflexive attitudes. Those reflexive attitudes can be taken up by individual agents, but they also provide established frameworks for larger cultural modes of reality-construction within which such attitudes find their applications. In what follows I sketch three such basic perspectives in order to show how the concept of harmony would be defined within each. One main purpose is to see how this reflection may enable an integration of agentive and holistic modes of self-understanding.

3. The critique of this model of rationality within the context of modernity was central to the first generation of the Frankfurt School, see Horkheimer and Adorno (2007) and Horkheimer (1947).
4. Meaning: the end can itself be a normative value, like the categorical imperative. What counts is *the attitude towards the value or end*, namely whether it is established in a mono-logical or a dia-logical perspective.
5. Given the social situatedness in contexts of empirically diverse positions, the questions arise how this diversity can be mediated and reconciled with the intersubjective orientation towards the absolute equal value of the Other. The answer is through a philosophy of finitude that approaches the Other in the dialogical mode of cognitive and normative recognition. Due to the insight into one's own situatedness, which is defined by an insurmountable finitude concerning knowledge and power, the attitude towards the Other is one of reflexive openness and humility. Here, the subject is not seen as self-sufficiently present within its own cognitive household, but rather requires the Other to expand and understand the world as well as its own self-understanding (Mead 1934; Kögler 2012). The Other thus becomes constitutive for the building of communities of knowledge and self-understanding, as much as the dialogical establishment of norms and rules becomes the source of legitimacy of the established political order.

## References

- Aristotle. 1962. *Nicomachean Ethics* (transl. M. Ostwald). Indianapolis/New York: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Random House.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Lois Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Dilthey, Wilhelm. 2004. *The Construction of History in the Human Sciences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dreyfus, Hubert, 1985. "Holism and Hermeneutics." *Review of Metaphysics*, 34:3-23.
- . 1991. *Being-in-the-World*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1970. *The Order of Things*. New York: Random House.
- . 1972. "The Discourse on Language", in M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 215-237.
- . [1975] 1979. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. [1960] 1989. *Truth and Method*. New York: Crossroad Publishers.
- Giri, Ananta. 2019. "Transformative Harmony. An Introduction and An Invitation", in Ananta Giri, *Transformative Harmony*. Delhi: Studera Press.

- Habermas, Jürgen. 1983. *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 1988. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- . 2001. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1962. *Being and Time*. Oxford: Blackwell P. Ltd.
- . 1999. *Ontology: Hermeneutics of Facticity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Honneth, Axel. 1996. *The Struggle for Recognition*. London: Polity Press.
- . 2014. *Freedom's Right*. London: Polity Press.
- Horkheimer, Max and Theodore Adorno. 2007. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Horkheimer, Max. [1947] 2013. *Eclipse of Reason*. Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1999. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kim, Jaegwon. 2010. *Philosophy of Mind*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Kögler, Hans-Herbert. 1997. "Reconceptualizing Reflexive Sociology: A Reply." *Social Epistemology*, 11(2).
- . 1999. *The Power of Dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics after Gadamer and Foucault*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- . 2005. "Constructing a Cosmopolitan Public Sphere: Hermeneutic Capabilities and Universal Values." *European Journal of Social Theory*, 8(3):297-320.
- . 2012. "Agency and the Other: On the Intersubjective Roots of Self-Identity." *New Ideas in Psychology*, 30:47-64.
- Leibniz, G.W. 1991. *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays*. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett P.C.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 2007. *After Virtue*. U. of Notre Dame Press.
- Malpas, Jeff and Santiago Zabala. 2010. *Consequences of Hermeneutics*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern U. Press.
- Mead, George Herbert. 1934. *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mendelssohn, Moses. [1789] 1993. "On the Question, What Is Enlightenment?" *Public Culture*, 6(1):213-217.
- Putnam, Hilary. 1981. *Reason, Truth, and History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rawls, John. 1993. *Political Liberalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press.
- Rorty, Richard. 1979. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Searle, John. 1969. *Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1983. *Intentionality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weber, Max. [1922] 1978. *Economy and Society*. California: U. of California Press.

Wong, David. 2014 "Reconciling the Tension between Similarity and Difference in Critical Hermeneutics," in Ming Xie, *The Agon of Interpretations: Towards a Critical Intercultural Hermeneutics*. Toronto: U. of Toronto Press.

## CHAPTER 6

# Transformative Harmony

## Culture and *Prama*

*Marcus Bussey*

Culture is premised on a desire for harmony. All cultures represent systems of order that generate intelligible fields of shared meaning within which identity, purpose and personal and collective expression all make 'sense'. To achieve this goal, shared system of meaning evolves that harmonises the various, often contradictory, tendencies that are inherent to all collectivities. Such contradictory tendencies are entropic in nature and amplify disharmonic forces over time. Seen in this light there is a tension between the centrifugal forces in societies that test and renew the core elements of a culture and the centripetal energies that operationalise centres of gravity and (re)order relations and the normative consciousness that sustain identity and meaning over time.

Giri in his poser argues towards a transformative harmonic vision for society. He rightly identifies the romantic harmonic narrative of Semashko as lacking the critical edge to drive the vision towards a sense of dynamic harmonic process. At the heart of Giri's offering is the concept of struggle. To convey this idea he suggests the Vedic notion of *sadhana*, a Sanskrit verb that implies sustained struggle to achieve an end that is greater than its parts. To capture this process orientation he suggests a dialectical method working between compassion and confrontation.

In doing so he captures some of the tension inherent to cultural processes in which the centrifugal and the centripetal tug at one another in a co-creative drama

with harmony and its antithesis endlessly dialoguing, challenging, transforming and realigning in the collective *sadhana* of co-creation.

This reflection picks up on specific elements of Giri's understanding of transformative harmony in an attempt to explore the effects of such a concept in the social realm. To do so I will focus firstly on the nature of 'concept' as a vibrational and ordering motif, then turn to specific understandings of culture characterised by centrifugal and centripetal dynamics as mentioned above. This examination of culture draws on both my understanding of culture as an evolutionary mechanism for human self-understanding and identity formation and on the concept of territorialisation found in the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Following this I explore the possibilities offered by the Vedic concept of *prama* and then conclude with some thoughts on the creative and transformative potential offered by harmonic diasporas within the cultural domain.

## Concepts Have Effects

Giri (2014) is offering us the concept of transformative harmony as a possible ordering node within an expanded vision of social possibility. My interest is in the role, concepts play in our lives. Concepts have effects in the world as they enable certain possibilities while silencing others. Thus the concept of transformation suggests there are always alternatives to any given present. The present (another concept) is thus no longer a manifestation of habit and stratified social relations but destabilised, and becomes more interesting and also remarkable. The present is a unique moment snatched from the teeth of time. Transformation as a concept returns agency to all of us in the present. Gandhi understood this and captured the sense of human possibility and power in his oft-cited maxim: Be the change you wish to see in the world!

It is helpful to shift this living understanding of the concept away from a strictly Western reading. As Giri offers us the Vedic concept of *sadhana* to help rethink and stretch our understanding of social process and struggle let me suggest the concept (unlikely at first glance I admit) of the *deva*. Traditionally the *deva* is thought of as a deity—the *suras* in Hindu cosmology. Philosophically, the *deva* can be understood as a concept, or more accurately a conceptual space from which specific effects arise. Indian mystic and philosopher P.R. Sarkar describes devas as 'waves...carrying so many ideas' (1997:85-86). He goes on to state:

This entire cosmological order is an ocean, an infinite ocean, of divine nectar. And the many vibrations created in this universe, so many waves, are different *devas*. And the life of an individual moves – goes

up and down—just like a boat in the sea, according to the length of the wave. (*ibid.*:87)

Such a reading suggests that the waves across which our lives move are conceptual in nature because it is concepts that actually hold meaning and from the movement of which culture, that wonderful weaving of the ideative expression of our collective humanity, emerges to sustain our identity and sense of purpose (Bussey 2015a). Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari note, “Concepts are centres of vibrations, each in itself and everyone in relation to all the others. This is why they all resonate rather than cohere or correspond with each other” (1994:23). This resonating process produces harmonies and links with the concept of ‘harmony’ as the other element in Giri’s duplex: transformative harmony. Both Sarkar’s and Deleuze and Guattari’s observations suggest that there is not only a unified conceptual field but also a multiplicity of fields in constant flux.

From such an open and culturally dynamic conceptualisation of concepts as ordering processes, we discover the infinite possibilities inherent to any moment. Because they order the world we live in it can be asserted that concepts have effects. This exciting aspect of the concept alerts us to the unique so often shrouded by the quotidian in everyday existence. We can also understand that this potentiality is constrained by concepts already actively ordering the cultural domain. Thus we can also see that concepts edit the cultural domain and that culture, being historically produced, is always a constrained subset of all the possibilities before us. It is this tension between possibility and order that is a hallmark of cultural evolution.

## Centrifugal and Centripetal

Cultural evolution consists of the continuous struggle between elements seeking to order and define the moment and those pushing the fringes to unleash alternatives. Such an understanding of culture as simultaneously ordering and yet rich in transformative possibilities lies at the heart of the concept, transformative harmony. It is this contestation that I refer to above as centrifugal and centripetal in nature. To understand how this works we need to further reflect on culture.

My understanding of culture is informed by my background in history (Bussey 2009a). From this perspective, culture is understood as an evolutionary process that extends human potentiality from the biological to the cultural. From this perspective, the emphasis is less on genetic learning and more on collective or mimetic learning. However, culture is not in the first place focused on change or even learning. Security, continuity and identity are core business for culture and need to be guaranteed before people can turn their attention to fulfilling expanded



cultural urges. Evolutionarily, culture stands in the shadow of terror. Terror of annihilation has generated repeated trauma such that much of culture suffers from the wounds we characterise today as post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD of course stands in the way of our quest for harmony. Yet culture is not all about pain: joy, expansion and co-evolutionary calling were also present as homosapiens moved from the sublime forgetfulness of group identity towards greater individuation and spiritual awareness (Wells 2010).

It helps to think of culture focused on security, continuity and identity as Culture 1 and of culture focused on collective learning as Culture 2 (Bussey 2014:8-9). Culture 1 holds the 'fort' while Culture 2 value adds to everything the fort stands for. When these two aspects of culture get out of balance we end up with either authoritarian states (Culture 1) or chaos and anarchy (Culture 2). The centripetal energy in culture is associated with Culture 1. It draws energy and imagination in towards a centre with a clear and coherent pattern or order in which identity and meaning become secure, grounded and purposeful. From here both individual and collective agency draw meaning and the energy required to not just maintain but extend, via Culture 2, the cultural project.

## **Transformative Possibilities in Culture**

Culture in this way is cumulative, dynamic and open-ended. Culture 2 enables this expansion by ensuring an ongoing drive towards innovation and transformation. This is a hybrid process and is centrifugal in energy as it is on the periphery of culture, where cultural 'gravity' is less that such experimentation occurs. This periphery is not geographic in nature, although Ibn Khaldun understood social change in this way (Galtung 1997), but is liminal, rhizomic and immanent (Bussey 2009b) as culture is polycentric even when seeking to appear concentric in nature. In this way change comes from unexpected and often unforeseen configurations of elements within the cultural data base which had lain dormant (Runia 2014). Much work has been done on this emergent process (Derrida 2005; Hetherington 1997; Nandy 2007); Deleuze and Guattari (1987) for instance, describe it via a series of de- and re-territorialisations while Foucault (1986) offers us the wonderfully useful (and vague) concept of heterotopia.

The process of de- and re-territorialisation is a useful tool for thinking about cultural evolution. The concept captures movements of elements of culture from one zone of intelligibility to another. Each zone is like a node in a system with no stable centre but only ever centrings—or 'becomings'. The idea of democracy, for instance, means one thing in the Athens node of 350 BCE, another thing in the Nazis Germany node and another thing again today in the United States

node. Democracy as a concept is malleable, permeable even empty and takes its intelligibility from signs attributed to it by context. Yet, as a concept it does have ordering effects in each re-territorialisation. So, for instance, it de-territorialises from ancient Athens and shows up (re-territorialises) millennia later in the Paris of the French Revolution.

What has happened is that the idea—the concept—appears as the ‘same-different’<sup>1</sup> simultaneously. Thus the idea of democracy remains immanent in the cultural data base and re-territorialises when the context calls it forth but it is never the same. This rich immanent context is what Foucault called a heterotopia in which democracy was an imminent possibility amongst many others. This concept of heterotopia can thus be seen as a rich conceptual tool for approaching the hybrid process that is always working within culture. However, for those imprisoned in the present, immanence and the cultural editing constantly going in, on and through them, remain elusive. The present is naturalised and reified as an expression of Culture 1. Such a reading accepts cause and effect as linear and discounts the place that rupture and surprise play in the emergence of any context. Culture 2 challenges such a narrow reading of the present. When we understand the startling possibilities inherent to any moment then the present becomes truly remarkable.

So, in this remarkable present we find that there is a constant atmosphere of tension between Culture 1 and Culture 2 as both have little patience with the other’s core objectives. At their worst Culture 1 is authoritarian, collectivist and tends towards fundamentalism whilst Culture 2 is iconoclastic, permissive and individualistic. Yet dialogue and co-creativity arise out of the friction between these points and that is all for the good. Transformative harmony is not the end of this tension but its constructive expression. It is the pragmatic quest for balance between the two polarities of culture.

It is important to have this dynamic vision of harmony before us when considering the question of transformation. Harmony without dynamism is stasis. Harmony as an element of social process is a normative goal that, though always out of reach, is a state that calls for social actors to reflect on their actions and their effects on the world around them (Deleuze and Guattari 1994). In this sense, transformative harmony is an invitation to social learning that is intuitive, critical and anticipatory (Bussey 2015b). It is critical because it looks at the effects of current processes, values and beliefs on the marginalised and it is anticipatory because it offers an ever-expanding vision of optimal expression for all beings and ultimately for the Cosmos itself.

## ***Prama* and Harmony**

In thinking about this critical and anticipatory stance I find the notion of *prama* suggested by Sarkar (1992) to be particularly fruitful. This Sanskrit term captures the dynamic nature of ‘balance’ of which harmony is an expression. Yet it does not privilege harmony over disharmony in the dualistic sense that both European romanticism and democratic secularism do. *Prama* suggests that all action is a mix of the static (*tamasik*), mutative (*rajasik*) and subtle (*sattvik*) and that these states act as ordering fields of energy/vibration within any context: material, social, intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual (Inayatullah 2002). Harmony is expressed in all three states. *Tamasik* harmony is of the kind found in the feudal system of Europe and the caste system of India. *Rajasik* harmony is characteristic of the topsy-turvy flux of modernity and capitalism in general. *Sattvik* harmony implies a spiritual dimension at work that reinvigorates consciousness and reframes material considerations. An important feature of the scheme is that no dimension exists without the presence of the others. They are mutually reinforcing aspects of reality always present in different states of equilibrium and disequilibrium. Thus harmony is one natural state amongst others and transformative harmony allows us to think about the aspiration for harmony as a critical and ethical driver without essentialising it and creating violent structures or trivialising it as a naïve desire to avoid confrontation and dissensus.

Transformative harmony then can be understood through the interpretive lens of *prama* as a dynamic process of *sattvik*, *rajasik* and *tamasik* energies. This helps us think in greater depth about Giri’s concept of compassionate confrontation. Compassion has a *sattvik* quality which brings soulfulness to relationship and an awareness of vulnerability and finitude which challenges the *tamasik* illusion of permanence central to our experience of reality. Confrontation has the *rajasik* energy required for the struggle to overcome the *tamasik* hegemonic processes that order and sustain reality. When linked to compassion it unites energy with soulful presence. Even the *tamasik* (static) is important as it represents the ‘centre point’ of any system where a kind of permanent present casts a hypnotic spell over people creating the illusion that reality—their reality—is the only reality.

## **Harmony and Confrontation**

Together transformative harmony and compassionate confrontation generate the ethical and imaginative space for thinking about relationship. The co-creative possibilities of Culture 2 beckon to us while the need for continuity and security that are central to Culture 1 demands attention. The relational consciousness required to bridge and honour both these dimensions of human experience call

forth something new in us all, both as societies facing imminent crisis, and as individuals linked to these social realities.

This relational pathway requires a new form of reason based on the logic of robust inclusiveness (Derrida 2001). There is a neohumanist dimension to this relational consciousness (Bussey 2011) as what propels us towards what Sardar (2010) calls Mutually Assured Diversity, or MAD for short, is calling forth a new humanity. Diversity and the inner resilience to both manage and leverage this emergent reality is at the heart of MAD. Such an assurance is of course 'MAD' for many in a world suffering from 'diversity' stress. Culture 1 is struggling to hold on to core identity and regularly retreating into fundamentalism as the default position for all those suffering stress. Currently, all is in flux and Culture 2 has been hijacked by capitalist culture. The vision of transformative harmony in all its richness offers us a middle way.

## **Harmonic Diasporas**

Concepts have effects and there is much possibility in the concept of transformative harmony. Given that Culture 1 defines a point in space and time and that Culture 2 pushes out from that space seeking to explore new possibilities, transformative harmony should be understood as a calling forth. The concept suggests an emergent and exciting human landscape containing multiple transformative diasporas. Transformative diasporas are places within the emergent cultural fields that offer sites for re-imagining possibilities. As vibrational centres, as concepts and devas in dialogue and confrontation, they evoke a series of shifting modalities that harmonise human potential within a pluriversal (as opposed to universal) cosmic setting. The alternative futures they point towards evoke what Jacques Derrida called in one of his last writings 'the enlightenment to come' (Derrida 2005). Such a space is a forever postponed terminus towards which we as individuals grope in the sadhana of self and collective realisations. It is, therefore, what lies at the heart of cultural evolution.

As we experience an increasingly globalised world in which cultures are ever more porous and hybrid, the question before us all hinges on how to transform without losing meaning. Yet this requires us to manage paradox so that our meaning does not impinge on the expression, happiness and well being of others. Furthermore, thinking neohumanistically, through the application of relational consciousness, we need to also explore ways in which to do all this not simply without compromising the needs of our planet and its multitude of non-human residents, but through maximising conditions for all. This is indeed a unique and challenging time in which we have to live.

The way forward lies in the kind of cultural experimentation Giri is pointing towards in his poser. That concept suggests that we are dealing with an imaginative domain that is tied to the lived realities of people. This calls into action a practical imagination<sup>2</sup> that seeks to meet emergent needs as the planet moves into a new phase of collective expression.

## Conclusion

It is in the play of this time of flux that transformative harmony can be understood as layered, open-ended and dynamic. The movement between/across states is of course theoretical and is experienced as pressures for social justice and ethical renewal at any point in the system not overly in the grip of a dominant harmonic order. This restless energy amplifies at the periphery of the system where the ordering logic of the centre is weakest. This suggests harmonic diasporas as sites for alternatives and as sources of the creative energy to transform any dominant system and the logic that sustains it.

## Endnotes

1. Deleuze and Guattari see all such dualisms as necessary evils: "We invoke one dualism only in order to challenge another. We employ a dualism of models only in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models. Each time, mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualisms we had no wish to construct but through which we pass. Arrive at the magic formula we all seek – PLURALISM = MONISM – via all the dualisms that are the enemy, an entirely necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever rearranging" Deleuze and Guattari (1987:20-21).
2. Here I am thinking of something akin to John Paul Lederach's moral imagination. See Lederach, J.P. (2005). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; also my own elaboration on imagination as found in my article: "Intuition, Rationality and Imagination." *Journal of Futures Studies*, 20(1):139-148.

## References

- Bussey, M. 2009a. "Mapping Time: Cartography at the Limits of World History." *Social Evolution and History*, 8(1):3-26.
- . 2009b. "Six Shamanic Concepts: Exploring the Between in Futures Work." *Foresight*, 11(2):29-42.
- . 2011. "Neohumanist Consciousness: The Next Evolutionary Step." *Prout*, 22(1): 14-15.

- 
- . 2014. "Concepts and Effects: Ordering and Practice in Foresight." *Foresight*, 16(1):1-16.
- . 2015a. "Cultural (not Natural) Selection: Spirituality and Religion's Contribution to Deep Evolution", in Siddhartha (ed.), *Religion, Culture and the Ecological Crisis*, pp. 187-216. Bangalore: Meeting Rivers.
- . 2015b. "Intuition, Rationality and Imagination." *Journal of Futures Studies*, 20(1):139-148.
- Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (translated by B. Massumi). London and New York: Continuum.
- . 1994. *What is Philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press.
- Derrida, J. 2001. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (translated by M. Dooley, and Hughes, Michael). London/New York: Routledge.
- . 2005. *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Foucault, M. 1986. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics*, 16(1):22-27.
- Galtung, J., and Sohail Inayatullah (eds). 1997. *Macrohistory and Macrohistorians: Perspective on Individual, Social, and Civilisational Change*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
- Hetherington, K. 1997. *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Inayatullah, S. 2002. *Understanding Sarkar: The Indian Episteme, Macrohistory and Transformative Knowledge*. Leiden: Brill.
- Nandy, A. 2007. *Time Treks: The Uncertain Future of Old and New Despotisms*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black.
- Runia, E. 2014. *Moved by the Past: Discontinuity and Historical Mutation*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sardar, Z. 2010. "The Namesake: Futures; futures studies; futurology; futuristic; foresight – What's in a name?" *Futures*, 42(3):177-184.
- Sarkar, P.R. 1992. *Proutist Economics: Discourses on Economic Liberation*. Calcutta: Ananda Marga Publications.
- . 1997. *Subhasita Samgraha* (Vol. 24). Calcutta: Ananda Marga Publications.
- Wells, S. 2010. *Pandora's Seed: The Unforeseen Cost of Civilisation*. New York: Random House



## CHAPTER 7

# Biopsychology of *Sadhana* and Cooperation

## Foundation of Transformative Harmony for Our Individual and Collective Welfare

*Sid Vishwamitra Jordan*

Humans and the entire mammalian family are affiliative by nature. This affiliative behaviour is largely controlled by instincts in the animal species. Thus animals are true to their nature, whereas humans with the double-edge sword of their thinking neocortex and emotional brain, the limbic system, can consciously or unconsciously follow this affiliative inclination or oppose it. The opposition is often the results of the stress and trauma associated with human relatedness. However, the drive to live together harmoniously remains active for most of us. We do not thrive very well as islands separated from the collective body. This holds true for our individual and collective well-being. Bucky Fuller stated that the next step in human evolution is “learning to live together”. This giant step for human and planetary survival and thriving, Fuller concluded, would be more propelled by psychic and social forces rather than simply biological evolution.

There is, in all of us knowingly or unknowingly, a desire for unity. Our intrinsic biology, psyche and spirit seek a transformative harmony that unites us. The innate physico-psycho-spiritual drive towards transformative harmony can be better understood in the context of the wedding of ancient subjective knowledge of the east and the objective science of the west referred to here as the Biopsychology



of Cooperation. First, we will explore the roots of this science of intuition that prepares the individual for achieving a degree of self-realisation. This expanded intuitional mind leads to the realisation that the individual and collective fates of people, animals, plants and the environment are inextricably woven together. This inter-connected fabric has a ground in new insights into our biological, psychic and spiritual makeup. This trilateral nature reveals the true neuroplasticity of human beings and the epigenesis (Lipton and Bhaerman 2010) of a new species that represents transformative harmony on every level. As we think so we become.

We will explore the labyrinth of the ancient teachings of *kundalini*, the serpentine force at the base of the spine and the modern science that supports this subjective approach of *sadhana* to an objective adjustment of social service and harmony.

Before entering this labyrinth of ancient wisdom that leads to synchronicity and social harmony we all have a personal story, a narrative, that has led us to this path of discovery of the elements of harmony between our inner and outer being.

## Personal Story of Finding Water

My story begins with the transformative playfulness of leaving my cultural moorings of the Southern United States. I ended up on the flower-child and student-rebellion streets of San Francisco as a community psychologist engaged as a post-doctoral fellow in 1968 at the Lanley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute. This fellowship involved “training in community mental health through emersion in the community”. This training experience led to an exploration of the social dynamics of disharmony and harmony with an accent on the positive role of being a good observer and listener of the offerings of this polyglot culture. The shared experience was understanding others and supporting them in their quest for personal growth and social harmony in the schools of the predominantly black community of Hunters Point, my study focuses on the oil and water mix of Catholic Latino young people in an Episcopal run youth centre in the Mission District; marginal third generation Chinese youth of China Town who were stretched between American schools in the morning and Chinese schools in the afternoon; North Beech artists and hippies in the shadows of Coit Tower and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg’s historical hang out at the City Lights Book Store surrounded by the present stoned drug culture and the lingering odour of tear gas in the streets of Berkley where the police took on the student rebellion at the “people’s park”. This clash of cultures for me led to perturbation of the static harmony of being a prisoner of the past. This clash served as what Prigogine (1984) called a “dissipative structure” that dismantles old structures resisting change and

creates the possibility of a higher order of benevolent harmony. These dissipative structures work at a physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual level to drive evolution in a transformative manner. Dissipative structures could produce a crisis far from equilibrium. The results could be chaos or a higher order, danger or an opportunity for transformative harmony. There is a yoga sutra, *Vha'da'sa'yusa'ma'na'shak'tihsevyam'stha'payatilak'sye*, that translates, "Obstacles are the helping forces that establish one in the goal."

I was experiencing the chaos of reordering the perceptions of my inner and outer world. I felt more like a medium for something larger than myself, guided by an increasing perception of grace from a divine source.

Eighty per cent of our fellowship time was spent in the community and twenty per cent of the time the six of us students benefited from the experienced wisdom of a faculty of psychiatrists, psychologist, social worker and anthropologists that had earned their stripes immersed in this San Francisco Bay community. As students we were "fish out of water" coming to understand what Einstein meant when he said that, "the last thing that fish discover is water", how our familial and cultural heritage has shaped us.

Exposure to multicultural venues is the best cure for this cultural amnesia, awakening us from the trance of the imposed influences of family and culture, unconsciously infused and tenaciously holding on. Of course it helps to have sage guides, as was experienced in my fellowship. We were on a mindful multicultural pilgrimage, sorting out the inner and outer terrain of a consciously perceived "present-past". We came to recognise how the past is now coloured by an awakened present. This transcultural experience moves us from the static particulars of our culture of origin to universally shared values for the common good. Of course this exchange needs to be negotiated from the strengths of each culture. We have the responsibility of honouring each culture and participating in the raising of each culture's trappings to its quintessential expression before blending cultures and emerging with shared universal values.

## Seeing the Beauty, Longing for the Guest

As we own the beauty in all cultures and celebrate the local and universal, we begin to live more fully in the present and reclaim some of the awe and wonder of our youth. With the benevolence of universal values we are transformed by the ever-present synchronicity and harmony that has always lain just beyond our conscious grasp. Grace and gratitude become our anthem as more beauty is revealed to us. Rumi, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet, puts our capacity to see beauty nicely:

**Zero Circle - Rumi**

Be helpless, dumbfounded,  
 Unable to say yes or no.  
 Then a stretcher will come from grace  
 to gather us up.  
  
 We are too dull-eyed to see that beauty.  
 If we say we can, we're lying.  
 If we say No, we don't see it,  
 That No will behead us  
 And shut tight our window onto spirit.  
  
 So let us rather not be sure of anything,  
 Beside ourselves, and only that, so  
 Miraculous beings come running to help.  
 Crazy, lying in a zero circle, mute,  
 We shall be saying finally,  
 With tremendous eloquence, Lead us.  
 When we have totally surrendered to that beauty,  
 We shall be a mighty kindness.

Now the real work of transformative harmony begins. We are on a mission of awakened conscience and realising how much personal work is required as a lifelong learner. We realise that speed without a system is dangerous and that a system without speed is useless. Life is short and there is so much work to be finished within and without. What system should we adopt and who is the teacher? Where did we come from, what are we doing here, and where are we going are still the perennial questions that goad transformative work.

Kabir exonerates us to answer these questions in the poem "The Guest" translated by Robert Bly:

Friend, hope for the Guest while you are alive. Jump into experience while you are alive! Think... and think... while you are alive. What you call "salvation" belongs to the time before death. If you don't break your ropes while you're alive, do you think ghosts will do it after? The idea that the soul will rejoin with the ecstatic just because the body is rotten – that is all fantasy.

What is found now is found then. If you find nothing now, you will simply end up with an apartment in the City of Death. If you make love with the divine now, in the next life you will have the face of satisfied desire. So plunge into the truth, find out who the Teacher is, Believe in the Great Sound! Kabir says this: When

the Guest is being searched for, it is the intensity of the longing for the Guest that does all the work. Look at me, and you will see a slave of that intensity.

Discovering or rediscovering a system of transformative harmony is our worthy goal. Let us now see what contributions the biopsychology of spiritual practices (*sadhana*) and cooperation might offer to create a tapestry of transformative harmony. We begin with our individual journey that draws on the spiritual force at the base of the spine as it moves upward and embraces universal relatedness.

When Shrii Shrii Anandamurti was asked, “Are there many paths to the ultimate goal of self-realisation?” The reply was, “There is just one path.”

This response shocked his devotees who perceived the practice of yoga as embracing all paths towards unity with the divine. They replied, “Baba what is that path?”

He asserted, “*Kundalini*—on any planet where there is a humanoid structure the path of self-realisation is *Kundalini*.”

The human body is the minimum requirement for *sadhana*. This universal path has been elaborated into a system and process of the eight-limbed yogic practice popularly known as Astanga Yoga. The modern version of this practice is a combination of subtle eastern subjectivity and modern western science. This is an example of transcultural harmony and contributes to the foundation of transformative harmony for individuals and planetary cooperation. First, we must transform ourselves individually and come to know our true selves before we can fully engage others in benevolent harmony. Planetary unity is a bright beacon on the horizon of a new age of spirituality that beckons us.

## **Biopsychology and Yoga *Sadhana*: Education for Self-Knowledge and Social Welfare**

The ancient and modern science of biopsychology seeks an understanding of the connection between the mind, body and spirit. Ashtavakra first systematised this science over 2000 years ago under the name “Raja dhi Raja Yoga”. P.R. Sarkar (1957), Indian philosopher and spiritual teacher revitalised this science as Biopsychology (1998) that synthesised modern science and the ancient understanding of how the *chakras* are related to mental and emotional states. Sarkar’s elucidation of this knowledge is embodied in how we can use yogic practices or *Sadhana* to create individual and social balance. In this presentation we will examine how the physical, psychic and spiritual levels of biopsychology support the yoga *sadhana* practices in the acquisition of self-knowledge and promotion of social welfare. Further consideration will be given to how this science of biopsychology and yoga

*sadhana* is being applied in Neohumanist schools and becomes a universally applied educational practice to support self-realisation and a more cooperative society.

The modern science of biopsychology includes the neuroendocrine science of how the nervous system and endocrine system work together to integrate and regulate the activity of the brain, autonomic nervous system and endocrine glands. Key to the yogic science of biopsychology is the yogic spiritual practices (*Sadhana*) that help the relationship to ones self and others become more balanced mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Integrated with the physical plexus of nerves and glands are the *chakras* in the yogic system that represent psychic containers for all of our 50 propensities of the human mind. These propensities (50) can be expressed internally or externally (2) and by five motors and five sensory organs (10) totalling  $50 \times 2 \times 10 = 1000$  potential expressions. These expressions or qualities of the mind are called *virttis*. Thus each *chakra*, translated “wheel”, contains psychic qualities of the mind or *virttis* and a plexus of glands and nerves.

It is said “the mind is like a river that runs in two directions—towards the crude (matter) or subtle (Spirit)”. Thus the “occupations” of the mind such as love, hatred, or fear known as *virttis* become expressed sentiments. When these externally-oriented occupations of the mind run towards the substations or subsidiary glands, those below the pineal and pituitary glands, the cruder or more mundane propensities such as fear are activated, whereas when the mind moves towards subtle internal propensities, such as love, attraction towards the Spirit is activated. Thus the *chakras* and allied glands located along the spinal cord are substations for this journey of individuals and society to travel towards the crude or the sublime expressions. We are choosing moment to moment which direction to travel. Therefore we need a system of spiritual practices (*Sadhana*) that is methodical and systematic to curb the crude forces of *avidya* (ignorance) and mount a victory for *vidya*, the expression of truth and beauty.

Knowledge of the structure and function of *chakras* and glands that control the *virttis* is important for individuals performing spiritual practices. Below are the *chakras* and their propensities:

The terranean (solid) plexus, or *mūlādhāra chakra*; located at the mid-point of the last vertebra of the spinal cord:

1. *Dharma* [psycho-spiritual longing]
2. *Artha* [psychic longing]
3. *Kāma* [physical longing]
4. *Mokṣa* [spiritual longing]

The fluidal plexus, or *svādhiśthāna chakra*: situated on the spinal cord directly behind the root of the genital organ:

1. *Avajñā* [indifference]
2. *Múrcchā* [psychic stupor, lack of common sense]
3. *Prashraya* [indulgence]
4. *Avishvāsa* [lack of confidence]
5. *Sarvanāśha* [thought of sure annihilation]
6. *Krurātā* [cruelty]

The igneous plexus, or *mañipura chakra*; located at the navel:

1. *Lajjā* [shyness]
2. *Pishunātā* [sadistic tendency]
3. *Irśā* [envy]
4. *Suśūpti* [staticity, sleepiness]
5. *Viśāda* [melancholia]
6. *Kaśāya* [peevishness]
7. *Trśñā* [yearning for acquisition]
8. *Moha* [infatuation]
9. *Ghrñā* [hatred, revulsion]
10. *Bhaya* [fear]

The *anāhata chakra*; situated at the centre of the chest:

1. *Āśhā* [hope]
2. *Cintā* [worry]
3. *Ceśhā* [endeavour]
4. *Mamatā* [mine-ness, love]
5. *Dambha* [vanity]
6. *Viveka* [conscience, discrimination]
7. *Vikalātā* [mental numbness due to fear]
8. *Ahaṁkāra* [ego]
9. *Lolātā* [avarice]
10. *Kapaīātā* [hypocrisy]
11. *Vitarka* [argumentativeness to point of wild exaggeration]
12. *Anutāpa* [repentance]

The *vishuddha chakra*; located at the region of the throat:

1. *Śāḍaja* [sound of peacock]
2. *Rśabha* [sound of ox]
3. *Gāndhāra* [sound of goat]
4. *Madhyama* [sound of deer]
5. *Paiṇcama* [sound of cuckoo]
6. *Dhaevata* [sound of donkey]
7. *Niśāda* [sound of elephant]
8. *Oṃ* [acoustic root of creation, preservation, dissolution]
9. *Hum* [sound of arousing *kulakuṇḍalinī*]
10. *Phát* [practication, i.e., putting a theory into practice]
11. *Vaośát* [expression of mundane knowledge]
12. *Vaśat* [welfare in the subtler sphere]
13. *Svāhá* [performing noble actions]
14. *Namah* [surrender to the Supreme]
15. *Viśa* [repulsive expression]
16. *Amṛta* [sweet expression]

The lunar plexus, or *ājñā chakra*; located between the eyebrows:

1. *Aparā* [mundane knowledge]
2. *Parā* (spiritual knowledge)

These are the forty-nine crude propensities. And the last one [number 2 of the *ājñā chakra*], that is, the singular subtle propensity, is *parā* [spiritual knowledge].

The *sahasrara chakra* associated with the pineal gland contains the seeds of the 1000 propensities located in the brain. The pineal as a structure controls all fifty *vṛttis*.

## Scientific Evidence of Subtle Energy Associated With *Chakras*

Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama, scientist and Shinto priest, has specifically developed a Chakra Instrument which is designed to detect minute electrical, magnetic and optical changes, which occur in the immediate environment of the experimental subject. The recorded activity of the heart chakra was enough to produce a weak but measurable physical light. Moreover, the subject was asked to press a button whenever she thought that she experienced the emission of psi-energy. The

subjective feelings corresponded to the objectively measured periods of activity. It was experiments like these which were conducted with 100 subjects which led Motoyama to conclude 'that mental concentration on a chakra activates it' (1999).

For the past twenty years, Valerie Hunt, a professor of kinesiology [the study of human movement] at UCLA, has measured human electromagnetic output under different conditions. Using an electro-myograph, which records the electrical activity of the muscles, Hunt, like Motoyama recorded radiations emanating from the body at the sites traditionally associated with the *chakras*. Through her research, she made the discovery that certain types of consciousness were related to certain frequencies.

She found that when the focus of a person's consciousness was anchored in the physical world, their energy field registered the frequencies in the range of 250 cps (cycles per second). This is close to the body's own biological frequency. Active psychics and healers, however, registered in a band between 400 and 800 cps. Hunt (1999) considered those recorded at 900 cps and above "mystical personalities" who had a firm sense of the cosmic interconnections between everything.

Convincing evidence is presented showing that the pineal, and not the pituitary, is the master gland of the endocrine system. It converts light, temperature and magnetic environmental information into neuroendocrine signals that regulate and orchestrate body functions. It regulates our internal clock, determining our daily sleep-wake patterns and influencing our broader lifetime rhythms (2005).

Subtle energy is the foundation of integral physiology, which is a medical paradigm that unites the contributions of Western medicine and Eastern systems of health. Supported by scientific research, integral physiology bridges belief systems and offers a neutral language that people of myriad backgrounds can use to communicate with one another about experiences that extend outside of known science. Integral physiology steps beyond the so-called, body-mind connection to recognise the importance of experiences traditionally called 'intuitive' or 'spiritual'. The theoretical model utilises a chosen set of thinkers to explain the subtle energy component of a truly integral physiology. Unifying the valuable contributions of Western medicine and the knowledge of ancient energy systems, the theory of integral physiology is a harbinger to the hard science that is beginning to emerge. It bridges rigid belief systems of both medical and religious institutions by offering a neutral language and providing a framework by which to discuss the non-physical aspects of healing. Before long, the scientific means to prove the theory and the technology to employ it will be established. Understanding human subtle energy is undoubtedly the next frontier in medical research (2005).

Candace Pert, founder of Mind Body medicine and author of *Molecules of Emotions* (1997), published over 250 research articles on the neuropeptides that are



located throughout the body. She formulated a theory of the emotions, mediated by receptor active peptides, such as the neuropeptides and immune system cytokines, as the agents that integrated communication between the brain and the body. She also authored the musical guided imagery CD “Psychosomatic Wellness: Healing Your Body-Mind” and “Healing the Hurting, Shining the Light, A Chakra Meditation for all your Body Minds”. Candace Pert believed the meditations in these CDs would help you access subconscious patterns and reprogram them for better health. She coined the term “bodymind” to put an end to mind and body dualism. She asserted that the mind is distributed throughout “nodal points” along the spinal cord known as the *yogic chakras*.

## Holistic System

Biopsychology is a holistic approach of synthesis, a systems approach that doesn't separate one element from another in theory or practice. *Asanas*, diet, meditation, ethics and service are all part of tuning the bodymind instrument to harmonise the symphony of the *chakras* to transform the physical and psycho-physical into the Supreme Spiritual Beatitude.

## Yoga Sadhana: Spiritual Practices for Self-Realisation and Social Service

Yoga is defined by Patanjali as the cessation of the propensities of the mind. Rather than this implied suppression of the propensities of the mind, Shrii Shrii Aanandamurti defines yoga as a pinnacle psychology of “Goading the tendencies of the mind towards the non-attributional Supreme State”. This definition of yoga is consistent with Rajadhiraja or Ashtanga Yoga that supports a “non-dual dualism” which embraces a subjective approach to an objective adjustment. The absolute and the relative world are both accepted as service to others is deemed service to the Supreme.

## Morality: The Foundation of Spiritual Practices

Ashtanga yoga (eight-limbed yoga) constitutes the *sadhana* or spiritual practices that control and balance the *chakras* to achieve personal and social integration. Without the application of morality contained in *Yama* and *Niyama*, the first two limbs of ashtanga yoga, the mind lacks the equilibrium to meditate or accomplish the other spiritual practices. The application of morality requires that mental balance be maintained with regard to changes in time, place and person as to how

we think, speak and act in a given moment. While this avoids dogmatic stances of “one shoe fits all”; the aim of morality is to achieve Infinite Bliss so morality is not merely relative. The ultimate aim in a moral life is not to lie or commit theft but rather to remove from the mind the tendency to lie or steal. The details of the application of *Yama* and *Niyama* are found in *Guide to Human Conduct* (1957).

## Asanas and Glands

On the physical level of personal development yoga *sadhana* focuses on the application of asanas, physico-psychic postures, to balance the propensities (thoughts, emotions and behaviours) of the *chakras*. The seeds of all propensities (*vrttis*) are in the brain but their first expression occurs in the glands or substations of the mind.

The glands then become a primary target for balancing the mind's propensities attached to each *chakra* and controlling the associated thoughts and behaviour. The subglands from the thyroid and parathyroid glands downward control forty-eight propensities. The pituitary gland controls two propensities, worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge. The pineal gland located above the pituitary gland controls all one thousand propensities. By performing asanas, postures for physical and psychic well-being, the glands and sub-glands are pressurised and depressurised to balance the production of glandular secretion. This gives primary importance to lymphatic glands that supply lymph, the primary hormone, to other glands and the brain. Lymphatic glands or nodes are located throughout the body but the largest groupings are found in the neck, armpits, and groin areas. When lymph comes in contact with an activated gland, other hormones are created. In humans, the thyroid and parathyroid glands are more developed than the lymphatic glands. The thyroid and parathyroid glands are more concerned with psychic development and intellectual elevation while the lymphatic glands are more concerned with physical activity. Asanas are designed to correct imbalances in the secretion of these glands and subglands.

This new science of biopsychology of the glands and *chakras* developed by P.R. Sarkar (1957) details how to recognise imbalances and correct them with the application of the proper asana applied by a trained practitioner. The pressurising and depressurising of the glands with the appropriate asanas supplies the needed balance in the production of the secretion of the gland and subglands. This balancing of needed hormonal secretion begins at the level of the glands and affects all of the seeds of the 1000 propensities in the brain, ultimately controlled by the pineal gland. For example, the shoulder stand has a pressurising effect on the thyroid and parathyroid glands, associated with the throat *chakra*, which results in balancing the secretions of these glands and subglands. This balancing of the

thyroid secretions can reduce sleeplessness and nervousness. The shoulder stand and other inverted postures, such as hare and headstand, also result in deactivating the lower *chakras* as the higher *chakras* are activated producing a state of calm and focused mind. The peacock pose is instrumental in pressurising the adrenalin glands associated with the navel chakra resulting in a reduction of fear. The cobra pose pressurises the thymus gland behind the breastbone and balances the production of the hormone thymine related to the immune system. When overactive, the immune system produces allergies and when underactive fails to protect us from infection. Thus the practitioners should select the asanas they perform carefully with the aid of an experienced yoga teacher.

For proper and timely development of the individual an appropriate amount of lymph must be available. Vegetarians produce more lymph because they get more chlorophyll from green vegetation that aids in the development of the brain and spiritual practices. A sentient environment and good company serve as catalytic agents in manufacture of lymph. Even if one has a sentient diet if the environment is negative it is detrimental to mental progress.

### **Initiation: Embracing the Goal**

The spiritual practices are designed to strengthen the *chakras* and control the expression of the propensities. The goal of these practices is “to move with accelerated speed towards that Supreme Shelter, uniting the “little I” of the individual soul with the “Big I” of the cosmic soul. When the student is ready the initiation into the practices of *Dharma Sadhana* involves embracing of this goal of union with the Divine by surrendering all of ones physical, mental and spiritual potentialities at the lotus feet of the Supreme. As Yogi Berra, sportsman famous for his pithy quips, once said, “If you don’t know where you are going you might end up somewhere else.” This first lesson in ashtanga yoga offers withdrawal of the mind from different physical and mental objects, then directing the mind towards the goal with mantra. This is the process of concentration (*Ishvara Pranidhana*). Initiates are encouraged to not only perform sitting meditation twice a day but to also recite the mantra while moving through their daily activities to remain immersed in goal of self-realisation.

### **Withdrawal and Surrender**

The nature of the human mind is to always be attached to an object, one object after another, whether our attention is focused outwardly in our daily existence or inwardly for meditation. The monkey-mind predominates our awareness and is a necessary state of our ego to function in the world. However to move towards our spiritual goal the preoccupation with the objective world needs a transcendental

object to be freed of worldly attachments. The best method of withdrawal from these worldly attachments while remaining in the world is to view every object encountered externally as an expression of the Divine. This practice is called *Madhvidya* or “honey knowledge”. To practice this honey knowledge we are advised to take everything with the cosmic feeling that the doer of the action, the action and the results of the action are objective manifestations of the Divine. When teaching your students, it is the Divine who is the teacher and the Divine who performs the teaching and the Divine who constitutes the results of the teaching. When I am preparing this paper, it is the Divine who composes, presents and receives the paper. The part that recipients don’t care for belongs to me, that which inspires you is the work of the Divine.

Now that we have withdrawn all of our propensities from the external world with the practice of *Madhvidya* where will these propensities be directed? These withdrawn propensities could cause disturbance in your subconscious or unconscious mind if not directed to some internal moving object. Thus the moving panorama of internal objects is the moving images of the “done I” or objectivised mind (*citta*) such as the internal image of a horse becomes the direction of withdrawal. The next step in the withdrawal is to guide the propensities towards the “doer I” (*ahamtattva*) that is not moving but has the potential for movement. Since binding attachment is still a quality of the “doer I”, this “doer I” must be withdrawn to the internal feeling of “I exist” (the *mahattattva*). While there is little movement in this pure feeling of “I exist” there is still some struggle and attachment. Thus the final surrender and withdrawal is merging this pure “I” feeling of “I exist” into the Cognitive Principle (Pure Consciousness) that is free from all bondage. This is the supreme goal of human existence to merge the little “I” with the big “I” of Pure Consciousness.

## Breath Control

*Pranayama*, breath control, is a practice to increase the power of concentration and ideation. *Pranayama* means “control over the vital power or life force” which gives the practitioner the ability to do meditation for a longer period of time with greater concentration and ideation. It is during the period of pause in the systaltic movement of breath that the individual is most receptive to any sensation or idea. Beyond the five senses in the state of pause it is the *pranendriya*, the yogic “sixth sense” in the centre of the yogic heart (not physical heart), that allows for subtle perceptions of soft, hard, harsh, hot, cold, nurturing or noxious in daily life experience. It is within the womb of silence and the pause of the breath that the intuition of the heart chakra flowers.

## **Dharana – Concentration**

*Dharana* means, locating the mind firmly in an area or region of the body such as a chakra. *Dharana* further means, “to hold” an image of the mind. Like a cinema film made up of successive individual pictures *dharana* is made up of successive external images converted into internal mental images that are static and don’t remain unless immediately followed by other images.

The objective of this practice is to balance the five factors (solid, liquid, luminous, air and ether) associated with each of the first five *chakras* and thus balance the overall activity of the body and mind. *Mantras* are used for each chakra as the shape, colour and centre of each chakra is visualised. Concentrating on the chakra and reciting the *mantras* balance glands and subglands and associated hormones resulting in a balanced mind.

## **Dhyana – Continuous Flow of the Mind**

In contrast to *Dharana*, which deals with more static images, *Dhyana* is dynamic and involves the constant flow of an internal image of the Guru. *Dhyana* means, “to direct the mind towards the Supreme One”; remembering God is *Dhyana*. The Guru is none other than *Brahma*; the spiritual aspirant’s own true self. The Guru meditated upon in *Dhyana* is therefore a “mirror” of that *Brahma* within everyone and not the physical Guru. This internal concept of the Guru avoids the pitfall of static personality worship or idolatry. *Dhyana* is performed by focusing on the guru chakra the internal portion of the crown (*sahasrara*) *chakra*. The guru *chakra* and the *sahasrara* chakra are virtually the same and associated with the pineal gland that controls all the propensities. Thus if one achieves full concentration on the guru chakra one becomes omniscient. Omniscience means knowledge regarding past, present and future. One does not perform spiritual practices to become omniscient but rather to please the Lord. Thus the saying, *Guru Kṛpahi kevalam* (The grace of the Guru is everything).

## **Samadhi – Transcendental States**

Once established in *dhyana* one can attain the transcendental state of *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is neither a negative nor a positive state but rather a state of equilibrium that is attained after meticulous and prolonged spiritual practice. *Samadhi* is not a goal but the results of ardent application of the other seven limbs of *ashtanga* yoga.

*Savikalpa samadhi* produces a blissful trance of absorption of the unit mind in the cosmic mind and helps achieve self-realisation. *Nirvakalpa samadhi* produces a state of absolute vacuity beyond all qualities or propensities of the mind that is associated with final salvation. Even after the state of vacuity in *Nirvakalpa samadhi*

ends the spiritual waves of exhilaration continue to flow and may last for days. These trailing waves of exhilaration and joyous exuberance keep reminding the intuitional practitioner that their state beyond the mind had been one of absolute bliss.

Great aids in goading the mind towards *Samadhi* are *dhruvasmrti* and *anudhyana*. *Dhruvasmrti* means developing a “fixed memory” on the Supreme Entity. The overwhelming desire to run after and catch hold of the object of meditation is termed “*anudhyana*”. This intense desire to “catch hold” of the object of meditation creates a psycho-spiritual vacuum that propels the *kundalini* (latent spiritual force) at the base of the spine through the *chakras* finally reaching the *sahasara chakra*. It is the “longing” for union with the Supreme that does all the work. Regarding this deep longing Kabir says, “Look at me and you will see a slave of that intensity.”

### **Dharma Sadhana for Education**

This biopsychology of *sadhana* reveals that the individual requires tri-lateral development as a physical, psychic and spiritual being. Recognising this *dharma* or true nature of people, Neohumanist education offers an education of the whole person. Emphasis is placed on the training of teachers in Neohumanist schools that incorporates all round personal development that includes the above-mentioned *sadhana* practices. The children in the schools are slowly introduced to these practices based on their developmental requirements as individuals and age groups.

Neohumanist education adopts the principles of holistic, child centred, relational, spirituality, service-oriented, ecological and creative/critical thinking approach. Recognising that many progressive schools have adopted these holistic characteristics leading teachers and administrators from the Neohumanist tradition at a recent global conference in Holland posed the question, “What is unique about Neohumanist education?” (2016) We knew that acquisition of knowledge had long been the *mantra* among educators and that we were reaching towards a better understanding of what we offered that made the biggest difference in student’s lives and the impact they were to have on society. Our mentor, P.R. Sarkar (1957) had clarified the difference between “knowledge” and “understanding”:

There is some difference between knowing and understanding. Whatever information regarding some object we gather through the medium of the sense organs is what we “know” about that object. But when the basic or ultimate nature of the object is fully subjectivised, then we “understand” the object.

Among our group of educators from Egypt, America, Australia, Holland, Romania, London, Malaysia and India we shared our stories of our Neohumanist education journey and enjoyed our good company laced with multi-ethnic meals. Most importantly we playfully created a Neohumanist Game that took our shared and well-understood elements of Neohumanism but arranged them in new patterns based on our different backgrounds and priorities as educators. What emerged was a deeper understanding of the Core Elements of what Neohumanist Education meant to us and perhaps others if we put it to test.

These “core elements” were three in number: first a theory of the Mind that draws on the *ashtanga yoga* described above that defines the layers of the mind (*kosas*); secondly, the Heart-centred approach that promotes love of all of creation; and thirdly, the application in the world of this Heart-centred approach which leads to the desire to express Service to all of creation seen as an expression of the Divine in plants, animals, people and the environment. We observed that these three core elements support one another through the heart-centred love of Neohumanist education that serves the child, teacher and society at all levels.

The layers of the mind or *kosas* are directly related to the *chakras* and help direct the development of the curriculum in Neohumanistic education. The first two *chakras*, *muladhara* and *svadhistana*, are related to the conscious and subconscious mind respectively. There are three more levels identified as the superconscious mind or unconscious mind related to the navel chakra (*manipura*), heart chakra (*anahata*) and throat chakra (*vishuddha*). For curriculum purposes beginning with the human body (*annamaya*) these levels of the mind are related respectively to the development of the senses (conscious mind/*muladhara*), intellect (subconscious mind/*svadhistana*), creativity (first layer of superconscious mind/*manipura*), intuition (second layer of superconscious mind/*anahata*), and spirituality (third layer of superconscious mind/*vishuddha*). The elaboration of the development of the Neohumanist education curriculum based on the levels of the mind is detailed in Neohumanist Education; Education for a New World (1986). Dada Shambhushivananda (2016) states, “NHE is a dynamic educational model that nurtures all levels of the human personality—from its crudest existence to the subtlest consciousness as illustrated in Table 1 of NHE Learning Outcomes as associated with each layer of the mind.”

These universal yoga practices that began in the East have now become a part of our planetary transformative harmony providing a path for individuals to realise their true selves and contribute to a just and sustainable society. The above review has focused principally on practices that create the individual foundation for transformative harmony and planetary cooperation. Now let us examine this biopsychology of cooperation from the collective point of view as we seek a balance between the needs of individual and collective harmony.



**Table 1** NHE Learning Outcomes

<i>Hiranamaya</i> (Supra-mental Causal Mind) <i>Hiranamaya</i> (Causal Mind) <i>Vishuddha Chakra</i> <i>Dhyana</i>	Inner Peace; Compassion; Benevolence; Magnanimity of Mind; Forgiveness; Self-Restraint and Inner Discipline; Firm Determination; Strong Will Power; Surrender to the Supreme and Ego Transcendence; Recognition of Sacredness of all things: living and non-living; Universal Love; Service Spirit; Missionary Zeal; Supra-Aesthetics; Sweet and Smiling Behaviour; All-round Balance; Concentration.
<i>Vijnanamaya</i> (Subliminal Mind) <i>Anabata Chakra</i> <i>Dharana</i>	Neohumanist Ethics and Inner Moral Compass; Awakened Conscience; Sense of Responsibility; Moral Courage; Readiness to Sacrifice for Others; Above Hatred, Anger, Vanity, Prejudices, Pseudo-culture, and Group-ism; Commitment; Fore-sight, Far-sight and In-sight; Access to Intuition; Discriminant Faculty; Fight for Justice; Preservation and Celebration of Diversities; Concern for Future Generations, Minimum Disparities; Sustainability; Accountability.
<i>Atimanas</i> (Supra-mental Mind) <i>Manipura Chakra</i> <i>Pratyahara</i>	Aesthetics, Creativity, Joyful Learning; Trust, Harmony, Loyalty; Spontaneity, Innocence, Light-Heartedness; Straight-forwardness, Simplicity, Inner Charm; Unity in Diversity; Art for Service and Blessedness; Playfulness; Humour.
<i>Manomaya</i> (Sub-conscious Mind) <i>Svadhastana Chakra</i> <i>Pranayama</i>	Deep Thinking; Thirst for Knowledge; Understanding Inter-connectedness of All Things; Freedom from Dogma, Superstitions and Fissiparous Tendencies; Enlargement of Mind; Photographic Memory. Cognitive Development; Discerning Cause-Effect Relationships; Problem-Solving and Decision-making Skills; Rational and Positive Outlook; Scientific Aptitude; Knowledge of Flora and Fauna and the Elements of Nature.
<i>Kamamaya</i> (Conscious- Mind) <i>Muladhara Chakra</i> <i>Yama and Niyama</i>	Practical Life Skills-Technical, Entrepreneurial, Communication, Interpersonal, Organisational; Skills-development, Time-management.
<i>Annamaya</i> (Human Body) <i>Asanas</i>	Healthy Lifestyle Habits; Proper Nutritious Diet; Safety, Martial.

## Biopsychology of Cooperation and Social Harmony

The biopsychology of cooperation and benevolent social harmony requires that people recognise our innate collective *dharma* and reach out to one another for a



better planetary conversation. This volitional effort is aided by a neurobiology and inner spirit that fosters the urge to move together.

## Relational Brain

Cozolino in his book, *The Neuroscience of Human Relationships: Attachment and the Developing Social Brain* (2006) views the brain as a relational brain linked to other brains. The brain is considered an organ of adaptation to change that is understood in relationship to other brains. This gives us the biological platform for the social synapse that produces resonance in our shared social space. This makes social harmony a natural process that transports sight and sound between individuals, external neural circuits for one another. This is not only a physical circuit but also a psycho-spiritual connection that supports the ultimate human goal of Bhagavad *Dharma*, the pure spiritual goal of becoming one with Supreme Consciousness.

This neural network connectivity on a social level is further supported by the concept of mirror neurons that support empathy for one another. Observing the actions of others, elicits mirror neuron activity in one area of the brain that belongs to the mirror neuron system (right posterior inferior frontal gyrus).

Marco Iacoboni, a neuroscientist inquires in his book *Mirroring People: The Science of How We Connect to Others* (2008) "What do we do when we interact? We use our body to communicate our intentions and our feelings. The gestures, facial expressions, body postures we make are social signals, ways of communicating with one another. Mirror neurons are the only brain cells we know of that seem specialised to code the actions of other people and also our own actions. They are obviously essential brain cells for social interactions. Without them, we would likely be blind to the actions, intentions and emotions of other people. The way mirror neurons likely let us understand others is by providing some kind of inner imitation of the actions of other people, which in turn leads us to "simulate" the intentions and emotions associated with those actions. When I see you smiling, my mirror neurons for smiling fire up, too, initiating a cascade of neural activity that evokes the feeling we typically associate with a smile. I don't need to make any inference on what you are feeling, I experience immediately and effortlessly (in a milder form, of course) what you are experiencing." More ominously, Iacoboni sees mirror neurons as implicated in addiction and finds possible implications for how we react to consumer and even political ads. This is a good example of how a natural resonance can be employed for the common good or our individual and collective detriment, harmony or disharmony.

The oral tradition of storytelling is another ground where we can create a positive or negative narrative that influences those sharing the narrative. All of our communication with one another requires scrutiny of our intuition to guide

our thought, words and actions on the path of a positive narrative that serves the general welfare. An awakened conscience guided by our intuition requires sufficient self study and collective discourse that makes positive use of our relational brains and mirror neurons for a better planetary conversation.

Further biological support for social harmony is the naturally occurring hormones that support bonding and affection. These hormones that promote and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships include oxytocin and endorphins.

Oxytocin stimulates milk ejection during lactation and uterine contraction during birth, releases during sexual orgasm in men and women, increases in response to remembering positive relationships and decrease in remembering negative relationships. Oxytocin has also been shown to promote bonding in relationships between men and women as well as mother and child. We cannot depend on hormones to ensure good relationships. We have observed the mind is like a river that runs in two directions—towards the crude or subtle, dictated by our free will. Thus we must adhere to an ethical code of benevolence based on time, place and person. The natural hormones are there to help us if we properly direct the mind as an ethical act of transformative harmony.

Endorphins are a morphine-like substance produced by pituitary gland and the hypothalamus during exercise, excitement, pain, consumption of spicy food and orgasm. Endorphins are routinely produced by runner's high, relaxation, acupuncture, breast feeding and inverted yoga postures. There are a number of naturally occurring narcotic substitutes for natural highs and pain control that occur in the brain and throughout the body. These include oxytocin, endorphins, and anandamide that are natural substitutes for morphine, marijuana, and other painkillers. Ironically Anandamide with the prefix of ananda, which translates "joy, bliss, delight", is a naturally occurring cannabinoid neurotransmitter. In keeping with the Buddhist saying, "pain is inevitable but suffering is a choice" one can choose joy supported by the body's own "bliss" hormones. Drugs such as heroin may be used as a substitute for close relationships. Addiction has been best treated by close relationships and a sense of community through the work of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. So there are biological and transformative harmony solutions to the opioid epidemic.

The number of addicts overwhelms the current system and there are too few healers. One encouraging sign is that prisons that house a high percentage of addicts are now being offered yoga and meditation in a never-increasing network from the yoga community. Most prisoners are not treated and allowed to have access to street drugs through their "underground" connections. The same attitude on the part of society still exist that people should have a choice to access alcohol and other drugs, prescribed and illicit. This creates a self-medicating society that

erodes the fabric of positive individual and social harmony. Buckminster Fuller put it eloquently, “When I was thirty-six I decided to stop drinking and start doing my own thinking.” Unwittingly many people are participating in slowing a positive planetary shift in consciousness by “dumbing themselves down” with drugs and alcohol, an “accepted drug” that destroys individual’s capacity to make use of this human body for transformative harmony.

The other major epidemic that thwarts transformative harmony that we must address are emotional and mental disharmony, such as depression and anxiety that often lead to abuse of prescribed and illicit drugs and/or alcohol. Depression suppresses endorphins and thiamin (immune hormone). McClelland (1985), at Harvard, conducted studies to demonstrate that how watching films of Mother Teresa caring for the poor of Calcutta boosted the immune system. Many replications of this study have demonstrated that observing positive and loving behaviour in others supports positive immune functioning. Perhaps this is further support for mirror neurons which not only create imitative behaviour and empathy but also change our chemistry in a healthy manner. Thus the alternative is to transform disharmony into obstacles (opportunities) that become helping forces in achieving our goal of transformative harmony. Many people with these problems of depression, anxiety and addictions have surmounted these “obstacles” and gone on to help others and become leaders in social reform.

## **Reframing Transformative Harmony**

Radical acceptance can transform suffering into joy and laughter. As a friend of mine said, “The older I get the funnier everything is.” Joining with children in imaginative play is good for our chemistry and soul. Letting others help you and making loving request are forms of service. “Live life as if everything is rigged in your favour” (Rumi). “Spiritual practice is transforming fearful love into fearless love” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti).

Last night as I was sleeping,  
I dreamt – marvelous error! –  
that I had a beehive here inside my heart.  
And the golden bees were making white combs  
and sweet honey from my old failures.

—Antonio Machado

## Conclusion

Love is the first point and the last point.

The psychobiology of cooperation has been presented here as a trilateral endeavour on a physical, mental and spiritual plane to achieve transformative harmony individually and collectively. This transformative harmony is a dynamic balance (prama) that serves the present time, place and people of the planet. This spirit of universalism expresses a love of all of creation—animate and inanimate. Om Shanti, Om Shanti, Om Shanti.

## References

- Avadhutika Anandamitra Acarya, 1986. *Neo-humanist Education: Education for a New World*, Ananda Marga Publications.
- Bussey, M. 2016. *Gurukula Networker A Reflection on the Neohumanist Summit*, Issue 42, p 6.
- Cozolino, L. 2006. *The neuroscience of Human Relationships: Attachment and the Developing Social Brain* by Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology, New york: W.W, Norton.
- McClelland, D. 1985. *Mother Teresa Film Stimulates Viewer's Immune System*, *VegetarianTimes*, October, p 10.
- Lipton, B.H. and Bhaerman, S. 2010. *Spontaneous Evolution: Our Positive Future (And a Way to Get There from Here)*: Hay House, CA.
- Ozaniec, Naomi. 1999. *Chakras for Beginners*. Hodder and Stoughton Educational, London. ISBN 0 340 62082 X.
- Pert, C. 1997. *Molecules of Emotions: The Science Behind Mind-Body Medicine*, Scribner.
- Prigogine, Ilya; Stengers, Isabelle. 1984. *Order out of Chaos: Man's new dialogue with nature*. Flamingo. ISBN 0-00-654115-1.
- Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. 1998 *Yoga Psychology*: Ananda Marga Publications.
- Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. 2010. *Yoga Sadhana: The Spiritual Practices of Yoga*, Ananda Marga Publications,.
- Sarkar, P.R. (1957) *A Guide to Human Conduct*, AnandaMarga Publications
- Ac. Shambhushivananda Avadhuta. 2016. *Gurukula Networker, NHE and the Layers of the Mind*, Issue 42, p 8,
- Len Wisneski, MP, FACP1 and Lucy Anderson, MSW (2005) *The Scientific Basis of Integrative Medicine Evid Based Complement Alternat Med*. 2005 Jun; 2(2):257–259. Published online Apr 13. doi:10.1093/ecam/neh079PMCID: PMC1142191



## CHAPTER 8

# Transformative Harmony

## Reflection on Ideas and Practices

*Meera Chakravorty*

Impressive and comprehensive accounts of various social movements bringing in transformative harmony have been subjected to many rational explanations and also have been described as potential game changers. What truth is, what life means, what morality and ethics require and justice demands are all different aspects of the same large question related to the transformative values. Great thinkers and reformers have contributed to the theories related to the issues of moral skepticism, literary and historical interpretation, free will, being good and living well, liberty, equality and law among many areas with much concern because what we think about any one of these must stand up eventually to any argument we find compelling about the rest. For years, the simple yet powerful ideas have posed relevant questions about history, future, political philosophy, social activism and now at this moment of conflict and struggle still remains open for new dimensions of reflection. For instance, the theory and practice of non-violence is a major transformative idea which has brought a fundamental shift to the social demography. For many of us in this part of the sub-continent, non-violence stretches back to the dawn of Indian philosophical thinking, through the age of the Upanishads, of Mahavira, and the Buddha to the Indian Independence struggle movement when finally the British colonial regime came to an end. It was when the South African struggle for the independence was going on and Nelson Mandela expressed that he was

impressed by non-violent means of resistance that it began to make sense to broad communities of people as the proper cause of justice.

The legacy of the Indian polity evidently shows how its earlier thinkers considered the concept of non-violence as a critical theory to work on, to help us understand a messy and complicated reality, the human behaviour and more importantly, to imagine and put into practice through it a profoundly transformational culture to bring about a more just world. Asserting a belief in non-violence could see one branded as a radical individual. The invocation of non-violence has a revolutionary rather than defeating moral (Bell 2011:33). Politics and governments are not arcane mysteries that only the experts and highest born can engage in. They are within the capacities of ordinary, non-expert people, who have the right to govern themselves. In fact, non-violence may, in view of this, be seen as a process that legitimised democracy and turned it from an abstract concept into a desirable form of modern governance. In the beginning, however, the belief of people in the practice of non-violence must have supposedly derived from the collective experience and wisdom of the community. But for non-violence to gain legitimacy in the actual governance, it also needed philosophical justification and the intellectual background to play its revolutionary role in politics in the world. Non-violent strategies, for instance, could experiment both with the projects of democracies and autocracies because it is the only critical and creative exploration of solution. But autocracy cannot experiment with non-violence since it is obsessed with causing miseries to people through violence and gets stuck with its violent power.

Therefore, in the context of Indian cultural history, non-violence has been treated as an obvious virtue, prior to its moderations in further conceptualisation. The ancient theories of governance in India made it almost mandatory to rulers except in some contexts specifically mentioned. It was thus accepted as a way of life in general and an important philosophical engagement in particular. In the modern times, society is trying to view it as an uncommon engagement as well as a radical practice which has also been taken up for serious studies by scholars across the social sciences and humanities. This is more so in democratic countries. However, for non-democratic, authoritarian governments non-violence continues to prove unsettling, not to say infuriating and 'flagrantly cosmopolitan' causing much distress. It has, therefore, become frivolous and suspect an idea in their regimes. Clearly, there are more ways than one, when one is ready to reason for seeking analysis by which non-violence is understood as stability, reliability and sustainability facilitating a democratic culture. It is interesting to note that people are accustomed to this usage with non-violence no doubt, but they are surprised to find that it is being associated with apparently different kind of connotations like 'happiness'.

This way of understanding in the wake of a critical thinking may not be so uncommon for those non-western religions and philosophies who address social and cultural factors influencing people to offer them a wealth of perspectives one of which is the traditions of saints, sufis and mystics who have emphasised time and again that simple facts, plain truth and the simple voice of nature structured around the individual's lived experiences brings in happiness. Hence, it is wiser to denounce complexity or ambiguity in reasoning and expression as evidence of falsity or manipulation coming uncomfortably close to the populist and vain speeches that delude people to an 'imaginary happy' zone till their delusion withers away. It is important to note in this context the impact of Protestantism with its long tradition of valuing simplicity and direct observation over elaborateness and higher reflection, the intellectual background to peoples' deceptively straightforward arguments, as also the other parallel tradition of the mystics who quite explicitly refrain from appreciating the age of reason as much as it appreciates the age of simple common sense evident in Kabir, Dadu and others (Kabir, Oral Tradition). This is not to tarnish the image of enlightenment rationalism, but to show that the intellectual tradition is concerned with its intrinsic fragility. Significant is the fact that when the complexity of a certain thought process proves unsettling causing particular distress disallowing a happy state of mind, such thought process, Ramakrishna Paramahansa repeatedly emphasises showing its frivolous nature, fails to engage a person with simple contentment ever and can even be harmful. Emphasising this view of his teacher, Swami Vivekananda says: "I was not born to create a new sect in this world, too full of sects already" (Vivekananda 1966:249). It is important to note that therefore practice of non-violent thought helps creating a simple and spontaneous state of mind.

Continuing the argument further, one can point out how our bizarre understanding of an idea can be very unsettling and harmful. It is for instance, almost taken for granted that the idea and practice of 'competition' in the modern times is inevitable at any cost. The presiding threat of 'unhappiness' created by competition pushes the individual to the edge suggesting to him/her that life is shaped by it. It is almost impossible to fathom what that means and this is what gives the crisis its peculiar character because it is simultaneously deeply disturbing and somehow remote. The conventional argument for the addiction to competition is that it facilitates merit and therefore is justified, since society will be happy only with merit in the job market. What this argument overlooks is that it effectively makes the case for viewing competition not as a cultural trait but as a 'product' of the market forces, something fundamentally shaped by that which ground and unground the employees of a company, for instance, including the upper hierarchy if it thinks they have not delivered in accordance with the demand of the market. This de-territorialisation creates chaos and violence incessantly. What



will be the happiness quotient of such people? There is plenty of evidence of cases when individuals and institutions often readily accept competition as the best tool for renewing their supposedly efficient workforce wishing that the laborious and unpredictable business will be provided with a solution or thinking it might give the particular company or the brand its edge over other corporate institutions. However, there is no guarantee of this at all. All a company possibly gets may be a puzzled response, especially during crisis not sounding a happy note with which it may only struggle to stop the world descending into chaos by periodically replacing the company CEOs.

If competition is not the solution to happiness and relaxation then what is it that explains the ability of the people to survive crisis, something which has been demonstrated time and again over the centuries. It is possible that the crucial advantage lies in being more flexible culturally and thus it is in this context that the culture of non-violence may provide us with various dimensions of transformative harmony. This transformative exploration is significant and possible as it takes the space that is better filled by hope and happiness allowing more important and interesting developments not just between governments but between people of different countries and cultures. The positive engagement of non-violence is as much important because of its persuasive way of tackling difficult questions and acting as mediator in situations including conflict zones as it is hard to accomplish the task at practical level since the subtle dynamics of a balancing act is always at stake. Cultural historians have reflected across time for a trajectory of non-violence in the Asian context, especially with reference to Japan and India, and understanding it through wide range of investigations from antiquity to modern age. The texts of Upanishads as also the philosophy of the Buddha, Mahavira and others continue to guide people to an archaic wisdom where the metaphor of non-violence and the practice of it are on an equal footing. Buddha's advice to king Bimbisara of Magadha, in this context, to negotiate with the rival kingdom of the Vajjis, is interesting to note. The practice of non-violence increasingly has shown that it has not only remained powerful metaphorically, but also has become absolutely inevitable to go through the terrains of domestic and foreign, urban and rural, legal and religious, medical and scientific and more. Or else, how is it that the members of a species as greedy, quarrelsome, egoistic and deceitful as ours still manage to continue to live together in societies in a relatively harmonious and orderly fashion?

Both as theory and as practice, non-violence has to be examined in relation to its objective determination by the development of culture. The orientation of the understanding that follows is broadly philosophical, nevertheless, the process of thinking through non-violent action is explicitly and implicitly formulated, contested and reformulated. While the practical aspects of non-violence may have

shown histories of uneven development shifting through the centuries tackling, for instance, entrenched racism or any other systematic exploitation of which many theorists have remained unaware the question of non-violence in the early records of the ancient Indian texts as a harmonising element is set in the premises that have governed the narrativisation of the then historical social context with highly idealistic emphasis and with the intention to canonise to locate spiritual principles within the social and political histories. But the question was reformulated in a way of which most sociologists remain unaware of is the impetus that came from social movements within other sorts of histories. One of the consequences of such developments is undoubtedly that it is in these other kinds of histories, that one comes across some of most profound insights which re-stated the concept of harmony in different terms developing new methods to address it. The philosophy and literature of the other histories belonging to Kabir, Raidas, Tulsidas and Vachana poets often called the marginalised, thoroughly examine the existing approaches of the institutionalised theses and bring in a discrete epochal shift to the understanding of harmony established through the discrete pieces of evidence in their poetry, songs and writing and also in similar works some of which are irretrievably lost (Kabir). These thinkers have asserted on the one hand a conceptual development and on the other continue to offer impetus to people for diverse relations with each other. This sense of mutual regard and faith has therefore not been just a case of 'altruism' but a way to demonstrate the extent to which human beings are genuinely disposed to bring in a harmony to the community and the society, to go beyond sectarianism for reasons other than self-interest. Considering the public appreciations for such endeavours minimal, the ability on the part of these thinkers to pursue such efforts needed perseverance, industry and determination amply evident in their way of living.

However, the issue of reconciling the perception of the traditional approach with the marginalised as also with the academic is indicative of a whole range of problems that are at once methodological and conceptual as well as political. For many of the academic approaches and preferences for 'High Canonicity' may not agree with the perceptions of the other histories which are located beyond 'isms' because equating these will perhaps be a way of domesticating the 'uncanonised' contents of the revolutionary expressions. It may not be therefore too far-fetched, in this context, to refer to the opinions of Julien Benda who in his *Treason of the Intellectuals*, mention the bias of 'political passion', 'class passion', and 'racial passion' which are according to him among the worst so that 'anti-semitism' and 'socialism' are said to be equally diabolical, while the working class who, even in the middle of the nineteenth century, felt only a scattered hostility for the opposing class are castigated because in Benda's own time (the 1920s) they formed a closely-woven fabric of hatred from one end of Europe to another (Ahmad 1992:169).

For Benda, intellectuals are eminently useful in making hegemony work, their unseemly participation in the perfection of political passions is what he thinks is despairingly the very essence of their contemporary mass sell-out (Said 1983:14-15). This issue is effectively treated by the uncanonised stream which shows how the non-mainstream concerns work beyond academic disciplines which can culturally transmit and spread in people a harmony provided that its carriers are more likely to be agent of transformative change a benefit for those with whom they interact.

The indigenous texts also reflect on the principles of harmony called as the *Purusharthas*, though not much solicited at the present time, these principles call for the transformative harmony keeping in view the concerns for social justice raising a fundamental debate about the permissible limits of creating disharmony, for instance, in governance, where the code of law called the *Dharmashastras* would necessarily intervene with any transgression since the beneficiaries of this dispensation are the people and the society. There can be no denying that these sources are most focused on any group or individuals on the question of maintaining a harmonious balance in the society through proper persuasion of these four principles of *Purusharthas* which are *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha* to achieve a level not of unrestrained material privileges. This is exactly where the dialogue for 'value priority for harmony' begins where the question of separating today's notion of market-crazy violent concerns holding on to its wealth from harmonious living is raised. Inevitably then, value priority of some kind continues to be the spectrum of the theoretical position from which these issues are raised. When compared with the nature of debate on the same issues today one can see how they have been characterised by a persistent emphasis to endorse a systematic guarantee of a continuous subject position with its own intellectual and political formation as well.

Important are the concerns of transformative harmony that can be traced in the other stream which has the source in the folk philosophy, like for instance, the Bauls of Bengal and similar folk or non-mainstream traditions. Areligious in nature such traditions have greatly augmented a harmonious change even in the metropolitan culture of materialism attempting to engage it with critical reflection on wealth's so-called 'eternity' aspect. In the Baul songs, there are evidences of this reflection creating the space for dialogue which has potentials of minimising the effect of today's cut-throat consumer culture that disorients people from their roots. The Baul's approach is ever a fundamental dissent writing its own history of choice unlike the choices dictated by wealth-oriented practices of the 'Mall-culture' which in the guise of 'family values' propagates consumerism violently. This power of consumers never confirms even the sense of self-achievement in individuals. Therefore, empowering them with any kind of values is always a far cry. Being inherently aggressive and violent in nature, it sets its own limitations for itself with

its own restricted space that it finds difficult to transgress. While analysing about it, one finds its structural inequality efficiently creating a disharmony leading to violence with terrible consequences which can erase individual and community value system absolutely as the disorientation of the individual and the society can be effectively put into practice by the project of consumerism.

The struggle for justice through peoples' movements though rarely gained the academic distinction helped to mobilise people for bringing in political actions affecting their lives however marginal that would be to begin with. Interestingly, the social and cultural emphasis of these movements over the years have facilitated its process of inclusion in the academic studies, as well as topics of impressive articles and serious dissertation. The environmental movements like Chipko, afforestation activities, water preservation and recycling, non-violent civil rights movements in different parts of the world, harnessing solar energy, anti-war demonstrations and many more have consistently involved people socially, culturally and politically to bring in transformations in the society. As scholars point out, it was in other words, mostly the 'survivors' of the movement who later became so successful in their profession.

Radicalism had been, for most of them, a state of mind, brought about by an intellectual identification with the revolutionary wave that had gripped so much of the world when they were truly young; of the day-to-day drudgeries of, say, a political party or a trade union they had been (and were to remain) largely innocent (Ahmad 1992:66). For instance, those who entered the political arena could necessarily obtain electoral endorsement. The peasant demonstrations, in Karnataka, sought to present their issues purporting to restrict also interpretations to the farmers' original intentions regarding mutated cotton or Brit-Brinjals, thus negotiating their way through to electoral success.

It is true that one has to be conscious of the transformative shifts that many a time have unusual way of affecting public life for worse or for good in a democratic system in which the margins are drawn to be followed by each of its weighty pillars like the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. However, in countries like UK and USA, the courts have sometimes felt able to characterise the constitutional debate about the permissible limits of judicial law-making in a democracy, where the law as declared by the Supreme Court would not necessarily have obtained legislature's/electoral endorsement. As Stephen Sedley observes, it is the judicial ideologues like Justice Scalia of the US Supreme Court as also Jonathan Sumption (a noted historian too), who are making law for all they are worth. Among many instances, they have recently made unsolicited use of a lawsuit about democratic representation in order to declare unconstitutional all legislative restrictions on corporate election funding. What can be said, as Sumption suggests, is that the

US, with a judicial power to strike down primary legislation, stands at one end of a spectrum of judicial interventionism. He cites Lord Justice Law's distinction of principle between 'macro-policy', which with rare exceptions is a matter for ministers and not for the courts, and policy as it affects individuals, which is the stuff of judicial review. But the principle, while 'never overtly rejected', is according to Sumption, not consistently applied: 'The tendency of the courts to intervene in the making of "macro-policy" has become more pronounced'. Indeed, 'many of the decisions of the courts (on fundamental rights) have edged towards a concept of fundamental law trumping even parliamentary legislation' (Sedley 2012:15).

We may miss what is essential about transformative harmony if we think about it in purely economic terms, so argues the rebellious poet reformers of the *Vachana* (a communication through verse or song) movement that occurred in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, southern India (Karnataka). Their rebellion against the monolithic hegemonic culture of the feudal kings finally brought an effective transformation in the lives of the people that sustains the impact continuously even now. These religious and areligious poets interestingly conceived of a way to help out people from both their material and spiritual bondages. Their perspective on 'Dasoha' translated as 'altruism' for the time being may be considered largely as a transformative principle has been affecting individual and community for decades. That their critique on mere 'charity' is a point not to be neglected needs a larger space for discussion. The reformers have devoted much of their thought to the aspects of human social organisation which is in a constant struggle between the supposedly incompatible spiritual and material interests. They pointed out the two-pronged emphasis of the feudalist materialist formations which exemplified unbridled exploitation of the people at large, therefore explored new methods with which to address this injustice by which people get alienated from real concerns bereft of any capacity for spiritual action. Far from being a mere charity Dasoha is set to demonstrate the extent to which people are genuinely disposed to co-operate with each other for reasons other than self-interest and to explain how such behaviour could evolve under the social conditions for the benefit of the society for which the individuals strive. It also submits itself to a sustaining question of how to deal with it. The question was effectively disposed of by the spiritual seekers who showed how dasoha can be a strategy that can be transmitted culturally enabling a veracity and a level of critical discourse. People often bear costs not only in spontaneous fitness but in material resources, discomfort, time and trouble for the sake of others even if they expect no return from them and have no engaging relationship with them. Studies have been devoted to establish how widely, how consistently and under what conditions people are willing to trust one another, to contribute voluntarily to the public good, and to refrain from pursuing rational self-interest to its logical limit.

The tradition mentioned above, of the non-mainstream culture is diametrically opposite in nature to the tradition of commodity production, its value rarely reaches the commodity producers with predominantly large scale productions bringing in the forms of commodity fetishism. In 1989, the CEOs of the largest four UK banks earned \$453,000, fifty times average UK householder income. These are striking inequalities. Yet by 2007, at the height of the financial sector boon, CEOs pay at the largest US banks had risen nearly tenfold to \$26 million, more than five hundred times US household income, while among the UK's banks it had risen by an almost identical factor to reach 4.3 million, 230 times UK household income in that year. How do we make sense of these salary increases? The continuing backlash against banking, as evidenced in popular protests as Wall Street and in the city of London, in a response not just to the fact that the world's poorer, as pre-crisis riches have turned to rags are being socialised. This disparity is nothing new. Neither, in the main, is it anyone's fault. For the most part of the financial crisis was not the result of individual wickedness or folly. It is not a story of pantomime villains and village idiots. Instead, the crisis reflected a failure of the entire system of financial sector governance (Haldane 2012:21).

This privilege of Capital-Romanticism though mediated by the system, obviously does not express the excruciating pain suffered by ordinary people far from bringing to them any remedy whatsoever. Lacking any transformative value, this system appears to have driven people to their deepest misery in a privacy that has been radically separated, in order to be understood, from the public and the political. It has sounded warning about its 'holding power' that could keep people at their desperately lowest miserable condition at a stretch or at a risk that they could 'get stuck' not knowing for how long. This attempt of a kind of formalist detachment from people deliberately posed by the hegemonic capitalist economy is the objective correlative of all other kinds of distracting cultural, social, spiritual lives of people eventually leading to the dislocations of their lives and concerns bringing a deep crisis. The dissent that can come at this juncture of transitional phase can promise to keep some sanity in the civilisation's structures also may pose a conceptual challenge because of its contradictory trends. Intrigued by the endless complications capitalist economy has offered so far, people ought to review more and more of these possibilities asking questions about what it means to be alive in such situations which will not only change their behaviour and the relationships with other people but also their own identities and freedom. If leading a simpler life, shunning commodity fetishism has the effect of offering though seemingly irrational trends and a hostility to capitalist attack against human values and rights, it is the moment people may like to associate with for an expression of their identities and development of their personalities probably 'a harmless and potentially useful exercise in self-reflection'. In this sense, then, this attempt



becomes a transformative one thwarting the displacement of the Self, needing to challenge the dominant threats in its own terms, and to fashion however limited it may be by constraints, shaping its own existence by minimising pains.

One of the interesting features of Transformative Harmony is its significance in the context of the migrants issue that is now going on for sometimes. The recent incidents of migrants from Syria and other places to the European countries when they were ousted out of their own countries as the conflict became unbearable for them, made the European countries at first a mere onlooker. In an interview, the famous historian Prof. Irfan Habib, mentioned recently that “The present migrant crisis was created when USA and European Union decided to bomb Libya, a prosperous country, and intervene in Syria, which had a modern, secular government. Even today US and its allies are arming Syrian rebels and rejecting peace settlements there while in Libya, they have let loose marauders of every hue. Europe is now reaping the harvest of its own leaders’ deeds. I cannot see how these streams can be stopped unless USA and EU give up plans to overthrow Syria’s government and agree to UN mandate for Libya” (Times of India 2015:10). The media showed reluctant European countries attempting to close its borders to migrants/refugees which they later relaxed after a toddler was shown dead on the beach and the image went viral condemning the apathy of the European nations. Now suddenly the political leaders of these nations appeared worried about how the interrelation between these refugees and their people is going to affect the socio-political and cultural scenario if the migrants are given asylum.

While these people who became refugees overnight also became simultaneously engaged in history with or without realisation of this fact, scholars may point out how this engagement with history may be understood differently. However, there is no doubt that this engagement is of much significance. Claude Levi Strauss (1908-2009), using his structural anthropology would perhaps have said in this context that since people of all cultures are ‘equitable’, the European nations need not bother so much about the impact the migrants are going to create. Strauss being influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure, conceptualised about ‘social structures’ and explained that people are not aware of the functioning of it in their day-to-day behaviour. He further explained that social relationships depend on the system of ‘exchange’, thus postulating three fundamental properties of the human mind: (i) people followed rules; (ii) reciprocity is the simplest way to create social relationships; (iii) a gift binds both giver and recipient in a continuing social relationships (Layton 1997:76). One may note that in their pursuit of implications these three do not appear to create a growing cultural suspicion if the refugees are allowed rehabilitation by the Euro-nations. On the other hand, this enables a bright perspective. The Euro-nations would soon find that to undertake the refugees as assets is to undertake their future wealth creation in many forms and

with harmony. We may recollect in this context how for instance the Africans who were once subjected to social boycott everywhere because of their skin colour, ultimately became the players in the mainstream culture of those very countries which had excommunicated them. The African sportsmen, to quote an example, bring laurels all the time to their host countries and no country can afford to deny the distinctions they increasingly bring home and the fact that they were treated as slaves once has become a matter of embarrassment continuously. Sports is an area quoted here to strengthen the argument, the other areas are equally enriched by the Africans and this process continue. It is therefore possible that the three 'fundamental properties' explained by Strauss are applicable to the context of migrants' issue that is prevalent now. Migrants are going to enrich their host countries with their rich history and culture. It may therefore be suggested that harmony is so much there for us to see, we just don't know how to find it.

It may not be out of context to point out how Swami Vivekananda's social service brought a transforming harmony by applying the principles of Vedanta. Appalled by the deep poverty and backwardness of the masses, he did his best to provide food and care to many people and pleaded further for their education. Through education comes faith in one's own self, he observed, we are horrible sinners, and our degradation is due to our calling women 'despicable worms', 'gateway to hell' and so forth. A society in which people enjoy full freedom from any kind of degradation, to realise truth, it's really free. That society is greatest, where the highest truths become practical. Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die (Vivekananda 1966:84-85). The whole life of society is the assertion of that one principle of freedom. All movements are the assertion of that one freedom. That voice has been heard by everyone, whether he knows it or not... We are all rushing towards freedom, we are all following that voice, whether we know it or not; as the children of the village were attracted by the music of the flute player, so we are all following the music of the voice without knowing (*ibid.*:126). Today we can hear the echo of this message looking at the tremendous struggle for freedom people are involved in, whether it is the struggle of Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar or by the people of Arab Spring or any other struggle it is not to reiterate that people are repressed but to show how they can redeem themselves off from the most violent, most delusional situations to achieve their goal and that they do not get lost in the void but can carry on with their journey to freedom.

## References

Ahmad, Aijaz. 1992. *In Theory*. Delhi: Oxford India.



- Bell, David A. 2011. "Simple Facts and Plain Truths." *London Review of Books*, 33(20):33-34.
- Haldane, Andrew. 2012. "The Doom Loop." London: LRB.
- Layton, Robert. 1997. *An Introduction to Theory of Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Said, Edward W. 1983. *The World, the Text and the Critique*. Cambridge, M.A. Harvard University Press.
- Sedley, Stephen. 2012. "Judicial Politics." London: LRB.
- Times of India. 2015. "Attempts on to Destroy Indian History—but History is not Mythology or Theology." Accessed from <https://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/the-interviews-blog/attempts-on-to-destroy-indian-history-but-historys-not-mythology-or-theology-irfan-habib/>.
- Vivekananda, Swami. 1966. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol.2. Calcutta: Advaita Ashram.

## CHAPTER 9

# Archaeology of Harmony

*Karl-Julius Reubke*

“Modern words are windows into the past” is a lesson I learned sixty years back from my beloved teacher Mario Carelli. Harmony is such a word. The idea of treating historical facts as archaeological remnants introduced into philosophical discourse by Foucault<sup>1</sup> has lately been extensively used by Agamben<sup>2</sup> explaining Greek words like ‘economy’. This approach thrilled me remembering the lesson of Carelli. The word harmony beguiles me into using a hobbyist’s version of Foucault/Agamben’s archaeological method for an illicit excavation.

Illicit because I am a Chemist and a dilettante in all sciences involved. Chemists evicted from their laboratory bench due to retirement regulations often turn their still vital energy to soft sciences like philosophy, art or writing to further “what mad pursuit” they had been following all their life<sup>3</sup>. They like to show their somewhat old-fashioned education<sup>4</sup>. There is also a slight protest in these writings. They dissent the modern strictly one-way regulation of sciences split into the largest possible number of chairs and research institutions. Dilettantes are people who thoroughly enjoy what they do without being paid for it. They are not only outmoded “dedicated followers of fashion<sup>5</sup>”; they also like to re-link fashionable with outdated lines of research. This attitude highly correlates with a longing for harmony which is often decried to be nostalgic.

The etymology of harmonia ~~अपुन्या~~ is exciting. It is related to the Sanskrit ~~अत~~ (rt) a participle, which became a word in itself already in Vedic times. The verbal root is ~~अर~~ (ar) “to set in motion”. As such the meaning is “fitting” or “the

right time”, e.g. for sacrifice. The Greek dictionary offers many words to translate harmonia, all expressing a sense of motion as well as of relation.

Meditating on the “soul” Aristotle tries to find a definition of harmony. His teacher Plato taught, according to Aristotle’s understanding, that the soul was something like Harmony<sup>6</sup>. Aristotle does not agree. Thomas Aquinas in his thorough commentary gently adjusts that Plato actually said that the soul was composed of some harmonic numbers, and therefore was a kind of harmony<sup>7</sup>. Aristotle does not mention numbers in this context. He declares **ἡμῶν ὁμοιωτικὴν κῆρυξιν καὶ συνθετικὴν ἀναμεικτικὴν εἶναι** (harmony is a mixture and a synthesis of opposites). He also admits “that harmony is a certain rational relation of mixed or composed elements”. The strong involvement of motion seems less important here.

For Aristotle, the relation of harmony and numbers remained a topic of meditation. I came across an interesting passage in his *Posterior Analytics* where he talks about sciences subordinated to other sciences and quotes as an obviously evident (!) example—**ἡ ἀρμονικὴ πρὸς ἀριθμητικὴν**—harmonics is subordinated to arithmetic”<sup>8</sup>. The two words “harmonika” and “arithmetike” are so close together that their consonance conjectures an etymological kinship. They can both be traced back to the ancient root “ar” mentioned above. Words stemming from this source followed different courses and some later derivatives of both or either are found in many languages. The preposition “pros” linking the two words in the text is revealing as well. It derives from a primal word found in Vedic Sanskrit as **प्रति** (prati). Used here with the accusative it expresses the nearness or the motion of the first item towards the second. Harmonics is close to or moves towards arithmetic.

Unfortunately, we don’t have any documents from Pythagoras. From all that has been written about his teachings, it is fairly safe to say that harmony and numbers were central to his worldview. In his understanding of a revolving cosmic order even opposites were kept in balance.

Fritz Schumacher, known for his book, *Small is Beautiful*, was or became in his lifetime a passionate gardener. “Somehow he had acquired some wheat that had been found in the tombs of the pharaohs, grains thousands of years old grown in the once fertile Sahara Desert. The ancient wheat grew but it was sterile. Fritz was astonished that after thousands of years there should still be life in the grain.”<sup>9</sup> Fritz did some “illicit excavation” and found there was life in the ancient seeds, they only lacked the power of generation.

Humanity evolved. Very few people deny the fact of evolution though there is much less consent about the actual implications of the process<sup>10</sup>. One such implication is that only by the disappearance or loss of some quality a new one is gained. Humanity like the individual cannot lose innocence twice, though it may

be a step-wise process. In the course of evolution, we all lost our innocence, the notion of harmony. The memory of it is still there. We understand harmony in some positive, sentimental way as living, being, working peacefully, happily and meaningfully together. We would like to establish more of this harmony. It is somehow the opposite of what we witness in our competitive everyday life where fairness, not harmony ranks highest.

Archaeological fragments, grains from an Egyptian urn, may carry some life, some fascinating information valuable and beautiful to the modern eye though they cannot generate a fertile future. Modernity, independent of how we define it, is the epoch of museums and exhibitions. This, I believe, is also true for words and expressions. By the archaeological approach, going back to the etymology and the use of words by the great men of the past, we may get some hint where to search for seeds yielding plenty of fertile fruits.

The understanding of harmony shifted at the time of Aristotle. It was the first step on the way of losing it. Whereas Plato used the term as his own, Aristotle mainly has it as a quote as in his "Ethik". There he mentions Heraclites teaching that "the most beautiful harmony results from opposites"<sup>11</sup>. In the two last books of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle is arguing intensively about the Pythagorean or Platonic idea of harmony and numbers. It sounds strange to modern ears how he is harping, e.g., about the special character of the number seven in relation to harmony (**ἑπτὰ μενφώνηενται, ἑπτὰ δὲ χορδαὶ ἁρμονίαι** ... seven are the vowels, seven chords to the harmony ...<sup>12</sup>). His science of harmony was not yet limited to music. It often seems natural, though, to translate harmonics by music as he mentions the "seven chords" of the harmony. In music a faint echo of the former splendour of this knowledge still resounds and is revived over the centuries. Aristotle knows that numbers have a real and individual quality. On the other hand, they do not have reality, as distinct entities. Thomas and later philosophers do not even comment on these chapters of the book which are really a kind of private meditation of the great old Greek philosopher difficult to understand.

When Johannes Kepler introduced his new views about our planetary system in the *Harmonices Mundi* he alluded to the ancient Egyptian vision of a world order. The meaning of harmony had now shifted to describe a working together of many parts in equilibrium as one unit. Ever since the age of enlightenment harmony became a keyword in this more or less vague sense used, e.g. by Leibnitz for his "pre-established harmony." The vision of an aesthetically, ethically and religiously well-functioning mode of cooperation survived.

It is fortunate that numbers lost their quality completely. They had to become the exponents of quantity, all of equal quality. Add one and you get the next. The value depends only on how many you put together. This was required for

the technical age to emerge. In the twentieth century numbers became even more powerful as they were expressed in the binary system losing their last shadow of individuality. When Shannon taught us to turn all information into easily transported commodities of ones and zeros<sup>13</sup> it has become near to impossible to talk about the individual quality of one, two, three or any number.

But, it would be a narrow understanding of evolution to believe that our forefathers were wrong only because they could not even dream of all the comfort and technical culture made possible by a different use of numbers. Aristotle has certainly a point where he states the obvious going together of the science of the qualities of numbers—because that quality is what worried him so much—and the science of harmony. He did not argue for a chair for either science. He argued that every different field of knowledge required a dedicated and adequate methodology. This is true even today. To define a science of harmony requires a specific methodology different from the one developed, e.g. mineralogy or natural science in general. We don't have such a science today. We don't even have an epistemology required to define scientific methodology other than experimental science. Such science is required to treat the quality of numbers. How to get there?

We probably cannot reuse the spoils of old and breathe new meaning into the notion of numbers. Nonetheless the moment we accept there is such individual quality in each numeral it may become an interesting field of research to find out where the knowledge of the right figure is helpful to understand, to order and cure a social process. There may be a scientific approach to learn where two is the best choice even if it is not an absolute necessity. People often complain that today there is a lot of brain directly converted into destructive action. The heart, it is said, is lacking. The head, the heart and the hands in a way make up the human. Where can a structured approach based on three essential qualities constituting a unity lead to a beneficial working together as a whole? To decide about "the essential quality of three" requires the knowledge why in this instance it is appropriate and where in some other field a fourfold, a fivefold or even a twelvefold structure is an arrangement with productive qualities. Arithmetic of qualities will evolve through understanding the appropriate proportions and relations in our living and working together. Implementing the constant internal movement within the differentiated numbers will establish a new harmony. This will be the meaningful advance to ever higher states of well-being.

Up to the time of enlightenment, harmony was discussed as pre-established. Today there is no such harmony. We cannot ask any God or divine being to give us back the lost understanding, the lost harmony. We are certainly free to create our own new harmony. This is possible if every individual is in harmony with the whole. It is a no steady-state, rather a continuous process of making things

better. Instead of one unmoved mover who might have set the whole world in motion, this is now the task of all individual humans. The condition for such a state we are striving for was most perfectly expressed by Rudolf Steiner: “Beneficial is merely if in the mirror of the soul of men the integral community is shaping and in the community is living the individual soul force.” This “shaping” has to do with finding the intrinsic quality of numbers.

According to Judaeo-Christian mythology, humanity started in paradise, which is believed to have been the place of most perfect harmony. As life became more interesting harmony got lost. Though we are not sure about the harmony in paradise we are pretty well aware of its loss today. As we not even believe in Paradise we cannot plan to return there. Our striving for a new state of harmonious social conviviality becomes easier, though, if we realise that there is still life in the ancient seeds of wisdom we unearth by archaeological methods. It will facilitate our belief in a new spiritual science required to give back quality where we ended up with mere quantities.

## Endnotes

1. Michel Foucault: “Archäologie des Wissens”, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 356, Frankfurt (1981)
2. Giorgio Agamben: “Opus Dei, Archäologie des Amts”, Fischer (2012), idem: Herrschaft und Herrlichkeit (Homo Sacer II.2) Suhrkamp (2010)
3. Francis Crick, *What Mad Pursuit – A Personal View of Scientific Discovery* Basic Books, New York (1988)
4. Francis Crick took the title of his book from John Keats famous *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.
5. Song by the Kinks (1966).
6. Aristoteles “Über die Seele, Griechisch-Deutsch” Felix Meiner, Hamburg (1995) 408a, 27ff
7. Thomas Aquinas, Corpus Thomisticum, “Sententia de anima” (<http://www.corpusthomisticum.org>) [86592] “quod Plato dixit quod anima erat composita ex numeris harmonicis, hi vero quod erat harmonia.”
8. Aristoteles: “Zweite Analytik, Griechisch-Deutsch” Felix Meiner, Hamburg (2011) 75b,16
9. Barbara Wood: “Alias Papa, A Life of Fritz Schumacher” Green Books (2011) p. 173
10. Daniel Quinn: “Ishmael”, Bantam (1992)
11. Aristoteles: “Die nikomachische Ethik”, Griechisch-Deutsch, Artemis and Winkler, Düsseldorf (2007).1155b “~~αὐτὸν εὐαριστῶν καὶ ἁπλοῦς ἀριθμῶν ... ἵππεδά~~

". This is the source for one of Heraclites 'Fragments'.

12. Aristoteles: "Metaphysik", Griechisch-Deutsch, Bücher VII-XIV, Felix Meiner, Hamburg (1991) 1093a13
13. Claude E. Shannon: "A Theory of Communication", (1948)

## CHAPTER 10

# Harmony is a Dynamic State of Being

*Henk de Weijer*

You don't get harmony  
when everybody  
sings the same notes.

— Doug Floyd

You are only afraid  
if you are not in harmony  
with yourself.

— Herman Hesse

### Introduction

Every year, on the evening of May 4, Dutch victims of World War II and later situations of war, are commemorated nationally on the Dam Square in Amsterdam, the capital of my native country. It is a commemoration from both local and national solidarity, dignified and in close harmony. About 20.000 people, among them survivors of persecution and imprisonment, the queen and other members of the royal family, representatives of the government, municipality, social organisations, general public, old and young, come together in silent remembrance. During WW II 'dignity' and 'harmony' were only words in the darkness of a closed dictionary.



How vulnerable is such a yearly meeting of people! During this ceremony in 2010, a mentally disturbed man unexpectedly started screaming during two minutes of complete silence. Around the area of the shouter, people panicked, saw another man with a small suitcase, cried: “A bomb!” and tried to run away from the point of suspected danger. Safety fences were run over, and 63 people got wounded. In the meantime, the screamer was caught, and the queen, who was led away during the simmering unrest, returned. The wave of unrest did not spread to all corners of the square but remained limited to a distance of about 30 meters from its centre, at which it came to a rest.

## **Cooperation and Harmony**

Also in 2013 I was aware of the ceremony, but only as a listener at a distance. The previous disturbance caused me to start thinking about the meaning and nature of harmony. It did not take long before I realised that any analysis of this subject could easily become academic, abstract and rather non-committal. Which questions can be asked after such a situation of obviously intended, yet broken harmony?

The word ‘harmony’ is being used, but what is the actual meaning of it? Under which circumstances is it born, what are its characteristics, when does it apply, how can it be maintained? In this essay, harmony in music or in visual arts will not be subject of investigation. That form of harmony is the result and expression of intrinsic levels of harmony in nature, society and individual beings or the lack of it.

Two definitions of the intrinsic nature of harmony, that is under consideration, can be used as a beginning. A first one is: “Pleasing or congruent arrangement of parts.” (Britannica 2011) and a second one: “Agreement in action, opinion, feeling.” (Britannica 2011) The first definition hints at the perception of an external state of balance between separate phenomena and both hint at an achieved state of balance after or during action. Something like, ‘a group of soldiers marching in perfect harmony’ and ‘a group of burglars performing an act of burglary.’ According to the first definition, also protons and electrons are operating in full harmony, but can this cooperation really be called harmony?

Although the two examples fit in with both definitions, something pinches: they may also fit in with a definition of ‘cooperation’ rather than ‘harmony.’ Cooperation is a deliberate and joint action, an association based on functionality. Cooperative actions originate either from negative motives, like fear and greed, or from positive and conscious decisions, like compassion and commitment. Protons and electrons do not possess such inner motives; they blindly follow the laws of nature. To attribute harmony or cooperation to protons or electrons would be anthropomorphic. Subatomic particles do not like or dislike what they are doing,

they have no conscience and cannot decide to follow the laws of nature or play creatively with them. Their action cannot even be called cooperation; it is purely mechanical. Harmony is a deeper commitment than functional cooperation and can only be attributed to conscious beings, not to subatomic particles.<sup>1</sup>

Zhang Jiahuan, a Chinese manager, had a functional use of cooperation and harmony in mind when she described the joining of two Chinese companies:

Huawei Symantec is just like a warship with a powerful engine, heavy armour and huge cannons. In addition to its large power, its engine constructed was based on local conditions and custom R&D<sup>2</sup> makes the whole ship move freely and flexibly. She hopes that the cooperation between the two parties can achieve harmony at a higher level. (Internet 2012a)

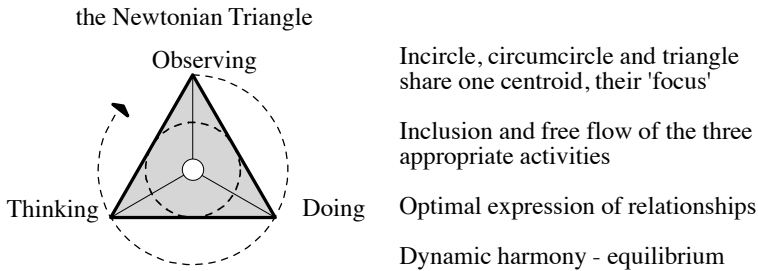
To avoid misunderstanding: both companies do not operate in the war industry, but in ICT. Zhang Jiahuan only hopes that functional cooperation will result in harmony, but obviously is not convinced that the functional cooperation is the result of harmony between the two companies. In other words, she does not consider harmony to be the primary catalyst that ultimately leads to cooperation. For her, cooperation is primary and harmony secondary.

All expressions of harmony are the result of an internal impetus. This impetus can be the adherence to a positive and natural flow of the moment; it can also be a conscious decision based on a deep understanding. 'In the afternoon, the children were playing in good harmony' and 'In order to establish a coherent society in harmony with nature, it is essential to promote a sustainable environment.' 'Playing in good harmony' does not find its basis in functionality, but in a positive attitude, in creativity, flow, alertness and an expanded state of mind. The second example suggests that we can choose to cooperate with or deny the flow of Nature. We, as human beings, have evolved from Nature, so our individual nature and the nature of Nature cannot be different. Nature follows its own nature; no one can change it. We, as conscious and rational beings, have some freedom to choose between a course of harmony or disharmony with Nature. This means, to observe and respect the nature of Nature and act accordingly. Descartes already concluded, "For 'tis not enough to have good faculties, but the principal is, to apply them well" (2013). In other words: harmony is not just silent observation. It is dynamic and includes action, action from an expanded state of mind.

## **Components of Action**

All complete actions rest on three legs: a physical, a mental and a reflective or

psycho-spiritual or component. A Newtonian triangle with three vertices, called *observing*, *thinking* and *doing* stands model for this (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Equilibrium.

These three legs of action can have different names:

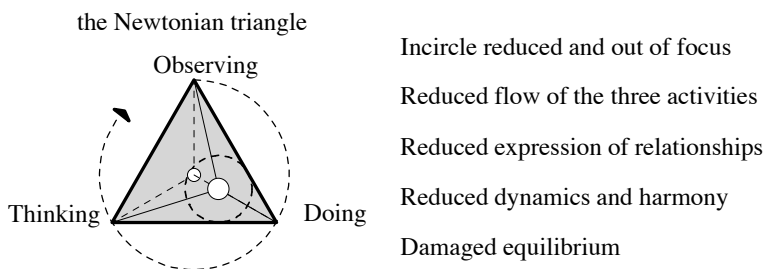
- In science: observing, analysing and empirical research.
- In architecture: considering a situation, designing and materialising. This applies both to the conceptual and the procedural phase.
- In social life: becoming aware of a situation, collecting evidence and social action.

In all three examples of action, an abstract phase precedes a concrete one and both phases include the three vertices, *observing*, *thinking* and *doing*. The order in which these three are applied is not essential. What does matter is, whether all three are equivalently involved or not.

An initiative to action by speculative thoughts, followed by research and analyses, will lead to a constructive outcome. An architect comes up with a study model or first concept, then analyses its connection with the program of requirements and demands and after that produces a more mature design. After appropriate thoughts are followed by an intuitive, conceptual idea that in turn causes adequate physical actions, a full round has reached completion.

Before a final concluding result will be achieved, many more rounds with a clockwise or anti-clockwise directional flow may be needed. If none of the three components is ignored or even neglected and all equally get the full opportunity of expression, their point of balance can be found in the centric of the triangle. If this is the case, the movement of the triangle is no longer held back by resistance and may continue forever. Such frictionless movement is a form of equilibrium, of dynamic balance.

If a group of people does not meet any negative resistance in its individual, social, economic and cultural way of life, its development is progressive. Those lucky people live in, what can be called '*dynamic harmony*'. If the impetus for movement is subtle and beneficial, such a society will show a harmonious development of progress and constant improvement. This '*dynamic harmony*' accepts all human beings as dignified individuals who are part of a social cycle and their natural environment; it will further all kinds of scientific and cultural expressions. As soon as the centre of balance shifts towards one of the sides of the triangle, the even flow of this dynamic action gets disturbed. As a consequence, also its product will be unbalanced (see Figure 2).

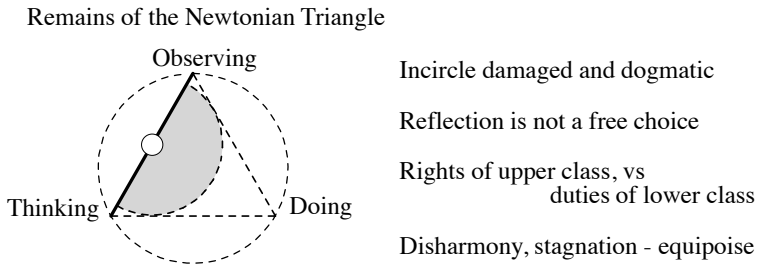


**Figure 2.** Distorted Equilibrium.

Actions that are the result of a rational approach, but do not include adequate overall reflection, are incomplete and dangerous. Suppose, in a conversation two persons have reached at a critical moment in their meeting and one of them expresses a strong emotion. In such a situation, it is essential that the other person remains able to analyse from a balanced state of mind. Depending on the outcome of that intention will a solution, or a new conflict, come out. The same applies to any educational methodology that is based on rationality and efficiency but lacks the feedback of a broader mind.

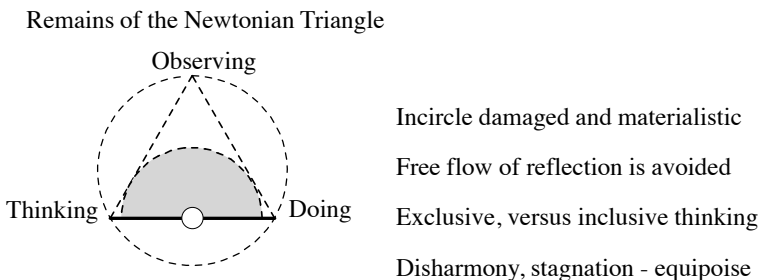
In the Middle Ages, the Scriptures were the only infallible authority and consequently all logic and "disputatio" (Störig 1976; Russell 1975) aimed to vindicate it. As a consequence, there was hardly any interest in facts and physical research. Lack of innovation in agriculture to increase food production, that was necessary to support the exploding population growth, caused an immense loss of lives. When, at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, also the pandemic of the Black Death broke out in Europe, medical knowledge could not understand its cause and consequently also not design a cure. By the year 1400, 25-50% of the European population had died (Internet 2013b).

If the centre of the initiating force is somewhere -so, centric or eccentric- on either side of the triangle, stagnancy is the characteristic, rather than balance. The name of such condition is 'equipoise' or 'static balance.' It is a state in which the free expression of the potential of a situation remains limited and suppressed<sup>3</sup> (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Elitist Equipoise

Maybe theoretically everyone will have equal rights, but no initiative will support a method to promote growth at any level. Such a period is a time of ignorance, dogma, and stagnancy and certainly not of benevolent nature. It is not a situation where cultural and scientific life will reach far and deep. In individual situations, expansion of mind, compassion and empathy will not blossom. An extreme static balance arises when people are only able to work like slaves for their survival and all other existential aspects find no expression (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Materialist Equipoise

## Individual and Social Pursuit

Earlier it was concluded that harmony arises from a comprehensive mind, a mind that is aware of its intrinsic nature. A mind that does not expand, may or may not follow a course of harmony. A decision to develop action towards harmony, may

arise inside one or two persons and inside one or more groups. The opposite may also occur: individual and social convictions do not run parallel or even oppose. In such a situation, flexibility and tolerance decide whether conflicts will arise or not. If administrative and social networks openly or covertly lack magnanimity of mind and tolerance, suffering will follow.

Limiting conventions and normative social behaviour are, in fact, mental and emotional forms of imprisonment. C.R. Das calls such narrow-minded cultural climate “typal-conventional harmony”<sup>4</sup> (Giri 2013). When Bêteille writes that both in Europe and India “there was harmony between the external conditions of life and socially accepted ideals of life”<sup>5</sup> (Giri 2013) it can be questioned whether the word ‘harmony’ needs to be translated here as ‘acceptance’, ‘tolerance’, ‘surrender’ or ‘submission’. If, in a certain society, harmony gets expression on all social levels, the administrative network will reflect such a mental state. Individual harmony can benefit from this and most likely will mirror and strengthen it. When, on the other hand, administrative, social and/or religious networks have adopted discrimination and suppression of various kinds, while individuals somehow have found a way to survive, it is a mockery to give this submission or tolerance names like ‘conventional’, ‘demonic’, “typal-conventional” or whatever shade of ‘harmony’. Why not call it what it is: ‘disharmony’? The word harmony describes a relation between two parties; it needs the active involvement of both but will only survive if one of the two at least does not oppose.

Individual harmony is a label that covers precious qualities. It is the result of a continuous enlargement of the mind and is capable of going with the flow of life. Another quality is being ready to serve and to continuously being aware of one’s deepest inner potential. Social harmony rests upon individual momentum and ultimately is the expression of cooperative endeavour. High-sounding words do not create it, and it cannot officially be declared, whether by a Chinese company or any government. Even if administrative and social networks are not conducive to social harmony, individual harmony is not impossible in the absolute sense. In such limiting circumstances, obstacles are many and few will be able to realise the highest and subtlest goal.

## **Disharmony as a Catalyst For Growth**

In daily life, harmony and disharmony often stand next to each other. If the origin of disharmony is on the macro level, individual actions will not be able to dissolve it. In that case, cooperation of enough people needs to come to the rescue. The opposite is also true: if the cause of disharmony is on the personal level, administrative action cannot solve it. Also in this case, cooperation will be helpful,

but this time close cooperation, directly around the individual, will be the solution. To overcome the limitations of the moment, family, friends or specialists may help a single person; but it is also possible that the concerned person will rise above personal disharmony by expanding his or her mind.

Disharmonies do not always merely function as obstacles; they can also be used as catalyst for individual or collective growth, although this does not happen automatically and by itself. A first step in such a constructive approach is to discover the origin of that disharmony by open and unbiased observation. When disharmony occurs on the social level, the second step will be to enlarge the circle of persons that are aware of it and have also become uneasy with it. A third step is the development of a strategy to overcome the state of disharmony. To end this disparity and disharmony, social action is inevitable.

A real and deep transformation of disharmony into harmony, whether on individual or social level, will only succeed if it is based on enlargement of mind. By nature, it is a non-violent approach, but it will be naive to think that opposition to it will also be non-violent in nature. Whatever the nature of opposition may be, the only attitude in this process of transformation with a lasting effect, is what Giri calls “Compassionate Confrontation” (Giri 2013:18). Will this externally applied force, have a positive effect? The answer will be ‘yes,’ provided it is guided by a subtle, internal transformation of individual minds, a constructive strategy and sufficient, focused energy. Such transformation is a positive struggle that includes the potential to grow in equipoise and equilibrium. A ‘compassionate confrontation’ does not have to be a priori without the application of force but must always be the very last resort.

Life is an endless series of situations with harmony and disharmony, so the struggle to overcome external and internal disharmony is long and complicated. Shri P.R. Starker even calls struggle “the essence of life” (Shri Anandamurti, date not known). As long as disharmony only has consequences on a personal level, anyone is free to accept it as a catalyst. In that case, a new harmony can be achieved between the ‘essence of life’ and a person’s essence. Disharmony and injustice on a social level should never be accepted.

## **Harmony, The Nature of Nature**

A last question remains: is harmony the acquired quality of an individual or is it an essential quality of Nature itself? Human beings are composed of three levels of existence, the physical, the intellectual/emotional and the spiritual. In between these three are the physico-psychic and the psycho-spiritual level respectively. According to Giri, Robert Bellah tells us that “while Japanese religion

is concerned with harmony - harmony among persons and harmony with nature - this is not static, but dynamic" (2013:16). This dynamic harmony will function on intellectual/emotional and psycho-spiritual levels. The 'transformative harmony' of Giri (2013:17) can be interpreted as a dynamic and compassionate impetus for the gradual transformation of any realised status quo of individuals into higher stages of Oneness.

However subtle this approach may be, it will not automatically lead to ultimate spiritual harmony. The nature of harmony is dualistic, so in spiritual harmony 'I' and 'Beyond I' unmistakably are in deep connection, but 'I' still occupies some individual, so separated, territory. Final realisation consists of complete surrender to and oneness, with the Existential 'Beyond I' which is not Nature, but the nature of Nature.

What are the most fundamental ingredients of mass and matter, subatomic particles, chemical and biological units? There can be no doubt that energy is an important ingredient of them all. Many different mechanical qualities of the different molecules in the chemical and biological hierarchy - on micro-level: Higgs bosons (Weijer 2012a), hadrons<sup>6</sup>, leptons<sup>7</sup>, atoms<sup>8</sup> (Weijer 2012b), molecules, organelles, cells or organisms and on macro-level: planets, stars, galaxies and clusters - can be explained, calculated and predicted by the energy they contain. But what causes and replicates new biological forms and what coordinates the functioning of mega molecules and biological units? What can be the cause of knowledge, creativity, intellect, intuition, tenderness, observational quality and awareness? Energy is a blind force; its main characteristic is movement, so a second ingredient needs to answer these questions and consciousness is a credible candidate (Weijer 2011).

In quantum physics, Schrödinger's model of the atom, also called the Cloud Model, describes particles as not moving waves. In this model, an unobserved particle is a superposition of many possibilities. The reduction of that superposition of many possibilities into a single one, is understood to be caused by consciousness<sup>9</sup> (Khalili 2003).

For such an important statement, a definition of consciousness is most essential. Two definitions can be mentioned here:

1. the quality or state of being aware, especially of something within oneself; and
2. the state or fact of being conscious of an external object, state, or fact (Britannica 2011).

Both definitions limit the vast potential of consciousness to a single, property of matter, like electromagnetism, temperature, weight or pressure. How can such a subordinate ingredient take a leading role in creative processes and reduce the time



of evolution, which at the moment is supposed to be controlled by randomness? An essential question comes up: is Consciousness cause or effect?

Aristotle (1999) distinguished between proximate and first matter of things. For example, the bars of a wooden bed are its 'proximate matter,' while the variety of wood is the 'ultimate matter' that these bars are made of. This ultimate matter of things has no intrinsic impulse for change. The cause of such change must be external. Natural objects, like plants and animals, on the other hand, do have such intrinsic impulse and their cause of changing forms must at least be partly internal. In Aristotle no questions arose about a possible relation between 'things' and 'natural objects' or about still more fundamental layers of matter inside 'ultimate matter.' He did analyse the causes of change and mentioned four, the material, the efficient, the formal and the final cause. At present physics only accepts the material and the efficient cause, while all arts, sociology, and psychology do accept the existence and role of energy in the two causes but also the existence of a catalyst for directed designs in the efficient cause.<sup>10</sup>

Indian philosophy shows examples of an approach in which Consciousness and Energy are accepted as the equivalent, but not superimposable, fundamental ingredients of the universe. Sant Gyaneshwar, (1271-1296 ACE) (2013) a philosopher from South India, described their equivalent relation as follows:

10

While He is sleeping,  
She gives birth to all that exists  
While She is sleeping  
He has no form at all.

15

Shiva and Shakti are one,  
Like air and the wind,  
Like gold and its lustre.

'He' or 'Shiva' refers to Consciousness and 'She' or 'Shakti' to Energy.

In his opus magnum '*Ananda Sutram*' Shri Anandamurti describes the role of and cooperation between what he sees as the two most fundamental principles of all phenomena, consciousness and energy. He mentions consciousness as the material and first efficient cause of objects and energy as the second efficient cause, the link between the material and the first efficient cause. Like Sant Gyaneshwar, he considers consciousness and energy as "an inalienable concomitance" (Anandamurti 1961).

If one side of the paper is removed,  
 Then the other side can no longer exist.  
 Similarly, *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are inseparably connected.  
 Let us take another example, milk.  
 Milk is inseparable from its whiteness.  
 If the whiteness is removed, milk is no longer milk.

— Anandamurti 1980

In this metaphor, *Puruṣa* can be interpreted as ‘Consciousness,’ and *Prakṛti* stands for ‘Energy’.

In both examples, Consciousness and Energy are not thought to be in dualistic opposition but, despite their individual identity, have a stronger bond than the word ‘harmony’ can express.<sup>11</sup> If Consciousness and Energy are the ultimate ingredients of the universe, it can only mean that all forms, whether quarks, atoms, cells, plants, animals, planets, stars, galaxies and clusters, as well as thoughts and minds, are nothing but their expression. They form the nature of Nature. The only conclusion that can be drawn now is that the very nature of human beings, individual or in groups, reflects the existential harmony of the Universe. The *sādhana* that Giri describes (2013) is the struggle to realise this truth and express it to the fullest.

How can the creation of individual islands of harmony, in a sea of chaos and disharmony, ever be accepted? If people want to live in a world that is based on deep humanism, live in a world that is based on deep humanism, their cooperation, in combination with a universal outlook, is essential and only natural. Deep organicism and deep humanism are closely linked. Deep organicism is “the recognition that all forms, whether inanimate, animate or subtle, are cohering, level-wise organised, systems that rest upon universal, gross and subtle laws”.<sup>12</sup> With Gregory Bateson (Bateson 2012) it agrees that all forms are deeply related and based on universal laws. Deep humanism can only include deep organicism since it also views the universe as a network of relations. Neohumanism, as coined by the Indian philosopher Shri P.R. Sarkar, elevates “humanism to universalism, the cult of love for all created beings of this universe” (Sarkar 1982).

Harmony is a fundamental characteristic of the universe, but we have approached ourselves, each other and the world in such a way that only few are aware of this reality. Everybody has the right to experience this harmony, so it is vital to step away from the ravages of industrial exploitation with its narrow-minded search for unlimited individual freedom and move forward with an empathic approach. Such increase in awareness will raise the level of expressed consciousness. The subsequent, equally increasing amounts of its qualities, -like patience, forgiveness, purity, benevolent intellect, deep knowledge, compassion and creativity-, will be conducive to overcome all occurring obstacles.

## Conclusion

Harmony is not just an intellectual thought, nor even a subtle state of mind. Action, and in particular balanced action, determines the achievement of harmony. In balanced action, three components will come to life: observing, thinking and doing. If all three equivalently contribute to the outcome of such action, the focus will be in the centre and a state of equilibrium will exist. The result of such approach will be balanced, progressive and benevolent for all and everything. Action to reach harmony occurs on personal, as well as social levels. One-sided immature action results in suffering. Suffering is not a variety of harmony but opposed to it. At the most suffering can be used as a catalyst towards harmony.

Consciousness and Energy are the fundamental ingredients of everything in the universe. The relation between these two can be best described by limitless cooperation and harmony. Spiritual harmony is the culmination of evolution towards syntropy.

All forms of harmony, whether on individual or social level, can only be realised by conscious efforts. It cannot be the privilege of anybody; it is the nature of Nature and the birth right of all. Sadhana is the continuous personal struggle to rise above all limitations, expand the mind and reach at a state of unity that mirrors the primordial harmony between consciousness and energy.

## Endnotes

1. In the course of evolution initially animals also act in mechanical, unconscious ways. The evolution towards conscious acting is gradual and exponential, yet initially slow. When amoebae exchange DNA, they do not act out of individual feelings of empathy, but in accordance with one or more universal biological laws of nature. Some higher animals probably also have feelings of empathy, although this has not yet been proven. Human beings do have this potential, although not everyone uses that ability in a conscious way.
2. R&D is an abbreviation of 'Research and Development.' It refers to a method to optimise the quality of new products, as well as the process of their production.
3. Equipose not only applies to the mirroring of past and present. It also applies to:
  - Human equipose: all human beings have the same 'weight,' the same importance, regardless of skin, religion, sex and sexual inclination, group caste, social class.
  - Equipose, the quality not to lose physical or mental balance.
4. Demonic harmony believes in easy and uncontested conformity from members because society, as well as individuals, treat each other as demons. It does not believe that either of them has a conscience. This is close to conventional harmony in society where to live in harmony, is to live within the lines and limits, drawn by

society. Building upon Sri Aurobindo, Das characterises such harmony as “typal-conventional” (see Giri 2013).

5. In both Europe and India in such conditions, there was harmony between the external conditions of life and socially accepted ideals of life.” See André Bêteille, *Harmonic and Social Systems*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1971.
6. Hadrons are subatomic particles composed of quarks. Six quarks and six anti-quarks exist.
7. Leptons are also subatomic particles. Electrons are the best known of the six leptons.
8. Atoms form the bridge between inanimate and animate structures. They can be considered to represent the fifth rudimental factor of Indian philosophy: *ksiti tattva* or solid factor. They are the end of the first or inanimate phase of evolution and the very beginning of the second, animate phase. the first phase of evolution includes the construction of all subatomic particles. The second phase is the evolution of atoms, ultimately in the complexity of biological units.
9. Many different interpretations of the reduction process exist, although not yet a final one.
10. Francis Bacon (1561-1621 ACE) was interested in the abstract and concrete reality. He knew the four causes of form that Aristotle mentioned and experienced how difficult it was to answer questions about abstract reality. In order to develop a footing so that at least the concrete reality could be examined, he made a split in the four causes. He attributed the material and efficient cause to physics; the formal and the final cause, on the other hand, to metaphysics. To this day, that split is maintained in Western thought, although two movements exist. The first movement denies nor confirms the existence of a subtle reality. The second movement denies its existence or, in addition, opposes it.

But how logical is that denial of subtle reality at all? If an architectural office develops a design for a Railway Station, not only the energy of the chief architect or the group of designers is what matters. Imagination, perseverance, persuasion and presentation, to mention a few subtle criteria, are at least as essential. It would seem that the Western world is not capable of developing an overarching model with a workable entanglement of the two realities. At the moment we live in a communicative world with R & D. What stops us from making optimal use of this and conducting a global research into usable models?

11. To get a picture of the relation between Energy and Consciousness the metaphor of a bar magnet with its dipolarity can be used. Both poles produce an electromagnetic field of attraction and repulsion. In bipolar neurons, axons and dendrites seemingly act indepen-dently and opposed, but in reality a fluent cooperation between the two exist. The cooperation of consciousness and energy is based on intelligence rather than mechanics, and this is a good reason to call it bipolarity, rather than dipolarity. Consciousness and Energy have their own identity; both are equivalent, and both seek expression. This desire for expression exerts a strong attractive force pull in the course of the time of this universe. The flow of these expressions is what is called evolution. Because the expression of consciousness needs a material basis, energy will

get first expression, after which a continuously increasing expression of consciousness evolves. Bipolarity not only works on macro level, but just as intensively on micro level.

12. Everything that has form is composed of elemental particles like quarks, photons and electrons. The first layer of composite particles has new qualities that are foreign to elementary particles. Molecules have properties beyond atoms, and cells in turn are equipped with a completely new set of qualities. Tissues, organs and organisms again are new identities with very specific new qualities. The structure of organisms, for instance, is a hierarchic set of levels that are organised in the form of a spatial network.

## References

- Al-Khalili, Jim. 2003. *Quantum: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
- Anandamurti, Shri. 1962. "Ananda Sutram", in *The Electronic Edition of the Works of P.R. Sarkar*. Ananda Nagar, P.O. Baglata: A.M.P.S (Central) - EE7.5, 2009.
- Anandamurti, Shri. Date not known. *The Interplay of Culture and civilisation*. Ananda Nagar, P.O. Baglata: A.M.P.S (Central)
- Anandamurti, Shri. 1980. *Vraja Kṛṣṇa and Vishuddha Advaitavada – 3 (Discourse 12)*. Ananda Nagar, P.O. Baglata: A.M.P.S (Central)
- Aristotle. 1999. *Physics* (translated by Robin Waterfield). New York: Oxford U. Press.
- Bateson, Gregory. 2012. *An Ecology of Mind- A Daughter's Portrait of Gregory Bateson*. Accessed on 10 May 2015, <http://www.anecologyofmind.com>.
- Descartes, René. 2013. *A Discourse on Method*. Project Gutenberg EBook.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate reference Suite*. 2011. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- Giri, Ananta. 2013. "Transformative Harmony." *Gandhi Marg*, April-June.
- Gyaneshwar, Sant. *Amritanubhava*. <<http://www.indiadinivine.org/audarya/shakti-sadhana/93496-ch-1-amritanubhava.html>> Accessed: 2015, May 10.
- Internet. 2012a. [http://www.huaweismantec.com/en/About\\_UsCompany\\_Publication/HS\\_Tech/2008/04/Home/Catalog200902/6148882569\\_0.htm](http://www.huaweismantec.com/en/About_UsCompany_Publication/HS_Tech/2008/04/Home/Catalog200902/6148882569_0.htm). Accessed: 2012, July14.
- Internet. 2013b. <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/plague.htm>>Accessed: 2013, May 8. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Death](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Death)>Accessed: 2013, May 8.
- Russell, Bertrand. 1975. *Geschiedenis der Westerse filosofie*. Wassenaar: Servire B.V. Uitgevers.
- Sarkar, Prabhat. 1982. "The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism", in *The Electronic Edition of the Works of P.R. Sarkar*. Ananda Nagar, P.O. Baglata: A.M.P.S (Central) - EE7.5, 2009.
- Störig, Hans. 1976. *Geschiedenis van de filosofie-1*. Utrecht/Antwerpen: Uitgeverij het Spectrum N.V.

- 
- Weijer de, Henk. 2011. *A New Ontological Model to Approach Evolution – part 1. BOMRIM*. Udaipur: vol. 3-nr.3.
- . 2012a. *Higgs Bosons and Microvita. BOMRIM*. Udaipur: vol. 4-nr.3.
- . 2012b. *A New Ontological Model to Approach Evolution – part 2. BOMRIM*, Udaipur: vol. 4-nr.1.



## CHAPTER 11

# Walking Towards Transformative Harmony

## A Meditation with Paul Ricoeur and Beyond

*Kuruvilla Pandikattu*

How do we transform ourselves and the larger society so that we can experience harmony within ourselves and with the rest of the universe? This is a meditative journey on human transformation and harmony based on some of the significant insights of the contemporary philosopher, Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005). Though we have drawn from the main insights of this great thinker, we have not consistently followed his line of thought in delineating a vision of transformative harmony.

In the first part, we see how Ricoeur (2005) situates the human existential situation of disharmony in the Adamic myth of fall. Here, based on the existential experience of the tragic, he looks at social inclusion and shared humanity as the transformative harmony that humans seek. Then we move to the next section, which forms the basis for such a harmony: recognising the other with respect, for which we base ourselves primarily on the excellent work of Michele Therese Kueter Peterson (2011). This takes us to proceeding section which looks at the collective story or shared narrative that makes transformation possible and harmony one of the deepest human yearnings. For this section, we are heavily dependent on the pioneering work of Samuel (2013) on Ricoeur. Finally, inspired by the work of



Kearney and Taylor (2011), we look at harmony using the metaphors of translation, hospitality, super-abundance and solicitude, key notions of Ricoeur (1977).

Following our reflection of Adamic fall, recognition as an experience and the possibility of shared stories, and based on the metaphors of translation and hospitality, fallible or frail human beings have to recognise that we cannot reach a point of pure, unmediated communion or engage in an absolute hospitable act that would avoid every misunderstanding. If such harmony (or hospitality) is impossible it will urge us to intensify and redouble our efforts to reach this impossible ideal of transformative harmony. Precisely therein lies our human grandeur! Thus our individual and collective journeying goes on, leading to deeper reflection, meaning and harmony.

## Harmony As Greater Social Inclusion and Shared Humanity

One thing that is striking throughout his writings is that Ricoeur always pleads for ever greater social inclusivity. For Ricoeur, inclusivity is of all selves, including the socially oppressed, is crucial. His writings offer a sense for the complex possibilities for open-ended social discourse that may create an ever more inclusively shared future in common. Selves are parts of distorted social systems; at the same time, these systems belong ultimately to selves. A reconciled social world would be one that is created by all those who participate in it at once, as opposed to one where the creative participation of some is practiced at the expense of that of others. It would consist in a kind of narrative unity of narrative unities, a story of human life together that included the stories of life together told by all. Such “an impossible possibility” (Wall 2005) arises only insofar as selves can have faith that as human beings they are ultimately capable of socially transformative creativity with one another.

## The Adamic Myth

Such a hope can in fact be symbolised, at least in part, from still a third reading of the Creation Mythology of Genesis. Here it becomes significant in a new way that there is more than one human being created in God's image: Adam and Eve as also, from the point of view of Genesis 1:27, “male and female” broadly. The myth imagines not just individuals before God but also different individuals in *Creation* and in the *Garden of Eden* together in a kind of primordial human community. It is true that this myth is itself distorted in Genesis 2 by Adam being said to have been created first and then Eve as his helper. But at the same time, and prior to this distortion, male and female also symbolise a still more primordial human life in common that is “very good” even in difference. Herein lies, indeed, an innocent

community in which, as we may interpret it, “it is not good that humankind [Adam] should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). In other religions, it is not just two ancestors but sometimes an entire host of ancestors who stand at this mythological origin. Mythology from this angle has the poetic power to open our imaginations up to the possibility that not only are selves or others singularly created like God but so also, ultimately, in social relations (Wall 2005).

These first persons are created with both primordial difference and commonality. Before the second story of creation and fall, they are affirmed to have been originally other yet living in harmony. The fall itself, which is absorbed later into history as we know it, subsequently raises the question of “shame” about difference and its need to cover over difference itself. The same difference of maleness and femaleness remains, but it is now experienced as divisive and alienating. Why such a fall should have taken place is just as inscrutable as why we fail to be happy or to love one another fully. It is equally a defeat of our own primordial human capabilities. But its result, from this new angle of social relations in common, is not just personal failure or disobedience of the other's command but humanity's joint guilt in community. “They hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8). This form of radical evil is not individual but collective, the sign of a fallen human community, of the loss of a primordial capability for participating in life in common in and through difference itself (Wall 2005:167).

In hiding themselves from each other from their Creator, the male and the female, paradoxically find a new commonality with each other. This fallen shared humanity emerges from at once having become more like God through a found knowledge of good and evil and having separated themselves from God in their shared shame. Human society before such a fall is “a commonality inclusive of difference, afterward a commonality merely of difference” (Wall 2005). What humanity is left within common after the actual fall is difference itself: “difference from each other experienced as difference from God” (*ibid.*). If all people share anything with each other in fallen history, from this mythological point of view, it is their common self-enslavement to separation. We know this in part because we can also stretch our imaginations, through such mythologies of created origins, in the direction of humanity's still more primordial difference in harmony. We can still imagine, however imperfectly, a primordial community created in common through the dark glass of our very fall. We sense that oppression is not our ultimate reality because we can begin to imagine, through the translucent veil of symbolism, what it is distorted from (*ibid.*).

## Primordially Shared Humanity

The story of Adam and Eve has of course been used for millennia, in all three of the Abrahamic religions grounded in it, for upholding patriarchal oppression itself. The interpretation goes that Eve was created second and sinned first, so woman must be the weaker and less God-like creature. Christian theologians all the way from Augustine to Calvin and beyond have been guilty of this pre-feminist reading of the text, and we would be deceiving ourselves if we did not see the original symbolism also expressing fundamental patriarchal beliefs. Of course, we need to remember that this problem is evident in all mythological, since myths are still human creations. But at least by reading the text as a myth, instead of merely a historical narrative (or, worse, an empirical truth), we can stretch our imaginations past its own “gendered essentialism”. Wall (2005) makes no effort to suggest, for example, that herein lies evidence for different gendered forms of social creativity—a male productive creativity through work, and a female reproductive creativity through child bearing. For the text, like the larger myth of creation in which it is embedded, is first of all about our primordially shared humanity.

## Recognition as the Identification with the Other

The human capacity to undergo a transformation of reflexive consciousness, and the correspondent transformation of one’s being, has to do with the moment of self-recognition. Following closely Michele Therese Kueter Petersen (2011:192-202), we can establish the groundwork for recognition, by explaining three steps in the form of a mini-phenomenology that is derived from Hegel (1977). Ricoeur presupposes such a step in his work on recognition. Here, we elaborate Ricoeur’s structure of recognition—identification, self-recognition, and mutual recognition. This structure provides us with a basic order for thinking about recognition, before moving to the next part of the narrative structure of human transformation and harmony.

Following Petersen (2011) we begin by elaborating the conceptual work of the moment of recognition, and how self-recognition works. According to her, Ricoeur pursues a threefold inquiry in his work on recognition. Identity, otherness, and a dialectic between that of recognition and misrecognition constitute what he refers to as *The Course of Recognition* (Ricoeur 2005).

That is, in the active voice we can recognise something, whether it be a person, an object, oneself, another, or one another. The passive voice has to do with what it is to be recognised; we seek to be recognised. I discuss, in turn, the three kinds of recognitions that constitute his structure, beginning with recognition as

identification. Within this structure, we trace some forms of recognition, in order to illustrate the concept of recognition.

Firstly, to identify is to establish a relationship involving the identity of one thing with another. When we identify something we distinguish it from some other thing. In order to identify we have to distinguish, and by distinguishing we are identifying. The first three forms of recognition below can be subsumed under the first kind of recognition in Ricoeur's structure, that of recognition as identification.

This form of recognition is the apprehension of sense manifold in intuition. Sensation is the domain of immediacy, which is not yet mediated by thought. We are given modifications of our own state through a series of sensations. Here we are mediating a manifold of sense impressions into a singular intuition or perception of an object. A perceptual object has to include a series of sensations, and with each of these sensations are properties.

The second form of recognition is the recognition of a concept in intuition, or the concept in perception. The German philosopher of Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant (1724-1802), tries to synthesise empiricism and rationalism. Similarly, he claims that knowledge is a synthesis of intuition and concept. On the one hand, there is intuition, a synthesized perception. On the other hand, we have concepts or notions of things. Knowledge is a justified synthesis between a concept and an intuition. Consider this example: I see something growing in my garden, and I say, "This is a flower." "This" denotes the sense perception, the intuition, and "a flower" is a concept. "Is" marks the synthesis that produces objectivity. The synthesis is performed by the transcendental imagination. With it, I recognise what I see in my garden as a flower. When I think "this is a flower," I subsume the sense perception under the concept. I want to note here what Ricoeur explains, "the unity of consciousness produces itself in the concept in order to recognise itself in it" (Peterson 2011; Ricoeur 2005:44). Thus we can unite the precept and concept in thought. The thought, as expressed in language, is either true or false. The truth or falsehood of the sentence must be determined by an independent act of verification.

Ricoeur says that change as well as temporalisation constitute the circumstances for the events of identification and recognition. As a result of change and temporality, recognition can turn to misrecognition, and beyond, to non-recognition. Change and temporality can accompany situations having to do with perception and recognition such that someone is unrecognisable. Or, it may be that someone, despite the lapse of years and much change in physical appearance, for example, is still recognisable. Ricoeur says, "the temporal distance that disappearance stretches and distends is integrated into such identity through the very grace of otherness.

Something escaping the continuity of our gaze for a time makes the reappearance of the same a small miracle” (Peterson 2011:194; Ricoeur 2005:65).

Further, lived experience provides an illustration of the threatening aspect about both change and time, which gives to the concept of recognition the emotional dimension. This idea is explored below in the third form of recognition.

Recognition of the other person over time is the third form of recognition. We can consider a case: We go to meet a friend at the airport whom we have not seen in a few years. As he steps off the airplane, we can say “There he is! I recognise him!” We may remark to our friend, “You look the same! You haven’t changed!” Ricoeur develops this understanding of recognition in the notions of idem-identity and ipse-identity, as previously mentioned. He writes of our idem-identity or sameness, which has to do with our temporality in terms of permanence over time in that we have physical bodies. We also have an ipse-identity, which has to do with temporality in terms of a constant, in that we possess character. Ipse has to do with a changing identity as the self is situated “with its historical condition.” Change or transformation happens, Ricoeur explains, although in a certain regard we have not changed (Ricoeur 2005:101).

Let’s consider once more the example of meeting our friend at the airport. This time, however, it has been twenty-five years since we last met. Our friend has undergone much life experience, and his appearance has changed, to be sure, with the graying of hair and the deep lines in the face; however, there are the familiar gestures and expressions, the facial features and definite personality traits that enable us to recognise this person once more as our dear friend.

Finally, in drawing from the work of Ricoeur (1984-1988) discusses the kind of recognition in which the reader is summoned in the reading to become a reader of herself. This occasion provides the opportunity for the reader to discern something in herself that perhaps never would have been able to be discerned were it not for the text. The truth lies in the very recognition on the part of the reader in herself about what it is that the text says. Without laying much emphasis on the six modes of recognition, we give a rough overview of the process of recognition below, with a view to affirm the other leading to transformative harmonious interaction.

## **Self-Recognition**

Ricoeur (2005) says that identity is still an issue when it comes to self-recognition. He adds that self-recognition has to do with the recognition that he or she is “capable” of many different accomplishments. Moreover, self-recognition requires the assistance of others. Ricoeur explains that “self-recognition...[is] found in the

unfolding of the figures of the “I can,” which together make up the portrait of the capable human being, its own space of meaning.”

The self as a capable human can recognise herself in her capabilities. To the “I can’t” he adds the unfolding of the temporality of the self with regard to the past memory, and the future promises, as what is a lived present discloses a double valence that includes presence as well as initiative. Memory and promises have to be considered together in the moment of self-recognition, which is the living present. Both memory and promises carry negative opposites that threaten them in their capacities as such, and constitute part of their meaning – forgetting accompanies memory, and betrayal accompanies promises. Further, these opposites help form their meaning insofar as when we remember we do not forget, and when we keep our promise to someone we do not break it. Finally, there is a connection between attestation and recognition, Ricoeur explains, in that when a person says, “I am confident that “I can, I attest to it, I recognise it” (Peterson 2011:196; Ricoeur 2005:250).

## **Mutual Recognition**

Once again, with mutual recognition there is, too, a question of identification. As Ricoeur (2005) explains, “Being-recognised, should it occur, would for everyone be to receive the full assurance of his or her identity, thanks to the recognition by others of each person’s range of capacities.” With mutual recognition, there is both a struggle waged against being misrecognised by others, as well as a struggle to be recognised by others. In the case of misrecognition, there is an original asymmetry between self and other, which the mutual reciprocity of the giving and receiving associated with the exchange of gifts, for example, cannot eliminate; Ricoeur calls this “a more subtle form of misrecognition that misrecognises itself.”

This asymmetry would like to be forgotten in the sheer happiness “of each other” (Ricoeur 2005:260). As Ricoeur elaborates, even in the celebratory exchange of gifts, the other is always inaccessible in terms of her alterity such that she, as other, remains unknown with regard to the “originary apprehension of the mineness of selfhood.”

Here the recognition has not to do with misrecognising someone, but with misrecognising that asymmetry in the relation between the two persons. This point is important to remember, as the dissymmetry serves as a reminder of the intrinsic value of each and every person who is utterly irreplaceable. Ricoeur says that while we can exchange gifts we cannot change places. The concept of mutuality is also protected from our conceiving of it in terms of something like a fusional union, as well. To keep a just distance in a relationship serves to integrate respect into the intimacy that is characteristic of the relationship.

## Recognition of the Self in the Other

Recognition of the self in the other is the another form of recognition, as proposed by Ricoeur. This kind of recognition has to do with mutual dependence. It is recognising the sameness and difference in the relationship between the self and other. A good example of this form of recognition is the master-slave relationship in Hegel's, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, whereby in dualistic thinking the master and slave are utterly different and can demonise one or the other (Hegel *et al.* 1977).

They both are, however, dependent on each other: Without the slave, the master cannot be the master, and without the master, the slave cannot be a slave. I would like to alter the terms used to characterise this relationship slightly, however, and consider it to be a relationship of friendship rather than a master and slave relationship. While it is true that one of these two selves appears to be domineering with regard to the extent to which the one asserts and maintains itself, this distinction depends ultimately on their essential identity. The truth is that the two selves are identical; this identity is the more comprehensive and perfect realisation of each self in the other. The accord is superior and more significant than any difference that exists. Even so, the contention and clash has to be experienced so that this effect is brought to the fore. Consciousness discovers its own self-existence in the other's self-existence. Hegel explains that both of them discover that they serve a mediating role for each other, "through which each mediates and unites itself with itself; and each is to itself and to the other an immediate self existing reality, which, at the same time, exists thus for itself only through this mediation" (Peterson 2011). And he says, "They recognise themselves as mutually recognising one another."

## The Otherness of the Other

The next form of recognition is the recognition of the otherness of the other. This recognition is significantly different from that of seeing the self in the other, because it involves recognition of the transcendence of the other. Levinas privileges a more radical alterity in the other. The "face of the other" summons us, elicits our response, and places a demand on us to extend hospitality in welcoming the other; the self as other is infinitely transcendent. His claim is not that the other is a formal inbreaking, but rather than the actual, witnessed, sensible, perceptive other has something specific to say. Specifically, the face of the other says "Thou shall not kill." We are absolutely convicted by the face of the other. The face is directly apprehended such that the other demands recognition in its otherness. It enjoins, arouses, and provokes responsibility for evil deeds. In recognition, there is the abjectness of the seeing of ourselves, and our own miserable deeds and fault in



the light of the other. We affirm the freedom of the other in letting the other be. We maintain self and freedom through encounter of the face of the other (cited in Peterson 2011:198-99).

Peterson (2011) remarks that Ricoeur brings in a difficult enigma here with regards to the work of Levinas. The writer-philosopher who is the third party to his work has to engage in a comparison between what are incomparables—the pole of the other and the pole of the “I.” There has to be justice among the incomparable ones, and justice is a comparison between these incomparable ones. In considering the original asymmetry between the other and the “I,” whichever pole it is that one starts from, the question is one of comparing incomparables, and therefore “of equalising them,” he notes. The point is that Levinas cannot coherently elevate otherness over sameness.

### **Recognition of the Divine in the Non-Divine**

The final form of recognition is theological recognition, or recognition of the divine in the non-divine. Theological recognition can be recognition of the divine in the human, or of the human in the divine. In the final chapter of *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Ricoeur discusses forgiveness. He says that forgiveness happens, and is the ground from on high of the way in which the admittance of wrongdoing emerges from the impenetrable profundity of the self (Peterson 2011:199; Ricoeur 2006:467). Forgiveness can signify seeing the divine in the non-divine, or “the being of God when God is not being God” (quoted in Peterson 2011:199). Forgiveness can signify that there is an infinite, mysterious depth to our humanity, and that we cannot definitively understand ourselves or others. Forgiveness can signify a rich and vast reality and points the way to that reality by teaching us to be open to its possibility. We can rethink this mystery in our felt knowledge of the experience of forgiveness, and assign theological meaning to it (Pandikattu 2009).

In the moment of self-recognition, the two movements, recognition of the self and other, and recognition of the other as other (the fourth and fifth forms of recognition), are important. To illustrate this point, I want to deviate slightly from Ricoeur’s structure; these forms, as we have seen, belong to mutual recognition. In considering just one side of the relationship in the discussion that follows, these forms will be considered as part of the moment of self-recognition. Imagine that while practising contemplative silence we remember a recent altercation we had with a friend that continues to weigh heavily on our minds. In a moment of frustration and impatience, our friend made a rash comment and said something hurtful. We experience a moment of illumination. In remembering and rethinking the lived experience, we recognise that immediately prior to that rash comment, we made a statement that could have been taken the wrong way. In truth, if it was



interpreted in the way that has occurred to us just now, it is a wonder that our friend remains our friend. In this moment, we recognise the vulnerability of our friend, but in acknowledging the vulnerability of the other, we also experience a moment of self-recognition in experiencing our own vulnerability in relationship as well. We understand at a new level how dependent we are on each other. We have made a connection between our insensitivity and the other by thinking the concept of fault: "We were insensitive, and we are to blame." Our friendship is strained—there is an awkwardness in our relationship now. We may feel unworthy.

### **Recognition and Harmony**

Recognition happens often in our lives. Thus, in the case of a friendship, we become aware that we can graciously extend the benefit of the doubt to the other, and speak words of forgiveness to clear the space between us. We also can recall all of the wonderful times we have spent together, and the possibilities we have in the future, which can serve as an impetus to speak words of forgiveness. There is a transformational quality of appropriating this moment of recognition in which we go beyond self-recognition and recognition of the other by opening up the space of hermeneutical activity for transformation. This space is the dimension of a new relationship that we have with ourselves and the other. In the example of friendship above, recognition of the self and other occurred in the moment in which we recognised our own vulnerability as well as the vulnerability of our friend. Recognition of the other as other occurred when we did not expect words from the other. The other was remembered in freedom. The transformational quality of the moment of recognition occurred in extending the benefit of the doubt, and for the sake of the sheer joy of friendship, we spoke words of forgiveness. Integral thinking is the hermeneutical expression of daily activities we rethink our relational realities in the light of our experience. In our consciousness of time, we can bring selected moments of interpretation to bear in this hermeneutical activity, including diatopical and multi-topical hermeneutics (Giri 2016), which deal with the challenges of cross-cultural dialogue and planetary conversations of our times. This space can become the origin of the new relationship that both we and other are brought into. A new relationship (relational reality) commences in self-recognition so that there is a transcendent possibility embedded in recognition. At the very least, the hope of community and being together is possible, or awareness of our being in being with others. Minimally, there is the transformation towards we, as we consider new motivations and intentions for acting, in relationship with others, and maximally towards the awareness of the wholeness of being and possibility of new being. There is a disclosure of a new possibility for the lighting process, i.e. the illuminating process. This process is not only the opening of intelligibility, but also is the appearance of something brought about in the world, and that appearance can be a

symbol of God. This is theological recognition. Moments of self-recognition open us to the possibility of transcendence in our relational realities and open up new and fresh ways of dwelling in the world. As Ricoeur explains, “An acceptance of a kind of companionship with misunderstanding, which goes with the ambiguities of an incomplete, open-ended life world, has to replace the fear of error” (Ricoeur 2005:255-258; Peterson 2011:202).

Such recognition starting from our own individual self-recognition and leading to the recognition of the Divine or Transcendence in the other enables us to walk with the other reverentially, respectfully and gently. Such a walk leads to transformation and harmony.

## **Storied Possibilities**

### **The Storied World in Which We Live**

After recognising the other, how are our lives changed or reshaped? How ought we to live? How do we transform our world and bring about harmony? As indicated by Nathaniel Samuel (2013), the noted American sociologist Robert Neelly Bellah (1927-2013) and his colleagues observe that the modern American psyche, equally applicable to the modern person today, is pervaded by an anxious search for moral integrity amid a burgeoning culture of individualism that values independence, self-reliance and pure undetermined choice above all else. These values have often proven to be morally unfulfilling, leading to a ‘win or lose,’ ‘sink or swim’ mentality that venerates strength and success while dismissing weakness and failure. The culture of individualism is revealing itself to be bankrupt at providing a vision of life that upholds personal freedom and agency, while at the same time safeguarding the intrinsic dignity of human beings and the indispensability of the common good (Samuel 2013).

One way of interpreting this existential angst is as revelatory of a yearning for deeper connectedness—a desire to not only foster the bonds of community, but even more profoundly, to be part of a transcending story and vision that gives meaning and direction to our limited existence (Pandikattu 2002). This role has traditionally been played by the foundational myths—both sacred and secular—of religion and civic society. However, unmoored from such narrative foundations in a secular age, modern democratic society has struggled to enunciate a common vision of the human good, and an alternative to the culture of radical self-reliance and individualism (Samuel 2013).

Bellah and companions help us recognise how morality and identity are shaped by the narrative world in which we live. By extending narrativity even to non-

textual forms, we can affirm that we live our stories in our daily practices and actions or our lived narratives (*ibid.*). This is elaborately treated by Ricoeur as we explore in the coming section.

### Paul Ricoeur and the Hermeneutics of Narrativity

In this background we can investigate how narratives function as mediators of meaning and self-understanding in conversation with Paul Ricoeur, whose hermeneutics of narrative is widely regarded as unsurpassed in its analytical depth and interdisciplinary applicability. Ricoeur almost exclusively focuses on the mediation of what he defines as the archetypal narrative form—literary text. By engaging the power of the reader's productive imagination to appropriate the world of the text, these artefacts make possible new life meanings and renewed understandings of self. However, we extend Ricoeur's model of narrative mediation beyond literary text to include the way that significant events, rituals and exemplar life stories also mediate meaning and understanding in life. These deserve consideration because they populate the narrative ethos within which human life unfolds. Moreover, as narratives engage human imagination and memory, they also must engage critical reasoning skills in order to resist any tendencies towards ideological distortion (*ibid.*:9-10).

Thus we can focus on the narrative hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur for a theoretical framework on the dynamics of narrativity. One of his significant theses is that narratives mediate human meaning and identity by structuring the temporal flow of existence into livable stories. Reality is structured as a meaningful world through the mediation of language, symbol and narrative (*ibid.*:59).

Ricoeur is also widely recognised as having produced the most comprehensive philosophy of narrative in contemporary scholarship. His flagship publications in the area are the three volumes of *Time and Narrative* in which he ruminates on the interrelationship between narrativity (as historical and fictional text) and temporality. He followed this with *Oneself as Another* in which he continued his exploration of the concept of narrative identity, and advanced the ethical consequences of his thesis in what he describes as his 'little ethics' (*ibid.*:60; Ricoeur 1992).

Paul Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics concerns the functioning of narratives. He is in general agreement that personal meaning and identity are constituted in the interpretive context of a community, society and tradition. The problem is we are seldom conscious of the stories of which we are a part. To a great extent, we are normally forgetful of the ethos into which we are socialised and which structures our daily ethical decisions. Ricoeur posits that human beings are in constant need

of self-interpretation, wherein life can be viewed with an introspective lens afforded by critical distance (Samuel 2013). Literary text is Ricoeur's privileged media that makes possible such distancing from everyday reality, through its capacity to compose (or plot) a virtual world that can be imaginatively engaged by readers.

We make more explicit this Ricoeurian dynamic of narrative mediation in what follows. We situate his narrative work within some key events in his life story and career. This biographical information is necessarily brief, but hopefully serves to indicate Ricoeur's personal investment in thinking through how narrative lends meaning and coherence to what he often called the *aporia* of human temporal existence. This will enable us to reflect on the narrative function leading to the 'capable' human beings as proposed by Ricoeur.

### **Ricoeur and Narrative Functionality and the Vision of the 'Capable' Man**

Richard Kearney, a prominent Ricoeur-scholar, describes with fondness how Ricoeur would often direct the following question to his students: "Where do you come from?" In asking this, Ricoeur sought to establish in the minds of his students the significance of context, experience and story in determining their questions, opinions and interpretations of reality.

Ricoeur's contribution to narrative theory can probably best be understood within the context of his hermeneutical philosophy, which advanced the inevitable mediating role that language played in human understanding in general, and self-understanding in particular. In direct opposition to the immediacy with which the Cartesian ego of modernity was theorised to know itself and the surrounding cosmos, the hermeneutical turn in philosophy posited that all understanding is mediated by a complex of signs, symbols and texts that comprise the semantics of language (Samuel 2013:64).

Ricoeur was thus led to thinking about narrative by way of its "remarkable features...as a distinct structure of language" (cited in Samuel 2013:64). Narratives achieve a unique *gestalt* of meaning that makes them more than the simple summation of sentences—just as the poetic configuration of metaphor engenders it with meaning that transcends literal readings. Moreover, literary narratives are open to an infinite number of imaginative variations in plot and character, which provide alternative visions of life. In the act of reading, a person's imagination and experience is engaged so that meaning may be recovered from the text that may in fact go beyond what the original author intended. Meaning, therefore, is a product of the dialectics of composition and reading; it is interpreted as the world of reader engages the world of text (*ibid.*:65).

It is important to note that Ricoeur's aim has never been to offer a comprehensive theory of narrative. Rather, as mentioned before, he sought to bring conceptual clarity and analytical precision to scholarship on how narrative function in the work of mediation, leaving the inquiry into narrative form or structure to literary theorists. Drawing from Aristotle, he couches narrative mediation as working through a process of mimesis, or creative imitation. An author draws from the material of everyday experience to create a virtual world that, far from duplicating reality, is rather a creative imitation (mimeses) by which a new vision of reality is born. Thus the capable human being may emerge.

## **Concluding Reflections: Sharing in the Suffering**

These concluding reflections enable us to walk with Ricoeur on the path of the ideally impossible hospitality and translation, which helps us visualise harmony as an ideal, what we need to struggle to realise in our midst. Then we journey through the morality of super-abundance and solicitude, which helps us to suffer in rather than suffer with the Other. Such a suffering is personally and socially transforming.

### **The Impossibility of Hospitality**

As we have already seen, "it is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Hosting the stranger is a formidable task. To open our lives to any guest is to allow our comfortable patterns of behaviour to be interrupted, at least for a time, as we attempt to provide a welcoming place for the other to dwell. But when it comes to hosting the stranger, who by definition is unfamiliar, enigmatic, and often a little disconcerting, we may wonder whether hospitality is possible at all. Is it possible to welcome the stranger into my life, world, culture and tradition without misinterpreting or offending her? If so, what would such hospitality involve? How might host and stranger enter into a relationship that isn't fraught with misunderstanding, resentment and discord, and that doesn't result in more suffering than it alleviates? Particularly when it comes to the difficult challenge of interreligious hospitality, how might it be possible for the world's religions to engage in an encounter that would be expansive and enriching rather than coercive and oppressive? (Kearney and Taylor 2011).

It seems that the primary obstacle to hosting the stranger is not that we are ignorant or disrespectful of traditions other than our own, and the main challenge is not to learn to preserve the unique character of those traditions. Rather, we believe our most important and difficult task is to come to terms with our limitations as hosts, and specifically with the fact that we are incapable of offering perfect hospitality to the stranger. We cannot reach a state of perfect justice or harmony

that would allow us to relate to our guest without offending him or violating his integrity as a stranger. Nor can we protect ourselves from the suffering that comes with being finite and fallible human beings rather than sovereign or omnipotent hosts. But the challenge is to acknowledge these limitations, to recognise that suffering and strife are inevitable, and to open the door anyway. We shall suggest that if we hope to become gracious hosts we must not avoid such suffering but must enter more fully into it by working through the risks and failures involved in hosting the stranger and allowing ourselves to become transformed by the encounter (*ibid.*).

Paul Ricoeur proposes that this transformative encounter can be best understood through the model of translating the stranger's world—symbols, narratives, rituals and practices—into my own world, and by allowing my life to be translated into his foreign idiom, I can learn to understand myself not as an autonomous ego but as one stranger among others. Through this translation process, and specifically through what Ricoeur refers to as a “work of mourning” whereby we surrender our desire for perfect or ideal hospitality, we can become capable of imperfect but real hospitality to the actual strangers that knock on our doors looking for food or shelter and asking to share our homes, lives, traditions, cultures and religions. Here some general reflections on the demands and difficulties of hosting the stranger may be appropriate.

Why is hosting the stranger so challenging? What leads certain thinkers to insist that such hospitality is not merely difficult but impossible? As ethical philosophers like Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida have reminded us, hospitality requires that we respect the stranger as other, which means that we must avoid reducing her to our own preferred categories of meaning. The stranger, in this view, is totally transcendent to us, “wholly other;” and therefore cannot be interpreted according to our familiar meanings and concepts. Derrida remarks that “hospitality requires that I open up my home ... to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other ... that I let them come, let them arrive ... without asking of them reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names” (*ibid.*:12). Hospitality, in other words, must leave the stranger a stranger.

But this creates a problem insofar as in order to treat the stranger with hospitality. I need to relate to him, approach him, speak to him and understand him. Indeed, if I am to welcome him into my home and attempt to provide for his needs, I must have some idea of what those needs are, of who he is, where he comes from, what he likes and dislikes, what food he eats and doesn't eat, not to mention what he considers sacred or offensive. And the converse is also true (*ibid.*).

## The Improbability of Translation

Similar to hospitality, there is another profound notion that we can explore: translation. The important point here is that this fecund exchange would be impossible had the translator succeeded in rendering a perfect translation. It is precisely the difference between the two, “an equivalence without identity” (*ibid.*:17) as Ricoeur puts it, which is responsible for the distance necessary for this productive interchange of possible meanings.

In other words, it is the translator's willingness to recognise her inability to reach out and capture the text without remainder that has allowed the two texts to enter into a creative partnership and to share with each other their unique cultural and semantic resources. By surrendering the “fantasy of perfect translation,” she finally comes to experience what Ricoeur refers to as the translator's “reward,” by which he means the “happiness associated with translating” and the “pleasure” that comes from gaining access to a new and irreducible” linguistic partner. This translation, moreover, has allowed the translator to experience her own language as well as equally strange and irreducible. Emphasising the importance of mediation by the foreign language, Ricoeur asks rhetorically: “[Without] the test of the foreign, would we be sensitive to the strangeness of our own language? Finally, without that test, would we not be in danger of shutting ourselves away in the sourness of a monologue, alone with our books?” (*ibid.*).

The foreign language has allowed us (translators) to see “our own language as one language among others,” to come to terms with the fact that there are only “peculiar” or specific, concrete languages that each lay claim to a particular, unique way of carving up the world, and which are therefore—through the creative exchange involved in translation—vitally important to the others as well. It may be helpful, at this point, to reflect briefly on how this translation paradigm relates to our general problem of hospitality to the stranger. Ricoeur's description of the translator's work of mourning can help us understand what is required of any host. Namely, and most importantly, we will have to come to terms with our limits and recognise that we are incapable of facilitating a perfectly harmonious and peaceful encounter. We will have to recognise that we cannot reach a point of pure, unmediated communion or engage in an absolute hospitable act that would avoid misunderstanding or offence. Such acts, Ricoeur tells us, are “pure fantasy,” and stem from a “desperate refusal of the human condition, which is that of multiplicity at all levels of existence” (*ibid.*). Thus perfect translation, just like perfect hospitality, is improbable and so we have to deal with imperfect translations in real life.

But if we follow Ricoeur rather than Derrida here, this recognition that such pure hospitality is impossible will lead us not to intensify and redouble our efforts to reach this impossible ideal, but to relinquish the desire and to opt instead for an



imperfect but genuine relationship to another real human being. In other words, “we must surrender one world in order to gain access to two, and in order to be able, finally, to affirm that two is better than one, and that it is not good for man to be alone” (*ibid.*).

## Logic of Superabundance or Economy of Gift

Finally Ricoeur attempts to mediate love and justice or between the “poetry of love” and the “prose of justice.” His aim is not the fusion or the amalgamation of the antagonists; not even the affirmation of their radical duality, which is elaborated by Dallmayr (2011).

As elaborated by Dallmayr (2011) there is “a third, difficult path” which allows the antagonists to remain in a state of “tension,” but which, precisely in and through this tension, encourages a mutual learning and rapprochement. In following this reflective path, Ricoeur takes up a biblical text: one in which the antagonists encounter each other in a mode of intense contestation and yet are closely linked or connected. The *Sermon on the Mount* as given by the Gospels of Mathew and Luke.

In a way, the entire theme of Ricoeur's lecture is here put to a final test. The passage in Luke's gospel is particularly eloquent and revealing. Following a series of blessings or benedictions addressed to a large crowd, Jesus says sharply: “But I say to you who hear me: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your shirt” (Luke 6:27-29). Almost abruptly and without preparation, this “new” command to love one's enemies is followed by the statement (a variation of the traditional “golden rule”): “And as you wish that people would do to you, do so also to them” (Luke 6:31).

Ricoeur wants to find out what exactly is happening here. Does not this mean to the new love command “imply a harsh disapproval of the golden rule?” And if the golden rule is chastised or put aside, does this not further imply a disapproval of the idea of justice itself? The cited passage in Luke's gospel, Ricoeur notes, must inevitably puzzle readers – especially to the extent that the golden rule is viewed as equivalent to, or a stand-in for, the “demand of justice”. His reflection at this point clearly moves into very difficult philosophical and theological terrain—a terrain requiring both caution and courage at every step. Mandalay notes that Ricoeur's dexterity in navigating this terrain becomes immediately evident when he characterises the new command (to love one's enemies) as a “supra-ethical” demand: a demand operating under the auspices of a higher “economy of the gift” (*économie du don*) and of a “logic of super-abundance” (Dallmayr 2011:14).



In contrast to the “logic of super-abundance” there stands the “logic of equivalence” or the logic of the golden mean. It is nearly impossible to reconcile these two. So the emergence of “economy of the gift” (*ibid.*:15).

What supporters of the gift economy find defective in the traditional notion of justice is the aspect of reciprocity and mutuality, the principle of equality or symmetry governing the transaction of giving and taking. Pushed to their logical consequence—and not all supporters are willing to go that far—both justice and the golden rule are ethically devalued and equated with a mode of instrumental rationality, with a calculation of costs and benefits ultimately reducible to the formula “do ut des” (where giving occurs solely for the sake of receiving). By contrast, giving or the gift (*le don*) is presented as an expression of pure altruism, as a sign of asymmetrical renunciation and even self-sacrifice or self-surrender (to the “other”). Viewed in this manner, the opposition between the two “logics” appears irremediable: between pure self-love and self-surrender no common ground can be found (*ibid.*). Ricoeur is fully aware of this dilemma and of the obstacle it places on his “third path.” Through one-sided celebrations of the logic of super-abundance, he notes, “the golden rule has become suspect” and even an object of scorn, and the same suspicion extends to principles of social justice and corollary social practices.

As argued by Dallmayer (2011), Ricoeur is mainly concerned about imbalance or the tendency to sacrifice one “logic” in favour of another. Basically, he is quite ready to embrace the economy or “theology of the gift”, provided that theology does not require him to abandon the demands of social justice and social responsibility. He indicates in many ways to his fondness for gift-giving and super-abundance without negating social responsibility. What he does not embrace is a certain morality of give and take or equivalence.

And here Ricoeur observes: “What kind of penal code or what legal order (*regle de justice*) could possibly be derived from a maxim of conduct which erects non-equivalence into a general principle? What distribution of functions, roles, advantages and disadvantages reflecting distributive justice could be implemented if the axiom of lending or giving without return would become the general norm?” (*ibid.*).

Without abandoning the “new” (and higher) love command, Ricoeur aims precisely at its reconciliation with social reciprocity and mutual respect: “If it is not to degenerate into immorality, the hyper-morality (of super-abundance) must accord with the kind of morality which is announced in the golden rule” and formalised in the idea of justice (*ibid.*:16).

In the meantime, the tensional relationship between justice and generosity requires continuous attention and negotiation. Ricoeur also points to some hopeful devices for managing this relation and preventing a harmful rupture.

Unfortunately, Western thought has been dominated by calculating cleverness or "enlightened" self-interest, at the expense of the demands of ethical generosity. In the end, it may be that in an attempt to obviate this danger Ricoeur—without abandoning Aristotelian prudence—prefers to place emphasis on the dimension of super-abundance and the gift, stating: "I would say that the effort to introduce step-wise, but persistently additional degrees of compassion and generosity into all our legal codes—from penal to welfare codes—constitutes an entirely reasonable task, though one that is difficult and interminable" (*ibid.*:18).

### **Solicitude: Sharing in the Suffering of the Other**

This morality of super-abundance gives birth to a sharing in more than with Ricoeur's notion of sharing in the suffering of the other, which takes us to Ricoeur's rich notion of solicitude.

As noted by Dierckxsens, it is a term closely related to the idea of desire, which may not be understood as desire for otherness (Dierckxsens 2016). In fact, Ricoeur's idea of solicitude is closely related to the notion of obligation towards the other, and in this sense is at odds with desire, as elaborated in his *Oneself as Other* (Ricoeur 1992).

Solicitude in Ricoeur's understanding is spontaneous and therefore not merely a response to an obligation, norm or rule. In Ricoeur's view, care or solicitude is the spontaneous recognition of the suffering of another in true sympathy or compassion for that suffering. Solicitude "occurs, originating in the suffering other". So "Being confronted with the suffering other, the self [...] gives his sympathy, his compassion, these terms taken in the strong sense of the wish to share someone else's pain. [...] In true sympathy, the self [...] finds itself affected [...]. For it is indeed feelings that are revealed in the self by the other's suffering [...], feelings spontaneously directed towards others. This intimate union between the ethical aim of solicitude and the affective flesh of feelings seems to me to justify the choice of the term 'solicitude' (*ibid.*:191-192).

To share in the suffering of the affected is not simply "a dreary duty" according to Ricoeur. Therefore, solicitude does not entail merely acting according to the Golden Rule that obligates justice. Rather than expressing the idea that we recognise justice as the result of the recognition of a norm, rule or obligation, Ricoeur's idea of solicitude expresses the sense of justice proper to compassion. To be sure, solicitude introduces equality into the relation between self and other insofar as it implies the sharing of another's suffering in compassion. For Ricoeur, true compassion means "[b]eing confronted with the suffering of other," and suffering with the other in "the strong sense" of sharing "someone else's pain" (Dierckxsens 2016). In Ricoeur's line of reasoning, solicitude should thus be understood in the original sense of the

word, as caring, in terms of being anxious about the suffering of the other. Thus, solicitude, for Ricoeur, is a sharing in another's suffering, which implies a sense of justice, or the feeling that the suffering of another is unjust, distressing, "too much to support;" hence, the feelings of sharing in another's suffering, as if this sharing would introduce equality into an unbalanced relationship. In Ricoeur's line of reasoning, solicitude is the spontaneous recognition that the suffering other is in need of justice.

Given that solicitude for Ricoeur is the spontaneous recognition of justice for others, it conflicts with Aristotle's idea of equality as mutual desire. Certainly, Ricoeur does not ignore the fact that Aristotle's idea of mutual desire is also closely related to justice. As Ricoeur explains, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle and Thomson 1976), Aristotle makes his famous distinction between three kinds of friendship: friendship for the sake of the "good" of the beloved, friendship for the sake of "utility," and friendship for the sake of "pleasure" (Dierckxsens 2016). It is the first kind of friendship that is closest to justice insofar as friends equally desire the good for each other. Furthermore, as Ricoeur points out, even if friendship is essentially self-love or "philautia" in Aristotle's definition, in the sense that "one must love oneself in order to love someone else," Aristotle's idea of true friendship for the sake of the good is not egoistic. To be more precise, following Ricoeur's line of reasoning, in Aristotle's idea of true friendship, the friend is not a means to be used to one's own advantage, as is the case in friendship out of utility and in friendship out of pleasure. Rather, according to Aristotle's idea of true friendship, the friend as such is desired (*ibid.*).

Such a genuine friendship and consequent solicitude are transformative, establishing lasting harmony and peace in the larger society. From the various existential and Ricoeurian perspectives we have explored, transformation may be real. But harmony remains an ideal, for which we must redouble our efforts to arrive at this almost impossible ideal! It is a long, arduous and fruitful walking together!

## References

- Aristotle and James Alexander Kerr Thomson. 1976. *Ethics: the Nicomachean Ethics*. Harmondsworth, Eng: Penguin.
- Bouma-Prediger, Steven and Brian J. Walsh. 2008. *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.
- Campbell, Joseph and Bill D. Moyers. 1988. *The Power of Myth*, 1st ed. New York: Doubleday.

- Crites, Stephen. 1986. "Storytime: Recollecting the Past and Projecting the Future," in Theodore R. Sarbin (ed.), *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*. New York: Praeger.
- Dallmayr, Fred. 2011. "Love and Justice: A Memorial Tribute to Paul Ricoeur," in Farhang Erfani (ed.), *Paul Ricoeur: Honoring and Continuing the Work*, pp. 5-20. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Dierckxsens, Geoffrey. 2016. "Otherness and Desire in Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics of the Self." *WordPress*. Accessed May 17. <https://revistauotramargem.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/8-n1-dierckxsens.pdf>.
- Frankl, Viktor E. 1963. *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 1969. *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*. New York: World Pub. Co.
- Giri, Anantha Kumar. 2016. "With and Beyond Epistemologies of the South: Ontological Epistemology of Participation and Multi-Topical Hermeneutics." National Institute of Advanced Studies, March 23. <http://nias.res.in/event/public-lecture-%E2%80%9Cand-beyond-epistemologies-south-ontological-epistemology-participation-and>.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, Arnold V. Miller and J. N. Findlay. 1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Kearney, Richard. 2011. "Owl of Minerva Takes Flight: Obituary for Paul Ricoeur," in Farhang Erfani (ed.), *Paul Ricoeur: Honoring and Continuing the Work*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Kearney, Richard and James Taylor. 2011. *Hosting the Stranger : Between Religions*. New York: Continuum.
- Pandikattu, K. 2002. *Tamas (There Are Many Alternative Stories)*. World-Web-Life, Mumbai.
- . 2009. "The Depth of Fault, the Height of Forgiveness: Phenomenological Reflections on Paul Ricoeur's Incomplete History", in E.K. Alam (ed.), *Christianity, Culture and Contemporary World: Challenges and New Paradigms – Reflections on International Catholic Thinkers in Honor of George Francis Mclean on the Occasion of His 80th Birthday*, pp. 87-100. Louaize (Lebanon): Notre Dame University.
- Petersen, Michele Therese Kueter. 2011. *A Hermeneutics of Contemplative Silence: Paul Ricoeur and the Heart of Meaning*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Iowa, and Department of Religious Studies. <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/1494>.
- Reagan, E. 1996. *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1977. *The Rule of Metaphor*, (translated by Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello). London and New York: Routledge.
- . 1984-88. *Time and Narrative*, volume 3, (translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- . 1992. *Oneself as Another*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- 
- . 1995. "Intellectual Autobiography," in Lewis Edwin Hahn (ed.), *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. The Library of Living Philosophers*. Chicago: Open Court.
- . 2005. *The Course of Recognition*, (translated by David Pellauer). Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.
- . 2006. *Memory, History, Forgetting*, (translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer). Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Ricoeur, Paul and Oswald Bayer. 1990. *Liebe und Gerechtigkeit: [Lucas-Preis 1989] = Amour et justice*. Tübingen: Mohr.
- Samuel, Nathaniel Girard. 2013. *Story-Making: A Narrative Pedagogy For Transformative Christian Faith*. Boston College. <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/3403>.
- Taylor, Charles. 2007. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Wall, John. 2005. *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricoeur and the Poetics of Possibility, A Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

## CHAPTER 12

### From Unity to Harmony

#### Raimon Panikkar's Advaitic Trinitarianism

*Anthony Savari Raj*

#### Introduction

This chapter<sup>1</sup> would like to be a small contribution to the dialogue of cultures which indeed has become imperative of our times. It focuses on the contribution of Raimon Panikkar who delves deeply into the central insight of Advaita, of course from his Hindu-Christian background, and restates it in contemporary terms offering it as a spirituality for contemplation and action. His reclamation, reappropriation and reinterpretation of advaita, I believe, certainly offer valuable insights into the question of social and religious harmony, both in *theoria* and in *praxis*.

A word on unity and harmony becomes crucial here. Unity may contribute to harmony, but it need not necessarily be equated with harmony. A monolithic unity may have the temptation towards a colonial mentality which believes that we can express the totality of the human experience through a single form, notwithstanding all its positive intentions and results. It may even elicit the opposite reaction of a cultural apartheid which upholds a radical diversity that renders unity only as a dream. Harmony charts a middle way. Harmony implies the journey of the many

towards the one without ceasing to be different. Avoiding 'solipsism' without falling into 'colonialism', overcoming 'monism' without falling into 'dualism', therefore, seems to constitute the experience of harmony.

By way of elucidation of the same, the chapter proceeds in three parts:

1. The first part spells out 'the context' of a Christian interpretation of the advaitic intuition.
2. The second contains 'the text' of such a response.
3. The third, which may be called as 'the texture', indicates a contemporary challenge that the advaitic vision in general, and its Christian interpretation in particular, have to face. Here Raimon Panikkar's *Advaitic Trinitarianism* becomes exemplary. Among other things, it indeed signals a required passage from a monistic unity to a trinitarian harmony.

## The Context

Let me begin by pointing out a renewed understanding that is beginning to take place in our times in what it means to be a "Christian."

The word 'Christian' can describe the content of Christendom (a civilisation), of Christianity (a religion) and of Christianness (a personal religious attitude).

During the epoch of the so-called Christian culture of the High Middle Ages, one could hardly be a Christian without belonging to Christendom. And until recently, one could hardly confess being a Christian without belonging to Christianity.

But today, of course, due to several factors, especially due to a cross-cultural human situation, people have more chance of being Christian by maintaining a personal attitude, without depending on Christendom or Christianity with their respective institutional structures (Panikkar 1995).

Of course, I am referring to a personal attitude of contingency and humility on the one hand and a greater openness to embrace, complement, clarify, deepen and even get corrected by the insights and contributions of other religious traditions of the world.<sup>2</sup>

This is because Christians today are faced with an unavoidable question: can one be an authentic Christian, that is, can one live the depth and plenitude of the Christian message, and at the same time, make room in oneself for other religions without assigning to them a secondary role? (Raj 2002).

Perhaps it's a question of seeing in the other a *stimulus* to deepen one's own beliefs, marked of course by an emerging conviction that in our contemporary cross-cultural human situation, no single culture, religion, world-view or person is all sufficient to face—let alone solve—any of our contemporary human predicaments.

It is in this backdrop of this contemporary cross-cultural and inter-religious climate, I would like to situate the recent encounters between Christianity and Vedanta in our Indian soil. And for the moment I can do no more than merely recall and indicate just the names of the pioneers in this enterprise of dialogue.

To start with, we have Johanns who from 1922 to 1934, contributed to a vast study of the chief school of Vedanta under the title *To Christ through the Vedanta*. Then we have Abhishiktananda who centred on the convergence of advaita transcendence and Christian Trinitarian faith (Abhishiktananda 1984). Rudolf Otto traced up both the similarities and differences of advaita and Christian mysticism. Monchanin, Klostermaier and Bede Griffiths (Griffiths 1966) have reflected deeply on the apophatism from either a Trinitarian or Christological perspective. Devanandan has viewed *maya* as shot through with divine purpose. Mark Sunder Rao assimilated *anyatva* (i.e., non-otherness) with at-one-ness. Sara Grant passed from *tadatmya* to the truth of *aham brahmasmi* in christic consciousness and Richard De Smet has insightfully recalled the importance of *laksana*.

However, I would now like to focus my attention on the interpretation of advaita by philosopher-mystic Raimon Panikkar, who in my assessment, is the finest fruit of the East-West fecundation process. Born of a Hindu father and a Spanish Catholic mother, Panikkar has been striving all through his life towards the harmony of a pluralistic world. He has found himself in the middle of the East and West traditions, especially in the Hindu/Buddhist and Christian/Secular version, both of which have become part of his personal universe.<sup>3</sup> He expresses this multireligious experience in his own inimitable style: "I left as a Christian, I found myself a Hindu and I return a Buddhist without having ceased to be a Christian."

My focus on Panikkar may be justified, because it is he, I believe, who gets back to the central insight of advaita, of course from his Hindu-Christian background, and restates it in contemporary terms offering it as a spirituality for contemplation and action. His reclamation, reappropriation and reinterpretation of advaita, I believe, certainly offer valuable insights into the question of social and religious harmony, both in *theoria* and in *praxis*.



## The Text

Detectable beneath all of Panikkar's work is a single but deep insight which he calls "the cosmotheandric intuition" (Panikkar 1993; Raj 1998). This intuition indeed reveals the advaitic (non-dualistic) character of reality, pointing thus to the ultimate unity of reality. This unity, of course, is not a monistic oneness (*ekatva*) but advaitic which is neither one nor two, which insight has already been well-expressed in the classic *ekam eva advitiyam* of Chandogya Upanisad.

It is only in overcoming the apparent duality of reality, without at the same time falling into the temptation of putting everything into one fold or bag, Panikkar believes, that we may approach the advaitic intuition in an intelligible way.

Reality is neither one nor two. It is not one, for we cannot deny evidence: we experience multiplicity. It is not two, for we cannot deny that any duality, epistemologically, logically and metaphysically presupposes an underlying unity.

For Panikkar, however, the advaitic intuition, in the ultimate analysis, is not the denial of reason, but the transcending and overcoming of it. Advaita has its reasons that the reason does not know, we could say, paraphrasing the well-known Pascalian phrase. Hence the negation of both a dualistic and a monistic structure of reality, because of the fact that we can bring reality neither into an intelligible oneness nor allow a disparate unrelatedness, Panikkar submits, is the very scope and function of advaita.

Panikkar, therefore, formulates this advaitic reinterpretation in terms of the advaita of cosmotheandricism. In his words:

The times begin to be ripe now to gather again the broken pieces of these partial insights into a new holistic vision: there is no matter without spirit and no spirit without matter, no world without Man, no God without the Universe, etc. God, Man and World are three artificially substantivized form of the three primordial adjectives which describe reality (Panikkar 1978).

In other words, Panikkar's cosmotheandric vision which brings together God, World and Human into a harmonious whole without reducing the three either to an amorphous unity or separating them like oil and water, is best 'understood' from the advaitic perspective of 'not one, not two.' Panikkar thus delves into advaitic intuition to unearth and develop the cosmotheandricism which, at best, points to a trinitarian unity and totality: a totality which is a unique oneness, an oneness which is neither two (dualism-*dvaita*) nor simply one (monism-*ekatva*) but a not-two (*advitiyam*) as to imply a *triadic oneness* in a cosmic-human-divine awareness.

In the context of this integrated vision and from a Christian perspective, one may also detect a single but deep insight of Panikkar, which he calls the "Radical Trinity". The Radical Trinity represents, in short, Panikkar's efforts to apply the Christian trinitarian understanding of God to the trinitarian structure of the entire reality. Besides being the culmination of his thought, this insight is also a splendid and concrete example of Panikkar's efforts at Hindu-Christian bridge-building. It symbolizes his attempt to enlarge and deepen the Christian mystery of the trinity through the Buddhist and Hindu modes of silence and non-differentiation, effecting thus, a revision in the usual and prevalent understanding of *advaita* and the trinity, and further enabling these insights to open themselves up to a cross-fertilisation (*Advaitic Trinitarianism*) (Raj 2001). Moreover, the Radical Trinity is a fitting example of Panikkar's cross-cultural enterprise to articulate the experience of truth in such a manner that it becomes meaningful in the different contexts of diverse cultures.

More concretely, Panikkar's *Advaitic Trinitarianism* (a re-vision of the trinity in the light of *advaita*) throws light on the *advaitic* (non-dualistic) nature of the Persons of the trinity, nay, the entire reality, besides bringing to the forefront other modes of perceiving or experiencing the trinity. Trinitarian *Advaitism* (a re-vision of *advaita* in the light of the trinity), on the other hand, tries to overcome the *advaitic* tendency towards a monistic oneness (*ekatva*) by discovering the foundational, trinitarian structure underlying every reality. Reality being trinitarian, it can never be totally reduced to or exhausted by any one of its dimensions, even if it is the dimension of "Pure Consciousness," *Cit*, *Nous*, *Logos*, or Mind. All the three dimensions of reality (the cosmic, the divine, and the human) belong together, one is not without the other.

## The Texture

Now, the question is: what does this reinterpretation of Panikkar imply for one tradition? Does this mean, for instance, we have to replace the traditional understanding of *advaita* with trinitarianism?

I believe, all that the cosmotheandric principle does is only to make every religious tradition conscious of its responsibility (i.e., response-ability) (D'Sa 1997) *vis-à-vis* the signs and problems of our times. Here, I may spell out just three of them.

To begin with, our religious traditions have to wake up from their one-sided but deep slumber of other worldliness to an awareness of their cosmotheandric responsibility. It amounts to taking the world's structures—technical, political, economic (the *vyavaharika* of the Indic tradition) more seriously, so that practical,

everyday life in general, and politics in particular, can also find their meaning within the religious life.

Secondly, an appropriation of advaitaic intuition in terms of cosmotheandrisms enables the application and promotion of the principle of equality in one's life without losing out the fundamental issue of finding or preserving one's identity (Raj 2010). It indeed offers a basis for an egalitarian arrangement of social life, that is, of promoting a new world order based on social and economic justice, equality and peace.

Thirdly, the advaita of cosmotheandrisms inspires the view that the various religions are only individual dimensions of the respective other. No single religion—not even all traditional religions put together—has a monopoly on religion. In such a scenario, it will not be the Church or the Gurudwara or the Mosque or the Temple that will be the focus of religion, but its cosmotheandric responsibility which promotes harmony with the Cosmos, communion among all humans and confidence in the Divine Mystery.

To conclude, I would like to signal a challenge to the advaitic vision in general and Panikkar's cosmotheandric reinterpretation of advaita in particular.

The challenge is, how do we concretely translate, realise and live the advaitic intuition of trinitarian oneness in our time and in our lives?

The question of praxis is of paramount importance since by itself the advaitic vision appears too general or mystical in the concrete Realisation of social and religious harmony. Our contemporary Indian experience demands that the advaitic intuition should have a grounding and a direction that would integrate its mystical content with a practical and prophetic concern.

Here, I believe, comes a decisive Christian contribution, particularly from the recent "Liberation Theology" in Christianity with its thrust on the "Liberative Praxis" (Gutierrez 1973; Wilfred 1995). It makes a convincing plea to direct the activity of all religious institutions in the direction of socio-economic and political justice and to rally all the potential forces of institutionalised religions to enhance the *humanum* and to struggle for a common cause: the elimination of the unjust situation of the world, including man-manipulated hunger, human exploitation, wars, crushing of minorities and downtrodden, abuse of the poor, neglect of the famine aspects of man and reality.

What in short is being suggested is a "preferential option" to respond to the human and ecological suffering that criss-crosses our cultures and religions which would form the starting point, the basis, the heuristic for cooperation and co-walking of religious traditions. The religions of the world can seek to bridge their incommensurabilities and discover some common ground by embracing a shared

concern and commitment for the welfare of the suffering and victims of the world. A liberative praxis and commitment to the suffering becomes, in other words, a common hermeneutical key and ground on which followers of different religious traditions can come together (Knitter 1996; Wilfred 1995).

It is my humble submission that this commitment is to be grounded by a holistic vision as that of Panikkar and also inspired equally by a shared preferential option for the suffering and victims. This commitment may be described in terms of the Christian notion of *soteria*—an authentic well-being in the world.

## Endnotes

1. This chapter builds upon my earlier presentation entitled, “Trinitarian Oneness: An Indian Christian Interpretation of Advaitic Intuition,” *Christianity, Culture, and the Contemporary World: Challenges and New Paradigms*, ed. Edward J. Alam (Lebanon: Notre Dame University Press, 2009), pp. 31-6.
2. For recent literatures from Christian, Jewish and Islamic perspectives, see Marcus Borg, *The Heart of Christianity* (San Francisco, Harper San Francisco, 2003); Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference* (New York: Continuum, 2002); Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). Also, see the proceedings of the conference on “The New Religious Pluralism and Democracy,” April 21-25, 2005, sponsored by Georgetown University’s Initiative on Religion, Politics and Peace: <http://irpp.georgetown.edu/conference.htm>
3. Panikkar is the author of more than 40 books in about 6 languages. The following are the important works in English, related to this paper:  
 R. Panikkar. 1973. *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*. London: Orbis Books.  
 ———. 1982. *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation.  
 ———. 1983. *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation.  
 ———. 1989. *The Vedic Experience. Mantramanjari*. Pondicherry: All India Books.  
 ———. 2004. *Christophany*. New York: Orbis Books.

## References

- Abhishiktananda. 1984. *Saccidananda: A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience*. Delhi: ISPCK.
- D’Sa, Francis X. 1997. “Religion and Response-ability. The Future of Religion and the Religion of the Future.” *Bulletin of the Abhishiktananda Society*, 18:3-11.
- Griffiths, Bede. 1966. *Christ in India: Essays Towards Hindu-Christian Dialogue*. Charles Scribner's Sons.

- Gutierrez, G. 1973. *A Theology of Liberation. History, Politics and Salvation*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Knitter, Paul. 1995. *One Earth and Many Religions. Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.
- . 1996. “Cosmic Confidence or Preferential Option?”, in Joseph Prabhu (ed.), *The Intercultural Challenge of Raimon Panikkar*. New York: Maryknoll.
- Panikkar, R. 1978. “Philosophy as Life-Style”, in A. Mercier and M. Svilar (eds), *Philosophers on Their Own Work*, Vol. IV, Berne.
- . 1993. *The Cosmotheandric Insight. Emerging Religious Consciousness*. New York: Orbis Books.
- . 1995. *A Dwelling Place for Wisdom*, pp.109-153. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.
- Raj, Anthony Savari. 1998. *A New Hermeneutic of Reality. Raimon Panikkar's Cosmotheandric Vision*. Bern: Peter Lang AG.
- . 2001. “The Radical Trinity: Raimon Panikkar's Re-Vision of Advaita and the Trinity,” in Anand Amaladass and Rosario Rocha (eds), *Crossing the Borders. Essays in Honour of Francis X. D'Sa on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, pp. 179-192. Chennai: Satya Nilayam Publications.
- . 2002. “Inculturation or Interculturation? Towards a New Indian Christian Identity in a Pluralistic Society.” *Philosophy, Culture and Traditions*, 1:27-40.
- . 2010. *Ecosophical Justice. Ecology, Justice and Raimon Panikkar*. Bangalore: Capuchin Publications.
- Felix, Wilfred. 1995. *From the Dusty Soil, Contextual Reinterpretation of Christianity*. Madras: University of Madras.

## CHAPTER 13

# On Transcending Dualism Towards Harmony

Walking and Meditating with Charles Hartshorne

*Warayuth Sriwarakuel*

### Introduction

Dualism has played an important role in the Western thought. Although we often attribute this problem to Descartes (1596-1650), a French philosopher, mathematician and scientist, who contributed a lot to the duality between mind and body in his epistemic system, the problem of duality, in fact, is as old as other metaphysical problems going back to ancient Greek philosophy.

As a matter of fact, it is normal for human beings everywhere, no matter from the East or the West, to learn and see things according to contrasts or opposites. Contrasts are pervasive in the world around us, or as Hartshorne (1976) says, “Contrast is found not only throughout life but throughout nature as discovered by science.” It might be said that the fundamental difference between Western and Eastern people is that while Western mind stops at duality, the Eastern mind strives to transcend duality to reach unity. In other words, the Western people tend towards the duality of reality, whereas the Eastern people tend towards the unity of reality.

Religion has been one of the powerful historical forces shaping our thought. Religion influences the way of life of most peoples in the world, even now in this age of science and globalisation. Some thinkers in the past predicted that there would be no more major religions in the world by the twentieth century, and that science would have replaced them. It is true that many people in the West have turned their backs to religion and become unbelievers since the Enlightenment, or as Ian Barbour (1990) puts it:

For many centuries in the West, the Christian story of creation and salvation provided a cosmic setting in which individual life had significance. It allowed people to come to terms with guilt, finitude, and death. It provided a total way of life, and it encouraged personal transformation and reorientation. Since the Enlightenment, the Christian story has had diminishing effectiveness for many people, partly because it has seemed inconsistent with the understanding of the world in modern science. Similar changes have been occurring in other cultures.

However, we have found that these predictions were wrong. Throughout the twentieth century, people still respected and followed their religions, especially during and after the First and the Second World Wars. In the twenty-first century, Christianity and all other religions are still very much alive, and science has not succeeded in replacing them.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it seems that more and more people are believers in religions. This is evidence of how religion is essentially significant to life.

Religion affects not only the way of life but also the way of thinking. Turning to the West, we will find that “The Western theological tradition, in all its evident diversity, rests upon a polar or, more precisely, a dyadic foundation. Though consistently monotheistic, Christian theology is repeatedly inscribed in binary terms. The history of religious thought in the West can be read as a pendular movement between seemingly exclusive and evident opposites” (Taylor 1996). In his book *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*, Mark C. Taylor (1996) lists the opposites given in Table 1 as examples.

A question may be raised, “Why does the Western theological tradition rest upon this polar or dyadic foundation?” An answer may be that it is based on a polar foundation because it has been influenced by Aristotelian logic.

**Table 1. Exclusive and Evident Opposites**

Vision	Blindness
Invisible	Visible
Spirit	Body
Spiritual	Carnal
Mind	Matter
Good	Evil
Innocence	Guilt
Purity	Stain
Proper	Improper
Centered	Eccentric
First	Second
Original	Imitation
Natural	Monstrous
Purposeful	Purposeless
Honesty	Duplicity
Height	Depth
Depth	Surface
Interiority	Exteriority
Speech	Writing
Seriousness	Play

God	World
Eternity	Time
Being	Becoming
Rest	Movement
Permanence	Change
Presence	Absence
One	Many
Sacred	Profane
Order	Chaos
Meaning	Absurdity
Life	Death
Infinite	Finite
Transcendent	Immanent
Identity	Difference
Affirmation	Negation
Truth	Error
Reality	Illusion
Certainty	Uncertainty
Clarity	Confusion
Sanity	Madness
Light	Darkness

## Aristotelian Logic

Logic has a long history. Logic in the West is more than 2,500 years old. Philosophers in Western civilisation who made contributions to logic include Pythagoras, Zeno of Elea, and Plato. However, it was Aristotle who made the greatest contribution to logic. In fact, he is considered the father of formal logic. His formal logic is based on three laws: the law of identity, the law of the excluded middle, and the law of non-contradiction. Later philosophers and logicians who made contributions to logic include Boole, Venn, Frege, Russell, Whitehead, and Gödel. Yet although logic is subject to change and development like other subjects, all Western logicians have followed the Aristotelian three laws of logic. Of course, Hartshorne is no exception. The Aristotelian three laws of logic are described as follows:



1. The Law of Identity: If  $p$ , then  $p$  ( $p$  is  $p$ ).
2. The Law of the Excluded Middle: Either  $p$  or not- $p$  (not both).
3. The Law of Non-Contradiction: It is not true that both  $p$  and not- $p$  are true together (if  $p$  is true, then not- $p$  must be false, and *vice versa*).

Among these three laws which one is the most fundamental? I think the most fundamental one is the law of the excluded middle. Why so? Because we can transform the other two laws into the law of the excluded middle. Let us see the following proofs.

From the Law of Identity to the Law of the Excluded Middle:

1.  $p \rightarrow p$  The Law of Identity
  2.  $\sim p \rightarrow p$  1, Material Implication, Replacement Rule
  3.  $p \rightarrow \sim p$  2, Commutation, Replacement Rule
- Q.E.D.

From the Law of Non-Contradiction to the Law of the Excluded Middle:

1.  $\sim (p \rightarrow \sim p)$  The Law of Non-Contradiction
  2.  $\sim p \rightarrow \sim \sim p$  1, De Morgan, Replacement Rule
  3.  $\sim p \rightarrow p$  2, Double Negation, Replacement Rule
  4.  $p \rightarrow \sim p$  3, Commutation, Replacement Rule
- Q.E.D.

The law of the excluded middle leaves no room for an intermediate between opposites or contradictories, or as Aristotle (1984) puts it,

...there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories, but of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate. This is clear, in the first place, if we define what the true and the false are. To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true; so that he who says of anything that it is, or that it is not, will say either what is true or what is false; but neither what is nor what is not is said to be or not to be.

From the above quotation we can deduce that the law of the excluded middle has no room or space for “both/and” and “neither/nor”. People who follow this law in their way of thinking are forced to choose only either of the two opposites. We can illustrate this through the following examples.

### Example 1 The Chilli is Either Green or Red.

According to the law of the excluded middle, if the statement “The chilli is green” is true, then its opposite or contrastive “The chilli is red” must be false. There is no space for “The chilli is both green and red” and “The chilli is neither green nor red”. In fact, the same chilli can be both green and red in its different parts at the same time. It can also be neither green nor red, for example, white or brown at a particular time. It can have different colours at different times.

### Example 2 Light is Either a Particle or a Wave.

According to the Aristotelian law of the excluded middle, “Light is a particle” and “Light is a wave” cannot be true together or false together. If “Light is a particle” is true, then “Light is a wave” must be false, and *vice versa*. In fact, some physicists hold either position as Newton and Einstein did. Others like quantum physicists hold that light is both a particle and a wave. Someday perhaps some physicists may hold that light is neither a particle nor a wave because all actual entities are subject to change at all times.

The above two examples demonstrate that Aristotelian logic has its own limits. What I am saying here is not that Aristotelian law of the excluded middle is invalid. I am just saying that this law is true only within its own system or context. It is not always true in the absolute sense.

People who adopt the Aristotelian law of the excluded middle as fundamental in their way of thinking will be trapped in the game of dualism. If they do not recognise its limits, they will not and cannot be able to transcend dualism.

## Hegelian Logic

In the West, it was Hegel who first recognised the limits of Aristotelian logic. Thus he proposed Dialectical logic instead. For Hegel, the whole of reality is a historical process. The dialectic is something that is realised in the actual process of history. In other words, dialectic logic implies that form and content always go together. Logic is not just a matter of form separate from content, which is how Aristotelian logic is interpreted. Hegel (1929) says, “...the maxim of Identity...Everything is identical with itself,  $A = A$ : and, negatively,  $A$  cannot at the same time be  $A$  and not  $A$ . This maxim, instead of being a true law of thought, is nothing but the law of abstract understanding.” In order to understand Dialectic logic clearly, Peter Singer (1983) summarises Hegel’s basic ideas as follows:

1. Reality is a historical process.

2. The way this process changes is dialectical.
3. This dialectical process of change has a specific goal.
4. This goal is a conflict-free society.
5. Until that goal is reached we are condemned to remain in one form or another of alienation.<sup>2</sup>

The dialectic is composed of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Unlike Aristotelian logic, the dialectic contends that A and not A can be true together, or as Brent (1983) puts it:

A dialectical process is a process that...We begin by starting our thesis, and about such a statement or thesis we might assume with Aristotle's law of identity that what it says it is, it says it is, that it cannot be both affirmed and denied (non-contradiction), and that it must either be so or not be so (excluded middle). But to make such a claim in the real world of human experience...does not yield knowledge that conforms to such fixed structures. Any such initial statement (thesis) will be contradicted (antithesis) and...no such contradiction is itself ever final. As such, Hegel's concept of emerging truth breaks Aristotle's law of the excluded middle and claims that in so doing the inadequacy of that law to explain the facts of how the epistemic subject acquires true knowledge. For these syntheses that arise in both the development of the world and in the development of man's understanding of it, show that neither thesis nor antithesis is finally true, but rather that both are in a certain way true. The 'middle' that Aristotle wished to 'exclude' is seen to be the essential core of reality itself.

#### **Example 1** Dialectic

Thesis:            Water

Antithesis:      Fire

Synthesis:       Steam

#### **Example 2** Dialectic

Thesis:            Coffee

Antithesis:       Tea

Synthesis:        Coffee mixed with tea<sup>3</sup>

From the above two examples we can see that Hegelian logic can solve the problem of dualism in the ontological dimension. It obviously tells us about

the way things are. Ontology deals with mode of existence, non-existence, and actuality. Hegelian logic works well with the development of the world and its objects. However, in the epistemological dimension Hegelian logic is not that much of a help for developing our understanding of the world and its objects in form of propositions. Let us consider the following proposition:

Tea is different from coffee.

According to Aristotelian logic, the opposite of the above proposition is “Tea is not different from coffee” or “Tea is similar to coffee.” And according to the law of the excluded middle, if “Tea is different from coffee” is true, then its opposite must be false, and *vice versa*. On the contrary, according to Hegelian logic, “Tea is different from coffee” and its opposite can be true together. The question to be raised here is why Hegelian logic keeps silent on this problem at the epistemological dimension.

## Hartshornian Way

It was Charles Hartshorne who helps us solve the above question. Hartshorne was born in Kittanning, Pennsylvania on June 5, 1897, and died on October 10, 2000. David Ray Griffin says, “He (Hartshorne) was clearly one of the major philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>4</sup> John B. Cobb considers Hartshorne the Einstein of religious thought. After reading his works and understanding his ideas, I absolutely agree with Griffin and Cobb. Hartshorne is most famous as a process philosopher. He wrote more than 20 books and 100 articles in his lifetime.

Hartshorne was a scholar who made great contributions to the modal proof of the abstract aspect (pole) of God based on the second form of St. Anselm’s ontological argument and the concept of the concrete aspect (pole) of God who is dynamic and creative. Some may know him as a philosopher who brought philosophical insights to an empirical field through his first book, *The Philosophy and Psychology of Sensation*. Some people may even know him as a very distinguished ornithologist through his book *Born to Sing*. Still, others may know him as a devout vegetarian who did not own an automobile, preferring to ride a bicycle, and supporting feminism, abortion rights and higher taxes. In this chapter I will try to show another face of Hartshorne, namely, a great contributor to logic.

For Hartshorne, extremism is always wrong. Let us consider the following three statements.

- a. There is nothing in the world.
- b. There is everything in the world.

c. There is something in the world.

It is obvious that the first two statements and (b) are wrong because they are extreme. The third statement (c) is correct because some things do exist, and some things do not exist in the world.

Dealing with the nature of God, Hartshorne argues that both classical theism and pantheism go wrong because they are extreme. Hartshorne considers his position as neo-classical theism or panentheism<sup>5</sup> which is in the middle way between classical theism and pantheism. Let us consider the following three statements:

1. God is relative in all aspects (Pantheism)
2. God is relative in some aspect (Panentheism)
3. God is relative in no aspects (Classical Theism)

The words “all aspects” and “no aspects” imply extremism. Thus Hartshorne rejects (1) and (3), and he prefers (2). In his own words, Hartshorne (1976) says:

If ‘pantheism’ is a historically and etymologically appropriate term for the view that deity is the all of relative or interdependent items, with nothing wholly independent or in any clear sense non-relative, then ‘panentheism’ is an appropriate term for the view that deity is in some real aspect distinguishable from and independent of any and all relative items, and yet, taken as an actual whole, includes all relative items. Traditional theism or deism makes God solely independent or non-inclusive. Thus there are logically the three views: (1) God is merely the cosmos, in all aspects inseparable from the sum or system of dependent things or effects; (2) He is both this system and something independent of it; (3) He is not the system, but is in all aspects independent. The second view is panentheism. The first view includes any doctrine which, like Spinoza’s, asserts that there is a premise from which all acts are implied conclusions.

Now if we turn to the word “absolute”, we can play the same game as follows:

1. God is absolute in all aspects (Classical Theism)
2. God is absolute in some aspect (Panentheism)
3. God is absolute in no aspects (Pantheism)

Thus for Hartshorne, God is both relative in some aspect and absolute in another aspect. This is the main thesis of panentheism or neo-classical theism which takes a middle way. From this game proposed by Hartshorne, we can solve the problem Hegelian logic does not answer at the epistemological level. Let us now turn to the proposition “Tea is different from coffee” and its opposite “Tea is

not different from coffee” or “Tea is similar to coffee.” How can we make the two opposites true together according to Dialectical logic? We can make both of them true through the Hartshornian way. Let us start with the propositions containing the word “different.”

1. Tea is different from coffee in all aspects.
2. Tea is different from coffee in some aspect.
3. Tea is different from coffee in no aspects.

From the above three proposition, it is obvious that the propositions (1) and (3) are wrong because they are extreme. The proposition (2) is correct. Now let us turn to the propositions containing the word “similar.”

1. Tea is similar to coffee in all aspects.
2. Tea is similar to coffee in some aspect.
3. Tea is similar to coffee in no aspects.

Similarly, the propositions (1) and (3) are obviously wrong while the proposition (2) is true. Therefore, with the Hartshornian way, we can make Hegelian logic clear at the epistemological level as follows:

**Thesis** Tea is different from coffee in some aspect. (True)

**Antithesis** Tea is similar to coffee in some aspect. (True)

**Synthesis** Tea is both different and similar to coffee in some aspects. (True)

## Conclusion

The world today is filled with many conflicts and disputes. We are recommended to use rational processes or logic to solve all these problems as Habermas proposes in his ideal speech situation.<sup>6</sup> Yet to follow Aristotelian logic or the Western theological tradition without recognising their limits is not of much help. The Hartshornian way may be a more appropriate way to settle disputes, solve conflicts, and transcend dualism of all kinds. The Hartshornian way can give space to all the opposites. For example, let us see the serious fight between egalitarian liberals and multiculturalists. The main thesis of egalitarian liberalism is “Everybody is just like us”, while that of multiculturalism is “Everybody is just different from us”. According to Aristotelian logic, the two theses are opposite, and they cannot be both correct according to the law of the excluded middle. However, the Hartshornian way can help solve this problem in the following ways:

1. Everybody is just like us in some aspect. (True)
2. Everybody is just different from us in some aspect. (True)

3. Everybody is both similar to and different from us in some aspects. (True)

If the egalitarian libertarians insist that “Everybody is just like us in all aspects” and the multiculturalists that “Everybody is just different from us in all aspects”, then we can see that both groups are wrong because everybody, as a matter of fact, is both similar to and different from us in some aspects.

Even though Hartshorne himself was not aware that his methodology could solve these epistemological problems of Aristotelian and Hegelian logic, I would like to credit him with this, and call this solution “The Hartshornian Way.”

## Endnotes

1. Except for those who believe that science and religion are always in conflict. Some of these people have chosen to take side with science while others with religion. However, Ian Barbour divides 4 ways of relating science and religion: conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. Many people including theologians take the last three ways as their alternatives. “Those who are of the opinion that science and religion share common admirable purposes, or at least are on speaking terms, affirm that each enterprise possesses a rational-factual and a normative or valuing component. Both contribute to a fully satisfying understanding of the world and our place in it. Others, however, are of a different opinion. They sharply demarcate the methods and goals of science and religion, assigning special functions to each so as to assure their mutual independence. On the one hand, the challenge is to avoid reducing one enterprise to the other—science to religion in the form of natural theology or religion to science as an antiquated approach to explaining natural phenomena. On the other hand, the challenge is to avoid complete compartmentalisation by assigning matters of the heart to religion and matters of the head to science where each has nothing to contribute to each other”. See James E. Huchingson. 1993. *Religion and the Natural Sciences*, Orlando: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., pp. 4-5.
2. See series of television programmes transmitted by the BBC in 1987. See also Magee, Brian 1987. *The Great Philosophers: An Introduction to Western Philosophy* (Based on the BBC Television Series), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 205. Marx followed and took over all Hegel’s basic ideas. The difference is just that for Hegel the process of historical development is spiritual, whereas for Marx this process is purely material.
3. Hegelian logic is close to the way of thinking of the Eastern peoples because it is inclusive. All forms of the Eastern logic are holistic because Eastern thought tends to be inclusive, whereas Western thought tends to be exclusive. At the epistemological dimension the Nyaya logic is the logic of integration between induction and deduction. At the ontological dimension the Taoist logic is the logic of complementarity while the Buddhist logic is the logic of detachment. In order to see the difference among these types of logic, we may use “tea and coffee” as examples. If a waiter asks, “Tea or coffee?”, then what an answer would be. An Aristotelian may say, “Tea” or “Coffee”, but not both. A Hegelian would say, “Both tea and coffee in the same cup”. A Taoist

will say, “Both tea and coffee in two different cups”. The answer from a Buddhist may vary. It may be “Tea”, “Coffee”, “Both tea and coffee in the same cup”, “Both tea and coffee in different cups”, “One tenth of tea and nine tenths of coffee in the same cup”, or even “Neither”.

4. See *The New York Times on Friday*, October 13, 2000, p. C15.
5. The difference between Spinoza’s pantheism and Hartshorne’s panentheism is at their theses. Pantheism holds the thesis that “Everything is God” or “God is everything (the world)” whereas panentheism holds that “Everything is in God” or “God includes everything (the world).” God, according to Spinoza, is monopolar in the sense that He is relative. For Hartshorne, God is dipolar, namely, God is both absolute and relative. St. Thomas’ classical theism holds that God is also monopolar but absolute. God created the world and everything in it from nothingness (creation ex nihilo).
6. Habermas describes three different pragmatic functions in speech, namely, representative, expressive, and interactive functions. The representative function presupposes the distinction between experience and language, the expressive function between intention and expression, and the interactive function between what is and what ought to be respectively. He projects the idea of a discussion in the pursuit of consensus in an ideal speech situation in which all discussants are fully free to express their opinions, have an equal opportunity to share ideas, have equal power, and use rational processes to persuade the rest. Every discussant or participant is expected to use good reasons and stay away from all kinds of fallacy.

## References

- Aristotle. 1984. “Metaphysics”, in Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. two, p 1597. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Barbour, Ian G. 1990. *Religion and Science*, p. XIII. Harper San Francisco: An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers.
- Brent, Allen. 1983. *Philosophy and Educational Foundations*, p 174. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Hartshorne, Charles. 1971. *Reality as Social Process*, p 47. New York: Hafner Publishing Company.
- . 1976. *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God*, pp. 89-90. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hegel, G.W.F. 1929. “Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences” (translated by W. Wallace), in Jacob Loewenberg (ed.), *Hegel Selections*, p 136. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.
- Peter Singer. 1983. *Hegel: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, Mark C. 1996. *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.





## PART TWO

# TRANSFORMATIVE HARMONY, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS



## CHAPTER 14

# Understanding Nature of Action and Harmony in the Bhagavad Gita

*Kāma, Samnyasa and Karma*

*Binod Kumar Agarwala*

### The Issue

The entire cosmos is conceived as an institution, which is a person, in Vedic tradition in general and the Bhagavad Gita in particular. The human being who acts out of desire (*kāma*) disrupts the cosmic unity. In other words: the human being who acts out of desire disrupts the harmony of the cosmos. Hence *Kṛṣṇa*'s injunction is to act without desire.

But many modern scholars have tried to interpret *Kṛṣṇa*'s injunction in the Bhagavad Gita to perform action abandoning all *kāma* "desire". These modern scholars<sup>1</sup> have tried to understand this injunction assuming the dogma that intentional action entails desire. On their assumption it is not possible to perform action abandoning all desires. So, they naturally assume that *Kṛṣṇa* could not have given such an absurd injunction. The only course left for these scholars is not to accept the *prima facie* literal meaning of the injunction and to go for a non-literal secondary meaning of the injunction.<sup>2</sup> They argue on the classical Indian principle of interpretation that when the primary meaning of a passage leads to an absurdity, one is justified in accepting a secondary meaning.

The most favoured strategy of these scholars in reinterpreting the injunction to abandon desire is to read it as the injunction to abandon only some desires, which are declared to be impermissible/bad desires. Impermissible/bad desires are distinguished from permissible/good desires either on the basis of what one desires, e.g. selfish<sup>3</sup>, worldly desires, or on the basis of how one desires, e.g. impassioned desires<sup>4</sup>, or on the basis of overall justification on a range of considerations without a codified criterion, e.g. unjustified desires<sup>5</sup>. So, injunction to perform action abandoning all *kāma* is understood as injunction to perform action abandoning only selfish, worldly, impassioned, or unjustified desires, i.e. the injunction is to perform action on the basis of altruistic, spiritual, unimpassioned (calm), or justified desires.

This kind of reconciliation of the assumption that intentional action requires desire and the injunction to perform action abandoning all desires may be praiseworthy intellectual exercise in revisionary reconciliation of *Kṛṣṇa*'s injunction in the Bhagavad Gita with modern thought, but it is not a correct interpretation of the injunction. The injunction to perform action on the basis of any kind of desire be they altruistic, spiritual, unimpassioned (calm), or justified desires, finds no textual support in the Bhagavad Gita, even if it appears cogent and compelling to the modern scholars on other logical grounds.

Does intentional action entail desire? Is desireless action impossible? The answer to both the questions according to Gītā is in the negative. Desireless action is possible because impulse to action (*karma codana*) is threefold, i.e., knowledge, what is known and the knower *jñānam*, *jñeya* and *parijñātā* (XVIII.18). Here to begin with I am following the traditional translation of *jñānam*, *jñeya* and *parijñātā* as 'knowledge', 'known' and 'knower' respectively, which will be questioned later. The scholars who accept that intentional action entail desire get round this text by claiming that *cikīrṣā* is a necessary condition of action, which is entailed by knowledge (*jñānam*) and claiming that *cikīrṣā* means desire.<sup>6</sup> It is possible to argue that *jñāna* implies *cikīrṣā*, and the argument can be accepted on the ground that while *jñāna* is impulse to action in the Bhagavad Gita at the same time it is also claimed (III.25): "the wise one should act, therefore, without attachment, desirous (*cikīrṣur*) of gathering of the people (into a unity) (*lokasaṁgraham*)."<sup>7</sup> But the question is: are these scholars correct in translating *cikīrṣā* as 'desire,' as is done above, when 'desire' is also accepted as the translation of *kāma*? Is *cikīrṣā* same as *kāma*? If they are same as the translation of both as 'desire' suggests then it follows that *jñāna* entails *kāma*.

The question arises: Can *Kṛṣṇa* in the Bhagavad Gita accept that *jñāna* entails *kāma*? The answer is unequivocal and it is in negative. Knowledge (*jñāna*) in Gītā is opposed to desire (*kāma*). Knowledge (*jñāna*) is covered by this constant enemy

of the wise (*jñāni*), in the form of desire (*kāma*), which is insatiable fire (III.39)<sup>8</sup>. In VII.20 it is also admitted “*jñāna* has been led away by this or that desire”<sup>9</sup>. Since, ‘knowledge’ and ‘desire’ are opposed, when impulse to action comes from ‘knowledge’, that impulse cannot be identified as ‘desire’, i.e. *cikirṣā* that is entailed by knowledge (*jñāna*) cannot be same as desire (*kāma*). So, clearly no intentional action needs to entail desire (*kāma*). So, desire-less action is possible according to the Bhagavad Gita. Since *Kṛṣṇa* accepts the possibility of ‘knowledge’ supplying impulse to action, he advocates abandonment of all desire as conative factor in the actions. If *cikirṣā* is not “desire” (*kāma*), what is it?

We have already noted that the object of *cikirṣā* is “gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraham*). In III.20 it is said “attain success in action only by keeping gathering of people in view.”<sup>10</sup> Here “gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraham*) is the object of “keeping in viewing” (*sampāśyan*) indicating that “gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraham*) is the objective of the action. So, *cikirṣā* is better translated as “objective” or “goal” or “resolve” of action. “Gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraham*) as the objective or goal or resolve of action is not the same as fruit of action (*karma phala*) as it is never stated as fruit of action (*karma phala*). It is stated in V.12, “the irresolute is attached to the fruit (of action) because of desire.”<sup>11</sup> That is to say: we can talk of fruit of action in the context of action performed due to desire (*kāmakāreṇa*). Resolve (*cikirṣā*) is not desire (*kāma*); so, “gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraham*) is not fruit of action (*karma phala*). As fruit (*phala*) is distinct and separable from tree, fruit of action (*karma phala*) is distinct and separable from action (*karma*). Only after the action (*karma*) is finished or ended that fruit of action (*karma phala*) comes into existence. “Gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraham*) does not relate to action (*karma*) as distinct and separable result of it. This objective of “gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraham*) is internal to the action and inseparable from action. “Gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraha*) belongs to action (*karma*) and action (*karma*) belongs to “gathering of people (into a unity)” (*lokasaṃgraha*). When we distinguish resolve (*cikirṣā*) from desire (*kāma*) and refuse to translate former as ‘desire’ we are not indulging in verbal quibble. It involves deeper issues in metaphysics of action (*karma*), a discussion of which will be undertaken in the last section of the present essay.

One thing is clear that the modern commentators have failed to notice an important aspect of *jñāna* in the Bhagavad Gita. *Jñāna* in Vedic thought as they rightly claim entails ‘resolve’ (*cikirṣā*). As resolve (*cikirṣā*) is already involved as a component in *jñāna*, it cannot be translated as ‘knowledge’ in the modern sense because ‘knowledge’ in the modern sense entails no conation or resolve. Hence, proper translation of Vedic *jñāna* cannot be ‘knowledge’ it has to be ‘knowledgeable resolve’, so that the fused cognition and conation involved in Vedic *jñāna* becomes

apparent in translation in modern vocabulary, otherwise we will get into confusion in following the logic of thinking involved in.

## the Bhagavad Gita

Much misunderstanding arises because of translation of *kāma* as ‘desire’ and accepting modern interpretation of ‘desire’ as catch all word for impulse to action without discrimination to make possible the entailment of ‘desire’ from intentional action. This kind of error is often made in the writings of modern scholars studying the Bhagavad Gita, who use expressions like “the desire for Brahman,” “the desire for the maintenance of the world,” “desire for the self,” etc.<sup>12</sup> The expression “the desire for the self” is an outcome of erroneous interpretation, because the injunction of III.43 is “Then knowing Him who is superior to intellect (buddhi), subduing the self by the self, slay the enemy in the form of desire that is hard to conquer.”<sup>13</sup> Clearly, desire (*kāma*) is the enemy of self and it is to be killed by self then self cannot be an object of desire (*kāma*) in the Bhagavad Gita. Such textual arguments can be given for similar expressions mentioned above

Is this mere quibbling over words and their meaning? No, as discussed earlier while explaining ‘resolve (*cikirṣā*)’ much deeper issues of relation of action to its end, goal, or completion is involved. It pertains to issues of metaphysics involved in action, which will be discussed in the end section of the present essay.’

## *Kāma* as Motivation for Action

Let us ask what exactly is the understanding of *kāma* in the Bhagavad Gita? A clear statement of what desire (*kāma*) is given in II.62 “when a man thinks of objects (of senses), attachment for them arises, from attachment arises desire (*kāma*); from desire (*kāma*) arises anger”<sup>14</sup>. This is an enthymeme as one step is missing in it. From desire arises anger due to fear (*bhaya*) of the desire being not satisfied. That’s why both the dual desire and anger (*kāmakrodha*) (V.23, 26; XVI.12) and the triad of passion, fear and anger (*rāga-bhaya-krodha*) (IV.10) occur in the Bhagavad Gita. Clearly in the Bhagavad Gita, desire (*kāma*) means ‘attraction of sense objects’. In III.37 “it is desire (*kāma*), it is anger, born of the rajas *guṇa* (spirited strand)”<sup>15</sup>. VI.24 also clearly employs the term desire (*kāma*) in the sense of attraction of senses to their respective objects. It says “abandon without reserve all fancy-born desires, well-restraining all the senses from all quarters by the mind.”<sup>16</sup>

Regarding desire (*kāma*) *Kṛṣṇa* in the Bhagavad Gita says that the senses, mind, and buddhi are said to be its seat (III. 40)<sup>17</sup>. It is already mentioned above that

knowledge is veiled by desire. It is with these three that desire veils 'knowledgeable resolve' (*jñāna*) and deludes the embodied (III.40)<sup>18</sup>. The senses, mind, intellect (*buddhi*) and self form a hierarchy in that order (III.42). That is the reason for the injunction of III.43: "Then knowing Him who is superior to intellect (*buddhi*), subduing the self by the self, slay the enemy in the form of desire that is hard to conquer."<sup>19</sup> Hence, the injunction to act "abandoning all desires ... without attachment" (II-71)<sup>20</sup> means that the impulse or motivation to act must not come from any desire.

What is the reason for not accepting desire as provider of impulse or motivation for action? There are many reasons. One reason is stated in II.43 and 44 "those who have desire have no determinate buddhi"<sup>21</sup>, i.e. they have no determinate resolve to act. It is stated in II.41 'determinate buddhi is one the indeterminate buddhi is infinitely many branched.'<sup>22</sup> What it means is that desires pull buddhi in many directions making it indeterminate and indecisive. As desire and anger are born of the spirited strand (*rajas guṇa*) (III.37) there is "strong impulse generated from desire and anger," (V.23)<sup>23</sup> which makes it "enemy... in the form of desire that is hard to conquer" (III.43)<sup>24</sup>. The impulse (*vega*) of desire (*kāma*) is so strong and has power that it can engage a person to do evil against his wish (III.36)<sup>25</sup>. Because of strong impulse (*vega*) buddhi is pulled in many directions by multiple desires making it indeterminate and irresolute.

Secondly, "When a man thinks of objects, attachment for them arises. From attachment arises desire; from desire arises anger. From anger arises delusion; from delusion, failure of memory; from failure of memory, loss of reason; from loss of reason he is utterly ruined" (II.62-63)<sup>26</sup>. What it says is that a person propelled by desire ultimately gets ruined. Here, the role of memory in function of reason is recognised and ruination of man mentioned is social ruination, i.e. when a man's reason is destroyed he is socially ruined.

Thirdly, "the irresolute attached to the fruit (of action) because of desire, is firmly bound (to the action)" (V.12)<sup>27</sup>. The adhesive that binds man to action is *kilbiṣam*, which is acquired by performing action out of desire. The word *kilbiṣam* is translated by the term "sin" but what it actually refers to is that which makes the action as one's own action, that is something acquired by performing action out of desire for its result. If one because of desire performs action to get its result, i.e. satisfaction of the desire, then he is bound to action in the sense that action is attributed to him, he is held responsible for the action, he gets the blame for the action, and the action becomes "his" personal action. In the metaphysics of action (*karma*) in the Bhagavad Gita this happens because *kilbiṣam* is acquired. It is important point that *kilbiṣam* is acquired by performing action with certain inappropriate motivation, it is not inherited. So, there is possibility that by performing action by appropriate motivation one may not acquire *kilbiṣam*.



Fourthly, desire is insatiable (*duṣpūraṃ*) (XVI.10), it is insatiable fire (*duṣpūreṇānalena*) (III-39). Because of insatiable nature of desire, those who desire (objects of) desire, attain to the state of going and returning (IX.21)<sup>28</sup>. One returns again and again to satisfy the insatiable fire of desire. It is a metaphor equivalent to another metaphor that says a person dies a thousand deaths to satisfy his infinite desires. “He who acts under the impulse of desire, attains neither maturity, nor happiness, nor the supreme course (in life)” (XVI.23)<sup>29</sup>. “He who desires to fulfil desires does not achieve peace” (II.70)<sup>30</sup>. A person attains peace when he acts abandoning all desires (*viḥāya kāmān*) (II.71).

Fifth reason is stated when Arjuna asks: “But, by what dragged on, O Varshneya, does a man, though reluctant, commit sin, as if constrained by force?” (III.36)<sup>31</sup> *Kṛṣṇa* answers: “It is desire; it is anger, born of *Rajas* all-devouring, all sinful; that, you penetratively know, is the foe here. As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as the foetus is enclosed in the womb, so is this (knowledgeable resolve) covered by it (the enemy). Covered, O son of Kunti, is knowledgeable resolve by this constant enemy of the wise (one with knowledgeable resolve), in the form of desire, which is greedy and insatiable. The senses, mind, and reason are said to be its seat; veiling knowledgeable resolve through these, it deludes the embodied” (III.37-40).<sup>32</sup> What this argument says is that desire covering the knowledgeable resolve makes the latter dysfunctional.

An extra reason (the sixth reason) is also stated in the Kashmir recession through introducing five extra *ślokas* in chapter three numbered 38 to 42 in that recession. This reason is not stated in what is taken as the standard version of the Bhagavad Gita. These extra five *ślokas* of Kashmir recession state: “Arjuna said: O *Kṛṣṇa*, how do these (desire and anger) come into existence? What makes them grow? What is their nature and what is their role? O son of *Parthā*, these are subtle and are the biggest enemies of embodied along with the sense organs. They abide in the mind as if to increase the happiness, but in reality they exist to delude. This horrible enemy in the form of desire and anger is born from the satisfaction of belonging to a particular lineage; it is of the nature of arrogance rooted in the sense of egoism, difficult to cross by the sinful ones. This enemy destroys one’s happiness, it creates misery, and by continually deluding one, makes him fear. This despicable and disgraceful enemy is always in search of loopholes, O Winner of the Wealth; it is of the nature of delusion coming out of *rajas*, and it represents the biggest problem for human beings.”<sup>33</sup> According to this argument desire works through various weaknesses of man and gives rise to deceptive happiness which in fact is not happiness.

A seventh reason, which is stated by all recessions of the Bhagavad Gita, which is one of the important reasons, will be dealt with later in the chapter.

To act abandoning desire does not mean that desires have to be absent while acting, it only means that desires are not to be the factor while deciding to act, i.e. the impulse or conation for acting should not come from the impulse (*vega*) of desire. Sthitaprajña, i.e. the one steady in knowledge, casts of all desires entering the mind, indicating that desires are present in the mind (II.55)<sup>34</sup>. In what sense does he cast of all desires? The answer is given in II.70: “He attains peace, into whom all desires enter as waters enter the ocean, which, filled from all sides, remains unmoved.”<sup>35</sup> The idea is that he attains peace, who is not disturbed by desires in the mind. He is the one who has controlled the impulse (*vega*) of the desires. That is why V.23 states, “he that is able, while still here, to withstand, before liberation from the body, the impulse of desire and anger, he is a *yogin*, he is a happy man.”<sup>36</sup> The injunction is to control the strong impulse of desire and anger, i.e. injunction is not to be moved to action by the impulse of desire or anger even if desire and anger are present. That’s why ones initiative of action (*samārambhāḥ*) has to be devoid of purposes of desires (*kāmasaṃkalpavarjitāḥ*) (IV.19). So, from where will the impulse or conation of action come? The impulse to action (*karma codana*) is three-fold, i.e. knowledgeable resolve, what is knowledgeably resolved and the knowledgeable resolver (*jñānaṃ jñeya pariñātā*) (XVIII-18) as mentioned earlier. XVI.21 expands the list of impulses for action to be abandoned: “triple is this, the gate to hell, destructive of the self: desire, anger, and greed. Therefore, these three, one should abandon.”<sup>37</sup> If the motivation for action comes from desire, such action is rājasic action not sātāvika action.

One may ask: how can *Kṛṣṇa* give injunction to abandon all desires when he himself says in VII.11 “in beings I am the desire unopposed to *dharma*”<sup>38</sup>? If *Kṛṣṇa* himself is desire unopposed to *dharma* then how can he ask for abandonment of all desires including the ones unopposed to *dharma*? Is the complete claim of VII.11 “and of the powerful I am the power devoid of desire and attachment; and in beings I am the desire unopposed to *dharma*”<sup>39</sup> not incongruous? Is it not incongruous to declare that *Kṛṣṇa* is the power devoid of desire and attachment, which is also power devoid of desire unopposed to *dharma*, when it is also declared that *Kṛṣṇa* is the desires unopposed to *dharma*? The incongruity vanishes when we realise that abandonment of all desire is abandonment of desire as impulse to action, hence also as impulse to use power (so that the power has to be exercised devoid of desire and attachment), but desire unopposed to *dharma* are identified not for serving as impulse to action, but as those desires which get automatically satisfied even when they are not serving as impulse to action when a person performs action required of him for “gathering of people into a unity” (*lokasaṃgraha*).

Satisfaction of Desire is not man’s business. It is stated III.13 “sin do the impious eat who cook for their own sakes”<sup>40</sup>, i.e. those who cook to satisfy their desire for food eat only sin. It is the automatic business of deities to satisfy the

desires when one performs what is required of him. III.12 “nourished by the *yajña*, the devas shall indeed serve on you the desirable enjoyments.”<sup>41</sup> In VII.20 and 22 it is claimed by *Kṛṣṇa* “Those whose knowledgeable resolve (*jñāna*) has been led away by this or that desire resort to other deities, engaged in this or that rite, constrained by their own nature ...possessed of that faith he engages in the worship of that (form); thence he obtains his desires, these being indeed ordained by me.”<sup>42</sup> No doubt *Kṛṣṇa* declares in X.28 “among cows I am the *Kamadhuk*,”<sup>43</sup> which is desire-fulfilling cow. Be it noted that even though some of our desires get satisfied through deities, there is no *quid pro quo* between the action and the deity-given satisfaction of desires.

This doctrine of engaging in action without desire but getting some desire fulfilled automatically through such engagement may appear as a strange doctrine. But, it is not so strange. Even in our professional life in an institution, we are expected to engage in professional conduct required by the institution disregarding desires. We are expected not to tailor our professional conduct to satisfy personal desires. But the overall practice of the profession in an institution is such that even if we do not directly engage to satisfy our desires, some of our desires get satisfied when we get lunches in meetings and salary at the end of the month. We must not forget that *Kṛṣṇa* in The Bhagvad Gita was advising Arjuna when he refused to discharge his professional duty in *cāturvarṇyam*, the classical Indian institution, as a warrior after entering the arena of war when the war bugles have already been sounded. *Kṛṣṇa* is advising him how to discharge his professional duty in an institution.

Who are men who make satisfaction of desire their business? XVI. 8 answers they are the men who say, “the universe is unreal, without a basis, without a Lord, born of mutual union, brought about by desire; what else?”<sup>44</sup> XVI. 10 to 12 declares that such people “filled with insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, holding unwholesome views through delusion, they work with unholy resolve; beset with immense cares ending only with death, enjoying desire fulfilment their highest aim, assured that that is all. Bound by hundreds of bindings of hope, given over to desire and anger, they strive to secure by unjust means hoards of wealth for enjoying desire fulfilment.”<sup>45</sup> This fits many professionals in any modern institution, be it parliament or a university. What happens to such people? XVI-16 answers: “bewildered by many a fancy, entangled in the snare of delusion, addicted to the gratification of desire, they fall into a foul hell.”<sup>46</sup> Such people hate the self in their own and others body. XVI.18 claims: “given over to egotism, power, haughtiness, desire, and anger, these malicious people hate Me in their own and others’ bodies.”<sup>47</sup> Implication is that those who make satisfaction of desire as their business cannot have the “desire for self” contrary to what is claimed by many modern scholars as they develop revulsion to self, i.e. become enemy of

the self. What it means is that such people cannot identify themselves with the other stakeholders in the institution and therefore trying to tailor the institution itself to satisfy their own desire destroy the institution, which makes life miserable, i.e. hell.

It may be argued that since the injunction is to withdraw senses from respective objects, one can do so with a desire to do so. That is to say injunction can be understood as injunction to develop desire to give up sense enjoyment, i.e. to develop desire for austerities. *Kṛṣṇa* in the Bhagavad Gita does not deny the possibility of such incongruous desire (or 'higher level desire' to borrow a term from analytic thinkers) but people who have such desire are of demonic resolve. XVII.5 and 6 claims: "those men who practice terrific austerities not enjoined by the scripture, given to hypocrisy and egotism, endued with the strength of desire and passion; weakening all the elements in the body – fools they are – and Me who dwell in the body within; know thou these to be of demonic resolves."<sup>48</sup> Such people also weaken the possibility of identifying themselves with other stakeholders in the institution. To use a modern expression, they become too 'judgmental' and due to hypocrisy and egotism 'look down' upon others, creating problem in the smooth running of the institution. They become demons in any institution.

When the actions are performed by impulse from knowledgeable resolve the actions becomes actions burnt by fire of knowledgeable resolve (*jñānāgnidagdhakarmāṇam*) (IV.19). Here the burning of action by fire of knowledgeable resolve is not indicative of destruction of action; rather it indicates purification of action, transformation of nature of action. IV.37: "as kindled fire turns fuel to ashes, so fire of knowledgeable resolve turns all actions to ashes."<sup>48</sup> By burning fuel does not go out of existence, it merely turns into ashes, similarly the fire of knowledge transforms the nature of action. As fuel ceases to be fuel when burnt by fire, action (*karma*) ceases to be action (*karma*) when motivated by *jñāna*, as fuel turns to ashes by being burnt in fire, by the fire of knowledgeable resolve action (*karma*) turns into inaction (*akarma*) as action (*karma*) becomes properly vested action (*saṁnyastakarma*). A properly vested action (*saṁnyastakarma*) is an action performed by a person but whose ownership is given on to institution as person.

## Reinterpretation of *Karma Saṁnyāsa* as Proper Vesting of Action

To understand *saṁnyastakarma* we have to first understand what is meant by *saṁnyāsa* in the Bhagavad Gita. The very first occurrence of the term is in the verse III.4 "not by abstaining from action does man win actionlessness, nor by mere

*saṁnyāsa* does he attain perfection.”<sup>49</sup> This is a criticism of *saṁnyāsa*, as it was traditionally understood as ‘renunciation’ in the time of writing of the Bhagavad Gita. During its time the essence of *saṁnyāsa* understood as ‘renunciation’ was commonly considered to lie in the abandonment of *yajña karma*, understood as ‘ritual acts’. This understanding of *saṁnyāsa* as ‘renunciation’ has remained unchanged throughout history of *Brahmaṇical* literature. A work as late as *Vāsudevāśrama’s Yatidharma prakāśa* defines *saṁnyāsa* as ‘renunciation’ thus: *saṁnyāso nāma vidhito grhītānām nityanaimittikāmyāśrautasamārtakarmaṇām praiśamantram samuccārya parityāgaḥ*.<sup>50</sup> The *praiśa* is the formula *saṁnyastam mayā* (I have renounced), which is considered the essential act of the rite of renunciation.<sup>51</sup> According to Vāsudeva it is *karma* (ritual acts) that one abandons when one utters this sacred formula. *Ārambha* is a term commonly associated with the initiation of performance of ritual actions. One of the earliest terms used to express this renunciation aspect of a renouncer’s life was *anārambha*, non-initiation of performance of ritual act.<sup>52</sup> The traditional understanding of both *saṁnyāsa* and its requisite *anārambha* is criticised in the verse IV.37 given above.

The criticism is based on implicit reinterpretation of *ārambha*, *anārambha* and *saṁnyāsa*. *Ārambha*<sup>53</sup> and its cognates like *ārabhate*<sup>54</sup>, *samārambha*<sup>55</sup>, *ārabhyate*<sup>56</sup>, *sarvārambha*<sup>57</sup> except in case of *sarvārambhaparityāgī* are used to speak about initiation of performance of all action. In the compound *sarvārambhaparityāgī*<sup>58</sup> *sarvārambha* means all initiations of actions with desire and the compound means ‘who has abandoned all initiations of actions with desire’. But *anārambha* and *saṁnyāsa* in the criticism of traditional understanding are also reinterpreted implicitly. The implicit reinterpretation broadens the denotation of both the term to include abandonment and non-initiation of performance of all actions, which are performed by mind, speech and body, and not mere ritual actions.

This becomes clear in the Bhagavad Gita’s argument. Its criticism of *saṁnyāsa* and *anārambha* is based on the claim that it is not possible for us to abandon all actions. It is claimed in III.5 “none, verily, even for an instant, ever remains doing no action; for everyone is driven helplessly to action by the strands (*guṇas*) born of Nature (*Prakṛti*).”<sup>59</sup> III.6: “He who, restraining the organs of action, sits brooding (*smaraṇ*, remembering) in his mind (*manas*) of the objects of the senses, self-deluded, he is said to be one of false conduct.”<sup>60</sup> If one restrains organs of action like hands, feet, mouth, organs of excretion, and organs of procreation, i.e. he sits inactive does not mean he is not acting. He may be performing action by mind (*manas*). He may be remembering sense objects by mind. Action is performed in Indian tradition by mind too as it is most active internal organ. In Indian tradition thought is not contrasted to action in the sense that former does not designate activity, while the latter designate activity. Action can be performed by external organs mentioned above like hands, etc. and also internal organs like

mind (*manas*). If a person has restrained external organs of action, but performing action by internal organs, and yet thinks that he is not performing action, he is deluded and he is indulging in false conduct. His inaction is false as he is still very active. He is not aware that he is acting and he is deluded. So the traditional understanding of *saṁnyāsa* and *anārambha* is inadequate. So the injunction in III.8 is: “perform required action; for action is superior to inaction. And even the journey of the body would not be achieved by inaction.”<sup>60</sup> To reconcile *saṁnyāsa* with impossibility of giving up of all actions, the author of the Bhagavad Gita at the very next occurrence of the term *saṁnyāsa* reinterprets it further.

The very next occurrence of the term *saṁnyāsa* is in III.30: “renouncing all action in Me (*Kṛṣṇa*), with thy thought resting on the transcendent Self, without expectation, without mine-ness, devoid of fever (*jvara*), do thou fight.”<sup>61</sup> Here there is reinterpretation of *saṁnyāsa*. In the reinterpreted *saṁnyāsa* action is performed by man but surrendered onto *Kṛṣṇa*. For in III.30 *Kṛṣṇa* advises Arjuna to fight (i.e. perform action) “surrendering all actions onto Me...”<sup>62</sup>. *Kṛṣṇa* again uses the expression “renouncing all actions onto Me”<sup>63</sup> in XII.6 and expression “mentally resigning all deeds onto Me”<sup>64</sup> in XVIII.57. *Karmasanyāsa* is not mere abandoning of action, but abandoning of action somewhere, i.e. onto *Kṛṣṇa*. This idea is further elaborated in IX.27: “whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice, whatever you give, in whatever austerity you engage, do it as an offering to Me.”<sup>65</sup> The idea is that in the *saṁnyastakarma* even though the agency for the action is that of man, i.e. he performs the action in the sense of participation of action, it is not his action. The agent of the *saṁnyastakarma* is according to *Kṛṣṇa* in his words “doer of work for Me” (*matkarmakṛt*) XI.55. *Kṛṣṇa* also gives injunction “be intent on (doing) actions for me”<sup>66</sup> you will succeed in doing action for me (*madartham karmāṇi kurvaṇ*) (XII.10). In *karmasanyāsa*, the action is performed but the ownership of action is transferred to *Kṛṣṇa*. *Saṁnyastakarma* even though performed through the participation of man, its ownership and responsibility is not vested in him (action does not bind him), it is vested somewhere else. This duality of performance of action but renunciation of it onto *Kṛṣṇa* is indicated by the use of expression *yoga-saṁnyastakarmāṇam* (IV.41) The *śloka* IV.41 reads: “him who has renounced actions by Yoga, whose doubts have been destroyed by wisdom, who is self-possessed, actions bind not...”<sup>67</sup> Actions bind not (*na karmāṇi nibadhnanti*) in the sense that he is not owner of the action, it cannot be attributed to him.

So, *saṁnyastakarma* means ‘properly vested action’ and it is vested properly on institution as person. So *saṁnyastakarma* is an institutional action as *Kṛṣṇa* represents the person that is an institution. Institutional action, even though performed through the participation of someone functionary in the institution, is not individual functionary’s action; it is the action of the institution. The



ownership and responsibility of institutional action belongs to and vests in not the individual functionary but belongs to and vests in the institution. The man who performs *saṁnyastakarma* is called by *Kṛṣṇa* in the Bhagavad Gita IX.27 as ‘the self-harnessed with the yoga of proper vesting (*saṁnyāsayogayuktātma*)’.

How has *Kṛṣṇa* succeeded in reinterpretation of *saṁnyāsa*? He tells in VI.2 “know that to be Yoga that which they call renunciation; no one, verily, becomes a Yogin who has not renounced volition.”<sup>68</sup> He combined the traditional sense of *saṁnyāsa* with *karmayoga*, thereby made the necessary modification in the meaning of *saṁnyāsa* required by its combination with *karmayoga*. As early as II.40 the essential elements of *karmayoga* were announced: “there is no destruction of effort here, there is no resulting harm,”<sup>69</sup> i.e. it retains the performance of action without giving rise to *kilbiṣa*. He needed to find a way for breaking the nexus between performance of action and fruit of action (*karma phala*). This *Kṛṣṇa* did by reinterpreting *saṁnyāsa*. *Kṛṣṇa* succeeded in combining the idea of *saṁnyāsa* with *karmayoga* to generate the understanding of *saṁnyāsa* not merely as “abandonment” but “abandonment onto” because this possibility was inherent in the traditional semantics of the term. The author of The Bhagavad Gita has merely elaborated a meaning in it, which had precedence in the semantic history of *saṁnyāsa* and its cognates. In the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*<sup>70</sup> and in the *Śrautasūtras*<sup>71</sup> just as in The Bhagavad Gita III.30, the place where the items are thrown down is indicated by the locative case. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* *saṁnyāsa* is used twice with the meaning ‘deposit’ or ‘trust’, which comes close to what the author of the Bhagavad Gita has in mind when he states that one should surrender action (*karma*) onto *Kṛṣṇa*.<sup>72</sup> There are twenty-two occurrences of the term *saṁnyāsa* and its cognates in the Bhagavad Gita.<sup>73</sup> Out of these nine times *saṁnyāsa* and its cognates are used with fruit of action (*karmaphala*), decision (*saṁkalpa*), enmity (*dveṣa*), expectation (*ākāṅkṣā*), attachment (*saṅga*), etc. as object.<sup>74</sup> In such uses the term *saṁnyāsa* and its cognates have the sense of renunciation but without the implication that these are deposited at some place or given to somebody. This kind of use of *saṁnyāsa* and its cognates retains the traditional sense of renunciation but it departs from the traditional sense as it is renunciation not of ritual act but of fruit of action (*karmaphala*), decision (*saṁkalpa*), enmity (*dveṣa*), expectation (*ākāṅkṣā*), attachment (*saṅga*), etc. This reinterpretation has become necessary, because it is essential to the earlier reinterpreted sense of *saṁnyāsa* and its cognates in which the action (*karma*) is performed but it is renounced unto *Kṛṣṇa* retaining the participation (without ownership) in the action (*karma*) and when action (*karma*) is renounced unto *Kṛṣṇa* the fruit of action (*karmaphala*) is also renounced without bothering onto whom the fruit of action (*karmaphala*) is going. That is why the Bhagavad Gita calls a person who abandons his attachment to the fruits of action “permanent renouncer” (*nityasaṁnyāsi*) (V.3). The ‘permanent renouncer’ (*nityasaṁnyāsin*)

of the Bhagavad Gita differs from the regular traditional renouncer (*saṁnyāsin*). The latter abandons action (*karma*) once, namely during the rite of renunciation, whereas the former is engaged continually in abandoning attachment. For the Bhagavad Gita the ‘permanent renouncer’ (*nityasaṁnyāsin*) represents the true renouncer: “he is renouncer and harnessed and [he is] not the one without fire and inactive” (VI.1)<sup>75</sup>. Thus the Bhagavad Gita proposes ‘renouncer of all decisions’ (*sarvasaṁkalpasamnyāsi*) (VI.2,4) as an alternative to the oft-repeated traditional injunction ‘renounce all action’ (*sarvakarmāṇi saṁnyaset*) in the sense of abandonment and non-performance of all action (*karma*). There are thirteen occurrences of *saṁnyāsa* and its cognates with action (*karma*) as its object in the Bhagavad Gita.<sup>76</sup> Two such uses are through the mouth of Arjuna who always uses the terms in the traditional sense of renunciation and non-performance of action (*karma*) simpliciter without retention of performance of the action (*karma*) and without any implication as to onto whom actions (*karmas*) are renounced.<sup>77</sup> Out of the remaining eleven uses through the mouth of Kṛṣṇa five uses<sup>78</sup> are in the new sense of performance of action (*karma*) but renunciation of it onto Kṛṣṇa with retention of performance (without ownership) of the action (*karma*), and six times<sup>79</sup> in the traditional sense of renunciation of action (*karma*) simpliciter without retention of performance of the action (*karma*) and without any implication as to onto whom actions (*karmas*) are renounced, i.e. complete abandonment of performance of action. Kṛṣṇa uses the term in all the three senses and the three senses are interrelated without any confusion or inconsistency. Renunciation of fruit of action (*karmaphala*), decision (*saṁkalpa*), enmity (*dveṣa*), expectation (*ākāṅkṣā*), attachment (*saṅga*), etc. without the implication that these are renounced on to someone or somewhere because it is logically absurd to speak of such things as being renounced on to someone or somewhere. The implication of this is that any action to satisfy desire, i.e. *kāmyakarma*, has to be renounced in the traditional sense of their non-performance (XIII.2) and hence without the implication that these are renounced on someone or somewhere. So with respect to *kāmyakarma* the word *saṁnyāsa* must have the same sense as it has with respect to fruit of action (*karmaphala*), decision (*saṁkalpa*), enmity (*dveṣa*), expectation (*ākāṅkṣā*), attachment (*saṅga*) etc. But regular action (*niyata karma*) cannot be renounced in the sense of their non-performance altogether (XVIII.7). These actions are performed renouncing all desires, therefore these actions are renounced only in the sense of renunciation of their ownership onto Kṛṣṇa retaining their performance (without ownership) on oneself and hence there arises the third sense of the term *saṁnyāsa*. All the three senses of *saṁnyāsa* are employed in the Bhagavad Gita without any confusion or inconsistency.



## Transformation of *Karma* into Institutional Action

Earlier it was mentioned that action is transformed when performed not out of desire. The meaning of transformation of action (*karma*) becomes clear in light of the three senses of *saṁnyāsa*. Transformation does not mean that there is an identified action, which can be performed out of desire for its fruits, and when it is purified by knowledgeable resolve, it gets transformed and is now the same action is done without desire for fruit. That is misreading of the doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita. What it means is that when one performs action for satisfying desire and when one performs action impelled by knowledgeable resolve, not only different actions are performed, but these actions have different nature. To put it very simply when one performs action to satisfy desire it is personal action attributed to the person himself and he is responsible for it. Such actions are not to be performed at all. But when the action is performed as professional action required by the institution in a situation, like the professional warrior action required by *cāturvarṇyam* in the situation of war from Arjuna, not only the identity of action is different but its very nature is different, as it is the action of the institution and not the personal action of Arjuna although it is performed through his participation. This is the meaning of seeing inaction (*akarma*) in action (*karma*). Such actions have to be performed, yet these are seen as inaction (*akarma*) because these are not the actions of those persons who perform them but of the institution. Seeing action (*karma*) in inaction (*akarma*) is when I see someone drowning whom I hate and I perform no action to save him even though it is required of me as a life guard of the concerned institution who runs the swimming pool. That “inaction” (*akarma*) on my part is really my personal action (*karma*) performed out of desire to harm him. To use modern legal terminology, in such situation even omission is an act for which one can be held responsible and is liable to be punished. This is just one difference in the nature of interested (*sakāma*) and disinterested (*niskāma*) action (*karma*). In the institutional context, someone else’s action also becomes the action of the head of the institution even when the latter is himself inactive because the former’s action is properly vested action (*saṁnyasta karma*).

## Beginning of Reconciliation of Performance and Sanyāsa of *Karma*

How does the author of the Bhagavad Gita reconcile the performance of the action with the surrendering or vesting of the same action to institution? The argument to reconcile the performance of action by man with the surrendering or vesting of action to institution begins with III.9 “except the case of action for the sake of *yajña*, otherwise this world is binding by action... perform action for the sake

of that... free from attachment.”<sup>80</sup> Action performed for the sake of *yajña* does not bind man. That is to say when the action is performed by man for the sake of *yajña* the action is not attributed to him. It is *yajña karma*. Here, even though the action is executed by man but his ownership of the *yajña karma* is denied. All other actions, like actions performed out of attraction or repulsion of sense objects, bind us. That is to say action done out of desire for enjoyment of sense objects are such that they attach to man, i.e. their ownership belongs to man. Therefore, the advice is to perform action for the sake of *yajña* free from attachment to sense objects. When action is performed free from attachment then it cannot be man’s personal action.

The idea of *yajña* is very old dating back to *Rigveda*. According to *Rigveda yajña* is a woven texture that holds together. “The *yajña* that is spread out with threads on all sides, drawn tight with a hundred and one divine acts, is woven by these fathers as they come near: ‘Weave forward, weave backward,’ they say as they sit by the loom that is stretched tight. The *Puruṣa* stretches the warp and draws the weft; the *Puruṣa* has spread it out upon this dome of the sky. These are the pegs that are fastened in place; they made melodies into the shuttles for weaving.”<sup>83</sup> So, *yajña* is the weaving of human actions. The *yajña* is nothing but introduction of solidarity in the world by the *ṛṣis* in the Vedic period. The action required for weaving the *yajña* is not decided by attraction and repulsion of sense objects. According to *Rigveda* 1.164.35 “this *yajña* is the navel of the world.”<sup>84</sup> *Nābhi* from *√nabh*, to expand, is also ‘navel’. *Nābhi* has another meaning also. According to Śāthapatha Brāhmaṇa I.1.2.23 madhyam vai nābhirmadhyamamayam centre is navel. But it is a centre that binds, for Durgācārya in his nirukta 4.3.5 declares nahanameva *Nābhi* that which binds is navel. According to grammar the word ‘*Nābhi*’ is derived from *√naha* meaning binding by extending through the application of the principle ‘*nahō bhaśca*’ (unā. 575) by which it gets suffix *n* and *hakāra* becomes *bhakāra*. So, *yajña* is the uniting principle of everything in the world. This idea of action for the sake of *yajña* in the course of the argument becomes action for the sake of “gathering of the people in a unity” (*lokasaṃgraha*). But that transition will require further analysis of the idea of *yajña*.

*Yajña* is the earliest rudimentary idea of human practice of institution, where actions are woven together to erect a united structure of people, which was conceived as “gathering of the people in a unity” (*lokasaṃgraha*).

Next step is to show that even if role of desire as a motivation for performance of action is denied but satisfaction of desire without it becoming motivating factor is not denied. III.10 declares “having created mankind together with *yajña*, the Prajapati said of yore, ‘By this you shall propagate; let this be to you the desirable bestowing cow’.”<sup>85</sup> The mythical setting in the beginning of creation indicates that

what is said holds good from time immemorial. The validity of what is said is prescriptive. What is indicated is that mankind is never without *yajña*, i.e. without unity and solidarity or without practice of institutions. Only in solidarity and unity, in practice of institutions, where actions of people are woven together, that mankind can prosper and survive every generation. The action has to be performed for solidarity and unity, for practice of institution, i.e. weaving it in *yajña* not for satisfying the desires. But desires get satisfied nonetheless. Since, the *yajña* is declared to be the desirable bestowing cow; it satisfies desire in its turn even though action is not performed to satisfy desire.

How does this happen? Here in III.11 for the first time in the Bhagavad Gita the idea of deva is introduced and in III.12 it is claimed “nourished by the *yajña*, the devas shall indeed serve on you the desirable enjoyments.”<sup>86</sup> Deities do the activity of satisfying desire of man when man performs *yajñakarma*, which strengthens them. III.13: “the righteous, who eat the remnant of the *yajña*, are freed from all sins; but *sin do the impious* eat who cook for their own sakes.”<sup>87</sup> Those who ‘cook for own sake’ means those who ‘act to satisfy their own desire for sense objects’. The impious, who acts to satisfy his own desire for sense objects acquires *pāpa* or *kilbiṣa*, i.e. sin, impurities, taint, or blame. This is the adhesive that binds man to action and the action becomes his personal action. When man eats the surplus from the *yajña* no sin (*kilbiṣa*) is acquired and so he is not bound to the action, i.e. *yajñakarma* does not become his personal action. Here it is to be noted that the Bhagavad Gita does not deny enjoyment to man in the world. But the enjoyment is given by devas (deities) automatically; men are not to perform action for the sake of enjoyment or satisfaction of desires.

In later literature the automatic satisfaction of desire when a person is performing *yajña karma* without any attachment and without expectation of *karmaphala* on *quid pro quo* basis was explicitly recognised as *dakṣiṇā* (the wages of expertise). The *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa* - *Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa* XVI.1.13 makes a very important point: “The *dakṣiṇās* are the internal fastenings of the *yajña*; a chariot devoid of fastenings is not able to carry. Even as by a (chariot) provided with fastenings one is sure to attain the reaching of a desired goal, so he attains through this (*yajña*) provided with *dakṣiṇās* that which he desires.”<sup>88</sup> Here the role of *dakṣiṇā* as a cohesive force that holds the *yajña* ratha together to enable one to complete the journey of life is emphasized. This brings the idea of *yajña* very close to modern institution where one is paid wages for his role and work, without such wages the institution will fall apart. But there is a difference between wages and *dakṣiṇā*, wages have *quid pro quo* relation with labour but *dakṣiṇās* are not so related to action even when they are paid in the context of *yajña*, these are independent of the specific *yajña karma*.

## Unity and Harmony

In the next stage of argument the unity and harmony of people is included as part of the dynamic circular unity and harmony of the cosmos by introducing the idea of Brahman. In III.14-15 it is claimed: “from food creatures come forth; the production of food is from rain; rain comes forth from *yajña*; *yajña* is born of action; know that action comes from Brahman, and that Brahman comes from the Imperishable. Therefore, the all-pervading Brahman ever rests in *yajña*.”<sup>89</sup> Living beings come from food. Food here stands not only for what is eaten, but also for everything that is enjoyed, which does not exclude even sexual enjoyment. Food, what is enjoyed comes from rain or rain cloud, *parjanya*. Here *parjanya* stands for everything that has the capacity for creation. That is claimed in *Rigveda* 5.83. The very first mantra says “Sing with these songs thy welcome to the Mighty, with adoration praise and call *Parjanya*. The Bull, loud roaring, swift to send his bounty, lays in the plants the seed for germination.” The reference to analogy with bull makes clear that sexual creative capacity is not excluded from *Parjanya*. *Parjanya* comes from *yajña*. The author of the Bhagavad Gita now extends *yajña* from the realm of human practice to the cosmic level. *Yajña* comes from action, where action refers not only to human action, but also action of the cosmic element, like the devas. Action (*karma*) comes from *brahma*. This is *Sāṃkhya brahma*, which undivided appears as divided in beings XIII.16<sup>90</sup>. It is almost coordinated with *Prakṛti* but not identified with *Prakṛti*, as action and movement belongs to *Prakṛti*, because Brahman is “*Puruṣa* seated in *Prakṛti*” (XIII.21).<sup>91</sup> Hence, action emerging from *Prakṛti* and action emerging from Brahman are different. But know that *brahma* comes from imperishable. This is clear indication that *brahma* here is not that of Vedānta as Vedānta’s *brahma* has no ontological origin.

Sāṃkhya Brahman comes from imperishable. The imperishable here is all pervading *Puruṣa* of Sāṃkhya, which is in each living being as well as in this entire cosmos. The unity of *Puruṣa* is the supreme good which is the origin of every thing. According to Mahābhārata 11364 “Unity is the imperishable; plurality is the perishable”<sup>92</sup>. The world of plurality is finite in duration, and rests on the basis of a greater, more fundamental unity, which is not finite but eternal. But this unity is not automatically established in practice. It has to be consciously established unity, that is unity of brahman, i.e. *Puruṣa* as reflected in buddhi, which establishes unity in everything. Brahman is established in *yajña*. That is to say unity is established in *yajña*. Why is this sudden reversal? Imperishable → brahma → action → *yajña* → *parjanya* → living beings is a linear progression. Then why is the need of reversal of movement from *yajña* to Brahman, i.e. establishing Brahman in *yajña*, when *yajña* has origin from brahma through action? This indicates that there is a unity and harmony of dynamic cycle here. The suggestion is that man and his social

practice is part of the totality and unity and harmony of a cosmic system. Insofar as the world of human practice is located within the entirety of what exists, the whole sphere of human practice and action has its place in the cosmic unity and harmony. This unity of the cosmic nature has to be maintained consciously by human practice.

This requirement is because even though man is part of the unity of cosmos, he has the capacity to disrupt the cosmic unity and harmony. So there is need to establish conscious unity of *yajña*. III.16 claims: “he who does not follow here the cycle thus set in motion, who is of sinful life, indulging in senses, he lives in vain.”<sup>93</sup> The entire cosmos is conceived as an institution, which is a person in Vedic tradition in general and the Bhagavad Gita in particular. The human being who indulges in senses, i.e. the human being who acts out of attraction and revulsion of sense objects disrupts the cycle mentioned in III.16. So, it is the man who acts to satisfy his desire disrupts the harmony and unity both cosmic and human institutional. He disrupts the unity and harmony of human practice and together with it the cosmic institution. He lives a meaningless life, by disrupting the unity of practice at all levels. This is the most important argument of the Bhagavad Gita against performance of action motivated by desire, i.e. motivated by passion for sense objects, which is the seventh argument mentioned above against desire (*kāma*) as motivating factor behind action. It by implication is telling man to perform action to consciously maintain the unity of cyclical system of cosmic institution of which human practice and institution is a part. Here we must not forget that the existence of any institution means the maintenance of the regular cycle of actions of the institution be it a university, or a bank or parliament. When the human beings manning the institutions start acting out of desires then the cycle of actions of the institutions gets disrupted.

### **Motivation for Action: *Lokasaṃgraha***

Now the question is: if one is not to act moved by attraction or repulsion of sense objects, then how is he to act? What motivates him to act? The answer to these questions begins in the next *śloka* and ends in *śloka* 20. This answer recovers and reinterprets the essence of traditional idea of *saṃnyāsa* as renunciation of *karma*.

III. 17 declares: “that man, verily, who rejoices only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone, - for him there is no work.”<sup>94</sup> Here the most important idea is that of work (*kārya*). Work (*kārya*) is generally contrasted with play. The play activity is a “pure” activity “because the game is played, not as ‘work’ is ordinarily performed, with a view to secure some end essential to the worker’s well-being, but exuberantly; the worker works for what he

needs, the player plays because of what he is.... The best and most God-like way of living is to '*play the game*'.<sup>95</sup> The word *ātmarati* indicates the amorous play of man with the self. This is further reinforced by the words *ātmatrpta* and *ātmani santuṣṭa*, both of which mean 'satisfied in the self', which indicate absence of all external telos or goals. What the *śloka* indicates is that the act of man who rejoices only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone cannot be of the nature of work (*kārya*). The *śloka* does not indicate any absence of activity on the part of such a man as interpreted by many commentators. Absence of activity is not indicted because of the presence of the word *ātmarati* (amorous play of man with the self), which indicates *ātma ramaṇa* (movement in the self), which cannot be passive or inactive.

The second most important idea is that of *ātman*. This is *ātman* is that of *Sāṃkhya* as the context makes it clear (III.3). So, this *ātman* is pure unitary institutional consciousness called *Puruṣa*, which is distinguished from *prakṛti*, which is unconscious principle of multiplicity as it is *traiguṇya* 'three stranded'. Here we have to ask: Why does the Bhagavad Gita introduce *ātman* or *Puruṣa*, which is pure contentless institutional consciousness at this stage of the argument? *Ātman*, which is identified with *Puruṣa* here, which will be identified later with *puruṣottama* when various *Puruṣas* will be distinguished, represent the institutional personality in general without representing any specific institution as person. *Ātman* is introduced here because it is the principle of unity, as contentless institutional consciousness it is one and same in all beings in all institutions without differentiation. Difference begins only with the content so that I am aware of the content of my mind on which the institutional consciousness shines and I am not aware of the content of the mind of another even though it is one and the same institutional consciousness that shines. Pure institutional consciousness undifferentiated unitary is same in all beings not only qualitatively but also numerically as it has eidetic being like being of number. But opacity comes whenever we move away from pure institutional consciousness and come to *buddhi* and other evolutes of *prakṛti*, because others' *buddhi* is not available to my institutional consciousness. My institutional consciousness can shine only on my *buddhi*, etc. It is not surprising that *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas*, etc. are put on the side of *jaḍa*, the unconscious. That is to say as pure undifferentiated institutional consciousness of yours as well as mine is one and same as there is nothing to distinguish yours from mine or you from me that is the reason it is institutional consciousness in general. But the moment the consciousness is consciousness of something, i.e. it is intentional, the opacity comes in. I am conscious of what I am thinking, but not conscious of what you are thinking. So as pure institutional consciousness we have one and the same institutional consciousness, it is the principle of unity. But when it is consciousness of something the opacity and



consequent difference comes in and multiplicity sets in. *Ātmārpta* and *ātmani santuṣṭa* indicate the satisfaction of man in unity of institutional consciousness, i.e. satisfaction in the institutional personality. So, *ātmarati* is not only one who plays but is one who is participating in the conscious unity of play, which is the play of the institution. His participation is for maintaining consciously the unity of play, the institutional play. As against the agent of previous *śloka* who performs karma for satisfaction of desires, which has seat in senses, mind and buddhi all of which are multiple in multiple man, disrupting the cycle of cosmic play, the agent of the present *śloka*, *ātmarati* participates in the cosmic play to maintain conscious unity of the cosmic play, the cosmic institution, because he is satisfied in unitary undifferentiated pure consciousness, i.e. this unitary consciousness is thereon the thinker side as one relatum of intentional structure of thought.

The play aspect of the *karma* comes into the fore further in the next two verses. III. 18 text speaks further about the *ātmarati*: “for him, there is here no purpose (*artha*) whatever in what is done or what is not done. Nor is there in all beings any one he should resort to for any purpose (*artha*).”<sup>96</sup> What is only indicated in the previous *śloka* is made explicit in the present *śloka*. The *śloka* explicitly states the absence of purpose for the man who is *ātmarati*, but it does not state any absence of activity for such a person. *Bādrāyaṇa* in *Brahma Sūtra*, 2.1.32-33 states, “not undertaken by way of any purpose, but simply by way of sport, in the common sense of the word.”<sup>97</sup> Here *artha* (purpose) is understood as goal external to action, unlike the goal of unity that is there in undifferentiated institutional consciousness, which is internal to action. The man who rejoices only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone, neither acts nor does not act for any purpose, i.e. for purpose external to action and inaction. He also does not relate to others for achievement of any external purpose. He is not a modern man who believes in networking, beyond the given institution, with others, which will be of use in mobilising support to manipulate the institution, leading to its destruction. Such a man’s (*ātmarati*’s) acts of commission, omission, or relation are not purposive, i.e. are not determined by any external purpose. Then the question is: how does one act?

The answer is given finally in III.19, which was already alluded to in III.9. The text of III.19 states: “therefore, without attachment, constantly perform the action which should be done; for, performing action without attachment, man reaches the supreme person [which is the institutional person].”<sup>98</sup> The injunction is to perform all actions that need to be done without attachment, i.e. without attachment to sense objects, and hence without being impelled by desires. To do action for an external purpose is to do action out of attachment. When a man acts without attachment he achieves the highest *arche*, which is here the *akṣara* as mentioned in

III.15. To achieve the highest *arche* also amounts to consciously establish unity in the institution (*yajña*) as mentioned also in that verse. This amounts to accepting a telos internal to action, not external to action. This telos is also *a priori* and not empirical based on attachment to sense objects. What is that internal telos? It is clarified in the next sloka through well known examples as gathering people into a unity (*lokasamgraha*).

The next *sloka*, i.e. III.20 states: “by action only, indeed, Janaka and others did attain right success. Even with a view to ‘gathering of people in a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*), you are fit to act.”<sup>99</sup> Here the phrase ‘with a view to gathering of people in a unity (*lokasamgraha*)’ is very important. Gathering of people in a unity (*lokasamgraha*) is not a purpose external to action to be achieved by it. If it were so it would be fruit of action (*karmaphala*), which it is not as explained earlier. We perform action belonging to the ‘people’ (*loka*) that is already ‘gathered into a unity’ (*samgrhita*) and our action further maintains that ‘people gathered into a unity’ (*samgrhita loka*). Hence action is performed with a view to ‘gathering of people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*), but not taking ‘gathering of people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*) as external purpose. The later would mean that before the action there was no ‘people gathered into a unity’ (*samgrhita loka*) and the ‘people gathered into a unity’ (*samgrhita loka*) will come into existence after the action has been performed. But such is not the case. The context of action is the ‘people gathered into a unity’ (*samgrhita loka*), even if the context is the limit of ‘people gathered into a unity’ (*samgrhita loka*), which is the context of war. War is not chaos but an organised conflict (*samgrāmaṁ* [Bhagavadgītā II.33]) to resolve some issue by force, which could not be solved in any other way, that is to say that *samgrāmaṁ* is a forceful settlement. How can we say ‘gathering of the people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*) is both origin for action as well as model for action. The duality is inherent in the very idea of cycle mentioned in *sloka* 16. In mantra-15 cycle is that of *brahma-action-yajna-brahman*. So *Brahman* is both the origin of action as well as model to be established in *yajña* by action. This dual role of *Brahman* is transferred to ‘gathering of the people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*) in the present *sloka*. Both ‘gathering of the people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*) as well as *Brahman* refer to some kind of unity, which is the institutional unity, which is both origin of as well as model for action. The reference to Janaka is to bring to fore another aspect of action with a view to ‘gathering of the people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*). ‘Gathering of the people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*) as origin of and model for action does not provide any decision procedure for ascertaining the definite action to be performed. There is no such decision procedure that can be learned and followed for ascertaining action to be performed in a situation. So, here one depends on precedent and examples. One ascertains what action to perform by following (but not imitating) the examples of people who have attained



perfection, maturity or ripeness in performing action, like the ones of Janaka. Why following an example is not mere imitation? It is answered in the next *śloka*.

III.21 says: “whatsoever a great man does, that alone the other men do; whatever he sets up as the standard that the people follow.”<sup>100</sup> Great men are exemplars. What action they perform the lesser men also perform the same action. This may give an impression that the lesser mortals imitate the exemplars. But this is not a correct reading. Hence in the very next line the possibility of this error is removed. The people follow the standard or measure they set up (*yat pramāṇam kurute*). To use an analogy from the modern law we say that following the precedent of a higher court by lower courts does not amount to imitation of the past judgment of the higher court, what is accepted by the lower court, which is binding, is the *ratio decidendi*, the reason on which the case was decided. Similar thing happens when lesser mortals follow the great men. Following their precedent does not amount to imitation of their external action. What is accepted as binding by the lesser mortals is the reason on which the great men decide the action for performance. That ratio (*pramāṇam*, measure) is followed. Here reason depending on precedence requires memory for recollection of examples from past. Hence it was argued in the Bhagavadgītā, “When a man thinks of objects, attachment for them arises. From attachment arises desire; from desire arises anger. From anger arises delusion; from delusion, failure of memory; from failure of memory, loss of reason; from loss of reason he is utterly ruined.” (II.62-63)<sup>101</sup>. The need for memory of exemplar and measure of action arises because the kind of action *the Bhagavadgītā* is speaking about cannot be decided on the basis of any external goal taking into account the efficiency of the action in achieving the goal as these actions have no external goal. The action performed in an institution does not relate to unity of the institution as a means to an external end.

In III.22 to 24 *Kṛṣṇa* presents himself as the exemplar for action and argues: “I have no work whatsoever to perform in the three worlds nor is there anything un-obtained that should be obtained; yet I engage in action. For, should I not ever engage in action, unflaggingly, men would in all respects follow my path. These people would be ruined if I should not perform action; I would be the agent of chaos, and would be destroyer of these beings born.”<sup>102</sup> Here we must ask the question: what is the purpose of giving this second example when the example of Janaka is already given? In II.61 *Kṛṣṇa* innocuously identifies himself with the *sat tattva*, which was designated variously as *Puruṣa*, *dehin* or *śarīriṇa*, which was established to be eternal, permanent and immortal, without any *bhāva vikāra* (modification), which is declared to be something that can neither act nor be acted upon, i.e. it can neither be the agent nor the patient of action. Now in III.22 declares: “I have nothing whatsoever to achieve in the three worlds, O son of Pritha, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained; yet I engage

in action.”<sup>103</sup> This highlights that the *sat tattva*, is the institutional personality, as institutional personality it lacks nothing yet it engages in action. What is being highlighted from III.22-24 is that strictly speaking, institutional personality never acts by itself, yet the institutional personality acts, if institutions stop acting, which is the same as institutional personality not acting, and then it would lead to chaos and ruin men. The perspective of the Bhagavad Gita is quite advanced and ahead of its times. It recognises the apparent contradictory nature of the institution, i.e. the institution cannot act by itself yet institutions act. If institutions do not act then it will lead to chaos and will ruin mankind. This apparent contradiction will be resolved only in the eighteenth chapter. But an indication is given regarding the solution of the problem.

The institutional personality acts without slackening (*atandritah*). If institutions were to slacken and stop functioning men will follow suit, i.e. they also will stop functioning. If the cosmic institution, which is *Kṛishṇa*, were to stop performance of action, these worlds, which are well established, will be uprooted. If the cosmic institution were to stop functioning, cosmic institutional personality, i.e. *Kṛishṇa* would become the agent of complete confusion. There is the implication that the omission of *Kṛishṇa* to perform his function will become on his part the act of commission of confusion in the world. The confusion, i.e. the breakdown of law and order, will lead to the destruction of all people, all who are born.

In III.25 the author concludes: “As ignorant men act attached to work, O Bharata, so should the wise man act, unattached aiming at the unity of people.”<sup>104</sup> The wise man, as he belongs to the institution, should act unattached from an objective of ‘gathering people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*). After having argued for performing action without desire, *Kṛṣṇa* argues for performing action only for the objective of gathering people into a unity. Ignorant man always acts to satisfy desire out of attraction of sense objects. In the same way the wise man should act always, as he belongs to the institution, without any desire without any attraction for sense objects, but always from an objective of ‘gathering people into a unity’ (*lokasamgraha*).

Here a complexity in the argument must be noted. The ignorant on the one hand do not imitate the external action of the great and wise man, he only follows the reason or the ratio or measure of the action of the great and wise, yet on the other hand the ignorant performs such action out of attachment while the great and wise perform it without attachment to action. So, the internal measure *pramāṇam* of action has to be distinguished from the issue of the performance of action out of attachment or non-attachment. We will see that the measure of the action of great and wise man has to be determined in reference to the ‘gathering of people into a unity, (*lokasamgraha*), while the issue of attachment and non-attachment refers to the ownership and non-ownership of action.

Finally in III.26 it is further concluded: “Let no man endowed with felt knowledgeable resolve create a division (confusion) in the minds of the ignorant who are attached to action; he should make them do all actions, himself rightly doing them being harnessed.”<sup>105</sup> With respect to higher ups in institutions it is now stated that they being endowed with felt knowledgeable resolve should not create confusion in the minds of the ignorant who are attached to action, by setting wrong examples of action himself. He should make them do all actions by setting himself as an exemplar, which he can do by himself rightly doing all actions being harnessed to actions as required by yoga. This holds good for any modern institution even today. So it was a revolutionary injunction, that understood ahead of its time how any institution, whatever that may be, functions and requires its higher ups to act in what manner.

After arguing for performing action without desire, but performing it for only objective of gathering people into a unity, finally in III 30 as mentioned above, it is concluded that even if the action is performed by men, i.e. members of the institution, these actions have to be renounced onto *Kṛṣṇa*, who represents the institutional personality, *Puruṣa*, the *sat tattva*, that means that ownership of action has to be given up onto institutional personality. Here the institution as person is the *Kṛṣṇa* himself. The argument is that as desire is absent and the objective of the action is not a desire of man rather collective unity, the action belongs to the collectivity, i.e. institution, represented by *Kṛṣṇa*, the institutional personality. This is how performance of action by man is reconciled with renunciation of action onto *Kṛṣṇa*.

If we take into account the context where the reinterpretation of *karma saṁnyāsa* in the Bhagavad Gita takes place, i.e. the context of battlefield, then the import of this reinterpretation becomes clear. Let it be emphasized that the message of the Bhagavad Gita is given, when Arjuna refused to discharge his professional duty of *cāturvarṇyam*, the classical Indian institution, as a warrior after entering the arena of war when the war bugles have already been sounded for an imminent battle, to advise him how to discharge his professional institutional duty.

The context makes it clear that the Bhagavad Gita’s advocacy is that of corporate institutional action to use modern expression. The split between the performance and ownership of action is a clear pointer in that direction.

## Goal, Temporality and Performance Structure of Action

Now the issue arises as to how exactly ‘gathering of people into a unity’ (*lokasaṁgraha*) as a goal relates to action if it is not external goal. In what sense it is internal to institutional action. The purpose or the goal for the sake of which

activity is performed can relate to the activity in three ways which we can for sake of convenience distinguish and label in the following way: (1) goal as end of activity, (2) goal as abstraction from the activity and (3) goal as actualisation in the activity.<sup>106</sup>

(1) Goal as the end of the activity: in this kind of goal when the goal is achieved, i.e. goal comes into existence the activity is finished, terminated or ended. The goal puts limit to the activity. The goal and the activity are distinct and separate. Here the activity is subject to and subordinate to the activity. The activity is merely meant to the goal. Since the activity is distinct and separate from the goal, if another activity can bring that goal into existence more economically, then one can choose that activity without giving up the same goal. The example of goal of this kind is the pot as the goal of activity of making the pot. (2) Goal as abstraction from the activity: in this kind of goal when the goal comes into existence the activity is not terminated as both activity and the goal can exist simultaneously. For example, taking walk for the sake of health. When health is achieved one does not stop taking walk. To maintain the health one may continue to take walk. Even though the taking of walk can exist simultaneously with the goal, i.e. health achieved, unlike the case of the previous kind of goal, still this kind of goal relates to the activity in the way the previous kind of goal does in some respect. Here the activity relates to the goal as a means. If health can be achieved economically by exercise at home one may opt for that activity rather than taking walk and achieve the same health. The difference in the two kinds of goals is that in the first kind of goal when it is achieved activity ceases, while in the second kind of goal even when the goal is achieved the activity may not cease. But the similarity between the two goals is that goal is the matter of primary concern while activity is not of prime concern. So, a particular activity can be dispensed in favour of another activity to achieve the same goal in both the kinds of goals. (3) Goal as actualisation in the activity: this concept of goal is radically different from the previous two kinds of goals. Here, the goal and the quality of activity are one and the same. The goal is so sensitive to the means that the two become identical with each other. So the idea of goal undergoes transformation in meaning. The goal as distinct and separate from the activity or as that which comes into existence after the activity is performed is no more applicable here. In the third kind of goal, the goal is present in the action itself. In this case, the activity itself, that which is performed in a specific way with specific qualities is the goal itself. In this case, the goal coincides with the performing of the activity itself. For the activity to be perfect in itself, to be totally in actuality and to have in itself the goal is one and the same. The play as the goal of activity of playing is one such example. 'Gathering of people into a unity' (*lokasamgraha*) in the Bhagavad Gita is goal of action in this third sense.

The end (termination) of activity also has three meanings: end of activity as goal of activity, (b) end of activity as limit of the activity and (c) end of activity as mere cessation (or suspension) of the activity. 107

The activity which is subordinated to goal, has its limit within the goal, i.e. limit coincides with the goal. (a) The finished pot is the goal of activity of pot making, once the finished pot comes into existence the activity has reached its limit and comes to an end. (b) The activity called living has a limit in death. The activity of life comes to an end when the limit of activity of living, i.e. death is reached but death is not the goal of activity of living. (c) The activity that itself is the goal, precisely because it is goal, it has no limit and precisely for that reason no end (termination) either. In this case, the goal and limit have opposite meaning. If the goal is present, then limit is absent precisely because the former is present, i.e. unlimited is present. If the activity is present as goal it cannot be absent by reaching any limit point as activity. Such activity, which is goal in itself, for that reason, is without limit, i.e. unlimited and hence is infinite. The play activity is such unlimited activity as the play activity is its own goal. So, the end of play is mere cessation (suspension), which can be resumed again from where it was suspended. The activity of *lokasaṃgraha* in the Bhagavad Gita is unlimited and hence infinite. Social institutions and practices require such activities, as they are constituted by such activities.

In what sense can activity be infinite, i.e. without end and without limit? When it is cyclically repetitive it has no end and no limit. A cycle has no end, as the cycle is the same everywhere. That is why in the Bhagavad Gita human action is seen as the part of established cycle (*pravartitaṃ cakram*) of cosmic institution III.16 as stated above. Now such cyclical infinite unlimited action is difficult to grasp for the modern mind as every action is for some external purpose for him. But the idea of cyclical infinite unlimited action is very simple if we think of corporate institutional action. Let us take university as an example. Activity of admission, teaching and examination for the institution are regular cyclical action to be repeated every semester or year as the case may be. All human practices and institutions from university to parliament are constituted by such cycle of activities. Since the Bhagavad Gita advocates human action as corporate institutional action no doubt it advocates actions, which are infinitely repeated in cycle as all human institutions or practices are conceived to be eternal. One may argue that if this be the case then fighting in the battle is also infinitely repetitive action. That appears to be a non-sensical claim. But is it nonsensical claim really? The cycle of activity can be regular like *nitya karma* in the family, or it may be irregular, to be repeated on the contingency of some event happening like birth and death. Activity of fighting in the battle is conceived as such irregular cycle, which is contingent upon something happening. This is the significance of the claim of mythic *Kṛṣṇa*

in IV.7-8 “Whenever there is a decay of order, and an ascendancy of disorder, then I manifest Myself; for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the firm establishment of order, I am born in age after age.”<sup>108</sup> This is an irregular cycle contingent upon certain happenings. So, fighting in a battle, which really is forceful right settlement of institution, is such irregular cycle of activity, and yet it is a repetitive cycle. There is repetitive but irregular occurrence of need to forcefully and rightly settle institutions. Given the twisted nature with which man has emerged from nature the conditions of war, hence the need to forcefully and rightly settle the institutions, take place albeit irregularly necessitating the repetition of fighting in the war to restore order of the institutions.

The infinite cyclical activity that needs to be repeated with the cycle of time has consequences for understanding both time and performance of action different from the modern understanding of time and performance of action. The modern understanding of time is that of empty time, which we can fill up with our act according to our free will. But the time structure needed by action of the Bhagavad Gita is not the empty time but the fulfilled time, time that comes full of activity. Hence action originates in Brahman as *Kāla Puruṣa*. This kind of time structure is available in celebration of festivals. The time of the festival comes full of activities. We cannot fill the time of festival by any action performed at our free will. The time of festival is a fulfilled time. This has a backfire effect on the conception of performance of action. Since the time comes with activities we are merely participating in the activity that the time has brought. Performance of action has the structure of participation in already accomplished deed. As indicated above this kind of time structure and structure of performance is available to us in the structure of celebration of festival. Our participation in corporate institutional action as envisaged by the Bhagavad Gita has this kind of time structure and this kind of structure of celebration. This is the meaning of the claim of *Kṛṣṇa* in the Bhagavad Gita XI.34 “Drona and Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karṇa and other brave warriors are (already) killed by Me”<sup>109</sup>, and at the same breath injunction to Arjuna: “you kill them; do not fear, do fight, you shall conquer.”<sup>110</sup> The injunction is to perform the done deed, which is the structure of celebration, like the celebration of festival. This structure of celebration fits with the corporate institutional action. The action belongs to the already existing institution, but the member performs that action. The idea is that the corporate institution is nothing but an arrangement of actions in time, as the time comes institution displays its action and members perform them as required.<sup>111</sup>

‘Proper vesting of action’ (*karmasaṃnyāsa*) and performance of the action ‘done already’ are two sides of the same coin. From the point of view of the man, it is performance of action and vesting the action on the institutional person. From the point of view of the institutional person (representing the corporate institutional



unity) it is performance of deed already done. One may argue that this cannot be the case as there is a contradiction in 'proper vesting of action' (*karmasaṃnyāsa*) and performance of deed 'already done'. The contradiction is that the two have reverse sequence in time. In 'proper vesting of action' (*karmasaṃnyāsa*)—first the action is performed then the action is abandoned on the institutional person as representing the institutional unity. While in the performance of deed 'already done', the action first belongs to the institution as the action already done in time and then the agent performs the action. Here, in this argument, the problem is that of not understanding the temporality of the action. The action that has its goal within itself is perfect action. In perfect action at each moment the action is complete, for example, same man at the same time 'is seeing' and 'has seen', 'is thinking' and 'has thought'. Perfect activity is not like how the moderns think regarding activity of building and becoming. In modern thinking it is not possible to say that someone 'is building' and 'has built' or someone 'is becoming' and 'has become'.<sup>112</sup> Unlike the modern conception of activity of building and becoming, in perfect activity performance and accomplishment are not two separate temporal moments. It is both performance and accomplishment at the same moment. Separating accomplishment from performance, and then seeing the reversal of the two moments in 'proper vesting of action' (*karmasaṃnyāsa*) and performance of deed 'already done', one conceives the contradiction. Since the performance and accomplishment are not in sequence, which cannot be reversed but simultaneous, there is no contradiction. This kind of contemporaneity is visible in celebration of festival. Celebration and arrival of the festival are not distinct and separate moments in time. Both are one and the same moment and hence are contemporaneous. So in 'proper vesting of action' (*karmasaṃnyāsa*) even though we distinguish performance and renunciation of action, these are not two separate moments. Similarly performing the deed 'already done' does not mean that accomplished act and the performance are at two separate moments. The significance of the ill-fitting dialogue in the war is to highlight its mythic nature. Separation of accomplished killing of warriors by *Kṛṣṇa*, injunction to kill the already killed, and subsequent killing of the already killed by Arjuna is only a mythic separation, and not a real separation into three moments. The simultaneity of performance and renunciation of action, and also simultaneity of the arrival of the done deed and its performance are taken care of when the action is performed by mobilising the infinite resources of own being (*svabhāva*) beyond the *guṇa* influenced part of it that is as good as mobilising the infinite resources of the *Puruṣa*/Brahman seated (reflected) in *Prakṛti*/buddhi, which is the same as *āditya kāla* (undivided, infinite, one, unmoving time as a whole) reflected in the *daitya kāla* (divided, finite, durational, measured, moving time) described in the Bhagavad Gita's chapters X and XI. The discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this essay. Here it must be mentioned that without bringing in such 'timelessness' (*āditya kāla*) together with

the 'temporality' (daitya kāla) to which it essentially belongs, so that 'timelessness' ceases primarily to be only a dialectical feature which arises out of 'temporality' in contrast with it but also begins to represent the fullness of time, making time cease to be an empty time of the modernity, we cannot really uncover fully the radical temporality of action in the Bhagavad Gita. Only when āditya kāla represent the fullness of daitya kāla, then only we fully understand the mystery of 'well vested action' (*saṁnyasta karma*). Performance of 'well vested action' (*saṁnyasta karma*) is nothing but realisation of the fullness of daitya kāla, i.e. fulfilling the daitya kāla with āditya kāla.

Such is the nature of true action, an institutional action according to the Bhagavad Gita, which maintains the unity and harmony not only at the level of practice of human institutions but also at the level of cosmos.

## Endnotes

1. I have in mind scholars like Rajendra Prasad [*Varnadharma, Niskama Karma and Practical Morality: A Critical Essay on Applied Ethics* (Delhi: DK Printworld, 1999), p. 59], Radhakrishnan [See Robert N. Minor, "The the Bhagavad Gita in Radhakrishnan's Apologetics," in *Modern Indian Interpreters of the the Bhagavadgītā*, ed. Robert N. Minor (New York: State University of New York Press, 1986), p. 149.], Arindam Chakrabarti, ["The End of Life: A Nyaya-Kantian Approach to the the Bhagavadgītā," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 16 (1988):330-331], Tara Chatterjea [*Knowledge and Freedom in Indian Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002)] and Christopher G. Framarin ["Good and Bad Desires: Implications of the Dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna," *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (August 2007), pp. 147-170].
2. Arindam Chakrabarti, "The End of Life: A Nyaya-Kantian Approach to the Bhagavad Gītā" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 16, 4 (1988), p. 329; B. K. Matilal, *Ethics and Epics: The Collected Essays of Bimal Krishna Matilal: Philosophy, Culture and Religion* (ed. Jonardon Ganeri). Oxford: Oxford
3. Tara Chatterjea, *Knowledge and Freedom in Indian Philosophy*. Lanham, Lexington Books (2002), p.134, argues that selfish desires are prohibited in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. B. K. Matilal, "Karma and Renunciation," in *Ethics and Epics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.130, says the *karmayogin* is
4. Arindam Chakrabarti, "The End of Life: A Nyaya-Kantian Approach to the Bhagavad Gītā" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 16, 4 (1988), p.330-31.
5. Christopher G. Framarin, "The Desire You Are Required to Get Rid of: A Functionalist Analysis of Desire in the the Bhagavadgītā," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (Oct., 2006), pp. 604-617.



6. Cf. J. N. Mohanty, "The Idea of the Good in Indian Thought," in *A Companion to World Philosophies*, ed. Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); B. K. Matilal, "Karma and Renunciation," in *Ethics and Epics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 123.
7. *kuryād vidvāns tathāsaktaś cikīrṣur lokasaṃgraham*
8. *āvṛtaṃ jñānam etena jñānino nityavairiṇā kāmārūpeṇa ... duṣpūreṇānalena ca*
9. *kāmaīs tais tair hṛtajñānāḥ*
10. *karmaṇaiva... saṃsiddhim... lokasaṃgraham... saṃpaśyan*
11. *ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto*
12. Cf. Christopher G. Framarin, "Good and Bad Desires: Implications of the Dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna", *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (August 2007), p.147
13. *evaṃ buddheḥ paraṃ buddhvā saṃstabhyātmānam ātmanā / jahi śatruṃ ... kāmārūpaṃ durāsadam //*
14. *dhyāyato viṣayān puṃsaḥ saṅgaś teṣūpajāyate saṅgāt saṃjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate,*
15. *kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ*
16. *saṃkalpaprabhavān kāmāṃs tyaktvā sarvān aśeṣataḥ/ manasaivendriyagrāmaṃ viniyamya samantataḥ //*
17. *indriyāṇi mano buddhir asyādhiṣṭhānam ucyate*
18. *etair vimohayaty eṣa jñānam āvṛtya dehinam*
19. *evaṃ buddheḥ paraṃ buddhvā saṃstabhyātmānam ātmanā / jahi śatruṃ ... kāmārūpaṃ durāsadam //*
20. *vibhāya kāmān ... niḥsprhaḥ*
21. *kāmātmānaḥ...vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ ... na vidhīyate*
22. *vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha...bahuśākhā hy anantāḥ ca buddhayo 'vyavasāyīnām*
23. *kāmakrodhodbhavaṃ vegam*
24. *śatruṃ... kāmārūpaṃ durāsadam*
25. *pāpaṃ carati pūruṣaḥ anicchann api ... balād iva niyojitaḥ*
26. *dhyāyato viṣayān puṃsaḥ saṅgaś teṣūpajāyate / saṅgāt saṃjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate //* (II.62) *krodhād bhavati saṃmohaḥ saṃmohāt smr̥tivibhramah / smr̥tibhramāṣād buddhināṣo buddhināṣāt prañasyati //* (II-63)
27. *ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate*
28. *gatāgataṃ kāmakāmā labhante*
29. *Kāmākārataḥ na ... siddhim avāpnoti na sukhaṃ na parāṃ gatim*
30. *Śāntim āpnoti na kāmakāmī*

31. *atha kena prayukto 'yaṃ pāpaṃ carati pūruṣaḥ / anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ //*
32. *kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ / mahāṣano mahāpāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam //* (III.37) *dhūmenāvriyate vahnir yathādarśo malena ca / yatholbenāvṛto garbhas tathā tenedam āvṛtam //* (III.38) *āvṛtaṃ jñānam etena jñānino nityavairiṇā / kāmārūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca //* (III.39) *indriyāṇi mano buddhir asyādhiṣṭhānam ucyate / etair vimohayaty eṣa jñānam āvṛtya dehinam //* (III.40)
33. *bhavatyēṣa katham Kṛṣṇa katham caiva vivardhate / kimātmakaḥ kimācārastanmamācakaṣva prcchataḥ //* (III.38) *eṣa sūkṣmaḥ paraḥ śtrurdehināmindriyaiḥ saha / sukhatantra ivāsino mohayanpārtha tiṣṭhi //* (III.39) *kāmakrodhamayo ghorāḥ stambaharṣasamudbhavaḥ / ahaṃkāro 'bhīmānātmā dustaraḥ pāpakarmabhiḥ //* (III.40) *harṣamasya nivartyaiṣa śokamasya dadāti ca / bhayaṃ cāsyā karotyēṣa mohayaṃstu muhurmuḥ //* (III.41) *sa eṣa kaluṣī kṣudraśchidraprekṣī dhañjaya / rajahpravṛtto mohātmā manuṣyāṇāmupadravaḥ //* (III.42)
34. *prajahāti...kāmān sarvān ... manogatān*
35. *āpūryamānam acalapraṭiṣṭhaṃ samudram āpaḥ pravṛṣanti yadvat tadvat kāmā yaṃ pravṛṣanti sarve; sa śāntim āpnoti*
36. *śaknotihaiva yah soḍhum prak śarīravimokṣaṇāt kāmakrodhodbhavaṃ vegam sa yuktaḥ sa sukḥi naraḥ*
37. *trividhaṃ narakasyedaṃ dvāraṃ nāsanam ātmanaḥ kāmāḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayaṃ tyajet*
38. *dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo 'smi*
39. *balaṃ balavatāṃ cāhaṃ kāmārāgavivarjitam dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo 'smi*
40. *bhuñjate te tv aghaṃ pāpā ye pacanty ātmakāraṇāt*
41. *iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ*
42. *kāmais tais tair hrītajñānāḥ prapadyante 'nyadevatāḥ / taṃ taṃ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā// ...sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasyā rādhānam ibate / labhate ca tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vibhātān hi tān//*
43. *dhenūnām asmi kāmadbuk*
44. *asatyam apratiṣṭhaṃ te jagad ābur anīśvaram / aparasparasambhūtaṃ kim anyat kīmahaitukam//*
45. *kāmam āsṛitya duṣpūraṃ dambhamānamadānvitāḥ / mohād grhītvāsadgrāhān pravartante 'sūcivratāḥ //* *cintāṃ aparimeyāṃ ca pralayāntāṃ upāsritāḥ / kāmopabhogaparamāetāvaditiniścītāḥ//āśāpāśasatairbaddhāḥkāmakrodhaparāyaṇāḥ / ibante kāmabhogārtham anyāyenārthasaṃcayān*
46. *anekacittavibhrāntā mohajālasamāyātāḥ / prasaktāḥ kāmabhogeṣu patanti narake 'sūcau //*

47. *ahaṃkāraṃ balaṃ darpaṃ kāmaṃ krodhaṃ ca saṃśritāḥ / māṃ ātmaparadeheṣu pradviṣanto 'bhyasūyakāḥ //*
48. *aśāstravihitaṃ ghoraṃ tapyante ye tapo janāḥ / dambhāhaṃkārasaṃyuktāḥ kāmarāgabalānvitāḥ // karṣayantaḥ śarīrasthaṃ bhūtagrāmam acetasaḥ / māṃ caivāntaḥśarīrasthaṃ tāt viddhy āsuraniścayān //*
49. *yathaidhāṃsi samiddho 'gnir bhasmasāt kurute ...jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā*
50. *na karmaṇām anārambhān naiṣkarmyaṃ puruṣo 'śnute /na ca saṃnyasanād eva siddhiṃ samadbigacchati //*
51. Ed. P. Olivelle (Vienna, 1976), 1.2.
52. *Vāsudevāśrama*, op. cit., 20.1. The same assertion is made by *Viśveśvara Sarasvatī* in his *Yatidharmasaṃgraha* (Poona, 1909), p. 18.
53. Cf. Patrick Olivelle, "Contributions to the Semantic History of *Samnyāsa*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1981), p.269.
54. XIV.12
55. III.7
56. IV. 19
57. XVIII.25
58. XVIII-48
59. XII.16; XIV.25
60. *na hi kaś cit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣhaty akarmakṛt / kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ Prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ //*
61. *karmendriyāṇi saṃyamya ya āste manasā smaran / indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācārah sa ucyate //*
62. *niyataṃ kuru karma ...karma jyāyo hy akarmanah śarīrayātrāpi ca ... na prasidhyed akarmanah*
63. *mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi saṃnyasyādhyātmacetasā / nirāśir nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigatajvarah //*
64. *mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi saṃnyasyāt*
65. *sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi saṃnyasya*
66. *cetasā sarvakarmāṇi mayi saṃnyasya*
67. *yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat / yat tapasyasi ... tat kuruṣva madarpaṇam //*
68. *matkarmaparamaḥ bhava*
69. *yogaṣaṃnyastakarmāṇaṃ jñānaṣaṃchinnasaṃśayam / ātmavantaṃ na karmāṇi nibadhnanti ... //*
70. *yaṃ saṃnyāsam iti prāhur yogaṃ taṃ viddhi ... / na hy asaṃnyastasaṃkalpo yogi bhavati kaś cana //*
71. *nehābhikramaṇāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate*

72. *angiraso vai svaryanto yatra mekhalāḥ saṁnyāsyams tataḥ saro jāyata* [3.6.7]. According to this myth sara grass, which is used to make girdles, first grew at the place where the Angirases had cast off their girdles when they were about to go to heaven. Cf. Patrick Olivelle, "Contributions to the Semantic History of *Samnyāsa*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1981), p.266 and 270.
73. The *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*, describing the *patnīsaṁyāja* offerings, states that blades of *darbha* are placed between the wife's thighs and arranged in a straight row from the *gārhapatya* fire to the *āhavanīya*. What remains is 'thrown down' on the bed of grass covering the altar: *atha yāni atīṣṭayante tāni barhiṣi saṁnyasyati* [3.30]. The *Hiraṇyakeśi Śrautasūtra* uses the term with reference to the instruments used to construct the altar. After its construction they are 'thrown down in a pile': *sphyaḥ svastir ity utkare vedikaraṇāni saṁnyastāni yathārūpam* [8.5.23]. In the *Baudhāyana Śrauta* the term is used without connotating rejection merely to indicate the depositing of several items together in one place: *dhr̥tya samidha āgnidbriye saṁnyasyanti* [5.16]. Cf. Patrick Olivelle, "Contributions to the Semantic History of *Samnyāsa*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1981), p.266 and 270. Cf. Patrick Olivelle, "Contributions to the Semantic History of *Samnyāsa*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1981), p.266 and 270.
74. *etaḍ rāyamaṁ mama bhrātā dattaṁ saṁnyāsavat svayam* [2.107.14], *bharataḥ śirasā kṛtvā saṁnyāsaṁ pāduke tataḥ ... bhrātā tu maji saṁnyāso nikṣiptaḥ sauhr̥dādayam* [\*2326], *sa nyāsavidhinā* [variant *saṁnyāsavidhinā*] *dattaḥ punye tapasi tiṣṭhataḥ* [3.8.15]. Cf. Patrick Olivelle, "Contributions to the Semantic History of *Samnyāsa*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1981), p.267 n21 and p.270.
75. III.4,30; IV.41; V.1,2 (twice),3,6,13; VI.1,2(twice),4; IX.28; 1XII.6; XVIII.1,2(twice),7, 12,49,57.
76. V.3,6; VI.1,2(twice),4; IX.28; XVIII.12,49.
77. *sa saṁnyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnir na cākriyaḥ*
78. III.4,30; IV.41; V.1,2(twice), 13; XII.6; XVIII.1,2(twice), 7,57.
79. V.1; XVIII.1
80. III.31; IV.41; V.13, XII.6; XVIII.57
81. III.4; V.2 (twice); XVIII.2 (twice), 7
82. *yajñānthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yaṁ karmabandhanaḥ / tadarthaṁ karma ... muktasaṅgaḥ samācara //*
83. *R̥g Veda* 10, 130, 1-2.
84. *ayam yajño bhuvanasya nābhiḥ*. That this *yajna* refers to the text becomes clear as we read the whole mantra, *iyam vedīḥ paro antaḥ prthivyā ayam yajno bhuvanasya nābhiḥ / ayam somo vrsno aśvasya reto brahmāyam vācāḥ paramam vyoma //*, "This Altar is the farthest limit of *Vāk*. This *yajna* is the navel of the universe. Soma is the semen

of the stallion bursting with seed. Brahmā priest is the highest heaven of *Vāk*. The alignment of *vāk* with *yajna* makes it a text if we keep in mind that *yajna* itself is woven by the poets by seven threads.

85. *sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ / anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭakāmadhuk //*
86. *iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ*
87. *yajñasiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarvakilbiṣaiḥ //*
88. *śleṣma vā etad yajñasya yad dakṣiṇā, navā aśleṣmā ratho vabaty, atha yathā śleṣmavatā yaṃ kāmam kāmāyate tam abhyaśnute, evam etena dakṣiṇāvatā yaṃ kāmam kāmāyate tam abhyaśnute.*
89. *annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḍ annasaṃbhavaḥ / yajñād bhavati parjanyaḥ yajñāḥ karmasamudbhavaḥ // karma brahmodbhavaṃ vidḍhi brahmākṣarasamudbhavam / tasmāt sarvagataṃ brahma nityaṃ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam //*
90. *avibhaktaṃ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktaṃiva ca sthitam*
91. *puruṣḥ Prakṛtiṣṭhaḥ*
92. *ekatvaṃ akṣaram, nanātvaṃ kṣaram*
93. *evam pravartitaṃ cakram nānuvartayatiḥa yaḥ / aghāyur indriyārāmo moghaṃ ... sa jīvati //*
94. *yas tv ātmaratir eva syād ātmatṛptaś ca mānavaḥ / ātmany eva ca saṃtuṣṭas tasya kāryaṃ na vidyate //*
95. *Coomaraswamy, 2: Selected Papers, Metaphysics, Ed. Roger Lipsey, Princeton University Press, 1977, Pp. 150–151.*
96. *naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākrteneha kaś cana / na cāsyā sarvabhūteṣu kaś cid arthavyapāśrayaḥ //*
97. *na prayojantvāt, lokavat tu līlākaiḥvalyam Coomaraswamy, 2: Selected Papers, Metaphysics, Ed. Roger Lipsey, Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 150.*
98. *tasmād asaktaḥ satataṃ kāryaṃ karma samācara / asakto hy ācāraṇ karma param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ //*
99. *karmaṇaiva hi saṃsiddhim āsthitā janakādayaḥ / lokasaṃgrahaṃ evāpi śapaśyan kartum arhasi //*
100. *yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhaṥ tat tad evetaro janaḥ / sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate //*
101. *dhyāyato viṣayān puṃsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate / saṅgāt saṃjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate //(II.62) krodhād bhavati saṃmohaḥ saṃmohāt smṛtīvibhramaḥ / smṛtibhramṣād buddhināṣo buddhināṣāt prapaśyati //(II-63)*
102. *na me pārthāsti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiṃ cana / nānavāptam avāptavyaṃ varta eva ca karmaṇi // III.22 // yadi hy ahaṃ na varteyaṃ jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ / mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ //III.23// utsīdeyur ime lokā na kuryāṃ karma ced ahaṃ / saṃkarasya ca kartā syām upabanyām imāḥ prajāḥ //III.24//*

103. *na me pārthāsti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiṃ cana / nānavāptam avāptavyaṃ varta eva ca karmaṇi //*
104. *saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṃso yathā kurvanti bhārata / kuryād vidvāṃs tathāsaktas cikīrṣur lokasaṃgraham //*
105. *na buddhibhedam janayed ajñānām karmasanginām / joṣayet sarvakarmāṇi vidvān yuktaṃ samācaram //*
106. The distinction is based on the distinction of three senses of telos of action in Oded Balaban, "Aristotle's Theory of *πρᾶξις*," *Hermes*, Vol. 114, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1986), pp.165-7
107. Based on three senses of end of action in Oded Balaban, "Aristotle's Theory of *πρᾶξις*," *Hermes*, Vol. 114, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1986), p.171
108. *yadāyadāhi dharmasya glānirbhavati... / abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṃ sṛjāmy aham //* *paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām / dharmasaṃsthāpanārthāya saṃbhavāmi yuge yuge //*
109. *dronaṃ ca bhīṣmaṃ ca jayadrathaṃ ca; karṇaṃ tathānyān api yodhavīrān mayā hatāṃs*
110. *tvaṃ jahi mā vyathiṣṭhā; yudhyasva jetāsi raṇe sapatnān*
111. This kind of temporal performance structure of action one finds in *Pañcarātra* literature also. Consider *Sāttvata Saṃhitā* 5.81: *abhedenādīmūrtervai saṃsthitam vatabījavat / sarvakriyāvinirmuktamuttamaṃ paramārthataḥ //*; 5.83: *bijaṃ sarvakriyāṇāṃ yad vikalpānāṃ yadāspadam / cātūrātmyam tu tad viddhi dvitīyamamalekṣaṇa //*; *Lakṣmī Tantra* 87/ 10.21: *bijaṃ sarvakriyāṇāṃ yad vikalpānāṃ yadāspadam / sauṣuptam cātūrātmyam tat prathamam viddhi vāsava //* The entire action is present *vatabījavat* (symbol of invisible or unmanifest *vatavrkṣa*) in time, but there is *pratibandha* of time on its germination and growth. When the favourable conditions come, which involves the right gathering of the *pañca kāraṇa* including the participation of *kartā* (agent) then time gives *abhyānujñā* 'permission' for manifestation of action like the germination of *vatabījaṃ* and the growth of *vatavrkṣa*.
112. These examples of activities are from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 1048b 18- 35.



## CHAPTER 15

# Harmony and New Horizons of Human Development

*Mala Kapadia*

Humanity, today, is at the threshold of self-annihilation and new beginning. The crisis at three levels—Economic, Emotional and Ecological (the 3E)—forces us to slow down, pause and revisit our journey. The major issues at various levels in the world—economic recession, rising unemployment, global political unrest, resistance to austerity measures, occupy Wall Street Movement, climate change impacting millions of people and mental health—are seen as a major concern by World Health Organisation (WHO). Though, technologically, we are very advanced, what is happening to our lives? We may have achieved materialistic progress, compared to earlier generations, but are we the happiest or the healthiest? We live longer, but is there any ‘life’ in our long life? There is globalisation of business but human engagement at work is going down. Why is this irony? The inner and outer climate changes seem to have a correlation. Developed economy has not created developed human beings, hence emotional and spiritual poverty and malnutrition have to be addressed along with economic poverty at global level. Our journey, outward, seems to have lost direction. We have walked many miles, yet not reached anywhere. Our journey seems to have taken place without compass, compass of inner values, integrity and life’s knowledge; basically the intelligence of heart which means emotional and spiritual intelligence.

We thought that our business models, from the beginning of the industrial era, will bring social progress, individual happiness and global prosperity and peace.



But, business models have given birth to an industrial mindset, which has not just alienated people from their roots but also alienated people from their own consciousness and heart. Pollution, population and poverty are the results of making a journey without a compass and have got us into deep crisis. Lack of compass has led us to a lack of compassion. Without compassion, we are insensitive to others' well being and there is an absence of a holistic long-term perspective on life. Outer engineering has not helped. The bridges have connected cities but not hearts. We'll have to go deeper and do a lot of 'inner engineering' or 'inner revolution' to bring about an outer change. These two terms are coined by yoga masters Sadhguru of Isha and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar of Art of Living. Hence our business model now needs integration of 'human model' with paradigm shifts in how we live and work.

## **New Definition of Human Development**

Before we get into defining development, let us get ourselves clarified on how do we define being human. Human, the word comes from humus which means forest soil. This defines our relationship with Nature and Mother Earth. We need to understand Earth as Living energy. Michael Fox is right when he says, "The human species is neither in balance ecologically nor in harmony ethically and spiritually with the natural world. The state of natural world reflects the state of humanity. The health and wealth of the Earth is the mirror of the health and wealth of society."<sup>1</sup>

All violence and exploitation of Nature or others in our ecosystem comes from the fear of survival. Hence, development can be redefined as how far, we as individuals or nations, have gone beyond survival and how expanded has our consciousness become to include well-being of all. U.N.'s definition of development is the result of capitalist thinking according to which industrial growth is supposed to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of human life. However, it's the same mindset, which has created the disease of affluenza. As modern psychologists describe the developed nations, "Oliver James suggests that we are suffering from "affluenza"- an addiction to affluence and a need "for more and more". John Naish notes what evolutionary psychologists have been saying for a long time, that our brains evolved to cope with scarcity, not 'abundance and plenty', and we are born 'seekers' and 'wanters' because, for millions of years, that was often the state we were in."<sup>2</sup> Our 'Development' has created more inequity, impoverishment of values and malnutrition of human Spirit, which is cut off from its source of nourishment that is spiritual living.

## New is Old

The perspectives shared in this chapter may be new for the Western scientific thinking. But they are wisdom of indigenous cultures and traditional spiritual scriptures written as lifestyle guidance for humanity many years ago. Unfortunately, when I speak in modern language, there is duality all the time: duality, for example, old vs. new, modern vs. traditional, West vs. East, developed vs. developing, scientific vs. spiritual. This is the language we used which represented the last Piscean era. Today when we are already in the Aquarius Age, it is more about synthesis, blending, merging boundaries, and expanding horizons of one into the other. Hence, when we go back to the times which is now considered indigenous, Eastern Spiritual or undeveloped, we realise the wisdom of the old and want to bring them, revive them in the present times. In short, I may still use the language of duality, yet by the end of this paper, you will have realised how there is no duality. Science and spirituality is one. In earlier times, this oneness was called *Dharma*.

## *Dharma* – Sustainability Guidance

Eastern ethos is about *Dharma*. Its root is in ‘Dharayati iti *Dharma*’ which means that one that sustains is *Dharma*. So *Dharma* is not religion, neither Hindu nor Buddhist. It’s all about guidance to sustain life. *Dharma* is both science and spirituality. The aim of science is to discover mysteries of the Universe and connect with objective Universal Truth. Spirituality tries to attain the same objective but the only difference is the language. Language of science is more technical. Language of spirituality is more poetic. Spirituality is defined as ‘beyond’ and ‘essence’. That makes it both science and *dharma*. Science connects us with a world that is beyond the horizon known to us and *dharma* connects us to our essence. When *dharma* guides our ways of life, we live a sustainable life and get connected with the well-being of all people, Earth, Planet, including Universe. Let me share five Dharmic principles that can help us live a unified life and become paths to human development. Energy Balance of Yin/Yang, Vedic foundation of Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram, definition of Health according to Ayurveda, three energies of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* that create our stages of development from numbness to enlightenment, and cultivation of Yogic mindset through principles of Yama and Niyama are five important aspects from Eastern Dharmic ethos that show us different perspectives on human nature and hence its development. I first share the three aspects of Energy Balance of Yin/Yang, Vedic foundation of Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram, and definition of Health according to Ayurveda, then connect with scientific evidence from modern research by David R. Hawkins and lastly

weave the last two aspects of three energies of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* that create our stages of development from numbness to enlightenment, and cultivation of Yogic mindset through principles of *Yama* and *Niyama*. In this weaving, research on modern psychology by Abraham Maslow on self-actualisation is also included as it creates combination of the West and the East flowing into each other.

## Energy Balance

Energy balance is about balancing the masculine and feminine energy within oneself. It is not about gender but how different energy brings about different way of thinking, feeling and living. Western efficiency, industrial era and all the development and growth that took place in last few years is result of masculine energy. Masculine mindset is to invade and conquer by killing, competitive in nature and is survival-centric. We see this getting reflected in ways of farming, medicine, commerce, education, politics, religion, organisations and in fact in every aspect of life in the last few centuries. Hence we have nations, religions and societies that are more masculine-energy dominated. They have more mental, muscle, nuclear and materialistic power. They have divided the world into powerful and weak, developed and under-developed, haves and have-nots. And the entire conspiracy is to ensure the presence of this power imbalance so that they can rule.

Holistic living is about the rising influence of Feminine Energy – Yin/Yang and Shiv/Shakti Balance. Researches related to health and brain throw light on how Feminine Energy mindset is more life-sustaining than Masculine Energy mindset. Feminine energy mindset is inclusive and nurturing – organic, integrative and collaborative. This energy listens to the Heart Intelligence, not just to the intellect of the brain. Emotions which we connect with our heart are joy, peace, love, passion, compassion, forgiveness, empathy and caring. What is the result? There is more trust, collaboration, nurture, creativity, capacity to love and emote, networking, teaching, service attitude, values and tradition, discipline, wealth creation, wisdom, coaching and mentoring. We see that these virtues of heart are now being integrated in the ideology of organisations that are making a shift from profit as motive to people as centre of focus. Reconnecting with the Mother Earth is certainly a feminine energy aspiration. Balance of feminine energy emotion creates health at individual and collective level. Research in medical science supports this fact: “Affection, support, kindness and compassion cause the release of endorphins, opiates and hormones such as oxytocin that are good for our well-being and health.”<sup>3</sup> In Indian mythology, this concept is shown as the highest integration of Shiva and Shakti and is known as ‘Ardhnarinateshwar’—half woman-half man integrated as One.

New definition of human development can include how well individuals and nations balance their yin/yang. Sustainable lifestyle can be attained only with such a balance which is both organic and holistic.

### **Vedic Foundation of Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram**

3 S: Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram are the guiding principles of Vedas. Satyam is the highest truth, not manipulated and fragmented. Shivam is the well-being of all. Oldest vedic prayer is “Tanme Manah Shiv Sankalpamastu”. Let my mind be rooted in well-being of all. Sundaram is the aesthetics or beauty. Somehow, aesthetics or beauty has not been a part of defining human development. This is one of the basic aspects of who we are as humans. Only a developed human being can appreciate and create beauty and aesthetics. It is not the artificial or plastic beauty; it’s the natural and spontaneous reflection of the Divine that is beautiful. Beauty creates harmony, appreciation, joy and contentment. These are the virtues of the heart. They are the ripples of consciousness in the mind.

### **Definition of Health According to Ayurveda**

Ayurveda and Yoga are the two ancient paths to attain sustainable lifestyle and health of an individual and the society. These can be termed as the oldest written literature in Positive psychology and human development. According to Ayurveda, the definition of a healthy person is not in just having a well-functioning balanced body but also good soul, senses, and mind: The Sanskrit line is: *Prasanna Atma Indriya Mana Swasth Ityabhi Dhiyate*<sup>4</sup> (Joyfulness of soul, senses, and mind is health). Prasanna can be loosely translated as being joyous and blissful. This is the characteristic of a healthy person and society. It is not just the absence of physical diseases. However, in case of developed nations, we find materialistic development in per capita income or medical and educational facilities but not of individuals who live blissful contented life.

Human Development Index needs to include prasannata or what now is called as subjective well-being. This will eliminate the emotional poverty of developed nations. Bhutan has shown this new horizon to the developed nations. Paul Gilbert writes: “It’s really quite strange because many of us live in a world of unprecedented wealth and comfort. Yet despite our apparently insatiable drive for efficiency, the competitive edge and the “business model” influencing all the aspects of our lives, there is no evidence that this is making us any happier than we were 50 years ago. Actually, there is evidence that we are becoming more unhappy and irritable as levels of stress increase in our hurry-hurry society. Despite our wealth and comforts, half of us will have some kind of mental health problem at some point, with depression, anxiety, alcoholism and eating disorders topping the list. The

world health organisation has worked out that depression will be the second-most burdensome disorder on earth by 2020 and other mental health problems will be in the top ten. We are also becoming less trusting and feeling more threatened.”<sup>5</sup>

### Modern Research By David R. Hawkins

When I read the work of Dr. Hawkins titled *Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior*, I felt that it was one of the most important missing pieces in the jigsaw puzzle of connecting science and spirituality. The work talks of the Laws of Universe, Energy patterns, non-linear dynamics, and attractors. His experiments and hypothesis are based on Dr. John Diamond’s research on Behavioral Kinesiology. The basic premise is simple: our muscles strengthen or weaken in the presence of positive or negative emotional, intellectual and physical stimuli. Dr. David R. Hawkins has expanded the research on kinesiological response to truth and falsehood, what sustains life and what does not. Developing a map of the fields of human consciousness based on this research on attractor, he helps us understand where we calibrate in the energy of different emotions and how a person’s higher energy can elevate many others. Based on his work, I have been able to generate insights on how one can achieve human development of higher energy level by practice of Yoga.

He has given a Map of Consciousness<sup>6</sup> where level (of human mind) and energy log calibration are correlated.

- Enlightenment 700-1,000
- Peace 600
- Joy 540
- Love 500
- Reason 400
- Acceptance 350
- Willingness 310
- Neutrality 250
- Courage 200
- Pride 175
- Anger 150
- Desire 125
- Fear 100
- Grief 75
- Apathy 50

- Guilt 30
- Shame 20

In describing these levels of Human Consciousness, he also gives corresponding God-view, Life-view, Emotion and Process. It suffices to have a look at only level and log. Shame is the lowest and enlightenment is the highest. Dr. Hawkins explains that figures on calibration are not arithmetic but by logarithmic progression. Thus 300 is not twice the amplitude of 150; it is 10 to 300<sup>th</sup> power. An increase of even a few points translates into a major advance.

What I found most astonishing is the fact that according to this study, overall average level of human consciousness today is approximately 207. Only 4% of the world's population calibrates at an energy field of 500 or above. Only 0.4% reaches 540. Isn't this surprising? For developed nations, shouldn't there be peace and joy in people's lives? And if not, what is the value of the economic wealth which does not result into higher human level? Does this not raise questions about the parameters that are used to define human development?

"Level of consciousness calibrating at 600 or above is reached by only 1 in 10 million. People's cumulative life choices may result in a net lowering of their level of consciousness. Kinesiological testing indicates that a mere 2.6% of the human population, identified by abnormal kinesiological polarity (testing strong to negative attractors and weak to positive attractors), accounts for 72% of society's problems."<sup>7</sup> This is where I reconnect with Vedic wisdom. When I first read this abnormal polarity, I was perplexed as to what type of individuals would test positive to negative stimuli and negative to positive stimuli? However, while listening to a presentation at a conference, the insight dawned on me. In Vedas, human nature is described as Asur, Manav and Dev. Asur nature is exactly what is described as abnormal polarity. Manav is the normal human being with all fears and pride, so almost in the range of 200 log. Dev is a more evolved nature, hence higher than 200 log and compensates for people around with lower log. They have energy fields that are powerful enough to counter balance the collective negativity of mankind. Though in Indian mythology these are shown as different communities of people, the deeper meaning is that we all have within us these three stages of development.

Levels 20-175 may denote Asur stage in which one is filled with the 'me-first' level of existence. Everything and everyone around is seen as resources for one's consumption. Only physical enjoyment and survival are the aims of life in this stage. Manav stage begins with the awareness of desire and urge to expand the circle of existence. Yet, at level below 200, primary impetus is personal survival, egocentric impulses. As one crosses 200 (Courage), the well-being of others becomes increasingly important. For human development, this transition is transformational. Neutrality is a leap as one starts to understand and accept Life

beyond one's egoistic existence. One gets connected to the Spirit within, expands consciousness, and becomes aware of the bigger picture of not just human existence but interrelationships among everything in the Universe. Since this is energy log, the connection with the Vedic science of Universal Energies comes easily. Let us weave the West and the East and science and spirituality together.

### **The Three Energies of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* That Create Our Stages of Development From Numbness to Enlightenment**

Yoga states that everything in the Universe is a combination of three Energies, qualities or *Gunas*—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Yogic psychology has elaborated on how our emotional, biological and mental activities are the results of these energies. Dominance of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* in different combinations creates emotional numbness to spiritual intelligence.

In ancient times, Sage Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and more recently, Sri Aurobindo's Purna Yoga (integral yoga) have given a scientific understanding of emotions, how these emotions grow in body-brain and mind, their correlation with the levels of consciousness through combination of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.

*Sattva* indicating the luminosity, light, the facets of *Buddhi* that we have in us, the intelligence that we have in us, which shows the part, throws the light on the outer objects to show what it is. *Sattvic* tendencies are of light (enlightenment), clarity and happiness, fine adaptation and sympathy with the environment, intelligence, poise, right mind, right will and feelings, right impulse and virtue. *Sattva* creates the Right Attitude.

*Rajas* Guna brings the mobility in us, makes us work in a particular way. If I am interested to know something, there is an inner movement of that intelligence. "All have their *Rajasic* modes and impulses and turbid parts of desire and passion and struggle, perversion and falsehood and error, unbalanced joy and sorrow, aggressive push to work and eager creation and strong or bold fiery or fierce reaction to the pressure of the environment and to life's assault and offers."<sup>8</sup>

*Tamas* Guna, which gives us the inner stability to receive, a kind of inner quiet awareness to know what we receive. Normally this *Tamo* Guna is expressed in the form of darkness and inertness, in which we don't have any understanding and knowledge. This is a gross form of *Tamas*.

We cannot even throw out the subtle form of *Tamas*; if we have to have the complete illumination, we need to throw out *Tamas* to gain stability in order to receive the illumination. "All have their *Tamasic* states and constant obscure parts, their moments or their points of unconsciousness, their long habit or their constitutional feeblenesses or movements of fatigue, negligence and indolence



and their lapses into ignorance and incapacity, depression and fear and cowardly recoil or submission to the environment and to the pressure of men and events and forces.”<sup>9</sup>

Let us now review the Indian perspective on Developmental Psychology. When I say Indian, it means that this knowledge was given to us by ancient psychologists born in India. They were called Rishis or Seers. Today we have reduced science to quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. However, in ancient times, these Seers connected with the Universal Knowledge and wisdom through meditation. They purified their own instruments of knowledge that is our mind to initiate the dawn of the real understanding. And that is how they received knowledge. And also, they achieved this in collaboration with the Nature. They lived a natural organic lifestyle in forests and through Gaia, they nurtured their souls. Thus, learning was a joyous and soulful process. My personal experiences of learning have been through a similar process and that is how insights get generated across disciplines.

From the perspective of Yogic psychology, our consciousness and hence state of mind corresponds to the three energies of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* (SRT) and oscillates between five levels of development or stays stagnant within a stage. These stages are called Moodha, Kshipta, Vikshipt, Ekaagra and Niruddha in Sanskrit. Depending on our energy profile or combination of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, we may go through the various stages in a given day moving from lower to higher. However, a deeper study reveals that most of us stay much longer in one stage and do not progress to the higher. Or, in stressful situations, we go down to the lower one, as it is a conditioned pattern of behaviour.

- **Stage One Emotional Numbness or Moodha** In the Moodha stage, *Tamas* is the major dominating factor with *Rajas* and *Sattva* having minimal influence. A Moodha mind is unable to differentiate good from bad and there is a flow with the environmental situation without self-identity and integrity. At this stage, the mind is trapped in belief systems, unable to review life scripts, the domination of *Tamas* causes fear, rigidity, anger, laziness, illusion, sleep, greed, fatigue, jealousy and inertia. In the map of consciousness given by Dr. Hawkins, this stage may have energy log of 20-175. Hopelessness seems dominant. Escaping into drugs, addiction to alcohol, excessive nightlife and sleeping during the day seem to be the identifying traits of the lifestyle in this stage. Physical and mental inertia causes health problems; even the medical help taken creates aggravation of *Tamas*, for example, drugs that make you sleep rather than heal you from within during depression or anxiety aggravate the problem. Excessive watching of television, computer and playing video games can create



lethargy of mind. Obesity in developed nations is not so much a problem with the diet as it is excess of Tamasic lifestyle issue.

- **Stage Two Agitation and Anxiety or Kshipta** In this stage, Rajas is the major dominating factor with Tamas and *Sattva* having minimal influence. The Kshipta mind operates so fast that it hardly gets time to think the consequences of its actions; commits mistakes on and often. Love, hate, sadness, anxiety and oscillation between tension and excitement are the major emotions in this stage. The individual is trapped in the micro self-centred perspective of survival. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this need is the basic need to be safe during fearful situations. The social need is limited to a known circle of people with many conflicts and competitions. In organisations, this mind is reflected in pursuing targets, achieving numbers and performance rating, distrust of others, work-life imbalance and stress-related health problems.

Rajasic lifestyle in developed nations has reached such a height that exhaustion of overactive Rajas is degenerating into Tamas. Psychologists all along have dealt with the transition that takes place when a person progresses from the teens to the twenties and the mid-life crisis at a later age. However, due to too much Rajas domination in the developed nations, it has given rise to new psychological problem of quarter life crisis. Oscillation between depression and violence, and rage and senseless killing of others or self, are symptoms of directionless youth getting stuck at this stage. In the map of consciousness given by Dr. Hawkins, this stage may have energy log of 125-200 but there is a tendency to go below 125 and get stuck there due to frequent stirring of Tamas.

- **Stage Three Emotional Maturity or Vikshipt *Sattva*** dominates the Vikshipt stage with Rajas and Tamas having suppressed influence. One tends to focus on Sattvic state of activities. Emotions of happiness, forgiveness, faith, patience, high energy and compassion are easily experienced in this stage. However, Rajas does tend to create disturbance and hence the person may oscillate between choices and not stay positively rooted for longer period unless he or she develops awareness and is constantly vigilant. This is where practice of Yoga proves to be highly remedial and benefits the individual. In organisations, this mind is reflected in expanding of the trust radius, creativity, passion, innovation, calculated risk taking, and setting stretch targets. In the map of consciousness given by Dr. Hawkins, this stage may have energy log of 200-400. Courage to reason is the graph. Love may also be experienced. When nations are in this stage, they work for peace through collaborative efforts across countries.

- **Stage Four Emotional Intelligence or Ekaagra *Sattva*** dominates the Ekaagra stage but Rajas and Tamas have minimal influence. A concentrated (Ekaagra) mind is an internal state of a person. One can cultivate this state also. Balance, discretion, resilience and giving a macro perspective to issue are the main traits of this stage. One is able to use emotional energy to create the desired result.

In organisations, this mind is reflected in best practices, optimum utilisation of human potential and social responsibility leading to individual well-being and organisational effectiveness. Neutrality to peace, log of 250-600 is the possibility if this state is sustained. As Dr. Hawkins' research indicates, very few individuals have sustained this log and hence organisations or nations are far from reaching this level.

- **Stage Five Spiritual Intelligence or Niruddha** The Niruddha is a thoughtless mind which is so calm that negative thought vibrations do not rise in it. The thoughtless mind is the highest state of mind; a state of Yoga Samadhi (apex state of Yoga) and the ultimate state of mental culture. This can be similar to peak experiences narrated by Abraham Maslow. In Indian spirituality, going beyond the dramas of Gunas is called 'Swaroop Sthiti' – our real state. One carries out all the activities of life without effort, with ease, with Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram at the heart of life. In this blissful state knowledge, intuition and understanding of the Universal Laws happens without much effort. It is as if in a theatre, from being an actor or audience who identifies with the drama, one becomes a director and writer of the play. There is empowerment in this state. Many of us have experienced this state and have felt the bliss and freedom. And yet, it's rare to find anyone around us in this state. The Sages or, Seers, and Masters are those who have attained this stage. This state is possible for individuals as well as cultures.

These five stages are explained in Table 1.<sup>10</sup>

Now let us see the correlation between research of Dr. Hawkins and *Sattva*, Rajas or Tamas domination shown in table 1.

- Shame to Fear = Tamas dominated state
- Desire to Courage = Rajas dominated state
- Neutrality to Peace = *Sattva* dominated state
- Enlightenment = Beyond Guna

Table 1. Fine Stage Intelligence

State Name	Dominance of Guna	Manifestation in the Emotional State	Biological State	Activities
Numbness Emotional	Tamas-Mj Rajas and <i>Sattva</i> -Mn	Fear, Rigidity, Anger, laziness, illusion, sleep, greed, fatigue, jealousy, inertia	Heavy and Dark	Violence, self-centeredness, ego-centric
Agitation and Anxiety	Rajas-Mj Tamas and <i>Sattva</i> -Mn	Love, hate, sadness, anxiety, oscillation between tension and excitement, Micro perspective	Oscillate between heavy and light	Extends from myself to family and society
Emotional Maturity	<i>Sattva</i> -Mj Rajas and Tamas-Mn	Happiness, forgiveness, faith, patience, high energy, compassion	Dominated By luminosity and lightness	Extends to larger circles of nation and the world
Emotional Intelligence	<i>Sattva</i> -Mj Rajas and Tamas-nominal	Balance, Discretion, Resilience, Macro perspective, able to use emotional energy for creating desired result	Luminous and lightness sometimes dulled by darkness	Extends to humanity and universe
Spiritual Intelligence	Beyond Guna	High Intuition, Bliss	Luminous	Universal to Cosmic

What is the enlightenment state beyond Guna? According to Sri Aurobindo, the three Gunas become purified and refined and change into their Divine equivalents through the practice of Yoga.

- “*Sattva* becomes Jyoti, the authentical spiritual light;
- Rajas become Tapas, the tranquility intense divine force;
- Tamas become Sama, the Divine quiet, rest, and peace.<sup>11</sup> This transformation is another dimension of human development index.

### Abraham Maslow’s Concept of Self-Actualisation

In the field of psychology, Abraham Maslow, the chief founder of Humanistic psychology, distinguished deficiency needs from Being or Growth needs in individuals. He called them as the continuum of maturity and not as contradictory

to each other. However, he clearly states that self-actualisation or Meta are needs of moral, aesthetic, intellectual and similar other needs and these are the signs of psychological health. He narrates, "Full humanness can be defined... these characteristics are not only neutrally describable; they are also subjectively rewarding, pleasurable reinforcing. They are:

1. Clearer, more efficient perception of reality.
2. More openness to experience.
3. Increased integration, wholeness and unity of the person.
4. Increased spontaneity, expressiveness, fully functioning and liveliness.
5. A real self; a firm identity; autonomy, uniqueness.
6. Increased objectivity, detachment, transcendence of self.
7. Recovery of creativeness.
8. Ability to fuse concreteness and abstractness.
9. Democratic character structure.
10. Ability to love, etc.<sup>12</sup>

And if self-actualisation is the only way to be fully human, should not societies, nations and cultures be supporting that? Maslow too mentions this, "...age-old axioms are swept away by the new possibility of defining the main function of a healthy culture as the fostering of universal self-actualisation."<sup>13</sup> This is the turning point where stage four and five get connected. When we look at new dimensions of human development, one or two self-actualised individuals are not what we want. We want the entire social, political and economic environment to support self-actualisation. Emotional and spiritual intelligence have to become a culture.

Many indigenous cultures have evolved to live in this state—Mayan, Incan, Lemurian, Shamanic, and may be many lesser known ones also. Margaret J. Wheatley narrates her experiences at Thera Island in the Greek Aegean near Crete, "Theran culture was its own unique expression of Minoan culture, a world that never fragmented nature from humans from art. Humans were not separate from the natural order. They didn't attempt to manipulate it or observe it from a distance... Minoans expected order to triumph over chaos because they lived close to life and knew life's cyclic nature. Cycles kept them from focusing on isolated events or from thinking that life was always progressing. (These beliefs still can be found today in indigenous cultures or their traditions.) In the eternal, recurring cycles of life, incidents and dramas were of no consequence. Humans participated in a grand circular flow of life. Nothing happened outside or independent of the living world. People didn't visit "nature" as we do now. It was all one life." Wheatley then explains how the Western mind is influenced by Greek civilisation. "In their love of

human potential, they (The Greeks) set us on a path where we forgot that humans exist within a greater cosmos. And today, it's hard to remember what it feels like to be a beloved partner with life."<sup>14</sup> Nature-connected living beings become organic, joyful and spiritual. These are the new parameters of human development index.

Nature, spirituality and human development are all integrated and integral. The biggest mistake is to see them as disconnected. As Maslow himself admits in the Preface to the second edition of *Towards a Psychology of Being* about his own path of Humanistic Psychology, "I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology to be transitional, a preparation for a still "higher" Fourth Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualisation and the like. ... Without the transcendent and transpersonal, we get sick, violent, and nihilistic, or else hopeless and apathetic. We need something "bigger than we are" to be awed by and to commit ourselves to in a new, naturalistic, empirical, non-churchly sense, perhaps as Thoreau and Whitman, William James and John Dewey did."<sup>15</sup> This explains the Quarter Life crisis of the 'twenty something'. They do not have a society that supports self-actualisation; their lives are disconnected with Nature and its cycles that connect with the wisdom of life. I call their crisis a spiritual crisis, born out of meaningless materialism all around them. A.S. Dalal, who has also quoted the same from Maslow, beautifully explains this evolution of perspectives in the field of psychology as, "The goal of human life implicit in the above quoted statement—growing out of humanness and human identity into the transhuman or the cosmic—has been the basic aim of every major system of yoga or spiritual discipline."<sup>16</sup> Sri Aurobindo has also stated, "The dominant Gunas are not the essential soul-type of the embodied being but only the index of the formation he has made for this life or during his present existence and at a given moment of his evolution in Time."<sup>17</sup> How can we consciously participate in the evolution and achieve our human development? This is where Yoga practice comes into play.

## **Cultivation of Yogic Mindset Through Principles of Yama and Niyama**

Sage Patanjali talks of Ashtanga Yoga: eightfold path of Yoga. They are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayaam, Pratyahaar, Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi. These eight are like concentric circles. They have to be followed as per one's readiness. They are not a linear progression of levels. Yama and Niyama, however, are the foundation of the Yogic attitude that needs to be cultivated through constant practice. Here, I expand only Yama and Niyama. There are five Yama and five Niyama as psychological practices that become commitment and all ten are

interlinked. Yama-Niyama works at all three levels of *manasa* (mind), *vachaa* (speech) and *karmana* (action). All three have to be integrated. When it is practiced at one level it also gets acknowledged. Yama is a way of life with others and the external world. Practicing Yama makes our social life Sattvic and collaborative, free from conflicts. Niyama are about an individual's inner life and its practice reduces the impact of Rajas and Tamas, purifies the senses, mind and body.

Patanjali calls Yama as Mahavratam. They are for people from all walks of life, at all times. They are absolute values. The word 'vratam' is derived from the root Vre, Vrethe. In Sanskrit, this means choiceless acceptance born out of understanding. Vratam is commitment and mahavratam is commitment without any break.

## Five Yamas

Yama has been translated in many ways. I like the definition "Perspective of life as Absolute Truth". Vimala Thakar observed, "These are absolute values of human life; life is not merely a code of conduct. Unless there are some absolute values, which cannot be bargained for, and the consciousness is rooted in those values, it seems that sane and healthy societies cannot come into existence...Once you see them as absolute Truth, because of the organic wholeness of Life, the Intelligence, the Sensitivity within you accepts those truths choicelessly and they become way of your living, they become incorporated in your way of living, which becomes a holistic way of living."<sup>18</sup> Five Yamas are: *Ahimsa*, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha. Five Niyamas are: Shaucha, Santosh, Tapah, Swadhyaya and Ishvar Pranidhana.<sup>19</sup>

### *Ahimsa*

*Ahimsa* is widely translated as non-violence and harmlessness. *Ahimsa* is A and Himsa: 'A' means absence of, 'Himsa' is to harm. Why does Patanjali begin with *ahimsa* is a very intriguing question. When you value *ahimsa*, you do not hurt anyone intentionally; you want harmony in every relationship. Now I realise that Yama as absolute truths have to be 'cultivated' in us. Why cultivated?: Because, it is missing in our current brain programming system. We have a possibility of formatting and writing a new program. So *Ahimsa* has to be overwritten or written after formatting "himsa." *Ahimsa* at the action level means no violence, physical abuse, killing, harming or cruelty to others of any kind: Others is not only human species but also Nature in totality. Capital punishment, cultural genocide to ecocide, everything is Himsa. In *ahimsa*, we revere life in totality.

According to Vyas, the most recognised commentator of Patanjali Sutras, the *Ahimsa* in Vedic concept is not just absence of himsa; it is harmony, maitri and

sadbhaav to Nature and all living beings.<sup>20</sup> This definition of *Ahimsa* makes it a much wider harmonious construct, an absolute value of and for Life.

### Satya

Satya has been translated as Truth. Are we truthful in our thoughts, action and speech? Truth is always coloured by perception; hence the need to clear perception is significant. My truth and your truth are in conflict with each other many times as we all perceive partial or local truth. So what does Patanjali mean when He asks for Truth as Yama?: Being truthful, truthful to your intentions and motives. Patanjali very beautifully explained truth as communicating without addition, dilution, distortion. The “seer scientist” knew that our truth is always partial. Hence, being truthful to how I feel or think is all that I can practice. And through this commitment, I accept my limitations and other people’s truth, connecting rather than contradicting, what Subhash Sharma has been calling the “Omega circle dialogue.” And this becomes our path to not just greater harmony within and in our relationships but to purify our perception, allowing “absolute truth” to reveal itself. What is your intention when you communicate? Is it to heal or to hurt? And this clarity connects Truth to *Ahimsa*.

Satya is commitment to follow direction of an inner compass. When we want to live truthfully at all three levels, our commitment to inner values is tested all the time. The short-term focus of businesses from quarter to quarter may require untruthful business practices. But the inner compass always asks you to answer two questions: Does this feel right? What are the deeper implications of this action? Questioning oneself creates self-governance and intrinsic morality. The economic crisis post-collapse of banking and consulting firms in the USA would have never happened if individuals had raised these two simple questions.

### Asteya

Steal means to steal; hence, literally, Asteya means not to steal. Superficially, most of us would say that we don’t steal. So we practice Asteya. What’s the big deal? But in the Vedic sense, Asteya goes much deeper. It means not taking anything that is not rightfully yours or you don’t need to fulfil needs of basic life. Asteya also means to accept the entire Universe as interconnected and share what you have with all other entities. In this “absolute” value, living for oneself or being selfish is a sin. Consuming more than what you need is not appreciated. The Bhagavad Gita says, “Yo Bhukte sten av sah.” One who consumes without giving to Deva (Universal Energy or Higher Beings) is a thief. Thus, this value protects us from falling prey to consumerism.

Asteya at the action level: Look around your home. How much have we stored in fear of the future or for decorating the home? Even when we go to the sea beach



or a park, children and adults, alike, end up picking up nature's belongings for their home. Picking up what belongs to Nature is driven by our excessive need to possess. Human beings seem to have forgotten to enjoy beauty by watching Nature the way it is. If they could, they might even patent the sunrise and charge fees from others for enjoying the sunrise. We have already patented the rivers by selling mineral or natural spring water.

### *Brahmacharya*

"Brahma" is a Sanskrit word the root meaning of which is that which contains an inexhaustible potential of creativity. This term has been widely underused as observing celibacy. Though celibacy may be attained when you live the value of Brahmacharya, the term is not limited to celibacy alone. Brahma means Supreme Intelligence and creativity is the characteristic of that intelligence. "Charya" comes from the root word Chara, which means to walk, move and live. Brahmacharya is to live in Supreme Intelligence, be guided by its creativity and live in the awareness of the Divinity.

Whatever one does in business, living, socialising and entertaining, one is constantly aware of the Supreme creative energy. Now when one is aware of such vast canvases, will one think selfishly and for a short term? My consciousness will be expanded to become compassionate, ethical, empathic, and philanthropic and guided by wishes for the well-being of all. Money and profit will flow but not by harming others, being untruthful or by stealing from others. "Money is not wealth; real wealth is land, forest, rivers, animals and people. Wealth is created by the imagination, creativity and skill. Bankers and business leaders in search of ever-increasing profit are not the wealth creators; at best they are wealth counters and at worst wealth destroyers. So let's honour the true wealth creators."<sup>21</sup>

### *Aparigrah*

Aparigrah has been translated as non-possessions. However, to me, it is more of the inner attitude of possessiveness leading to acquisition and attachment that needs correction than When we begin with *Ahimsa* or harmony with 'Nature', Truth, Asteya, and Brahmacharya, Aparigrah, in outer material possessions begins. We do not see ourselves only as a consumer of the outer world but as one interconnected with Nature and all beings. Hence, whatever wealth we have is not just for personal enjoyment or social pride but is held in trust and therefore is to be shared with all others around us. In today's times of consumerism, this absolute value alone can save us from deteriorating further. Aparigrah saves us from being consumed by the insatiable fire of desire. To think that we are what we "have" is to forget who and why we are. Aparigrah helps us shift from a 'having' individual to a 'being' individual. Poverty, population, lack of peace and many other world



issues will exist if we as human beings start practising these Yamas. Aparigraha is not an externally forced austerity. It is the cultivation of inner contented attitude that grows outward into an attitude to possession materials.

Here again, we can reconnect with Maslow who puts physiological and social needs along with self-esteem as the Basic and Deficiency needs. These are the needs that have to be satisfied, however, the satisfaction should help you relate healthily to the need and not get stuck with it due to neurosis. According to Maslow, “neurosis...a deficiency disease; that it was born out of being deprived of certain satisfactions...ungratified wishes for safety, for belongingness and identification, for close love relationships and for respect and prestige.”<sup>22</sup> This is where we can relate to scarcity syndrome of people and society that consumes most of the world’s resources. They may have enough to satisfy their need, but psychologically they are rooted in a fear of not having enough or aspiring to have more than others around them. This is ‘psychological poverty’, which an individual has to outgrow by working on his or her inner self...And the society needs to support this psychological safety and growth in individuals. Although not named that way, the symptoms of ‘psychological poverty’ at the level of the society, is shared above in the quotes of Paul Gilbert.

In contrast, Maslow also describes healthy people and one cannot but see the correlation between enhancement of *Sattva* and practice of Yamas. Maslow says, “Healthy people have sufficiently gratified their basic needs for safety, belongingness, love, respect and self-esteem so that they are motivated primarily by trends of self-actualisation (defined as ongoing actualisation of potentials, capacities and talents), as fulfillment of mission (or call, fate, destiny or vocation), as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person’s own intrinsic nature, as an unceasing trend towards unity, integration or synergy within the person).”<sup>23</sup> He also clarifies, “Basic needs and self-actualisation do not contradict each other any more than do childhood and maturity. One passes into the other and is a necessary prerequisite for it.”<sup>24</sup> Self-actualisation goes on all the time in life. It removes other deficit needs from the ‘centre of stage’, does not eliminate their existence. So one still needs to fulfill the basic needs, but they don’t have the power to get a person stuck there. The joy of all self-actualising activities is intrinsic. Motivation for growth is long-term in character. Self-actualising individuals become far more self-sufficient and self-contained. They are less anxious, hostile and needful of praise, honours, prestige, and awards.

Abraham Maslow does not use the term Spirituality in this work, yet the description is very close to what Dharmic living does to a person. For Maslow, “Just as all trees need sun, water, and foods from the environment, so do all people need safety, love and status from their environment. However, in both cases this is

just where real development of individuality can begin, for once satiated with these elementary, species-wide necessities, each tree and each person proceeds to develop in his own style, uniquely using these necessities for his own private purposes. In a very meaningful sense, development then becomes more determined from within rather than from without.”<sup>25</sup>

And what will help a person outgrow influences and condition his outer self and turn within? Maslow affirms, “In the theory of personality improvement, a place must be reserved for self-improvement and self-searching, contemplation and meditation.”<sup>26</sup> What more integration of the West and the East, science and spirituality, modern and ancient? Niyama and all other steps in Patanjali Yoga Sutras are step-by-step practices that will help the development of individuality. This then is the new horizon of human development.

## Five Niyamas

Yama and Niyama are the principles that help us to have sustainable holistic organic growth. They are not intellectual concepts to be theorised. They are practical application to be lived in our daily lives and relationships at all levels. They are experiential truths, not conceptual philosophy. Niyamas are the inner practices that help make our practice of Yamas possible. Five Niyamas are Shaucha, Santosh, Tapah, Swadhyaya and Ishvar Pranidhana.<sup>27</sup>

### *Shaucha*

Shaucha is ‘shuchita’ (purity). We generally think of purity as physical, however, Shaucha again is to be observed at all three levels of thought, speech and action, purity cleanses, refreshes and rejuvenates. Cleanliness is not just for home and clothes but for diet as well. We abuse our body with toxic food, food contaminated with fertilisers and artificial colours. Similarly, thought purity is essential. We are contaminated with messages of greed, consumerism and television programs distorting relationships. Shaucha goes as deep as the cellular level. Recent researches on immunology and kinesiology reveal great affirmation of our Yogic truths. Inorganic food and negative thoughts harm us at the cellular level, making us weak and diseased.

### *Santosh*

When one is pure, transparent and organic in inside, the person will obviously have inner bliss of contentment. Santosh means “a non-competitive, non-comparative approach to oneself, to one’s actions and acquisitions in life”.<sup>28</sup> Santosh leads to Centering and Centering leads to *ahimsa*, *Asteya* and *Aparigraha*. It’s a virtuous circle. Competition leads to inner violence—*himsa*, stealing or unethical root to

success – steya, possessiveness of material things beyond our real needs—parigrah, it becomes a vicious circle. Now we have a choice of getting into virtuous or vicious circle. In organisations, the business governance issues are non-existent when Santosh and Shaucha are practiced. Santosh is the virtue of contentment of the heart.

### *Tapah*

At one level, it is austerity. In fact, a lot of repression and suppression take place due to wrong understanding of this term. Tapah is to create a fire that will burn away millions of years of our conditioning, fire that purifies us from emotional and intellectual toxins and debris that we collect from our daily living. Tapah is formatting; reconditioning of our neuro-chemical habitual patterns that Patanjali calls Samskaras.

### *Swadhyaya*

“Swa” in Sanskrit is Self and “Adhyaya” is to study. So, this word has a very interesting connotation. It means continuous learning by self and it also means studying self consciously. One who is self vigilant, studying, observing and formatting self continuously will certainly develop an inner compass to make integrated decisions heart, head and Spirit.

### *Ishvar Pranidhana*

The word Ishvar is translated as God and this has created great misunderstanding in many minds. Ishvar literally comes from the root Isha. Ishate is to permeate. “Ishate Rajate Iti Ishavarah”<sup>29</sup>– One, which permeates everything, is Ishvar. Hence, in the language of modern quantum physics, it is the creative energy that encompasses the Universe. And Pranidhana is not to surrender but to follow the path. When one asks you to surrender, ego comes in between and asks questions. But when you choose to follow some path, it is only you who has resolved all questions internally. How would it be to follow the path of supreme creative energy? Obviously one feels very expanded and boundless.

Let us end with a beginning. A vision given by Dr. Subhash Sharma, “In ‘holistic vision’ of ‘holistic development’”, survival of all and development of all is the keynote of development thinking. The following three components provide conceptual foundations for this vision:

1. Compassionate and Green Economics
2. Social Justice with Social Harmony
3. Transformative and Empowering Humanism and Spirituality.”<sup>30</sup>

## Summary

As we stand at the threshold of dissolving old paradigms and making new beginning of individual and collective consciousness, well-being and integrated living and not making profit through greed takes the centre. The criteria for human development taken into consideration are not just economic growth but integrated growth of ecology and emotional levels also: Reconnecting with nature, listening to heart intelligence, formatting the brain's evolutionary script and cultivating Yogic attitude for integrated living.

The 3-E crisis at ecology, economy and emotional levels will be dissolved when the Nature-Heart-Consciousness will integrate in our life and work. Yogic practices will facilitate our participation in human evolution as a pathway to the integrated well-being of all.

New Paradigms of Human Development Index can include these questions at individual and collective level:

1. How balanced is the masculine and feminine energy?
2. How is Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram integrated in our daily lives as the principles of Life?
3. Are the body-mind-senses and Soul in joyful health?
4. Are Tamas and Rajas subjugated to the play of *Sattva* in lifestyle, decision-making and relationships?
5. What is the Energy Log? Above 200?
6. Are the educational, social, organisational, religious, political and national systems sustaining self-actualisation?
7. Are people rooted in Yama and Niyama?
8. Is there integrated development of Human Beings along with their Ecosystem, the economic development collaborative with highest human goal of spiritual living?
9. Is there integration of virtuous cycle combining sustainable growth of economics, ecology and emotional health?

With this, I end my reflections for this essay. However, as development and growth are life-long, the next phase of research continues on connecting *Chakras* or our Energy Vortexes with Abraham Maslow and David R. Hawkins. This also expands in balanced scorecard of integrated wealth—Ashta Lakshmi or Eight faces of Goddess of wealth.

May We all be happy, May We all be healthy... And Vibration Frequency on Earth is also changing...“In the new Aeon it is best to live joyously and creatively

for your cause, not to die for it. Other principles that will dominate the Aquarian Aeon are an increase in the frequencies of life, greater respect for non-human species, and an increasing mobility of physical self, information and resources. The supposed gap between spirit and matter will continue to narrow.”<sup>31</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Dr. Fox Michael W., *Caring for Creatures and Creation: Earth Healing and the Recovery of Humanity*, Pathways, Fall 1997, Bethesda, MD 20814
2. Paul Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, Pg. 10, 2009, London, UK: Constable and Robinson Ltd.
3. Ibid. p. 18.
4. Sushrut Samhita, Sutra 15/41
5. Paul Gilbert, *Compassionate Mind*, Pg. 8-9, 2009, London, UK: Constable and Robinson Ltd.
6. Hawkins, David R. (2002). Pages 68-69, *Power VS. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc.
7. ibid. p. 101.
8. Sri Aurobindo, *Greater Psychology*, Edited by A. S. Dalal, page 114, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry, 2001
9. ibid.
10. Kapadia Mala, (2009). *Heart Skills: Emotional Intelligence for Work and Life*. New Delhi, India: Excel Book. Based on Swami Omanand Tirth, “Patanjalyogapradeep”, Geeta Press, Gorakhpur, 2043, pg. 174.
11. Sri Aurobindo, *Greater Psychology*, Edited by A. S. Dalal, page 118, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry, 2001
12. Maslow, Abraham, *Towards a Psychology of Being*, Page 157, D. Van Nostrand Company, New York, 1968
13. ibid. page 159
14. Wheatley, Margaret, *Finding Our Way*, Page 7, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. San Francisco, 2005
15. Maslow, Abraham, *Towards a Psychology of Being*, Page iv, D. Van Nostrand Company, New York, 1968
16. Dalal, A. S., Page 6, *Sri Aurobindo and the Future Psychology*, Sri Aurobindo International centre of Education, 2007, Puducherry, India
17. Sri Aurobindo, *Greater Psychology*, Edited by A. S. Dalal, page 115, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry, 2001
18. Thakar, Vimala, page 30, 37 (1991). *Glimpses of Raja Yoga*, Gujarat, India: Vimal Prakashan Trust.

19. Iyengar, B.K.S. (2002), Page 135, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. New Delhi, India: Harper Collins Publishers.
20. Aaranya, S.S.H. (2000). *Patanjal Yoga Darshan* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Delhi, India, Motilal Banarasidas.
21. Kumar, Satish, (2012, January/March), "Money and Morality." *Resurgence*, 270, [Online]. Available at [www.resurgence.org/magazine/article3539-money-and-morality.html](http://www.resurgence.org/magazine/article3539-money-and-morality.html). (Accessed on September 18, 2012).
22. Maslow, Abraham, *Towards a Psychology of Being*, Page 21, D. Van Nostrand Company, New York, 1968
23. *ibid.* page 25
24. *ibid.* page 26, 27
25. *ibid.* 34
26. *ibid.* 38
27. Iyengar, B.K.S. (2002), Page 136, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. New Delhi, India: Harper Collins Publishers.
28. Thakar, Vimala, page 39 (1991). *Glimpses of Raja Yoga*, Gujarat, India: Vimal Prakashan Trust.
29. Thakar, Vimala, (1991). *Glimpses of Raja Yoga*, Gujarat, India: Vimal Prakashan Trust.
30. Sharma, Subhash, *New Earth Sastra Towards Holistic Development and Management*, page 55, IBA Publications, Bangalore, India, 2012
31. *Earth Chakras*, Coon Robert, 2009



## CHAPTER 16

# Transformative Harmony and the Community-Making Process

*Julie M. Geredien*

In all conversations between two persons, tacit reference is made, as to a third party, to a common nature. That third party or common nature is not social; it is impersonal; it is God. And so in groups where debate is earnest, and especially on high questions, the company becomes aware that the thought rises to an equal level in all bosoms, that all have a spiritual property in what was said, as well as the sayer. They all become wiser than they were. It arches over them like a temple, this unity of thought.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Oversoul*

### Part I: Harmony as a Guiding Concept for Humanity

#### A Nuts and Bolts Definition of Harmony: Naming its Four-Dimensional Structure

How do we recognise a sense of harmony? Is there an essential definition of harmony that bridges the appreciation of it in the modern world with the significance it had as a guiding cultural concept in the ancient world? Is harmony merely a “vague abstract idea,” as Piet Strydom argues in his writing about the status of harmony as a concept shaping the development of a new World Society? (2013:74). Or does it



have a reality as a precise analytical concept referring to a particular existent? What is its potential and status as a guiding understanding for humanity, one that moves us towards the birth of a cosmopolitan World Society in which all life is protected in a “cared-for planetary biosocial ecosphere?” (*ibid.*:74).

Chung-ying opens his essay, “On Harmony as Transformation: Paradigms from the I Ching”, with an inquiry that raises some of the same questions that I begin with, concerning the meaning of harmony. He writes:

‘Harmony’ has rich intuitive meaning in the common usage. It suggests concord, accord, attunement, agreement, togetherness and peaceful contentedness. Why does the word harmony attain such a rich variety of meanings? Why does this variety of meaning suggest a common core of reference or at least a family resemblance to one another? (1989:225)

To develop an understanding of harmony that addresses these questions and further ones, I will begin, like Chung-ying, by considering the definition of harmony that stems from ancient Greece and that was associated in particular with music. The Greek root word for harmony is *harmonia* and means, *the agreement of musical notes which create a perception of internal togetherness and mutual support among the individual notes* (*ibid.*:225). But as we all know, and as Chung-ying points out, harmony is now understood to be a concept that applies to domains such as mathematics or physics, as well as to music.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it is possible to recognise a sense of harmony “in colour, numbers, movements, natural objects, man made things, human behaviour, human writing and poetry, human thinking, emotions, design, management, and organisation” (*ibid.*:226). Furthermore, in ancient China, harmony (*he*), was a concept integral to physical and spiritual understandings of reality that not only applied to the cultivation of music and food and to beliefs about the after-life, but that also infused the development of the whole human self and all of society.

How is it possible for the word ‘harmony’ to be applied to so many diverse domains, locations and time periods? Here, I found it helpful to reflect more upon the definition from the ancient Greek root, considering its most central components only, eliminating those peripheral terms referring specifically to the world of music. With the most essential key words extracted from the original definition of *harmonia* just provided, we see that there remain four core dimensions to the experience of harmony. Those four dimensions of harmony essential to its meaning are: *internal togetherness*, *mutual support*, an *agreement*, and a *perception*. Chung-ying too, upon analysis, finds that harmony has four distinct aspects. He identifies three distinct, seemingly static dimensions, and then elaborates on a

fourth, that embodies harmony's inner dynamic structure. He defines the core four as:

1. Harmony is a totality of parts.
2. Each part of the totality is related to other parts in the totality.
3. All parts contribute to the formation of the totality in the sense of wholeness.
4. There is a temporal and spatial, or an unfolding and interactive aspect to the experience (for example, music is a coordinated movement expressing different proportional relationships over time; musical notes are written in a lucid spatial relation to one another, so that when this representation is brought to life, purposeful sound and not noise is created; time and space are coherently and optimally unified within our subjective experience through this dimension of harmony) (1989:225-226).

Chung-ying elaborates on these four aspects, noting that the above-mentioned relationships are distinguished by two features: the absence of oppressive force, and the presence of nurturing dialogical qualities.

It is to be noted that in aspect 2, the relation of each part to the other parts in musical harmony is one of support and recognition, not one of destroying or overcoming. One can further note that the relation of each part and of all parts to the whole are similarly describable as one of support and recognition so that the formation of the whole implies also the explicit realisation of an implicit order internally present in the parts. (*ibid.*:226)

Chung-ying's understandings of the four-dimensional structure of harmony correlates with the four key words I was able to draw out from the original Greek definition. The aspect of *internal togetherness* could be acknowledged in the observation that "harmony is a totality of parts"; *mutual support* could be affirmed by verifying that "each part of the totality is related to other parts in the totality"; *agreement* could be recognised in the fact that "all parts contribute to the formation of the totality in the sense of wholeness"; and *perception* could be experienced in the "temporal and spatial, unfolding and interactive aspect."

Our essential nuts and bolts definition of harmony then, allows us to apply the word harmony to any reality or transformative, striving movement in which all four of these distinct dimensions are either present or are being made conscious and actively called into being. We can therefore rightfully speak of harmony in relation not only to music, but to a myriad of realities, including our emotions and thoughts in response to music and to the larger context in which it is played. Moreover, the

development of human understanding, hope and organised solidarity within social movements, such as the Estonian Singing Revolution, can likewise be discussed within the dynamic structural framework that is offered by a multi-dimensional respect for harmony.

I have offered a primary definition of harmony that I propose can also be considered primal. It brings to light an original template, or foundational blueprint, and thus, restores to our perception the interwoven, participatory nature of the unfolding of life. As Chung-ying concludes, harmony is “deeply rooted in ourselves and in the world” (1989:226). He explains:

Our experiences enable us to recognise the four-dimensional structure of harmony: our perceptions enable us to identify the concrete harmony in diverse experiences of concrete things and events; and our thinking mind enables us to create the image/design of harmony in a general sense and even enables us to make an effort to realise it. The real inner and outer world of man contains the world of harmony as real and as ideal as well. ...all concrete harmonies share the same core of the harmony structure and yet form different harmonies characteristic of each concrete, individual situation (1989:226, emphasis my own).

Understanding harmony as a primal concept that is both real and ideal, allows us to appreciate its role in the regeneration of culture at a time of ecological and psychological chaos and environmental and social crisis. Furthermore, the rootedness of harmony “in ourselves and in the world” implies that seeming disharmony may have an important role to play in revealing to us deeper core perceptions of harmony that were previously invisible to us. That kind of inner mobility of perception is reflected in the simple outer world observation, often attributed to Emerson, that: “only when the sky is dark, can one see the stars.”

Systems theory reveals how in times of disequilibrium, there is the potential for deeper latent inter-connected structures to surface within consciousness. As they do, our perception of a seemingly chaotic, ‘dark’ system moves towards a more holistic illumined realisation of self-organisation. Duane Elgin helpfully summarises the insights of Christopher Bache on this point. Bache is a leading educator and scholar of religion and philosophy who has applied systems theory to understand possible patterns of transformation in self and society. He has written about how, in extreme conditions, “systems that were previously isolated might spontaneously begin to interact with each other to form new connecting patterns. ... this would enable the system to consciously reconfigure itself with a new level of simplicity, synergy, and sustainability” (1997:8).

The four-part structural definition of harmony leaves us then, with the recognition of harmony as a primal and vitalising concept. It makes possible the dawning awareness of an imminent and transcendent *internal togetherness* that was previously invisible to us. It therefore points to our inherent capacity to participate directly in the emergence of new levels of consciousness and in genuinely creative and responsive collective human actions.

I affirm that the call of harmony has the potential to guide us in a global movement towards a “post-colonial cosmopolis characterised by global justice, trans-civilisational dialogue and dignity for all” (Giri 2006:471). Opening us to comprehensive inquiry, the call of harmony promises to lead humanity through a diverse and integrated cosmomorphic transformation. The language of mediation and integration, that are a living aspect of its visionary and border-crossing logic, leads us towards a deepening world peace in which work and play, being and becoming, equilibrium and disequilibrium are balanced and liberate the expression of human joy and planetary well-being.

### **An Initial Affirmation of Harmony as a Guiding Concept for Humanity**

But, what overall evidences are there to support placing such trust in harmony as a concept capable of guiding humanity through this profound level of transformation? Why is contemplation of the four dimensions of harmony so important and why should harmony be granted something like World Saviour status as a leading focus for our attention? Is it reasonable to expect that the peoples of the world could agree upon such a focus to guide global transformation?

This book will be a full response to that question, integrating different disciplines, from philosophical ancient Chinese writings on harmony to new considerations from pioneers in Western science who are exploring, with the aid of neuroscience, human learning and our subjective experiences of emotion, cognition, culture and self-aware consciousness. But for now, my answer can be previewed in this three-point summary:

1. **Harmony is a concept that guides us firmly to the theories and practices of inclusion** Respect for the primal concept of harmony (*ho*) directly addresses two major obstacles that thwart the progress of humanity today: dualistic perception and systemic error. Dualistic perception is the cause of argumentation and war; systemic error is the cause of entrenched and ubiquitous social ills. Argumentation persists due to unchecked, reactive human tendencies that distort perception of our underlying unity, creating constructions of an excluded “other.” Social ill persists due to unconscious perpetuation of micro-aggressions and institutionalised forms of exclusion, not only of people, but of ways of thinking, feeling, and relating

that promote integration of new insights and perspectives, and creative transformation.

Harmony is a remedy for both these problems because of its ability to manage both the theories and practices of inclusion. An active and outreaching concern for inclusion de-universalises the hegemonic discursive frames of whiteness, frees us from standardised codes of categorisation and self-containment and allows us to approach challenge, social pain, creative process and the unknown, all of which are necessary for transformative growth.

Consider briefly now that perception of internal togetherness can only be nurtured by the resolve to define and to develop from within, in an ongoing and self-refining way, relationships of mutual support; it is further strengthened by striving to increase the resonance of those relationships with each other. This nurturance and strengthening is accomplished by continually seeking to include divergent perspectives and particular realities. With trust and commitment, such 'fresh', and sometimes initially discordant, elements are able to deepen the resonance, and to enrich the integrity and feeling of agreement within those relationships. Inclusion practices that are guided by the primal concept of harmony (*ho*) provide remembrance of the need to care continually for the internal togetherness of the whole, as it is the larger whole of our culture and ecological context that is continually influencing our development.

Without this approach attitude towards the 'other', the 'other' becomes a force that either weakens or directly threatens relationships of mutual support, often hardening them into rigidity, or preventing them, due to apathy and self-absorption, from realising their optimal creative and ethical potential. Mainstream epistemology in modernity has relied upon the logic of exclusion and self-containment to construct knowledge as power within hierarchy rather than as liberation and this has affected how we relate to ourselves, each other and learning itself (Foucault 1980). Without an inclusive approach attitude towards learning itself, systemic error persists, with people habitually closing themselves off to a 'larger view' and too frightened of the change that will result from addressing the root source of our problems. People become conditioned into mindsets of certainty and a sense of security through fixed identity.

Theories and practices of inclusion are necessary for the realisation of justice and rightful progress of humanity, as they facilitate natural life processes of optimal growth and fulfilment. Inclusion is inextricably linked to an understanding of the coordinating dimensions of harmony.

This fact, and the necessity of an approach attitude that orients our reason and feeling (creative unity *yi*)<sup>2</sup> towards inclusion, despite the challenges involved, serves to uplift the relevance of harmony as a guiding concept for humanity.

2. **Harmony is a concept that restores to our conscious awareness the natural desire within human beings to express an all-embracing love for humanity and respect for the well-being of all life.** An approach attitude towards seeming strife awakens the ancient desire within humans to participate in an active, radiating flow of love that nurtures life, learning, and the evolution of human consciousness. This deeply felt desire, and the accompanying cognitive appreciation of its importance in the protection of all four dimensions of harmony, is called *ren* by Confucius in *Analects*.

*Ren* provides physiological feelings of well-being and safety that nourish our perception of self and world. *Ren* is not however mere idealism or emotionalism. It requires us to develop third person point of view and the perspective of the “impartial spectator” (Sen 2002). It is considered both a particular and a general virtue, both an expression of benevolence and altruism, and an expression of the ideal of perfected virtue itself. The multiple dimensions of harmony engage both heart and mind so that we can cultivate *ren* fully. Far from a cold indifference, the practice of impartiality supports us in recognising new possibilities of resonance and agreement for humanity and in making creative and critical discoveries that resolve seeming human dilemmas.

For example, emerging languages of respect from neuroscience allow us to protect a non-judgmental and compassionate perspective on human emotional and cognitive vulnerabilities. The biological substrate of challenges like human defensiveness and volatility can be understood as linked to over-excitation of the amygdale. Insights like this can help us to plan new forms of education and to create new intentional environmental and cultural conditions that are infused with *ren* and that are conducive to the perfection of virtue in humanity: that promote inter and intra-personal attunement and that protect us from those vulnerabilities, even transforming them for our benefit. *Ren* allows us to respond intellectually and spiritually to such biological realities, from a human leadership standpoint of awareness and agency.<sup>3</sup>

Deepened reflection on the primal concept of harmony (*ho*) helps us to develop the virtue of *ren* so that it becomes the foundation of an ethical, cosmopolitan disposition supporting the wide-scale, deep structural transformation of culture itself and new levels of human understanding.

3. **Harmony is a concept that directs us reflexively to understand the development of genuine human understanding itself, and to recognise that our higher awareness of the comprehension process is, in itself, one of the most pure and graceful sources of human unity.** Catherine Elgin (1996) explains how the quest for genuine understanding is something more complex than the gradual accumulation of certain facts or disciplinary 'knowledge'. It is also more delicate than merely 'matching up' or relating different stances so that they 'make sense' when held next to each other and can be used expediently for political gain. Rather, the ongoing quest for genuine understanding involves the same essential marriage of diversity with underlying unity, of differentiation with coherent integration that the multidimensional concept of harmony implies. And, since an understanding, to remain so, must be held within a continual process of growth and refinement, the quest also necessitates acceptance of realities of uncertainty and ongoing change, which meditation on transformative harmony provides (1996).

To confirm an understanding as deep and broad requires that each of the four dimensions of harmony be fully engaged: perception, agreement, mutual support, and internal togetherness. When understanding is not conflated with a one-dimensional assumption of knowledge, but rather, is brought to life through integrity to the practices of inclusion discussed above, then it brings forth true wisdom for humanity. Understanding itself becomes an embodied expression of harmony.

Cultivating our capacity to understand means caring about emotional self-regulation and cognitive sensitivity, "reflective equilibrium," and on-going self-aware reflective perspective, each of which, in different ways, supports the four dimensions of harmony and help us to assess the epistemic value of emotion and poetic vision (*ibid.*). Multi-dimensional concept of harmony allows us to discern the much more robust meaning of human understanding, and the requirements for participating in its creation. It draws us towards "border-crossing transmutations among positions" and to the "transformative cultivation of the objective and the subjective" that "expands ontology" and therefore "enriches epistemology," revealing the richness of the world through multiple diverse means of inquiry (Giri 2004, 2013:1). In this way, harmony guides us to be illumined and uplifted by the qualities of mind, heart and shared sovereignty that genuine understanding engenders.

Most essentially then, appreciation of the primal concept of harmony (*ho*) leads us to: theories and practices of inclusion, love for humanity that recognises our unity, and cultivation of delicate and nuanced comprehensive understandings



that relate people flexibly and consistently to the larger evolutionary movement of “the extensive whole” (deTocqueville 1840:217). I believe that it is well worth pursuing these outcomes. They are keys to humanisation and general human progress. They, therefore, support further exploration of harmony as a guiding concept for humankind.

## Part II: Harmony as a Deep Systems Movement of Transformation

### Community Making as a Deep Systems Harmony Movement

#### *The Journey to Sacred Non-Sovereignty*

In the book, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*, Scott Peck, a psychiatrist uniquely concerned with nurturing the social conditions and insights that are conducive to our individual and collective moral and spiritual growth, described the patterns of transformation that he observed repeatedly in his own self-directed inquiry into community making. The overall spiralling process of change involves a movement with four discernible stages: Pseudo-Community; Chaos; Emptiness; Genuine Community. The critical turning point of transformation in a group's shared journey is entry into the stage of Emptiness. Here individuals begin to appreciate together the meaning of sacred non-sovereignty. Fred Dallymayr defines sacred non-sovereignty as a quality of being and intention in which a sovereign self or society is “not preoccupied with power and mastery” but instead turns its focus to something much more creative and holistic: an “ethics and spirituality of servant-hood” (Dallymayr 2005; Giri 2013:84)<sup>4</sup>. Peck describes the purpose of the stage of Emptiness like this:

The ultimate purpose of emptiness, then, is to make room. Room for what? Room for God, the religious would say. But since God means so many things to different people, including nothing at all, I prefer generally to say that emptiness makes room for the Other. What is the Other? It can be virtually anything: a tale from a strange culture, the different, the unexpected, the new, the better. Most important, for community, the Other is the Stranger, the other person. We cannot even let the other person into our hearts or minds unless we empty ourselves. We can truly listen to him or truly hear her only out of emptiness (1987:223).

The journey toward sacred non-sovereignty reveals to us our capacity to ‘truly listen’ and ‘to let the other person into our hearts or minds.’ Peck explains how the journey begins in Pseudo-Community, the initial stage of the community making



process in which he observed how modern day Westernised people remained identified with the social masks that maintain *status quo* social agreements, expectations and order. Pseudo-Community reflects reactive 'flight' responses to change, and unconscious resistance to the call that we transform and develop ourselves through the process of community making.

Chaos, the natural successor of Pseudo-Community, can be understood as a 'fight' response that emerges from feelings and needs that have been awakened by the community-making process. In Chaos people express views, reactions and beliefs that have been shut out during the shallow harmony of conventional agreement that marks Pseudo-Community. Chaos 'stirs up' individual and group inter and intra-personal dynamics, as people speak on and often cry out, challenging concerns and issues. During the stage of Chaos, themes of control and fear arise. Participants, often still immersed in conflict with one another, confront forms of oppression that need to be openly looked at. However true listening is not possible since people are not yet empty of their own fixed perceptions and embodied feelings. The group struggles with each participant's limitations, and attempts to become liberated from the constrictions that have previously caused barriers and walls in their communication. They disturb the inhibitions and the habitual masking of self that characterise the Pseudo-Community stage and that prevent necessary group transformation and development.

While in Chaos, group survival can sometimes feel at risk, as differences and divides between people are directly exposed and often reach the levels of crisis and strongly-felt intensity. Since the group has not yet felt the embrace, and reached the transcendent safe haven, of Genuine Community, participants are not yet able to relate to emergent group strife and adversity through listening and trust. However, the shared intent of participants to reach a new level of integration together and to know Genuine Community is a powerful 'hidden' organiser of the group's development. The dimensions of harmony can be recognised on a deep systems level even within stages of the community-making process that appear chaotic and in which the dimensions of agreement and internal togetherness seem particularly to have been lost. This is because of the underlying unifying power of the group's shared purpose.

Peck explains that despite feelings of frustration and confusion that often arise in the stage of Chaos, community making remains a "lawful process." The group's shared purpose is established in the beginning. Guidance is provided through a clear vision statement, a mission statement, guiding principles and a meaningful story, all of which are read aloud by participants before the group initiates its journey together. Peck writes: "Whenever a group functions in accordance with certain quite clear laws or rules it will become a Genuine Community"<sup>5</sup> (1987:83).

Although they may be forgotten in the emotional intensity and immersed reality of Chaos, guiding principles, rules and values are remembered and held on to through the usually silent presence of the Facilitator. This is a person who has personal experience and practice with the community-making process and who has been trained to recognise the stages of community as well as the patterns of meaning-making and self-learning that develop for groups in the process. The Facilitator is like a great listener, who hears the variations and permutations rising from the *sad*<sup>6</sup> of the group (Wolcott 2013). The group participants themselves do not yet know how to consciously engage in the harmonisation process. Until participants have together touched their human vulnerability, and shared critical discoveries related to submerged and hidden aspects of their life, they remain still in an immersed state of inner and outer strife, a medley of separate voices and competing melodies.

As individuals do walk into their weakness however, and as they willingly disarm themselves, relating the nature of their wounds, longings and truths, 'emptying' begins and entry into sacred non-sovereignty commences. Whereas Chaos is marked by the 'fight' response, by fragmentation and disunity, emotional reactivity, the need to organise and control and to feel personal self-mastery or sovereignty, Emptiness is signalled by silence, surrender and the inner search for those practices protecting human dignity that allow us to overcome our tendency to become immersed in our own perspective and to relate to one another through habit rather than through insight.

The willingness to enter this experience of Emptiness, and the ability to continue to enter into it and abide within it, is referred to by Peck as a "negative capability" (1987:214). Peck refers to an article by Alfred Margulies called "Toward Empathy: The Uses of Wonder", in which Margulies cites Keats' reference to Shakespeare as possessing this capability.

...In a now famous letter to his brothers, Keats wrote that Shakespeare possessed the quality of a Negative Capability, "that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason". (Peck 1987:215; Margulies 1984:1025)

Negative capability refers to "the ability to maintain an evenly hovering attention, to suspend the world" (Peck 1987:214). It requires the capacity "to go against the grain of needing to know." Negative capability "topples the familiar" and is considered an act of will since one must "submerge oneself," "submit to not knowing," and "put oneself aside" (*ibid.*).

Negative capability is related to states like *kensho*, global amnesia and Zen Buddhist states of mindful awareness that penetrate through the rigidity of top-

down influences of self-identity (Siegel 2007:151,153). Study of these states indicates that sacred non-sovereignty, which arises as community-making participants enter the stage of Emptiness, most likely initiates transformation on a deep systems level within our biological body. Scientist James Austin (1998, 2006) explores this area of interest in his investigation of the interior, biological realities underpinning the experience of *kensho* (Siegel 2007:153).

In states of *kensho*, the individual transforms from immersed participation in the self, where only one's own *egocentric* point of view and story is felt, to an outward-seeking, or *allocentric*, focus that places attention on fellow sentient beings, and on greater realities outside of the limitations of the self (*ibid.*:154). Siegel elaborates further on Austin's research and the 'hidden' biology of harmony believed to be involved in states of *kensho*:

Austin wrote about the brain's two different sets of circuits, which he referred to as 'egocentric' and 'allocentric' circuitry. He postulated that the neural networks important in the construction of an autobiographical narrative self might be shut down during the state of *kensho*. Such circuits might involve the thalamus, sitting at the top of the brainstem and serving as a relay port through which much of perceptual input passes. Input from the deeper structures of the most basic self, at the brainstem level of the reticular activating system, could then 'gate' this flow directly and alter how we perceive a sense of egocentric or allocentric focus. He suggested that the intralaminar nuclei of the thalamus may be involved in the creation of hyper awareness in *kensho* that can increase a form of 'fast-frequency synchrony' in more distal regions, such as in the cortex. These thalamic nuclei could then shape the process of re-entry that promotes a form of resonance within the loops from cortex to thalamus and back to cortex and thus alters the functioning of the egocentric and allocentric networks (*ibid.*: 154).

Austin's postulation, that the neural networks important in the construction of an autobiographical narrative are shut down during *kensho*, implies that new dimensions in self-perception, perception of other, and perception of larger narrative and social system design, may become possible as a result of such states.<sup>7</sup> As Siegel highlights, in these states, "input from the deeper structures of the most basic self, at the brainstem level of the reticular activating system," seem to be directly involved in opening a flow of information capable of transforming our more socially constructed and fixed perceptions of self and world (*ibid.*: 158). Siegel theorises that these qualities of openness can also become entrained so that fair-mindedness and non-bias become a stable aspect of our broadened identity.

Furthermore, the collective ability to move beyond the particular emotional coding of personal narratives and to access inwardly these deeper more universal structures within the self, can support a movement towards a “covenant for the common good” in which social structures protect these universal and bare dimensions of our humanity (Arendt 1958). It is reasonable to conclude that when groups of people enter states similar to *kensho*, through their realisation of sacred non-sovereignty and Emptiness, a far more sensitive and creative ontological foundation is created that is conducive to genuine democracy.

The practice of negative capability by individuals within a group is about more than a socio-centric movement towards “democratic transformation” therefore. It is also an ontological happening in which one undertakes “suffering on the part of the self, to touch the heart and soul of the other, including that of sovereign power” (Giri 2014:85). In his own way, Giri writes about sacred non-sovereignty as a call to willingly accept the disruption of our *status quo*, to suffer, in order to grow, and to realise our potential on multiple levels of being. The journey to inner states like *kensho* and the transformation from Chaos to Emptiness and through to Genuine Community is sacred work involving the transformation of power and freedom. Giri explains:

Transforming power and freedom thus calls for preparation to undertake and embody suffering as a mode of being and relationship (including political struggle) which is neither sadistic nor masochistic, but a participation in the joys of transformation and for building a collective and ontological foundation of dignity and for multi-dimensional human, societal and cosmic flourishing. (*ibid.*:85)

Unhinging the centrality of one’s own autobiographical narrative, as in states like *kensho*, opens one also to the possibility of far more engaged co-participation in a larger human story. This is why the stage of Emptiness in community making and the realisation of sacred non-sovereignty is so critical. It transforms our perception of suffering itself, so that we recognise ourselves, not as martyrs, but as co-creators, together on an evolutionary journey of becoming. This aspect of sacred non-sovereignty transforms perception and agreement and gives us the fair-mindedness and the quality of vision and attention that are needed to think, feel and act like true artists and scientists: natural community makers who thrive in the creative ontology of flourishing Genuine Community.

It is the agreement to work always in relation to the dimensional level of the whole (*chung-tao*, recognition of a greater unity and internal togetherness) that makes all true scientists, and artists, like Shakespeare, community builders and peacemakers. In a talk on peace-making, O’Dea, a humanitarian activist, elaborates:

The peacemaker is asked to climb up those levels of consciousness to see how the whole and its parts are one. The peacemaker must be able to vigorously represent the whole when the parts forget this truth, this essential dimension of peacemaking. That is why peacemaking so often requires incredible stamina and courage. Because of this persistent inversion of that holonic principle...[that from the dimensional level of the whole, parts and whole are one].<sup>8</sup>

The discipline of “persistent inversion of that holonic principle,” sustains negative capability and cultivates a disposition that contributes greatly to an “ontological foundation of dignity” (Giri 2013). One becomes able to make an emotional and cognitive accommodation to grandeur. In other words, one is able to recognise what is ‘larger than us’ and to relate to it in a beneficial way, unhindered by apathy, fear, or arrogance. Instead, responses emerge that protect us in relation to the larger whole: reverence, respect, gratitude, humility, attentive appreciation. These emotions come alive as participants reach Genuine Community in the community-making process and keep people attuned to a higher standard of human dignity.

The “persistent inversion of that holonic principle” is what makes non-sovereignty a sacred reality of union, sacrifice, pain, and joyful transformation and what makes a harmonic experience of internal togetherness a possibility even in a group of very “different” people. Peck writes:

Community is integrative. It includes people of different sexes, ages, religions, cultures, viewpoints, life styles, and stages of development by integrating them into a whole that is greater – better – than the sum of its parts....It is ‘wholistic.’ It integrates us human beings into a functioning mystical body (1987:234).

Peck goes further in his explanation of how this integration is made possible. The passage below helps us to understand how the “persistent inversion” described by O’Dea is an essential act of integrity in the community-making process, allowing the process of emptying to move people, through their co-suffering, towards the experience of Genuine Community.

The word ‘integrity’ comes from the verb ‘to integrate’. Genuine community is always characterised by integrity. ... Just as it characterises the highest mystical, wholistic form of individual functioning, so the integrity of community characterises the highest form of group functioning. ...

Since integrity is never painless, so community is never painless. It also requires itself to be fully open, vulnerable, to the tension

of conflicting needs, demands, and interests of its members of the community as a whole. It does not seek to avoid conflict but to reconcile it. And the essence of reconciliation is that painful, sacrificial process of emptying. Community always pushes its members to empty themselves sufficiently to make room for the other point of view, the new and different understanding. Community continually urges both itself and its individual members painfully, yet joyously, into ever deeper levels of integrity. (*ibid.*:234-235)

Peck describes arrival into the presence of Genuine Community in spiritual terms, associating it with Holy Spirit and the Dove of Peace (75). Countless individuals participating in the community-making process over the course of the last thirty years have described subjective and inter-subjective realisations and co-realizations of God-Reality, of transcendental vision, of inner spiritual awakening and realisation of profound, universal truths concerning the nature of our shared humanity. Very deeply felt relational emotions, such as sublime adoration, devotional love (*bhakti*), and wondrous awe, which are usually associated with sincere and focused practices in religious community, may not usually be experienced in the intentionally non-religious framework and language of community making. However, in rare particular circumstances and with certain configurations of participants, intense emotions in this family most certainly may be felt and known. These profound feelings invoke a higher reflective self-awareness and bless our place in the transformative pain and beauty of life. They therefore allow us in the stage of Genuine Community to become even more receptive to grandeur, more vulnerable and more resilient, and awakened to our transformative capacity, all at the same time.<sup>9</sup>

Genuine Community is a place of healing and is itself self-healing as a living system (Peck 1987:59). Furthermore, it nurtures the development of each individual as a transformative social healer, for once a person has known the beauty and spiritual potential of Genuine Community, that person can never again truly trust that Pseudo-Community is humanity's final resting place. Within the smaller learned process experienced as a group is a blueprint of a much larger process that could be known, eventually, by every human being in the world. Through the expansive, yet focused, emotions that rise in Community Making, like reverence, gratitude and attentive appreciation, we discover the potential for a path of intentional learning and self-cultivation that brings us towards the ideal of a world-wide beloved community.

These emotions engage natural inhibitions and so develop our attention and cognitive sensitivity optimally. In observations of the minute, we are able to perceive a vastness. The beauty of a dew drop resting on a blade of grass at the

break of morn, when perceived in its purity, is immense beyond imagining and so can be a single word uttered into the silence of Genuine Community. Micro and macro cosmic worlds, the inner and outer worlds, are felt as linked and reconciled. We are cured of reductionist conclusions and the unchallenged belief that we can overcome mystery and somehow master reality. These kinds of experiences are part of the healing and creative dimension of the spirituality of Genuine Community. In the community making process people gain the “strength to comprehend” the “*breadth and length and height and depth*” of harmonisation (Ephesians 3:18 King James Version). A structural orientation towards Transcendence that has been present throughout the process is finally collectively felt and known, and infuses the harmony dimensions of *perception* and *agreement* (Painadath 2013:89).

Daniel Siegel’s research in the field of interpersonal neurobiology shows that there are neural correlates for the coherence of mind and the empathy within relationships that emerge in this final stage of Genuine Community. His description of an integrative flow of consciousness, captured in the acronym FACES, (flexible, adaptive, coherent, energised, and stable), and of qualities of self-awareness that are conducive to integration, expressed in the acronym COAL, (curious, open, accepting and loving), could be applied to describe the qualities of relational heart-mind (*hsin*) and group wisdom (*chih*) found in the integrative stage of Genuine Community or shared sovereignty (2007). According to Siegel’s research, community making could be considered a collectively embodied movement toward public mental health that has its biological substrate in the distinct dimension of neural integration.

The described correlates of neural integration are coherence of mind and empathy in relationships. In these ways, neural integration, mental coherence, and empathic relationship can be seen as three aspects of the one reality of well-being. We do not need to attempt to reduce any one of these into some form of the other. Neural, subjective, and interpersonal together form valid dimensions of reality that cannot be simplified into the other (*ibid.*:199).

The harmonisation process which people undergo in community making consists of differentiation and integration, and is not a one-dimensional or abstract reality: it is a real, multi-dimensional, rooted one involving in its highest state, “creative interpenetration” (Chung-ying 1989:243). In this process, an ontological foundation of dignity is attained, embodying coherence of mind and empathy in relationships, perhaps never before experienced in a group; the biological substrate of this foundation is a wholesome inner movement of integration on the neural level. The practice of negative capability leading to sacred non-sovereignty does not reduce, conflate or disregard the ways that we know ourselves to be human.



Rather it offers us an experience of being human and of mindfully cultivating the sacred in that experience, in a way that penetrates through all levels of our being, including the neural level.

Because it engages the four dimensions of harmony so completely and with such deep levels of feeling, community making provides evidence and hope that culture can indeed be harmoniously transformed. An appreciation develops of ways of relating, of thinking and feeling, that are genuinely artistic, scientific and law abiding, that is, distinctly, beautiful, true and good. The great virtues of harmony making: *chung*, *yi*, *jen* and *li* are all experienced on a root level in the community making process and a new frontier in human development and collective progress becomes visible.

### **The Science of Transforming Perception and Reaching Integrated States of Harmony in Community**

The Foundation for Community Encouragement teaches facilitators of community making that, “Emptiness is an additive stage of community building achieved through a subtractive process.”<sup>10</sup> That subtractive process involves our negative capability. It asks us to take away our reliance on what is present and visible in the world as it is before us, and to relate to what is not yet present, but which asserts a reality for itself as an ideal, a vision, a generative possibility, a “world waiting to be born” (Peck 1993). This makes negative capability a transformative and potent reconciler of seeming opposites and a two-way creative bridge from the visible to the invisible world.

By taking away what is present that is old and ingrained, fresh ways of seeing particularity and diversity can be added. Siegel calls the outcome of this new kind of perception the “oddball effect” because what was once viewed categorically and seen homogenously is finally recognised in its variability, as individual, and uniquely distinct, an “oddball” rather than an exact match within its category (2007:104-105). Significantly, the oddball effect and the capacity to accept and to seek relationship with diversity are only possible through Emptiness. They are the result of eradication of prejudice, and of maintenance of fair-mindedness and non-bias, within one’s perceptions. The oddball effect is associated with an experience of expanded subjective time as one perceives distinct realities previously concealed and engages multiple perspectives and life-affirming responses to life (*ibid.*:104, 106). Experiences of the oddball effect are a natural part of the integrated state of harmony that evolves within Genuine Community. They reveal the wondrous diversity of life, the deeper rhythm, structure and essence of beauty that is *within* all things.



Peck cites Sam Keen's book *To a Dancing God*, where Keen explains that "for genuine novelty to emerge" we need to be applying the necessary discipline of "bracketing, compensating or silencing," a negative capability that requires "sophisticated self-knowledge and courageous honesty" (Keen 1970:28; Peck 1987:212). He concludes: "for the unique presence of things, persons, or events to take root in me, I must undergo a decentralisation of the ego" (Peck 1987:28, 212).

The seeming paradox that Emptiness is an "additive stage" draws attention to how spiritual perception is in a sense "added" unto us, through the discipline of de-centering ego. Here again, it can be helpful to appreciate that there are neural correlates for both the additive and subtractive processes that occur in Emptiness. Siegel explains these complementary processes in neurobiological terms. Understanding what may be involved in the neural dimension within this stage of community making can help us to appreciate the imperative, within the subjective and interpersonal dimensions for people to practice emptying and negative capability with intentional and mindful awareness.

Siegel describes how lower bodily receptors in our organs can be considered keys to empathic understanding of life. They do not implicate higher systems of socially-organised, judgment-formation that interfere with empathy (2007). Siegel explains: "At the simplest level of experience, "bottom-up" processing likely entails a linkage of the neural activity of our... senses with our dorsolateral (side) prefrontal cortex as we become aware of the core of our being, of our ipseitous self" (*ibid.*:137-138). The most effective way to initiate "bottom-up processing" is to begin with a kind and gentle focus on the body:

Cultivating awareness of the lower input from the body, brainstem, and limbic areas – This means exploring the way the muscles and bones feel as well as coming to sense the input from the hollow organs (the viscera) such as the intestines, the lungs, and the heart. (Siegel 2012:41-48)

The emergent result of "bottom-up" activity is our ability to recognise consciously our physiological feelings as embodied emotions, or as feeling-thoughts known as sentiments or intuition. This kind of cognition is a sign of what Siegel calls "vertical integration" (2012:41-48).

When we become aware of input from the body, the brainstem, and the limbic areas, we combine these subcortical signals with the vertically higher cortical regions to have this form of reflective awareness.

However, research and clinical experience indicate that strong habitual top-down judgments and expectations literally ‘shut us down’ from these bottom-up direct sources of knowledge and guidance, preventing us from cultivating more integrated and complex forms of self-awareness (2007:106). Pseudo-Community and Chaos, in different ways, are examples of this kind of closed mental and emotional processing. When top-down signals carry particular narrative imprints and non-reflective personal bias and judgment or entrained memories, rather than information that relates us openly to universally harmonising precepts, principles, and imagery from parables, then entrenched patterns of categorising, wind up reducing or overriding perceptual information from lower body receptors.

The remedy for this is to cultivate intentionally harmonious “vertical” paths of neural integration that do not block our bottom-up perceptions of “the whole.” Genuine Community is the stage in which we begin to weave together our inner and outer worlds, creating a shared ecological commons, or what has been called by Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor, a *body~place~commons* (Reid and Taylor 2009). Bodily perceptions of “the whole” shape our consciousness and sense of belonging because a culture is created in which optimal movements of neural integration can occur and be sustained. Siegel writes:

The art of living in a creative way may involve the art of being mindfully aware and open to experience as it arises without being swept up by judgments or automatic processes that dominate our perceptions of the whole. (2012:17-4)

Vertical neural integration involves six layers of the neo-cortex known by scientists to be the ‘newest’ part of the human brain. These layers form vertical columns in which information can flow both upwards and downwards. Perceptual information, such as visual data about seeing an actual, physical caterpillar or a mountain, that are processed in multiple areas of the brain other than the pre-frontal cortex, are understood by neuroscientists to travel upwards, from the bottom sixth and fifth levels of the layered cortical columns. The top cortical layers one and two respond to the upward flow of information from bottom layers by activating patterns of neural firing stored in our memory. Siegel explains:

We see a rose and while our bottom-up experience senses it as if it were the first time, our top-down flow knows this is a flower, names it as “r-o-s-e” and creates summaries of this and all other prior roses, or flowers and walks along this same old path. This top-down flow from layers one and two and three, sends streams of prior knowledge, judgment, and expectation hurling downward to crash into the bottom-up stream. The crashing of this top-down with the bottom-

up flow of sensation between layers four and three from an array of columns – we can propose – shapes how we become aware of what is happening in the present moment (2012:17-3-4).

Siegel describes practices that can liberate us from “enslavement” by invariant representations, freeing us from top-down rigidity (typical in the conventional approach to communication within Pseudo-Community) and preparing us to better understand and neutralise bottom-up chaos (experienced in Chaos stage). For Siegel, this self-liberation is made possible by appreciating a “middle-way” of conscious integration of cortical layers. Poet Stanley Kunitz (1979) intuitively describes this in his poem *The Layers*, when he writes of being directed by “a nimbus-clouded voice” to “live in the layers/not on the litter.” Siegel would say that practices for “living in the layers” include developing kindness and compassion, trust and inter and intra-personal attunement. Practices for avoiding “the litter” include cultivating relational meta-awareness of these integrative processes, so that we are able to recognise and bypass the limited judgments of our small self and to uncover the universal dimension of our inner being and a sense of agreed belonging with the larger world.

Community making helps people to engage in these processes, assisting them on subjective, interpersonal and neural levels to progress towards Genuine Community. The inevitable realisation of a bare and common “deep universal structure” within us restores the significance of the Confucian perspective, that the *Tao*, which is “the supreme and ultimate harmony,” can be awakened within us, even “if temporarily not prevailing, hidden in the hearts/minds of rulers and people” (Chung-ying 1989:230-231). In fact, Chung-ying reminds us that it is precisely this conviction about a deep resonating universal structure within each of us that is “the reason why Confucius sets out to reform the world” (*ibid.*:230). Siegel writes in modern language:

As the mindful brain develops, discernment is elaborated and we come to realise that the bare, primary self that is revealed with mindful awareness has within it a deep revelation: We share a core humanity beneath all of the chatter of the mind. Underneath our thoughts and feelings, prejudices and beliefs, there rests a grounded self that is a part of a larger whole. ...We share our ‘ipseitious self’ with each other, that grounded core essence beneath our adaptations, beliefs, and memories.

The concept of discernment also embraces an analysis of right action not as judgment, but as a moral direction that has a deep universal structure (2007:321-322).

Mary Helen Immordino-Yang arrives at similar conclusions regarding the uncovering of “a deep universal structure” within “the bare, primary self” that provides one with an enduring moral sensibility. She relates her neuroscience and education research, on the primacy of emotions in learning and human development, and quotes the opening lines from Kunitz’s aforementioned poem:

I have walked through many lives  
Some of them my own,  
And I am not who I was,  
Though some principle of being  
Abides, from which I struggle not to stray.

Kunitz’s words reflect a journey away from any invariant representation of what his life is. However, his poetry indicates that there invariably is still remaining, as Siegel suggests, “a moral direction that has a deep universal structure.” For Kunitz, it is a kind of awakening of awareness of the *Tao* through which he is able to perceive: “some principle of being” from which he struggles “not to stray.”

Yang speaks in her own way about the significance of the vertical domain of neural integration. She too sees that an open relation with the bareness and universality of our condition allows us to perceive kindly life’s particularity and the common “oddness” of individuality within all life forms. She emphasises the subjective and interpersonal dimensions of this reminding people that “life is a process of embodiment” in which bodily information is integral to our larger recognition of shared humanity and our most morally sensitive sense of self-awareness (2017). The “grounded self that is a part of a larger whole” that Siegel speaks of is a shared self, an ‘ipseitious self’ that we share with each other (2007, 2012). Yang says:

The process of living your life is a process of embodiment. It is a process of walking through your life in a body. It is not a sort of abstract thing where your head is there and the body is separate. ... you don’t just live in your life, you live in other people’s lives, and you live multiple lives, in as many as you can appreciate having. That is in essence the purpose of education, to expose people to these experiences. And doing that changes you. I am not who I was yet there is still some sense of me that still lives there. The very bottom of your brainstem is the essence of your survival and it stays. (Yang 2012)

Again, there is resonance here with the Confucian insight that harmony (*he*) is a movement of uncovering that which is already present within us on a deep

level, but that is buried and concealed from us. Interpersonal neurobiology and neuroscience show that we need to be liberated from past conditioning and self-contained and abstracted ego-centric identity, in order to perceive life holistically, as the *Tao*, as movement and transpiration, and so as to move beyond the bondage of form and limited consciousness: to truly live, not one life, but multiple lives. It is only in this courageous, truthful and poetic way that we come to feel life's sacrality, the essence of our survival, which Yang explains abides in the very bottom of our brainstem, and which gives meaning, beauty and dignity to the great border-crossing journey of life itself.

In Genuine Community the social agreement expands to include these levels of our biological, social and spiritual nature previously excluded and therefore non-apparent to us. These represent undeveloped aspects of our humanity. Shared sovereignty, and the expanded agreement of Genuine Community, encourages us to outreach to and to integrate continually those perspectives and feelings that live pressed into the margins of our society and our selves. The decentralising of the ego, as Keen (1970) refers to, allows us to re-centre both ourselves and our society around a dynamic learning process that outreaches to and integrates what has been left neglected and excluded in the fringes of our inner and outer worlds. This quality and intentionality of movement is the heart-centred focus of transformative harmony that makes us both whole and part of the whole.

Taking on the challenge of disequilibrium, or relating directly to change, means that we invite in the unfamiliar, the uncomfortable and the novel. We open ourselves to the oddball in us and in the world. This is what provokes whole new integrative levels of skill, insight and ability to emerge. Static notions of Genuine Community, as a phenomenon lasting only for a set time, and in a set place, transform into dynamic visions of Genuine Community, that cross contexts and human-constructed boundaries. When our top-down influences attune us similarly to shared principles and vision, we become able to relate with "curiosity, openness, acceptance and love," (COAL) to our feelings and thoughts (Siegel 2007).

Although explicit memories, trauma and somatic conditions affect the integration process, on the whole, if a group can arrive at Genuine Community, people begin to develop the healing ability to relate gracefully, with COAL qualities, to those whom they are intentionally attempting to harmonise with, and to the larger needs in the outer world. The practice of negative capability brings a great gift: a quality of mind, perception and being that is unbiased, generative, creative, and conducive to the flourishing of life. As we apply not only spiritual teachings and humanist guidelines in our quest for community, but also scientific insights about how to liberate ourselves from the enslavement of invariant representations and how to realise the shared ipseitous self and deepest moral orientation of our

humanity, the maintenance of Genuine Community will become synonymous with the art of creative living.

### **The Role of Intentionality and Facilitation in the Birth of a Community's 'Centering' Mind**

In a society organised by trauma and oppressive ways of holding social norms and forms, the qualities of emptiness and sacred non-sovereignty represent learned and cultivated responses to individual and social development, not preliminary or automatic ones. As Bell Hooks writes: "To build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialisation that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination" (2003:36). Intentional effort and awareness must be applied to support the emergence of the qualities and abilities associated with emptiness and sacred non-sovereignty. In *Further Thoughts on the Foundation for Community Encouragement Model: Demystifying the FCE Model*, Mary Ann Schmidt (1992) emphasises how entry into the stage of Emptiness is intentionally cultivated not automatic. The role of the Facilitator in modelling for participants the awareness and intention needed to move beyond the naturalness of Pseudo-Community and Chaos and to achieve harmonious Genuine Community is therefore central:<sup>11</sup>

As far as we know, groups of people do not automatically go 'into Emptiness' – in contrast to the fact that groups do automatically go 'into' Pseudo-Community and Chaos. Simply speaking, the FCE model does not create or encourage pseudo-community or chaos; it simply tries to manage it effectively in order to move the group towards emptiness. On the other hand, the FCE model does try to help the group achieve a state of emptiness. Even though a Facilitator cannot create group or individual emptiness, the suggestion, modelling and sometimes even insistence by the Facilitator on emptiness is the primary role of the Facilitator. (FCE Facilitator Training Manual)

It should be understood that the Facilitator mostly uses silence, and the practice of negative capability, as the means through which to 'insist' on group emptiness. Peck writes of the power of the use of silence in his chapter on Emptiness.

...silence is the most essential ingredient of emptiness. It is no accident, therefore, that we routinely use silence in community-building groups to lead them into emptiness. Christian mystics will sometimes speak of how 'Before the Word there was silence.' Indeed we can say that the Word came out of silence. It had to. Recently one of my hosts, a famous opera singer, not even knowing of my interest

in the topic, spontaneously informed me that ‘more than one half of Beethoven is silence.’ Without silence there is no music; there is only noise. (1987:212)

The constitutive role of the Facilitator in the Community-Making process provides us with a real-life example of how Strydom’s critical theory concerning triple contingency could be applied in new forms of collective learning. The presence of the Facilitator serves as an embodiment for the group of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> relational senses described in Part I of this book.<sup>12</sup> Strydom’s explanation of the theory of triple contingency helps us to see how the Facilitator functions as a role model, exemplifying for people a higher relational sense of consciousness that they themselves can develop. This development occurs naturally in the Community-Making process, as people move from their “first scenario” of double contingency, while in Pseudo-Community and Chaos, to their “more adequate replacement – namely triple contingency” which emerges in Emptiness and Genuine Community. He writes:

...the concept of double contingency needs to make way for a more adequate replacement – namely triple contingency. In the first scenario, two social actors, communicatively acting subjects or black boxes, A and B, face or encounter one another or enter into some relation with each other as ‘I’ and ‘thou.’ In the basic situation of triple contingency, by contrast, there is a third perspective borne by C, who observes what A and B are saying. By so doing C has a constitutive impact on the social situation. (1999:8)

The Facilitator in the Community-Making process is the “third perspective borne by C” and serves to protect and guide the process through which all participants are able to enter into a much greater compassionate and responsive awareness. The Facilitator practices the virtues of harmony making such as *chung* and *yi*, but does this virtually silently, using negative capability. This has a gradual influence on group consciousness, just as food, prepared by the cook who intentionally harmonises its flavours and qualities, gradually influences both the mind and the being of those who eat it. People become more sensitive because a more comprehensive and systems-oriented sensitivity is being continuously modelled for them. They begin to think critically and reflectively about themselves and for themselves.

Peck describes how through the ongoing practice of negative capability, genuine communities develop the capacity to be contemplative, becoming self-reflective and capable of realism and consensus. The Facilitator applies negative capability to serve as the meta-aware presence who, mostly through the practice



of silence, guides the group to the transformation point of Emptiness and sacred non-sovereignty, and also to places of spontaneous self-awareness as participants recognise for themselves that they are participating in a new powerful integrative level of consciousness.

This consciousness can be felt, acknowledged, described and actively cared for and sustained by the group, eventually without the presence of a “third perspective” Facilitator. The community members internalise the guiding vision and principles of Genuine Community, and through humility and realism, maintain the necessary allegiance to emptiness that is required to maintain their presence together at this evolved level of communication and insight. The group has meta-awareness of its newly-evolved consciousness, through the “constitutive impact” of the Facilitator (Strydom 1999).

The group in Genuine Community is described as a “group of all leaders,” with all taking on equally their responsibility to remain self-aware (1987:72). The community making model gives us not only a glimpse of a new possibility for democracy but also a new understanding and respect for the self-governing mind. The open and unbiased perception that accompanies sacred non-sovereignty provides people with a foretaste of a social body order, in which people are freed from the closed-system of logic of consumption, production and *status quo* power, and can begin to participate in the profoundly humanising creative and ethical potential of real collaboration and mediation within and across divides. Giri comments on these social and political implications of triple contingency, as well as the need for us to cultivate an epistemology, or knowledge system, that explores how people (A or B) make the journey to their own experience of the “the third point of view” (C):

Though this third point of view at an earlier stage of Strydom’s formulation represents ‘society’ (1999:8), at a later stage it represents a discursively engaged and learning public which is not just a representation of society and is not bound to a society’s ‘internal mode of justification’ (personal communication). Strydom also asks a bold question: ‘the third point of view: within or beyond society?’ ... Strydom’s pioneering concept of triple contingency urges us to explore the ontology of the third so that it again is not related to the first and the second in a dualistic mode and with a priori judgment. The third point does not represent only the observing third actor C who is observing A and B, but A and B also have the need to cultivate an observant self in their own selves. For the realisation of triple contingency we thus need cultivation of a third observing mode of being and becoming within both the first and the second (2013:189).



In the model of co-realisation that is offered by the Foundation for Community Encouragement, we understand triple contingency or the third point of view to be both within and beyond the group, both immanent and transcendent. Just as the Facilitator is within and beyond the group, the group itself, in the final stage of Genuine Community, is both within itself and beyond itself. In addition, shared sovereignty is co-participation in the virtue of *chung*, which is the mental and emotional equilibrium or centrality that serves as the foundation for perception in harmony (*ho*). To arrive at Genuine Community requires the emergence of the virtue of *chung* which in itself allows participants together to attain insights that are in a sense, “beyond them.” The centrality and neutrality of *chung* prepares people to relate to the “spirit of community” which is not envisioned as a purely human spirit or one created solely by the group. It is assumed to be external to and independent of the group. It therefore is thought of as descending upon the group, just as the Holy Spirit is said to have descended upon Jesus at baptism in the form of a dove (Peck 1987:75).

The virtue of *chung* allows us to relate to the transcendent and transformative reality of the spirit of community in a way that optimally develops individual and collective wisdom. Peck explains:

The Holy Spirit is particularly identified with wisdom. Wisdom is envisioned as a kind of revelation. To the secular mind we humans, through thought, study and the assimilation of experience, arrive at wisdom....

[However] the wisdom of true community often seems miraculous. This wisdom can perhaps be explained in purely secular terms as a result of the freedom of expression, the pluralistic talents, the consensual decision making that occur in community. There are times, however, when this wisdom seems to my religious eye to be more a matter of divine spirit and possible divine intervention....The members feel that they have been temporarily – at least partially – transported out of the mundane world of ordinary preoccupations. For the moment it is as if heaven and earth had somehow met. (1987:75-76)

Peck’s description of the presence of Holy Spirit in Genuine Community and of the secular and spiritual aspects of wisdom, can be further explored through an appreciation of Strydom’s investigation of Geist (Ghost). Geist is defined as “spirit/mind-based meta-cultural phenomenon” that is present in the human creation of new forms, which relate to a transcendent dimension but that are themselves at once socio-cultural and biological realities, since they “have their roots in the human organic cognitive endowment.” Strydom (2016) writes:

When the word ‘spirit’ is approached from a multilingual perspective, particularly considering the Germanic Geist, geest or gees, it quickly becomes apparent that it cannot be confined exclusively to religion or religious belief, but has to be broadened to cover also the human spirit/mind.

Like Peck, Strydom sees that the spirituality of Geist relates people to a transcendent cognitive realm of wisdom or normative order and that there is a link “between the cognitive order and the infinite processes it punctuates.” Strydom perceives how Geist as spirit/mind challenges old boundaries and makes possible vision of new forms, in much the same way that Peck sees ideal world-creation (“heaven and earth have met”) as possible in Genuine Community, through the presence of Holy Spirit and its mystical interaction with participants. Strydom writes:

I present the task of Geist or the human spirit/mind as capitalising on the potentials that the infinite processes deliver in order constantly to challenge the boundaries set by the various limit concepts comprising the cognitive order and thus to expand our human horizons with a view to giving form to our cultural models, institutions, practices, activities of all sorts and our orientations. At present, such challenging of boundaries and expanding of horizons are sorely required for contributing to the resolution of the pressing multilevel issues of problem-solving and, especially, world-creation with which the human form of life is faced at virtually every level.

The centrality and neutrality of *chung*, which arises in Genuine Community, also can be understood as an aspect of the presence of Geist as mind/spirit. Because it lets us approach the “infinite processes” within the new and the novel, it challenges the boundaries of the group so that new realisations of the virtues of *yi*, *jen* and *li* can also emerge organically and can sustain Genuine Community. Chung-ying elaborates on the dynamic and mobile quality of this centrality (*chung*) in harmony making. In this passage, we see how cultivation of the virtue of *chung* engages people in relational reflection, and how, within the context of community making, the neutral centrality of *chung* invites them to participate in the collaborative development of the various virtues necessary for Genuine Community. He writes:

In fact, one might say that *chung* indicates the proper positioning of a state of mind for a person in a context of relationship among different things: this state or position will enable the mind or the person to reach out to different things for the purpose of harmony. (1989:236-237)

In the process of Community-Making, *chung* is transformed from a noun, representing the centred mind and its virtuous quality of a spatial middle way, to a verb, describing the act of centering as the mode of transformation and growth that brings us toward new frontiers of harmony (*ho*). In this understanding, group participation in the emergence of *chung* becomes a way to realise harmony (*ho*), by “recognising difference and yet integrating the differences in a unity” (*ibid.*:237). By releasing our hold on a personal sense of preference and on a habitual mode of reaction, we are able to perceive difference as creative paradox, and as a multi-dimensional distance for our heart and mind to travel towards wholeness and synthesis.

*Chung* is therefore able to expand perception and also to challenge and re-organise dynamically our agreements so that differences do not keep us in a perpetual stage of Chaos. It allows us to relate directly to the creative power and wisdom of Holy Spirit, Geist or spirit/mind. This appreciation of the meaning of *chung* is key to transforming strife and life flux from a source of stress and anger, to a source of resilience and discovery. The realisation of *chung* in Genuine Community offers a path of dynamic development in which respect for inner qualities of equilibrium is maintained throughout the natural disequilibrium of learning and growth processes (*ibid.*:237). It therefore draws us closer to the stability of shared sovereignty and inclines us towards integrity and mutuality in agreement. After a group has discovered the ontological foundation of Genuine Community, it is possible to perceive even in quiet moments, the vitalising influence of an emergent source of difference. Such a moment lets people enter into a new unknown and to participate in the unfolding movement of harmony itself. At this point in the harmony making process, strife is understood as an embodiment of the dynamic flow of life and an expression of its amazing oddball variability, rather than as a destructive source of discord and chaos.

### **Good-Tasting Strife: Transforming Radical Strife into Relative Strife**

Heraclitus, the ancient Greek philosopher of the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, understood the need to expand our perception in order to recognise the underlying processes of transformation that lives within harmony making. He saw strife not as something to be obliterated or controlled, but rather, as the stuff of harmony itself. To Heraclitus, it was evident that there was a unity within opposites: through transformation, opposites within the physical world, like daylight (day and night), temperature (hot and cold), seasons (summer and winter) and life (birth and death) became equivalent to each other (*ibid.*:246).

By engaging an enlightened way of relating to opposites, one is able to perceive how the transformation of opposites within life, in fact, maintains balance in the

world. Heraclitus went so far as to view the seeming oppositions within strife or conflict as justice itself, explaining that “We must recognise that war is common and strife is justice, and all things happen according to strife and necessity” (DK22B80) (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/heraclit/#H3>). Chung-ying reports: “He [Heraclitus] also seems to suggest that from the viewpoint of the logos or wisdom, even strife is a form of bringing out or fulfilling the hidden harmony and in this sense strife is only contrariety and relativity of things in change/transformation: it is a mode of harmony” (*ibid.*:227).

Appreciating Heraclitus’ philosophy of strife from the view of logos or wisdom helps us today to perceive it in relation to theories of relativity and as a vehicle of life fulfilment, or justice. Strife is a “set of relations among temporal phenomena” that could be transformed through new perception and agreement as we integrate more holistic insights concerning for example, the relative nature of time itself, or one could say, the internal togetherness and interdependence of past, present, and future. Seemingly esoteric insights like this become attainable in the creative and ethical spirituality of Genuine Community. The Dalai Lama explains:

Dividing the temporal process into the past, present, and future, the Sautrantikas demonstrated the interdependence of the three and argued for the untenability of any notion of independently real past, present, and future. They showed that time cannot be conceived as an intrinsically real entity existing independently of temporal phenomena... (2005:60)

Strife and even violence represent a set of relations within and among temporal phenomena that communicate not just the conflict of competing relativist human impulses, wants and desires within a present given moment; but that also, on a sacred and pre-verbal level penetrating the temporal, translate to a bare expression of universal human needs that are recognisable across time and place. Recognising that there is a deep universal structure within human needs, that correspond to the truth of eternal precepts found at the heart of all spiritual teachings and that are being affirmed now by science, then lets us respect the significance of those needs and respond to their call for all social structures and cultural contexts to be organised around concern for a much more full realisation of self and society. We can view pressing desires and needs with non-bias and seriousness, within comprehensive and holistic conceptual frameworks that: embrace the relative nature of time; that encourage a virtuosic path of development out of our present-moment submerged adherence to subjective preferences; and that optimise our capacity for multiple perspectives and maximal understanding of reality.

Strife then is not something to be 'settled'; instead, it offers the potential for more critical needs to become uncovered and fulfilled through the new insights and movements towards change that emerge from true listening. Transforming strife means recognising the larger message within competing subjective impulses wants and desires so that the deeper structures of universal human needs can be commonly felt and a path to genuine human dignity can be collectively and cooperatively forged. The idea of a relationship to strife that actually 'tastes good,' comes from an ancient understanding of harmony referred to in the full-length work, as being akin to perfectly flavoured food. The analogy with food is particularly helpful when we consider how for people in the United States especially, food can become a source of addiction and inner strife that is riddled by subjective impulses and wants, but that always returns one's attention to underlying universal human needs, and the more layered meanings of nourishment.

Good tasting strife involves a creative and practical observation of an emergent set of relations that can be integrated holistically within the primal concept of harmony (*ho*) and its accompanying virtues, especially the dynamic reasoning of active *yi*. Real life application of this was explained by scholar-minister Yen Ying in the seventh century B.C. Chung-ying quotes Yen Ying's writing:

Harmony is like making soup (one has to use) water/fire, sauce/vinegar, salt/plum in order to cook the fish and the meat; one has to burn them with firewood. The cook will mix (harmonise, *ho*) them, and reach for a balanced taste. (He does this) by compensating what is deficient and releasing/dispensing what is excessive. When the master eats (food), his heart/mind will be purified (1989:227).

In this passage harmony making involves an understanding of how opposites are transformed and unified. The cook who has prepared food in a harmonious way has found a unity within the strife of opposites, and between conflicting qualities creating either deficiency or excessiveness. The food has the effect of purifying, and thereby sensitively attuning, the heart-mind (*hsin*) and living systems of the one who eats it, so that person may more capably perceive harmony or the tao on deepened levels. The same was understood to be true of those listening to music that was composed and played with this responsive centrality of heart and mind. Genuine Community is the place in which people cultivate together the qualities of mind and intentionality possessed by the cook and the musician. Participants in Genuine Community could potentially use their shared cognitive endowments to make new social forms, the real and metaphorical food and music of a renewed culture that then could begin in turn to support and sustain optimal development within a society focused on harmony-making.

Confucian philosophy respected the role of intentionality in relating to flux and change. Intention both precedes perception and influences it and so is at the heart of the transformative potential within the primal concept of harmony (*ho*). Research has shown that through contemplative practice and moral self-observation, we are able to sense another's moral and cognitive development and the nature of their intentions (Siegel 2007:179). This affirms the ancient Chinese understanding about how wisdom and beneficial qualities of mind-heart (*hsin*) are developed within a culture (Chew 1993:117-120). For example, if a person or group develops wise ways of relating creatively and ethically to strife, they become like the *chun-tzu*, or "ideal man" who coordinates and balances disparate elements within a given reality like cooking or music playing; other individuals or groups, who lack this ability, may be able to internalise the wisdom of those exemplars. In the same way that those who eat the food and hear the music of the *chun-tzu*, ingest the wisdom involved in creating those goods, those less able ones may be able to sense internally the motor circuits within themselves that are involved in the intentionality of those exemplifying a higher ideal of adaptiveness (Chung-ying 1989:232).

How does this transfer of wisdom through deep sensing happen? Research is revealing that our larger resonance circuitry<sup>13</sup> develops our capacities for imitation and mind sensing, helping us to cultivate virtue through relations of mutual support, and to develop link within the culture, especially through practices like mentoring and reciprocal learning (2007). Siegel explains from a neurobiological perspective, how this happens:

When we monitor someone else's patterns of behaviour, our resonance circuitry creates an integration of perceptual and motor neural maps – what we call a representation of their intentional state. The brain harnesses the pattern-detecting representations of action to create an image of the other person's mind. The mirror neuron system links patterns of perception of goal-directed actions (behaviour with intention and predictability) to the individual's motor circuits so that he or she can be ready to carry out a similar action. The larger resonance circuitry also enables us to know what 'is on the other person's mind' by examining the neural network activations of our own brain and body proper. Such imitation and mind sensing has tremendous survival value for us as a socially complex species (2007:179).

In brief, it can be said that how one does something, and the nature of its outcome, has encoded from within it the higher reasoning processes behind why it is done. When we contemplate thoughts and actions of people who embody deep

caring and reasoning, we enliven our resonance circuitry, and the sacred and social nature of our biology, developing an expanded awareness of intentionality, and awakening our own self-engagement system (*ibid.*:170). This system is involved in activating and myelinating the 'smart' vagus nerve and in releasing hormones like oxytocin that allow us, in a complex and emotionally charged situation, to approach challenge, strife and adversity which before may have caused us either to fight or to back away in a reactive manner (*ibid.* 2012:10-3, 10-6). The self-engagement system supports our biology so that we are able to act on and carry forward our most worthy intentions; and pro-social human interactions within Genuine Community support, the awakening of the self-engagement system.

Strife, as Heraclitus perceived, was a physical reality and like harmony itself, was rooted in ourselves and our world. Our resonance circuitry and capacity for imitation and mind-sensing are evidence that we have evolved in relation to this reality and are designed to learn from each other how to approach strife optimally. We learn how to do this not only on an abstract cognitive level, through practices of triple contingency learning and transcendent perspective taking, but also on an embodied biological level, by developing intelligence within our living body systems that helps us to optimise our relation to stress and change, so that antithetical/non-antagonistic dissension becomes possible (*ibid.* 2007:130).

Chung-ying elaborates on this understanding concerning transformative ways of relating to strife, and differentiates between kinds of strife. He summarises insights offered by Yen Ying so many centuries ago:

A distinction therefore between antithetical/antagonistic and non-antithetical/non-antagonistic dissension can be made: the latter leads to a totality in which the disagreeing parties form equal members and coexist to complement each other; the former leads to no such totality or perhaps even leads to the destruction of one disagreeing party or the other. In this sense the latter defines harmony in a dynamical sense, whereas the former defines the opposite of harmony, strife, in a radical sense (1989:230).

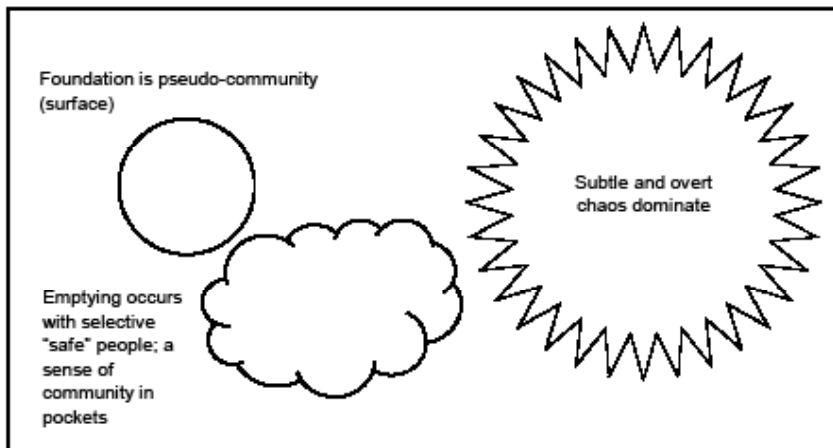
Chung-ying concludes that there are two kinds of strife. One leading to harmony, called "relative strife" and another leading to identity, called "radical strife." There are also then "two types of ontology and two types of dialectics." Hence, we will have a dialectics of harmonisation. We shall see that the philosophy of the *I Ching* illustrates this ontology of harmony and this dialectics of harmonisation (*ibid.*:230). The distinction between radical strife, which perpetuates and intensifies dissension and modes of oppression, and relative strife, which releases people into the peaceful dynamics of harmony and complementation, can be clearly discerned



when we consider the foundation, that is, the biological, social and spiritual context and ontology, from which they emerge.

Radical strife is a type of ontology and dialectic that emerges when there is a foundation of Pseudo-Community and, therefore, a lack of genuine human trust and security. Pseudo-Community is the result of clinging to old social agreement and identity and denying the vitality and internal togetherness of a larger possible whole. Because the social agreement in such a context is largely unexamined and has not expanded to include and integrate greater biological realities and spiritual principles, we are seriously limited in our capacity to transform the challenges of strife and to relate adaptively to the flow of change. Instead, strife and change are viewed as a threat, as they would seemingly 'take away' the one 'known' in this fear-based system: our ego-centric sense of 'identity' with the social systems and codes maintaining *status quo* order.

Radical strife is therefore associated with ego-identity and not with the allo-centric awareness of harmony or *ho* itself. Our much greater capacities for detachment, synthesis and creative insight are short-circuited. The struggles for control and for human-constructed notions of order loom over and oppress our higher capacities for surrender, dynamic emptiness and sacred non-sovereignty. Through this fear-based lens of perception, Chaos appears large and threatening to us, like an explosion that takes away our control and that we must then struggle to suppress by tightening the social order even further.

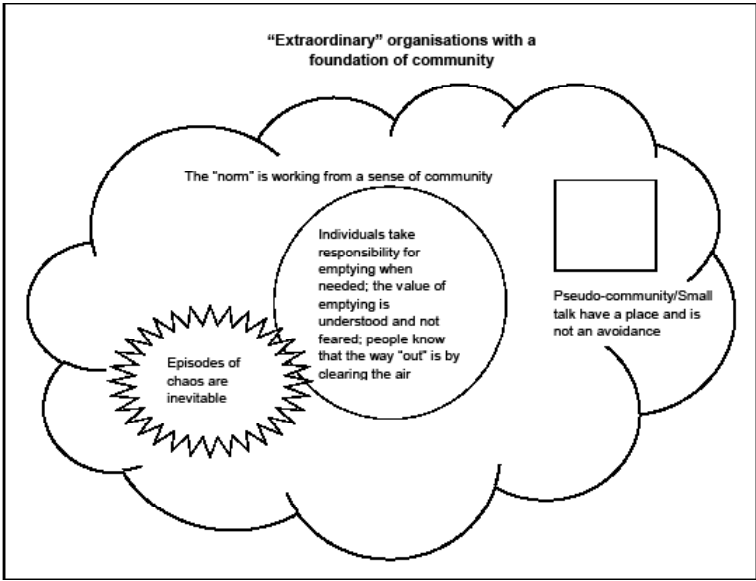


**Figure 1. Radical Strife** In the visual representation above, the rectangle represents the rigid conventions of Pseudo-Community that remain the foundation for the social agreement; the circle represents emptiness; the cloud represents the moments of Genuine Community that a few individuals may experience intra or inter-personally;



and the star burst represents the dynamic of strife and change (Chaos). Since our realisation of Emptiness is minimal and is not valued, strife or Chaos appears in an over-powering or threatening proportion to the ontology of Emptiness (created by Eve Berry for Foundation for Community Encouragement).

In relative strife, however, the ratio proportions of Chaos and Emptiness are inversed. In this ontology and dialectic, the ‘size’, or social value, of Emptiness remains very large. In relative strife, the foundation of our social reality is Genuine Community, a consensual place of trust, deep listening, equality, disarmament, group reflection, and respect for growth and wise risk-taking. Since remembrance of guiding principles and larger vision maintains sacred non-sovereignty, Emptiness keeps us attuned to the relative nature of time and the interdependency of past, present and future. In Emptiness, time is not felt or known as an intrinsically real entity. Our ability to relate dialectically (and dialogically) to an emergent set of temporal relations rising as strife or Chaos is greatly enhanced since from the perspective of Emptiness, an ontology has been established, independent of temporal phenomena, that can still relate to, transform and benefit from strife or Chaos through the embrace of the four dimensions of primal harmony (*ho*) and its accompanying virtues.



**Figure 2. Relative Strife** When Genuine Community is our ontological resting place, Emptiness is expanded, and the dynamics of change and strife (Chaos) live in a manageable proportion to our own capacity for transcendent perception, creativity

and collaboration. We are not ‘in control’, but we do sense our innate dignity as human beings and our capacity for participating in the transformation of our reality. We feel the responsibility to participate in an ongoing movement of growth and learning that opens us to new integrative levels of consciousness. In relative strife, the proportional relation between Emptiness and Chaos is therefore always the inverse of the proportional relation between the two that emerges in radical strife (created by Eve Berry for Foundation for Community Encouragement).

Making good-tasting strife is sacred work. We allow the road of difficulties to cross the good road. Black Elk says, “and where they cross, the place is holy. Day in, day out, forevermore, you are the life of things.” When we embrace strife and the vitality of contrariety and relativity in this way, we affirm life with our whole being and become a light of conscious awareness that allows people to once again “find the good road.” *Black Elk, Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, (1863-1950) expresses it in this way:

Hey! Lean to hear my feeble voice.  
 At the centre of the sacred hoop  
 You have said that I should make the tree to bloom.  
 With tears running, O Great Spirit, my Grandfather,  
     With running eyes I must say  
     The tree has never bloomed  
 Here I stand, and the tree is withered.  
 Again, I recall the great vision you gave me.  
 It may be that some little root of the sacred tree  
     still lives.  
     Nourish it then  
     That it may leaf  
     And bloom  
 And fill with singing birds!  
 Hear me, that the people may once again  
     Find the good road  
     And the shielding tree.<sup>14</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Chung-ying points out that there are also more rigorous concepts like “harmonic mean” that can be applied across math and a range of sciences and that recognise the basic underlying structure of harmony itself.
2. An understanding of reason in harmony with deep feeling is discussed in the section on the virtue of *yi* and includes a comparison of creative unity *yi* with Hegelian reason as an unfolding labour in response to the world that brings together true ‘self-interest and public unity.

3. How Neuroscience Will Make You a Better Leader by Laura Garnett, <http://www.inc.com/laura-garnett/how-neuro-science-will-make-you-a-better-leader.html>
4. In his introduction to the edited volume *The Modern Prince and the Modern Sage*, Giri writes: "Shared sovereignty is facilitated by post-national transformations of nation-states and post-egotistic transformations at the level of self. This is also facilitated by the work of what Dallmayr (2005) calls 'sacred non-sovereignty' where a sovereign self or society is not preoccupied with power and mastery but with an ethics and spirituality of servanthood." (2009).
5. This seems to be contingent upon the group members investing enough time in the process itself. In shorter two to three day workshops it is often reported that while most participants feel they have experienced Genuine Community, sometimes not every member does, or a large portion of the group feels they have experienced it together, with a few who do not feel they have. The transition from Chaos to Emptiness is for most modern Westerners a learned process, not an automatic one. The experience levels of the Facilitators and the developmental levels and backgrounds of participants will affect to some degree the amount of time it takes for them to move to the stage of Genuine Community, and there are of course a range of other factors beyond our comprehension that may also affect this.
6. *Saa* is the name in Indian music traditions for the 'base note drone' produced by a musician playing the tanpura. The musician makes creative permutations with a limited number of strings and notes, and fellow musicians, rather than created their own dominant melodies, listen and respond harmoniously to the movement of the *saa*. The *saa* has been likened to the deep rhythm sound, or music of the Earth, the Cosmos and the human body. In the full version of this essay, there is a short section on the metaphorical significance of the *saa* and reference to Sarah Wolcott's writing on this.
7. Our personal narratives have been coded in hippocampal memory through emotional processing in the limbic area of the brain, among other areas, and have, embedded within them, not only the value systems and perceptions of reality that have organised our life path, but also the unknown influence of explicit memories (not organised centrally in the hippocampus, but rather diffusely in the somatic body) that are connected to trauma (Siegel). Within one's own first person perspective, a person is naturally limited by these entrenched patterns of reaction and sometimes haphazard triggers. Recall that learning organised around a third person point of view question rather than first person, frees us from the limitations of immersed non-reflective problem-solving and provokes awareness of bigger picture, design, guiding principles and the transcendent capacities of the self.
8. This talk was offered in 2014 through the Shift Network and is available as a transcript through Shift Network. See also O'Dea's related book, from 2012, *Cultivating Peace: Becoming a 21st Century Peace Ambassador*. "
9. See Peck's book *The Different Drum*, Chapter XI on Vulnerability.
10. This statement is found in the *Facilitator Training Manual* provided by FCE.

11. The "Model" used by FCE and described in the Facilitators' Manual is heavily indebted to work done in the sensitivity group movement, to Bion Theory and the Tavistock Model. It is useful to remember that according to Bion's Theory, any group of people will go through pseudo-community (which Bion identified as 'fight' assumption behaviour) in their attempts to relate with each other. Groups may or may not become what Bion called a Working Group which we call community. M. Scott Peck added the stage of Emptiness as being the required stage for people to experience in order to facilitate the gift of Community.
12. Triple Contingency relates to the human capacity to develop more encompassing and relational senses of awareness. When people move beyond the limitations of an immersed, embodied perspective, they are able to participate in much greater variety and depth in their way of thinking and feeling. They can also practice meditation and integration across disjunctures rising in the public sphere. It is through these meta-aware perspectives that we can observe the movement of consciousness through social systems and the flow of energy and information within our body, mind and relationships. This content is elaborated upon further in Part I of the full length work, which is to be published in the book *Toward a Cosmopolitan World Social Body: A Treatise on Harmony*.
13. Siegel describes resonance circuits as "interconnected neural regions that enable a person to tune in to others and align his or her internal states with those of another person. The resonance circuits include the mirror neuron system and superior temporal sulcus that detect predictable sequences and map intention; the insula that brings information down from the cortex to the limbic areas; and the brainstem, and the body proper, including the viscera and muscular responses." He explains how the circuit is completed: "Then these lower inputs arise through the Lamina I of the spinal cord and the vagus nerve to reach to the anterior insula, anterior cingulate, and then to other areas of the middle prefrontal cortex (especially medial prefrontal and possibly orbitofrontal areas) where mindsight maps of "me," "you," and "we" are constructed" (Siegel 2012:AI- 69-70).
14. Found at <http://www.indians.org/welker/blackelk.htm>

## References

- Arendt, Hannah. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Austin, J.H. 1998. *Zen and the Brain*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- . 2006. *Zen-brain Reflections*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Chung-ying, C.Y. 1989. "On Harmony as Transformation: Paradigms for the I Ching." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 16(3):125-158.
- Chew, Phylis Ghim Lian. 1993. *The Chinese Religion and the Baha'i Faith*. Oxford: George Ronald.
- Dalai Lama XIV. 2005. *The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality*. New York: Morgan Road Books.

- Dallmayr, Fred. 2005. *Small Wonder: Global Power and Its Discontents*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- de Tocqueville, Alexis. 1945 [1840]. *Democracy in America*, vol 2. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Elgin, Duane. 1997. *Collective Consciousness and Cultural Healing*. Paper for the Fetzer Institute.
- Elgin, Catherine Z. 1996. *Considered Judgment*. Princeton: Princeton U. Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishings.
- Giri, Ananta Kumar (ed.). 2004. *Creative Social Research: Rethinking Theories and Methods*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- . 2006. "Cosmopolitanism and Beyond: Towards Planetary Realisations." *Development and Change*, 37(6):1277-1292.
- . 2012. *Life Worlds and Living Words*. Chennai: MIDS paper.
- . 2013. *Knowledge and Liberation: Towards Planetary Realisations*. London: Anthem Press.
- . 2018. "With and Beyond Epistemologies from the South: Ontological Epistemology of Participation, Multi-topial Hermeneutics and the Contemporary Challenges of Planetary Realisations." MIDS Working Paper.
- Hooks, Bell. 2003. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York, New York: Routledge.
- Immordino-Yang, M.H. 2011. "Me, my "self" and you: Neuropsychological Relations between Social Emotion, Self-awareness, and Morality." *Emotion Review*. 3(3), 313-315.
- . 2012. From talk, "Embodied Brains, Social Minds: Neuropsychological Perspectives on Social Emotion and Self" at USC's Doheny Library.
- . 2017. "Embodied Brains, Social Minds, Cultural Meaning: Integrating Neuroscientific and Educational Research on Social-Affective Development." *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1).
- Keen, Sam. 1970. *To a Dancing God*. New York: Harper and Co.
- Kunitz, Stanley. 1979. *The Poems of Stanley Kunitz: 1928-1978*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Margulies, Alfred. 1984. "Towards Empathy: The Uses of Wonder." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 141(9):1025-30.
- O'Dea, James. 2012. *Cultivating Peace: Becoming a 21st Century Peace Ambassador*. San Rafael: Shift Books.
- Painadath, S.J. 2013. "Towards a Culture of Transformative Harmony." *Gandhi Marg Quarterly*, 35(1):89-98.
- Peck, Scott. 1987. *A Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

- 
- . 1993. *A World Waiting to Be Born: Civility Rediscovered*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Reid, Herbert and Betsy Taylor. 2009. *Recovering the Commons: Democracy, Place, and Global Justice*. Springfield: University of Illinois Press.
- Sen, Amartya. 2002. "Justice Across Borders", in Pablo de Greiff and Ciaran Cronin (eds), *Global Justice and Transnational Politics: Essays on the Moral Political Challenges of Globalisation*, pp. 37-51. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Schmidt, Mary Ann. 1992. *Further Thoughts on the FCE Model: Demystifying the FCE Model*. from Community Facilitation Program Participant Manual.
- Siegel, Daniel. 2007. *The Mindful Brain*. New York: Norton and Co.
- . 2012. *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*. New York: Norton and Co.
- Strydom, Piet. 1999. "Triple Contingency: The Theoretical Problem of the Public in Communication Societies." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 25(2):1-25.
- . 2001. *Contemporary Critical Theory and Methodology*. Oxon: Routledge.
- . 2015. "The Latent Cognitive Sociology in Habermas Extrapolated from Between Facts and Norms." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 41(3).
- . 2013. "On the Focus Imaginarius of the Nascent Global Society and Contemporary Social Theory: What is the Status and Role of the Idea of Harmony?" *Gandhi Marg Quarterly*, 35(1):73-88.
- . 2016. "Pragmatism and the Question of Form: From a Critical Theory Perspective." Paper presented at *International Symposium on Pragmatism and Spirituality*, Bangalore, India.
- Touraine, Alain. 1995. *Critique of Modernity*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.
- Wolcott, Sara J. 2013. "Finding Harmony to Live In: From Noise to Music". *Gandhi Marg Quarterly*, 35(1).



## CHAPTER 17

### The Fresh Stop Project

#### An Oasis in a Food Desert of Louisville

*Karyn Moskowitz*

#### **Food Justice: An Introduction**

Food Justice is a community which practices its right to grow, sell and eat healthy food. Healthy food is fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate and grown locally with care for the well-being of the land, workers and animals. People, practising food justice, lead to a strong local food system, self-reliant communities and a healthy environment. Just Food (NYC 2012) is a non-profit organisation located in New York city.

In 2007, I moved to West Louisville to help organise one of the first community-driven farmers' markets in a "food desert" neighbourhood of this mid-sized American city. I had never before heard the term. Within minutes of walking around my new neighbourhood, I got it, loud and clear. There was food apartheid in this town. The line people cross when they step west of 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Louisville not only segregates the City racially and economically but also in terms of health and food equity.

At that time, I was not new to community organising or to the local food movement. I had spent the early part of my career organising around protection of public lands from logging and mining. However, my interest was piqued when I



moved from Portland, Oregon, an area with a sophisticated local food movement, to a hamlet in southern Indiana in order to raise a family in a rural setting. I was surprised to learn that one of the few places to buy produce in this low-income rural community (besides a few, scattered Amish farms) was the new Wal-Mart. One day, after I had purchased a tomato that tasted like cardboard and had just travelled 2000 miles, I looked around at all the surrounding farmland, blooming with corn and soybeans, and had an Aha moment. Certainly, if we organised the Amish and other farmers into a market, people would flock there to purchase the produce. Soon after, I helped to organise my neighbours into Orange County HomeGrown, which over the last 12 years has spun off three farmers' markets, a community-owned natural food coop, a music series, and a mural project.

Somehow the urban food desert struck a cord in me that hit me so hard I have never recovered. I grew up in New York City and central New Jersey, surrounded by food. Food and cooking have always been important in my life, and I am never really content unless everyone close to me is eating their vegetables. The move to Louisville opened my eyes to the injustices surrounding food in our inner city cores. It also taught me just how dangerous food apartheid could be to the collective health of our community.

In 2009, a few of my friends and I created New Roots, a Louisville, Kentucky based 501c3 non-profit organisation, in response to food deserts. New Roots' mission is to develop a just and thriving food system in Louisville metro communities by improving education and access to fresh and local food for urban residents. The New Roots program has impacted the local food system through the development of the Fresh Stop Project, a community-driven fresh food distribution program. Fresh Stops "pop up" in churches in food desert neighbourhoods, and are geared towards low-income households. Families pool their resources (food stamps and/or cash) to purchase fresh local produce from small farmers in the region. Our motto is "family's hearts and minds one at a time," meaning that each family has its own specific needs, desires, and issues. Using a community-organising approach, we try to discover the people's passions, and how they might be channelled to rebuild the local food system. Our leaders are passionate, encouraging children to eat fresh food, reinventing soul food with healthier, fresh ingredients, learning how to negotiate with farmers, and spearheading policy campaigns to improve the produce offered at area grocery stores. Our leaders are simply passionate about food, and many see the Fresh Stops as their spiritual mission.

The food desert phenomenon is not peculiar to Louisville, nor is it new. The imbalance in terms of quality and variety of real food has been going on for decades and has crossed generations. This food inequity, which is reflected in an abundance of high carbohydrate, high salt and high sugar "food," yet with little availability of

fresh fruits and vegetables, exacerbates and reflects the structural inequities of our local and broader economy.

In their 2007 report, “Bridging the Divide,” the statewide grassroots group, Community Farm Alliance, found that in the lower income neighbourhoods of Louisville, there is one grocery store for every 22,000 residents, while in the more affluent neighbourhoods, there is one grocery store for every 6,000 residents. The grocery stores that are located in the “food deserts” offer far less variety of fresh fruits and vegetables than the grocery stores in other parts of town. Typically, the produce is of very poor quality, with little in the way of organic items, and are located far enough away from so many families, who may not have easy access to transportation, that they are considered inaccessible.<sup>1</sup>

The Louisville Metro Health Equity Report, “The Social Determinants of Health in Louisville Metro Neighbourhoods,” published in 2011, found that Louisvillians in the poorest neighbourhoods have lower life expectancies, sometimes by as much as ten years shorter than the overall Louisville Metro life expectancy; Louisville residents ages 40-65 who earn less than \$20,000 annually are significantly more likely to report that they have had a heart attack, and neighbourhoods that have been labeled as “food deserts” have diabetes mortality rates that are two to three times higher than the total Louisville Metro rate, and that opportunities for physical activity in some neighbourhoods could be impeded by hazards for pedestrians and bicyclists, or high rates of violent crime in or near public parks.<sup>2</sup>

These statistics have been tossed around so often that most people have become numb to what they are really telling us. But behind every number in these reports real people exist, living this reality, every day. I have found that a positive step with high chances of sustainability is for people who are suffering from these challenges to come up with their own solutions, i.e., a community organising approach. A community-organising approach fosters the formation of strong, long-lasting relationships between community members, the farmers, and allies (people from outside the community) willing to listen, learn and act.

Community organising is a process in which people who live in proximity to each other come together in an organisation that acts in their shared self-interest. A core goal of community organising is to generate durable power for an organisation representing the community, allowing it to influence key decision-makers on a range of issues over time. Community organisers work with and develop new local leaders, facilitating coalitions and assisting in the development of campaigns.<sup>3</sup>

This model differs radically from both advocacy and service delivery approaches, which are both characterised by doing *FOR* people. Often professionals who work for government agencies or large non-profit organisations will attack a problem on behalf of those perceived as unable to speak for themselves. Alternatively, community organising is characterised by the mobilising of volunteers or leaders. Staff roles are limited to helping volunteers become effective, to guiding the learning of leaders through the process, and to helping create the mechanism for the group to advocate on their own behalf. Community organising strategies include meeting with corporate or government decision makers to hold them accountable for their actions, designing programmes for others to implement that meet the needs of the community, and aggressive group action to block developments counter to local interests.<sup>4</sup>

New Roots uses a radical democratic community organising and popular education model to act on the injustices we see in the local, state, national and international food system and rebuild infrastructure that is truly community owned. We believe that “to complain is human, but to act is divine,” and choose to do something about the health disparities documented in families living in the food insecure neighbourhoods of Louisville. New Roots’ main vehicle to carry out this goal is the innovative Fresh Stop Project and Food Justice Class. New Roots has a community board, and at present, does not have any full-time paid staff.

A Fresh Stop is similar to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project in that families get to share in the seasonal bounty of local farmers at designated times and places for pickup throughout the growing season in Kentucky. Fresh Stops in a sense differ from typical CSAs that they are organised by and for the community, share a focus on reaching low-income eaters, and are located in food insecure neighbourhoods.

I first learned about the Fresh Stop model in 2008, from City Fresh, an organisation out of Cleveland, Ohio, that had developed the concept in 2005. At that time, I was a community organiser with Community Farm Alliance in West Louisville. I had moved to the area in 2007 from southern Indiana to help start a farmers’ market in the California Neighbourhood. The challenge to creating the market was that we couldn’t find any farmers who were willing to consistently come and set up and sell in the neighbourhood. Since the neighbourhood is considered low-income, farmers believed (and this turned out to be true) that they would not be able to sell their produce at the prices they were used to getting in the wealthier neighbourhoods. Many farmers were scared away by the high crime rate (that first year we experienced a hostage situation in the store directly across the street from the market). Farmers are so hard pressed to make a living off of growing and selling produce that ameliorating food justice issues in Louisville is not a priority. Many

of them simply go to where they perceive the market is, i.e., in the upper income neighbourhoods.

In consequence, some of the youth leaders in the community asked me to train them on basic business concepts so they could buy produce from the farmers and resell it at the market. The problem with this model, and ultimately what caused its failure, was that to make a profit, ironically, the resellers needed to charge neighbourhood residents considerably more than farmer-vendors. The youth ultimately lost interest, and the community, while appreciating the close access to fresh, local food, got frustrated with the high prices, and lost interest as well.

I reached out to neighbourhood leaders to try and figure out another solution. Through frequent discussions with leaders, I learned that any food justice initiative would have a better chance of succeeding if it was based in Louisville's churches, where large groups of people gather and often break bread together (i.e., have already formed a "food community,") and do missionary or outreach work in the neighbourhood. The other key components to a successful food access project are that the food be affordable, and that farmers could not be expected to come to the food desert neighbourhoods to sell, nor be expected to take on the whole risk of selling to low-income consumers (who are wrongly perceived by the broader community to simply not care about purchasing fresh produce). And, of course, the project had to be community-driven.

What I learned from City Fresh is that if large numbers of families pooled their resources (i.e., food stamps and cash), the community would have substantial purchasing power. If neighbourhood leaders could collect these resources ahead of time, and pay the farmer for exactly what the community wanted, then the risks to both the farmer and the consumers would be eliminated. Plus, with big purchasing power, the community would be eligible for wholesale prices. Neighbourhood leaders could be recruited to develop the process, who in turn could recruit families to pay for their "shares," enlist and organise the farmers, and the rest would fall into place. But first I had to find the right pastor and the right church, someone who would be willing to take a chance on this idea.

An intern and I interviewed about 60 pastors that first winter leading up to the 2009-growing season. One pastor, Jean Hawkhurst from the Fourth Avenue United Methodist Church in Old Louisville, along with Al Mortenson and other church and community leaders, were all willing to take a chance on opening up the church to become the first Fresh Stop organising and distribution point. The Church saw the Fresh Stop as a component of its community outreach mission. At the same time, another church in West Louisville, the West Chestnut Street Baptist Church was interested, and they became the other Fresh Stop for that season.

That first season, the Fourth Avenue Fresh Stop connected with just one farming family. It turned out to be an unusually wet season, and much of the produce, which the church had prepaid for the entire season, was ruined. This forced the Fresh Stops to work together and recruit more farmers (and learn our lesson that Fresh Stops need multiple farmers to be successful), and to discover the three area produce auctions (two of them run by Amish farmers), and individual Amish family farmers, to work with. My ten-year old daughter and I spent that season living off unemployment, and using my Subaru station wagon to haul produce from southern Indiana Amish and the produce auctions in Daviess County, Indiana and Hart County, Kentucky. Working with the Amish was interesting and came with its rewards and challenges. The rewards were building wonderful business and personal relationships, and great prices. The challenges included communicating via letters, since they do not use telephones, and having to pick up the produce ourselves, since they do not drive automobiles and the 120-mile round trip was not feasible using a horse and buggy.

The next season, I connected with a local farm, Fox Hollow, which rented us a refrigerated truck to haul the produce. Soon we organised another Fresh Stop in Newburg, at an Apostolic church. The concept was catching on. Families, even low-income families without a lot of resources, were willing to pay up front, between \$6 and \$25 on a sliding scale, without knowing exactly what seasonal produce they would get in their share.

The first two years, even with the focus on community-organising, were disappointing in the sense that I felt like much of the organising work for the Fresh Stop was being done by me, or by people from outside the neighbourhood. Much of the information on how to run the project – from how to connect to farmers to how to set up the EBT machine – was stuck in my head. This didn't seem to be a rebuilding of a new food system, owned and operated by and for the community. A lot of my focus and the focus of our now-growing pool of volunteers was on produce distribution, and not on education and leadership development. Something had to change, or, I had to stop and admit defeat. I could no longer afford to run things the way I had been running them: a project run by "outsiders" was not going to be sustainable in the long run. The Fourth Avenue Fresh Stop was thriving with great church and neighbourhood leadership, but not the others.

In 2011, just as I was about to give up on Fresh Stops due to financial pressures, I met someone from the Shawnee Neighbourhood in West Louisville who was very passionate about food justice, Nathaniel Spencer. Nathaniel started to bug the heck out of me to start a new Fresh Stop in the Shawnee Neighbourhood. I knew that this was a neighbourhood with community leaders who were already starting to organise around the food justice issue. Pastor Tom Engels from Nathaniel's

Church, Redeemer Lutheran, was very supportive, as were other church leaders and members of the Shawnee Arts and Cultural Center next door. It seemed like a good combination for a Fresh Stop. The Presbyterian Hunger Programme provided two VISTA Americorps volunteers, Blain Snipstal and Seth Gunning, on a part-time basis. Both were experienced community organisers and had a lot of expertise in agriculture. They, along with my colleague Stephen Bartlett of Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville, immediately urged me to put my knowledge down on paper so I could better share my experience, and to switch New Root's focus from produce distribution to leadership development.

This is how New Root's innovative Food Justice Class was born. In one 24-hour period, I wrote down everything I had learned about the "Nuts and Bolts" of a Fresh Stop, as well as brainstormed with the VISTAs what might be needed to build a foundation of food justice knowledge. My hope was that if all of us—me, the VISTAs and any new community leaders we could recruit—spent two months together first, before the Fresh Stop season began, sitting down and collectively analyzing the problems of the conventional food system, and finished up with Fresh Stop nuts and bolts training, we would end up effective leaders who were truly invested in the project, and a solid, community-driven project. And that is exactly what happened. We started the Food Justice Classes in April 2011 with 15 leaders. We met at the Redeemer Lutheran Church for two hours a week for six straight weeks. Sometimes we would get on such a hot topic (such as the demise of the family dinner and its ramifications) that we wouldn't leave the room for hours. A year and a half later, we still have the same group and we are still meeting, every other week, all year round.

The Food Justice Class uses a popular education model, one that is class-based in nature and rejects the notion of education as transmission or 'banking education.' It stresses a dialectic or dialogical model between educator and student. In addition, popular education was originally conceived as a means by which groups in society that face oppression could overcome it. It has a strong emphasis on equipping people for action.

With that in mind, our group set out to teach one another what we collectively knew about the history of oppression in West Louisville, the history of food access in families and neighbourhoods, the "Colour of the Food System," i.e., who owns the food system in Louisville, how the local, national and international food systems all work together to create inequities, how grocery stores create unhealthy "traps" early in the month when SNAP benefits are distributed, and other topics that leaders chose.

In these conversations, people told their own food stories. For me, the most poignant were recollections of elders about their grandparents who worked as



domestics for wealthy families in the city's East End, and would bring home the leftovers. When one of our neighbourhood leaders, who was a child at the time, asked her grandmother why the meat purchased at the East End grocery store looked so much fresher than the meat available at the West End grocery store, her grandmother told her to "shut her mouth and don't cause trouble." Others spoke of beautiful and abundant backyard vegetable gardens and nightly family dinners, which have become scarce among the current generation. We learned that African-Americans in Louisville, for the most part, no longer own their own grocery stores, corner stores, restaurants, or produce distribution businesses. We became experts on the ingredients and adulterants industry adds to our food—high fructose corn syrup, MSG, aspartame—unconcerned that these additives contribute to childhood obesity and other diet-related illnesses. We shared food, recipes, and hopes and dreams for our new venture together.

As the final step in the Food Justice Class, leaders are asked for a commitment to run the Fresh Stop for a season. This core group of new leaders volunteered to become representatives on different Fresh Stop teams. One team was formed to create and maintain relationships with farmers who sell at wholesale prices and are able to deliver to the Fresh Stop. This team used the group's collective knowledge of farmers from all over the region and reached out to those likely to work with us. One young family farmer in particular, Mary Courtney from Shelby County, Kentucky, was willing to take a chance and agreed to sell us produce at wholesale prices and to deliver to the Church a few hours before each Fresh Stop. Robbie Adelberg, a young farmer who was based in Oldham County, grew a few items in large amounts. We connected with Catholic Charities Refugee Agricultural Partnership Programme and started to work with Somali Bantu farmers, as well as the new urban farm, The People's Garden, located in the neighbourhood. The "Farmer Liaison Team" worked with these farmers all season long, negotiating prices, and scheduling deliveries.

Another Fresh Stop Team used grassroots organising to spread the word and ask others to join them in pooling their money to purchase the produce. Shares are offered on a sliding scale, with higher income residents helping to subsidise lower income families; EBT/Food Stamps/SNAP Benefits are accepted, and no one is turned away for lack of funds. I had been working with the local Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) team at the United States Department of Agriculture, the agency that administers the SNAP Benefit programme, for nearly a year to convince them that federal regulations do allow us to accept these SNAP Benefits up to two weeks before the food is actually delivered (we'd learned this vital bit of procedure from the New York FNS team, an example of the importance of networking with agrifood agencies and organisations). Working out SNAP redemption also took a lot of negotiation with J.P. Morgan, the private contractor that offers the EBT

machine for free to “retailers.” We had to explain that we weren’t going to use the machine all year round, only during the Kentuckiana growing season. That first year they disconnected our machine after it lay idle all winter, and its reinstatement required weeks of inquiry up the chain of command.

Food is purchased weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, depending on the Fresh Stop, three days before the produce is delivered. Each Fresh Stop is autonomous, able to organise its particular church and neighbourhood needs. The Shawnee Fresh Stop is bi-weekly, the Fourth Avenue Fresh Stop is weekly, and the Wesley House Fresh Stop is monthly (and chooses to offer produce from all over the United States, not exclusively local). Shawnee and Fourth Avenue both offer sliding scale pricing. The sliding scale is key to our ability to purchase enough produce to feed each family. For example, in Shawnee, roughly 80 per cent of the shareholders pay \$12 (low-income), and 20 per cent pay \$25. This enables us to purchase roughly \$17 worth of produce for each family. Everyone benefits from having more food, and the families that are paying more do so knowing they are helping out their neighbours who wouldn’t otherwise be able to afford this local food. Not all produce purchased is organic, but we try to work with our farmers so spraying of herbicides, pesticides and fungicides is minimal.

On the day of the Fresh Stop, farmers pick the produce, drive it to Louisville, and drop it off. Volunteer shareholders descend on the site to organise the produce onto separate tables and divide it up so everybody gets the same amount of each item in their share. People fill up their basket with this bounty, are asked to re-order for the next Fresh Stop, pick up information on cooking and storage, and can taste the food that has been prepared by a volunteer chef. Most recently, the Shawnee Neighbourhood Fresh Stop had Chef Kelly Lehman, who runs a personal chef business, and Chef Jim Whaley prepare samples of dishes incorporating just about everything in the week’s share. Favourites from the 2012 season included beet risotto and kale-potato cakes. In this way, the guest chef gets to publicise his or her business so there is potential small business spinoff in the neighbourhood.

Each Fresh Stop feels like a family reunion, with people sharing their own cooking tips, life stories, support for each other and many smiles. After filling up their share baskets, families are offered veggie tipsheets (courtesy of Just Food in NYC) for cooking and storing the produce, and a community-generated newsletter with a description of the produce, recipes, food justice stories, and member highlights.

It is the Fresh Stop’s collective buying power, which allows them to ask for wholesale pricing from farmers, plus the sliding scale that ensures the produce is affordable. Our strength and our staying power are rooted in leadership development. Leaders are self-chosen, and rise to their areas of strength and purpose.



The nuts and bolts of a Fresh Stop may appear seamless to an outside observer. However, there are many moving parts consisting of hours of work driven by teams of volunteer leaders. The Shawnee Neighbourhood Fresh Stop, for example, has a total of 11 teams—the farmer liaison team, community outreach, accounting, newsletter, education, distribution, chef liaison, media, and setup and cleanup.

With so many moving parts, some things go surprisingly smoothly, but some things are bound to go wrong. For example, we took on two new farmers at the beginning of the 2012 season. We feel that the relationships between the community members and the farmers are key to our success and we work hard at communicating our expectations of produce quality, quantity and price well before the season starts, and in fact, many of our farmers grow specific items just for us. However, the very first day we were disappointed to find an entire load of broccoli that arrived brown and withered, just two hours before the start of the Fresh Stop. At that point, it is difficult to replace the produce, so share baskets end up a little bit smaller than we had planned. Similarly, an early April frost stunted the 2012 blueberry season, forcing us to forego our plans to pick 80 quarts. Because we lack storage, we took a chance on purchasing peaches from a farmer at a Tuesday farmers' market, and storing them in a shareholders basement, only to discover they were overripe by Thursday.

As of the 2012 growing season, New Roots has either organised and/or helped to sustain three Fresh Stops: Fourth Avenue, Shawnee Neighbourhood Fresh Stop in West Louisville, and the Wesley House Fresh Stop in Newburg. Via these groups, New Roots has reached approximately 750 families in Louisville and worked with over 12 family farms. Fresh Stops spent approximately \$20,000 with family farmers in 2011. Some of these farmers have told us Fresh Stops make up a small but critical portion of their overall farm income. All Fresh Stops attract 50 to 80 families on average. The opening day of the Fresh Stop season in May of 2012 – The First Annual Strawberry Jamm Festival – attracted a whopping 160 families who purchased a total of 155 gallons of fresh local strawberries and spent roughly \$2,000 with one family farm. The Shawnee Fresh Stop is able to collect, on average, about \$1,400 every other week – this from a low-income community. We are opening new markets for farmers in neighbourhoods they never believed they could profit from. The Shawnee Fresh Stop even organised a grassfed beef and pork. Fresh Stop with farmers Stan and Lelia Gentile of Dreamcatcher Farm, who taught us about the health benefits of grassfed beef versus grainfed beef. We sold \$500 worth of meat to the community in one hour! The farmers were thrilled, reporting that it was easier to sell to a Fresh Stop then risking hours at a farmers' market.

The beauty of the Fresh Stop model is that it can be replicated anywhere. Yet this is not a “cookie-cutter” project that is forced onto communities by well-meaning advocates. Instead, the organising process is organic and community-driven, and each Fresh Stop can make the programme its own, with its own rules and hence, its own unique qualities. In May of 2012, New Roots was able to help a group from around the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in downtown Washington, DC to organise food justice classes with the possibility of a Fresh Stop starting in 2013.

## **The Movement is Growing**

However, community organisers need to be aware that this work is complex and there are many hurdles to overcome. One of the biggest hurdles is funding for staff. Over the past three years, New Roots has raised nearly \$40,000, which has been used to pay for organiser’s time, transportation, seed money to the Shawnee Fresh Stop for marketing and outreach material, chef’s food, produce containers, and other necessary items. New Roots board is diverse and enthusiastic, yet it has been difficult to attract and maintain board members with fundraising experience, and despite many attempts, we have been unable, as of yet, to convince government on any level (local, state or federal) to invest in the Fresh Stops. However, many New Roots/Fresh Stop leaders are interested in scaling this model up and have shown their willingness to travel to other neighbourhoods in Louisville and even to other cities to introduce the model and also to help step up fundraising efforts. It is obvious that more sustainable funding is needed if we are going to grow this movement and truly transform the broader food system. However, we are in talks with various funders who are beginning to see that with very few resources, Fresh Stops have already touched and transformed many lives and has the ability to transform many more, i.e., that New Roots is a great investment.

Another challenge is keeping leaders engaged and not burnt out, and continually working with leaders to recruit new leaders to share the tasks as the Fresh Stops expand. Purchasing produce is tricky. Local produce is not “plastic” – it is alive and many things can happen to it from the time a Fresh Stop asks a farmer to grow it, till it gets to the neighbourhood, such as drought, early frost, bug infestation – all of which can limit supply. In Kentucky, policy makers are unsure if farmers can continue to meet this increased demand for local produce if more and more institutions and families desire it. Finally, the local food system is not clearly organised or advertised, and it often takes the farmer liaison team a lot of intense networking around the region to know who grows what, when and where and at what price, and it is a continual learning process.

I do see what we have presented as a valuable community-organising tool that should help communities to begin the conversation about food justice. To date, we have not seen any other project in Louisville achieve the success with food access in the city's inner core that New Roots has. Where it will end I cannot tell at this point. My hope is that with focused efforts, more and more talented leaders and funders will be attracted to the project, so that in the end, we do see palpable change in each and every family that wants to get involved, and we will be able to hire and accommodate staff and leaders to organise more and larger Fresh Stops.

We know we are making a "dent." But the question is, can we truly bring about long-term equity in our local food system and sustain it? I do know that many people have been touched by the Fresh Stop and have told me that their lives have been transformed. I can see many of our leaders blossoming and gaining strength, and the community building power. Some have sworn off fast and processed foods. Quite a number have met their weight loss goals. We have leaders who now feel so empowered that they approach other community members in grocery stores and explain why they should consider not purchasing a particular product in their basket because it contains high fructose corn syrup. Others have started to take photos of rotten produce and the abundance of alcohol (one grocery store in West Louisville recently replaced its natural food section with liquor) in the stores and distribute via social media. Our leaders have become "mavens," in their particular area of leadership, i.e., experts in pricing, sourcing, and distribution of produce, media relations, finance, database organising, etc. But seeing community members take a bite of a season's first ripe Kentucky tomato, cucumber, or peach, and watch the smiles explode over their faces, well, that's what it is really all about.

## Endnotes

1. Bridging the Divide, Growing Self Sufficiency in our Food Supply. A Community Food Assessment, Community Farm Alliance, 2007.
2. The Social Determinants of Health in Louisville Metro Neighbourhoods," The Louisville Metro Health Equity Report, Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness, Center for Health Equity, January, 2011,
3. Bobo, Kim; *et al.* 2001. Organising for social change: Midwest Academy: Manual for activists. Seven Locks. ISBN 0-929765-94-X.
4. Hess, Douglas R. June 1999. Community Organising, Building and Developing: Their Relationship to Comprehensive Community Initiatives. Paper presented on COMM-ORG: The On-Line Conference on Community Organising and Development. <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers.htm>.

## CHAPTER 18

# Perspectives on Bioregional Urbanism

## Transformative Harmony with Living Systems

*Sarah Howard with Ninian R. Stein and Stephen Bissonnette*

### An Invitation

My own journey of transformative harmony became clear to me when I walked across a region of our planet. I decided to attempt the walk one year after tearing cartilage and ligaments in my right hip. Walking had been part of my rehabilitation and healing process, and this walking pilgrimage seemed like a natural extension. Despite my doubts, and those of my doctors and family, I completed the journey of 500 miles during August of 2013. How did I make it possible? I have come to believe that it is because I allowed my body to lead me over the Spanish countryside. My hip and feet informed each step, told me how I could move, and how fast. I certainly didn't complete the walk because of will or mental discipline. These capacities helped, but if I had relied on them alone, I would have landed myself in a hospital. Ultimately I had to develop a relationship between my will, my mind and my body to complete the journey.

I have slowly learned to listen to my body system, to stop wreaking havoc and chaos on this living system of mine, and to operate myself in alignment with it. Only in this learning has my body been able to tap its own resiliency to heal itself and sustain. I have had to learn to work relationally and systemically with myself, and to stop using the “power-over” mind to will myself (Evans 1992). As a habitual overachiever, this process has not been easy. After numerous injuries and illness, however, I finally started on a journey of learning to listen to my living systems.

Transformative harmony is the process of changing from a state of chaos to harmony, just as I learned with my body (Giri 2011). Learning to listen is fundamental to this process. For me, learning to listen has required development of consciousness and awareness, rather than determined will or prefrontal cortex activities such as goal setting. Through mindful listening practices, including yoga, meditation, and walking, I am learning to repeatedly turn off the power-over mind which engenders injury and chaos, and instead listen to and allow other parts of my mind to step in and operate. I know I’m not alone in this journey. I regularly meet people in my profession, and in yoga classes, who are on similar learning journeys. I believe it’s because our culture rewards the power over mind than power over ourselves, our bodies, each other, other living beings, and the Earth—to overachieve and over-consume. Our societal mantras are “mind over body” rather than “mind with body.” We have learned to ignore the language of our living systems and instead we have learned to operate on them and over them. Now we need to re-learn how we operate ourselves.

Just as my body system was injured, so are the ecological systems and people systems of this planet. We see evidence of this in the news every day. Just as I am learning to listen and align my actions with my living systems, we need to learn to listen to and align our actions with Earth’s living systems. We need to acknowledge their limits—limits of the resources they can provide us—and what they need to keep sustaining themselves and us. In the end, this is the only way that we can create harmony, both in our bodies and with Earth.

Transformative harmony is fundamentally about co-creating our lives—and the world we live in—in ways that foster resiliency with all living systems. How do we bring this perspective to the methods of our professions of planning, architecture, and sustainable community development? Our practice research at Earths Institute has been dedicated to this. The focus of our inquiry has become our own organisation, and The Boston Bioregion Project as a pilot initiative. Our aim is to co-develop practices that work with living systems and support our bioregion, life region (McGinnis 1999:22). This chapter is an invitation to explore the idea of working with living systems in ourselves and in our practices, and to contribute to conversations about co-creating living systems methodologies in our fields of practice.

## Introduction

We have been asked to write reflections on the connections between transformative harmony and the practice of Bioregional Urbanism. This chapter explores the question: How do we engage in transformative harmony, changing our cultural systems from chaos to harmony, through the work and practice of Bioregional Urbanism?

I will start with definitions of terms. Our understanding of transformative harmony, as brought forth by Ananta Giri, is the process of changing cultural systems that perpetuate poverty, discrimination, and environmental degradation, to systems that fundamentally benefit all living beings, including all people. It is a conceptual idea that aims to describe a process that can be achieved through different methods and in different practice arenas, including sustainable and community development. Bioregional Urbanism is a practice method and framework that facilitates connecting ourselves—in our practices, communities, and cities—to the stewardship of our supporting bioregions (Howard, Loheed and Stein 2008). The goal is to support co-creation of just, resilient, sustaining places and bioregions. This method is a possible vehicle for applying transformative harmony in sustainable development, design, policy, planning and community-based work. I believe we can only work effectively with systems change when we acknowledge that we are in fact part of these very systems, and therefore need to act relationally within them, from the inside of ourselves and then with the rest of the world. This requires that we learn to create harmonious relationships with living systems through consciousness building and collaborative practice. Bioregional Urbanism, a collaborative practice methodology, aims to help us with this, to help us act within relationships of living systems.

In the first section, I will introduce the authors, their work, and methods. This transparency is important for transformative harmony goals. In the second section of this chapter, I will explore the value construct that I believe is foundational to our systems change work, the relational living systems construct. In the third section, I will look at how the living systems value construct informs our emerging practice methodologies – *bioregional leadership* as an individual practice and *Bioregional Urbanism* as a collaborative practice. In the fourth section of the chapter, I will explore the idea of operating relationally with living systems in our practice. I will first look at our organisation, and how we attempt to operate ourselves in the relational living systems frame. Finally, I will look at the organisation Earthos Institute as it works to co-create projects with communities, the bioregion, and the planet through projects.

Transformative harmony is cultural systems change. Currently, our cultural systems have forgotten how to value living beings, and so we lack methods in our

professional practices. As Mary Pfeifer states, “Social change is one million acts of kindness. Cultural change one million subversive acts of resistance.” This article attempts to articulate personal leadership and collaborative methods as subversive acts of resistance on behalf of living beings. I will be using the first person as an intentional cultural-change device. I am asserting the legitimacy of my own individual perspective as a living being. I am also simultaneously and explicitly claiming ownership of this perspective in my use of language, as opposed to using the third party language to impose my own experiences as universal truth. In addition, I am learning the living systems frame myself and will make my learning journey transparent as I reflect on our projects. In the vein of co-creating and co-sharing, I will also attempt to make the format of the chapter a user-friendly and accessible compendium of my reflections of our work.

## **Who We Are**

### **Author**

These are my own reflections on Earthos work. Owning my perspective liberates me to say what I am observing, perceiving, and analysing, while making room for other peoples’ voices. Although already in process, the concept of “relational living systems” fully emerged as I wrote this chapter and reflected on our work at Earthos through the lens of transformative harmony. The concept “relational living systems” has been informed by my colleagues and our work at Earthos, as well as by my prior work, studies and research over the last twenty years. During these twenty years, I’ve been asking myself: how do we support equitable, healthy, thriving communities as practitioners? Towards this goal, I have also been probing: how do operate our practices and our organisations in “non-violent” ways—in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King—when the prevalent discourses in community and sustainable development are based on power-over models (e.g. certain people and groups have answers while others do not). In an effort to answer these questions, my work has spanned environmental and experiential education, community education planning and policy, and just sustainable design. My training and frames include bullying prevention (Olweus Model, Wellesley College), diversity training (Project TEAMWORK, Northeastern University), gender violence prevention (Mentors in Violence Prevention, Northeastern University), community organising, Non-violent Communication (after Marshall Rosenberg), the Compassionate Listening Project (after Leah Green), participatory action research, the relational field and emergent design (Alexandra Merrill), architecture, environmental justice, just sustainability (Julian Agyeman), and regional resiliency. I currently teach design students at the college level to build knowledge from their own experiences. Through work and research, I have come to believe our



professional practices need a praxis (Paulo Freire) approach to enable us co-create with communities, and this approach needs to include a living systems frame.

## **Co-Contributors and Collaborators**

Bioregional Urbanism has been co-developed by three primary author-researcher-practitioners: Ninian R. Stein, Ph.D. (anthropology, archeology, and environmental studies), Philip N. Loheed, AIA, NCARB, (architecture, urban design and natural systems), and myself. Through action research and participatory action research, this methodology has been informed and co-developed with geographic communities and practice communities in the Boston Bioregion, and other global bioregions. We have worked with interns and professionals from around the world. Stephen Bissonnette (sociologist, college access programme manager, urban educator) joined Earthos as an intern during the summer of 2015: he helped to co-develop the methodology, and brought clarity and language contributions to our efforts.

## **Earthos Institute**

The organisation was created by leaders in the sustainability field who recognised the need for practice methods to enable diverse actors, in different arenas, to work together to improve sustainability, beyond buildings and beyond green washing to include communities, regions and the planet. Our work at Earthos is an experiment in finding new ways, and this article attempts to unpack how we are approaching this work and what we are learning.

## **Our Work**

At Earthos we have been developing iterative, responsive practice frameworks and tools (as a methodology) that aim to align human activities with natural systems. The goal is to enable us to collectively live within the Earth's capacity, in just sustainable (Agyeman 2005) and resilient (Adger *et al.* 2005:1036) ways. We suggest that currently our modern society and its practitioners (planners, designers and others) have a few tools, but do not yet have effective, coherent methods that enable us to work together towards this goal. I would suggest that this is because we do not know how to work with living systems at multiple scales, including the bioregional scale. We see efforts that can certainly help us, such as permaculture, urban and deep ecology, global footprint network, as well as others. However, these tend to be implemented at local/urban scales or the global scale. Living systems do not operate exclusively at one scale or another. And by working primarily at single scales, as a society, we have prevented ourselves from measurably improving the resiliency of living systems of this planet. We need



methodologies that connect living systems scales – from individual living beings including humans, to bioregions, and to the planet. We also need methodologies that enable collaborative and conscious stewardship across these scales and across disciplines and sectors. Our mission is to develop such practice methodologies. We are currently focusing on developing methods specifically for practitioners because they make daily decisions about our living system resources and places. Eventually, we would also like this practice research to more actively engage public residents so they also can make conscious decisions about their interactions with the living systems of our planet.

## **Our Research Methods**

We have been using a number of different practice research methods to learn about the bioregion and develop and test methodologies that facilitate transformative harmony by practitioners. These include action research, participatory action research (Kindon *et al.* 2008) with experiential learning (Kolb 1984), emergent design (Callavo 2004), learning communities, focus groups, and cross-disciplinary literature reviews. These methods help us align our work; they are co-creation methods rather than prescriptive, top-down, outsiderimposed methods. These methods address the current norm of commodification of communities and of ecosystems in the sustainability and sustainable development fields. It is important to note that our process is iterative with feedback cycles informing the on-going evolution of the methodology, to be responsive to living systems. In this work, we have started to identify trends that keep emerging, which we will share later in this chapter.

## **Identifying the Key Issues**

In our literature review and practice research, we have determined two significant issues in the Boston Bioregion, which is a geographic focus area that includes most of New England. These issues are complex, multidimensional, transdisciplinary, operate at multiple scales, and involve human and natural systems. They have consistently and stubbornly resisted linear, single sector, single community solutions. The first issue is wealth distribution inequality, coupled with increasing land values and related displacement, particularly along race and class lines. With this issue, we have witnessed the inability of individuals and community groups to independently address the issue (see Roxbury Memory Trail Project). The second is climate change impacts (flooding, etc.) in densely populated, socially and environmentally vulnerable areas, combined with the inability of actors to work across town and state boundaries to address them (see Alewife-Mystic Corridor Project).

## Identifying Boston Bioregion Initiatives

Through research, we identified: 1) projects and communities that could contribute to bioregional health and/or could benefit from bioregional resource knowledge; and 2) communities (geographic and otherwise) that express living systems needs that can only be addressed through collaborative, multi-scale practice. With these communities, we can co-develop efforts that contribute to bioregional sustainability and/or address significant issues that affect the resiliency and justice in the bioregion.

## What We have Learned From Our Work

As we work address these issues, we are learning that to innovate effective solutions, we as practitioners need the following:

1. The ability to understand the bioregion as a living entity that supports us and provides us with our core resources;
2. Collective understanding of our bioregional resources (provided by living systems) to inform innovation, education, research and practice;
3. Trans-disciplinary practice methods that facilitate collaboration across disciplines;
4. Understanding of different scales, and what is important at different scales, and How to work and collaborate effectively across scales;
5. Methods to steward the system *at the bioregional scale*, not just local, state, national and global scales (see Index and Conversations).

In practising with living systems, both human and natural systems, rather than imposing on them, we are also discovering that there is a need for stronger values framework for working within living systems. We need practice frameworks and tools that translate concepts of living systems so that we are better able to work together with and within living systems for transformative harmony. I would suggest that we need a practice-based relational living systems frame.

## Relational Living Systems Construct

### Relational Living Systems Value Frame

A relational living systems value frame helps us to understand our own living system, our body, as inexorably connected to all living beings and the natural world. This is a fundamental tenant of co-creation and transformative harmony. We are talking about creating harmonious relationships of living systems in our current modern

world – moving chaos in relationships of living systems to harmony through our thinking, valuing and acting. The word “create” means “to bring something into existence.” To actively bring harmonious systems into existence, to action this, we need to value and understand relational living systems, and begin to practice operating within relational living systems. We also need to be able to identify what is currently preventing us from doing this. This is specially important in our current culture in which profit, and the subsequent commodification of ecosystems and people, is the dominant value and action construct.

### **Operating Ourselves Within Relational Living Systems**

In a relational living systems model we are acting from inside ourselves into the world, understanding that we are fundamentally connected to all. We are operating ourselves in a dialectical between the inside of ourselves and the living systems of which we are a part.

Patricia Evans, a gender abuse researcher, suggests that expressions of chaos, including poverty, war etc., all have one thing in common – the ‘Power Over’ frame. She writes, “Power Over shows up as control and dominance. [Conversely], Personal Power shows up as mutuality and cocreation...Power Over is one model of how the world is believed to work. A belief in Power Over resembles a lens through which the believer views the world. Someone who believes in Power Over expects to get what he or she wants through the use of Power Over another. Our Western Civilisation was founded on Power Over. Now as a civilisation we have tremendous power of total destruction. The Power Over model is, I believe, no longer tenable. Some of the symptoms of living and acting in this paradigm are pollution, potential global annihilation, hunger and homelessness, prejudice and tyranny (Evans 1992).”

If we are to operate with/within relational living systems, and transform from chaos – domestic violence, poverty, human trafficking, ecological degradation, over-consumption, unequal resource distribution, overworking—to harmony, we can no longer see ourselves as separate actors with abilities to control, manipulate, improve or outdo “others.” Building on this understanding, I would suggest that acting within a living system is exercising one’s own personal power, while acting on a living system is engaging in power over. Acting on and power over dynamics show up as statements such as “getting buy-in” from the community for your idea, using research and case studies to impose solutions on an organisation or community, and tying funding to outsider goals and objectives. Alternately, in the personal/community power and co-creation models, solutions and desired outcomes are co-developed and co-created by those who are part of the community living system. In this model, research, case studies and innovative ideas are tools

rather than drivers for those who are co-creating. For the vast majority of those working in western sustainable development, this way of operating is in direct conflict to what has been taught and practiced. Learning to operate in co-creative, mutual practice will feel alien to these practitioners, as if they are using their non-dominant hands to handwrite a book.

The following will explore what we need to know about relational living systems expressed at different scales to move from chaos to harmony, and from a power-over to power-with approach.

### **Understanding Scales of Relational Living Systems**

To help us work with living systems in our practices of design, planning and policy, we can think about living systems at different scales, not independent of each other, but rather interdependent and relational. Relational living systems scales, which impact our ability to move from chaos to harmony in sustainable development, include the cellular scale, living organisms, communities of living beings, regions of living communities, and the planet as a whole. These systems are embedded within each other, connected, and part of each other. We need to work with our living systems consciously, with each of these scales simultaneously, in order to move towards harmony.

How do we understand these different but connected living system scales? Most of us understand living systems through our own bodies, as I demonstrated in the preface. We also understand them through raising children, caring for our pets, and tending plants in our gardens. These are individual, local living being systems. Today, however, our actions impact other communities and regions of living systems, primarily through the things we buy and consume; our shirts are made in China and our apples are grown in Chile. When we purchase and use these products we are impacting communities, bioregions and the planet beyond our immediate lives. As we practice, we need ways of relating to living systems beyond what we can see and touch, rather than objectifying (not relating to) and ignoring them, as is often the case in our globalised economy. We can begin to relate by asking ourselves: from where do our food and clothing and electronics come? How are they grown, manufactured and produced? What natural and living systems, including people, do we depend on to create the goods that sustain us? What are the landscapes and climates that enable their creation? How are we connected to people, landscapes, ecosystems, through the goods and services that support us? How are these people and landscapes supported, or threatened? Then, as we learn to relate, we can begin to intentionally think at different living systems scales. This frame enables us to engage in the practice of bioregional stewardship—as transformative harmony for our homes, communities and the planet—in each of our efforts.

## **Cellular Scale**

When we think in a relational living systems frame, we start thinking with our cells. An example of this might be: “If my cells are not healthy and sustainable, then neither am I. If I am not, then neither is my family, my organisation, my community, my bioregion, other bioregions and planet.” When we think this way, we stop creating products that harm our cells, removing toxicity from the products and materials we create (Karl-Henrik 1997).

## **Living Being Scale**

In this frame, we think with individual living beings, including ourselves, all humans and all other living beings. We think with living beings we find endearing such as the koala, as well as with those we may fear such as wolves, spiders, and snakes, and with those we need but are not necessarily aware of such as soil bacteria (responsible for the smell of spring). We begin to understand other living beings by learning to listen to our own living systems, as I did on my walk across Spain. I have learned from my own journey that practices, such as mindfulness, meditation, and yoga that help develop the capacity to listen to living systems. In terms of developing capacity to listen to and respect other humans and living beings, we have many teachers who can help us find our way, from the many species on this planet; to certain earth-centred traditional and indigenous communities; to recent/contemporary leaders and practitioners.

## **Community of Living Beings Scale**

In this frame we also think with communities of living beings such as organisations, coalitions, families, neighbourhoods, ecosystems—relational groups of people and species. Increasingly we have ways of understanding communities as living systems. Fields of study that can help us understand include organisational science (Senge 1990), sociology, anthropology, ecology, and liberation practices (Freire 1968).

## **Bioregion of Living Communities**

We learn to think with, understand and cultivate relationships between communities of living beings within a bioregional context. This is essential for the health of living systems on our planet. This may be the most difficult for practitioners in our individualistic and siloed professions. However, working with this scale, communities may be able to develop response and solutions that would otherwise be inaccessible to them. By working with others, sharing resources and knowledge through a living systems frame, we can re-build our systems so that they are more sustainable and just for all living beings. Mondragon’s Regional

Cooperative Economy is a good example of regional model that benefits people. In the Basque region of Spain, the regional economy collapsed after being cut off from the rest of Spain. Workers, organisations and communities (re)built the regional economy together using the cooperative ownership model. Only possible at a regional scale, this model ensures that the profit, wealth and resources are more equitably distributed through worker ownership. Although many have articulated bioregional theories and assessment models, this is an arena for tremendous possibility and future development, and is why our practice methodology focuses on engaging at this scale.

## **Planet of Bioregions**

As Earthos Co-Founder, Philip Loheed notes, “We need to work towards One Planet Living, bioregion by bioregion.” Many are working at the global scale, but we have not seen examples of explicitly defining and relating bioregions to each other and to the planet. Examples of relevant global efforts, from which we have learned, include One Planet Living (World Wildlife Fund with BioRegional), Global Footprint Network, Gaia theories, and climate change movements such as 350.org.

I think it is helpful to note that neuroscientists are beginning to understand how and why thinking relationally benefits us. In an interview with Krista Tippet, Neuroscientist James Doty explains that the process of individual meditation develops pathways for transformation, while the process of transcendence requires connection with another being (Tippet 2016). He explains that we often need practices such as mediation to work through conditioned fight or flight response (e.g., transform), to connect with those we perceive as “different” (transcend). He explains that our brains have a resilient capacity and plasticity to develop these important adaptive connections, and overcome differences, if we can move through these preconditioned responses.

## **An Emerging Practice Methodology**

Bussey, in his essay in this volume, presents us with the idea of “places within the emergent cultural field that offer sites for re-imagining possibilities.” Physical places, with which humans interact and form in their image, are expressions of the cultural field. They, therefore, offer actual “sites for re-imagining possibilities.” This is not so easily stated and is even less easily understood and actualized. I believe it is our inquiry to begin to actualise it in our communities, and our bioregions. Through our practice research, we are learning we need frames and ways of operating that enable us to re-imagine possibilities with the life region.

## **Bioregional Leadership**

Bioregional leadership needs to be an expression of relational living systems. Responding to Dallmayr's call for "an ethical turn around or transformation...a re-awakening of conscience" (Foreword to this volume), we can begin to "re-awaken" and "re-learn" ourselves using the relational living systems construct. We can then find ourselves into a new leadership. Leadership is more than technical knowledge and skills; it is the ability to refocus the vision together, and create processes, that allow us to connect—to ourselves, each other, and this vision—to act for the greater good. I believe that this is fundamentally a spiritual act (not necessarily a religious) because it engages our spirit and soul. To engage in this part of ourselves requires that we continually call on these other parts of ourselves for the greater good. Through this practice, we transform ourselves and re-learn ourselves. It is dynamic and living, as opposed to prescriptive. It is an intentional practice that raises our consciousness.

Bioregional leadership has been emerging over the last century in different contexts—and is deeply connected to many first nation/indigenous societies—but is currently rarely found in mainstream contexts. The challenge is bring it into mainstream, to cultivate and curate a national and international conversation about living systems and life places (bioregional) in practice.

Bioregional leadership is the capacity to contribute to the stewardship of living system and life places/bioregions. In our practice, we are asking: What does this really mean and who can be bioregional leaders? What are the mental, the emotional, psychological, spiritual aspects of bioregional leadership? It is intended to be an inclusive concept that is not dependent on expertise, but rather a willingness to engage, recognising autonomy of all living beings and actors in a bioregion. With this description, a five-year old could be a leader, as well as an entrepreneur, a teacher, a full-time parent, or a mayor of a large city. A young child can exhibit bioregional leadership by asking their parents to turn off the tap while brushing teeth because they understand the connection between the water that comes from the tap and the water that's in the lakes and streams nearby, and how it is necessary for that those lakes and streams to be full in order to support fish and other living beings. Parents are bioregional leaders when they understand that the shirt they are buying for a child has embodied virtual resources from another bioregion. These embodied resources include energy, water, land, and possibly the exploitation of that bioregion's people, even slave labour of another child.

Engaging in bioregional leadership requires that we engage in the practice of transformative harmony. This is because we have to change, or transform, the way we're doing ourselves to be effective bioregional leaders. In this process, we need to remember that we are moving from power over norms to power with/within



norms. As we do this, and our consciousness increases, we will undoubtedly face traumas, fear, grief in ourselves and in others. Our western society has caused tremendous harm to all living beings with the power-over norm, and part of the transformative process needs to include a recognition and metabolism of these traumas. We cannot move into power-with/within unless we acknowledge the trauma, the grief, and the impacts. Denial is one of the barriers to operating within relational living systems, and healing models such as Restorative Justice can help us with this.

In doing our work, ways of leadership fall into the following three categories. We are cultivating these as we re-learn ourselves.

### *1. Ways of Thinking Within Living Systems*

We are learning we need to change our ways of thinking, and our lens, from power-over to power-within/with living systems. Numerous authors have named this in different ways including Frances Moore Lappe (2011), Daniel Quinn (1992) and Ananta Giri (2011). What are these new ways of thinking?

- **Living Beings First** and adopting an ecological bill of rights (instead of humans first) that articulates this.
- **Ecology and Society Together (instead of either people or the environment)** Many in the environmental movement look at humans as the problem, and many in justice communities see environmentalists as being insensitive to human injustices (Agyeman 2005). Yet we are all deeply connected. We need lens that help us see ecology and society at the same time as we develop solutions. As Bissonnette comments, “we need to see humans as stewards and active participants and agents in this work instead of only as a passive cancer.”
- **From Ego to Eco Mindset** As mentioned before, we need ways to move from only valuing our own aggrandisement and wealth, to thinking about our well-being as part of a system of living beings.
- **Good for All** (instead of winning and losing). Instead of using our competitive selves, e.g. you win or I win, we need to make decisions based on what is good for all living beings, so that in the end we all ‘win’ our well-being.
- **Finding Common Ground using “and-and-and” thinking (instead of either-or thinking)** We need to move beyond “your way or my way,” to finding spaces where we can co-create sustainable models. This is not so easy in a culture in which economy is based on competition and academia is based on debate. Collaborative knowledge building is not part of our current mental frameworks.



- **Systems Understanding** We Need to Cultivate the ability to understand both parts and whole of a system simultaneously and the interconnectedness (instead of linear and siloed thinking).
- **Multi-Scalar Understanding** In living systems model, all scales are connected. We need ways of relating to different scales, and we need ways to think about different scales simultaneously. Currently, most of us operate within a single scale, or possibly, without capacity to understand impacts of decisions at other scales.
- **“Wicked Problem” Understanding** Coined by early 20<sup>th</sup> Century planner Horst Rittel, “A wicked problem is a social or cultural problem that is difficult or impossible to solve for as many as four reasons: incomplete or contradictory knowledge, the number of people and opinions involved, the large economic burden, and the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems.” (wickedproblems.com) We often observe that practitioners attempt to simplify the challenge of “sustainability” as something we can solve quickly, easily and cheaply. I believe we do this as a way to cope with the often overwhelming complexities and uncertainties in a culture that has few skills, and little tolerance, for either (Brown 2012). As a society, we are walking into the frames, skills and answers together. It will take experimentation, time and cultural change to address our current wicked problems and to co-create harmonic sustainability.
- **Root Causes** We need to develop solutions that address root causes, not just implement expedient surface solutions. As Bissonette offers: “We should see solutions not as bandaids, but as holistic cures to the root of the problem.”

From what we are observing and experiencing, the majority of practitioners in our culture oscillate between power-over and power-within/with, and most do not use a living systems approach. As we transition, we see the need for a commitment of learning to practice with/within living systems to help us through the uncertainties and complexities. If we begin to view our world through a living systems frame, we start to value this way, and then we can begin to understand how to act in this way, which will further inform our thinking and valuing. We can then start a positive feedback loop moving us towards harmony.

## 2. Ways of Valuing Living Systems

How does a living systems lens help change our values with the goal of advancing transformative harmony? In our ultra-rational culture, a vestige of the Enlightenment, we have relegated *values* to outside our professional realms. In professional practice today, we observe attitudes towards values that range from skepticism to outright animosity. Yet values inform everything we do. To deny this is to ignorantly perpetuate certain values, which can directly undermine life,

leading to injustices and chaos. In the case of 20<sup>th</sup> Century professionalism, these values have been based on rationalism. Rationalism was originally a response to the dominance of religion, as human institutionalised spirituality, during the middle ages. However, pitting rationalism against values and spirituality does not serve living systems. This article is not claiming to return to religious dogma, but to identify values that connect all humans and living beings, values that are alive in practices that respect living beings. The intention is not to create a doctrine, nor a comprehensive review, but to begin to identify values we have observed in practice which assist us in our goals:

- **All Life** Even as we may feel uncomfortable with other life forms, and groups of people, finding our way through compassion into valuing others as much as ourselves is essential to working within living systems.
- **Stories of Living Beings and Systems** We need to make room for the unfolding of these stories in our work, as Daniel Quinn models for us in *Ishmael*. Many of our meetings with community partners often take detours from culturally prescribed “agenda items.” The stories and the sharing that unfold during these “detours” cannot be valued in currency. How do we balance needed structure and agenda, with stories and what is alive in us to share?
- **Beyond Rational** Practitioners as well as scientists and neurosurgeons are discovering the importance of valuing and engaging other parts of our minds on behalf of living systems. These other areas enable us to connect to our innovation, creativity, design thinking, sense of interconnectedness, compassion, and spirituality, all necessary for co-creating with our living systems.
- **Process of Learning to Co-create with Living Beings and Systems** We need to value and learn to tolerate its inherent messiness and uncertainty, while simultaneously working towards solutions.
- **Interconnectedness** In a living systems frame we are part of the web. Isolated disciplinary silos, isolated scales (e.g. local, bioregion, or global), and prioritising certain living systems/organisms at the expense of others, prevent us from understanding the interconnectedness of living systems, and contribute to chaos. Indeed, we do need to understand individual disciplines and scales. Yet we need to remember that in a systems-thinking mindset, hierarchy is insignificant because all beings are fundamentally interconnected.
- **Systems** We need methods that enable us to understand individual parts and how they relate to each other. Currently we do not have ways of applying system-based values in mainstream practice, which is why people stay within their disciplines and scales, inadvertently creating chaos. We need to co-create and co-develop methods.

- **The Dialectical** We each have different views, knowledge, expertise, experience, and live in different realities. How do we work through, and with, these differences to co-create? In a living systems model nothing can happen outside of a relationship so we must be able to have discourse between seemingly contradictory ideas and realities.
- **The Spiritual in Each of Us** The spiritual parts of ourselves connect us to something more than ourselves, and connect us to the higher essences of ourselves as we do this work. The spiritual is what we cannot quantify and measure, it is the unknown and mysterious and mystical, and yet we have some inkling and understanding of it. Our spiritual self helps us face wicked problems even when we don't know the outcomes, it helps us cope with uncertainty and fear and trauma.

### *3. Ways of Operating Within Living Systems, Finding the “Third Way”*

At the heart of this is establishing mechanisms for co-creation and co-knowledge building. We so often hear in our professional life “we can't do that because... (money, norms, expectations, etc.) If we are going to advance justice and sustainability goals, we need to find “the third way” together – ways beyond the current limited binary constructs we have created. In our work, we have started to identify practice and operational methods that help us get there:

- **Engage All** skills, talents, diverse knowledge and experiences. The solutions that are just and sustainable, even regenerative, will not come from the old ways of thinking. We have found that those who have not benefited from existing unsustainable cultural systems are often those who can best provide insight into new ways forward. This is perhaps one of the most important lessons we've learned from our work.
- **Co-develop Knowledge Across Society and Sectors** This builds on the last observation.
- **Share Ourselves and Our Stories** Our stories connect us and place us firmly within the living systems frame. This requires opening ourselves and facing our vulnerabilities.
- **Wholehearted Practice** Researcher Brene Brown has been researching how we can live our authentic selves, and what is needed (vulnerability) and what gets in the way (shame and scarcity). To me, bringing our full selves to the table is fundamental to operating with living systems, and enables us to be resilient as we walk into new personal and cultural ways.
- **Honor Interdependence rather than the Currently Accepted Hierarchical Power-over Structures of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Western Society** An example of this in practice: organisations partner to define, implement, and fund programmes

together, rather than one organisation leading and subcontracting others. This operational structure reinforces interdependence.

- **Metabolise Complexity, Contradictions, Uncertainty, and Grief, Rather than Ignore or Fight These Realities** As we face significant changes related to climate and growing populations, this is a necessary skill for living systems resiliency. How do we work with challenges so that they nurture us and provide us with wisdom, through which we can move towards harmony, instead of into chaos?
- **Support Inquiry-based Practice** To develop new operational models within living systems, we need to practice through inquiry, not through expertise. Expertise is often used as power-over other, power over those who “do not know”. In our culture, we do not have expertise in sustainability; we are all beginners finding our way together.
- **Utilise Disciplinary Fluency** We need to learn to explain who we are, how we are normed and privileged (or not) by our disciplines and backgrounds. And we need to learn how to ask and receive this information from others.
- **Respect Contributions that Align with Our Living Systems** We need to move away from dictating how others operate their own livings systems, and towards respecting how each of us finds our way and are able to contribute in relation to these living systems.
- **Collaborative Design and Action** “We need to do this”, not “you need to do this.” In this model, cross-disciplinary team works together to co-create designs, products, communities, etc. In working through a design together, living systems issues can be informed by multiple perspectives leading to more robust outcomes. This requires a different skill set from our norm, in which a lead designer creates the conceptual design alone and then assigns follow up tasks to underlings and assistants. This collaborative skill requires the ability to building on each other’s ideas, rather than deconstruct the ideas of others, and dictate actions to others .
- **Lead With Vision, Goals, and Needs that Relate/Align With Living Beings Rather than Leading from a Scarcity, Fear-based Mindset** Co-developed solutions are often too easily abandoned because the team is not able to create a business model and funding plan quickly. How do we create mechanisms so that teams have time to test and develop living systems ideas fully?
- **Create Coalitions across Realms to Support Living Systems Projects** We have been learning that to action projects that value livings systems, we need to create unusual coalitions across realms: non-profit, indigenous groups, government, business, and community-based organisations.

## **Bioregional Urbanism**

Using the relational living systems construct, with bioregional leadership principles, we can begin to co-develop a practice methodology. A practice methodology enables us to work together with living systems. During the past 8 years, we have been co-developing such a methodology, Bioregional Urbanism framework, in partnership with communities in the bioregion. The steps outlined below have been identified and co-developed by Philip Loheed (architecture, urban design, natural systems), Ninian Stein (anthropology, archaeology, environmental studies) and myself, and then tested and further developed through partnership and collaboration with community groups, interns, and professionals. This chapter affords us space for very brief introductions to each of the action steps. We intend to publish more on this methodology in the future.

How does living systems thinking and valuing inform a flexible, adaptable framework that allows us to work with living systems at different scales, while honouring our respective perspectives, experiences and knowledge? To steward our living systems at different scales, we need ways of working together consciously. Frameworks help facilitate this. The Bioregional Urbanism framework aims to help us work collaboratively, and collectively, towards community, to regional, to planetary just sustainability and resiliency. And because we believe working with the resources of living systems is necessary for harmony in our world, our inquiries are: how do we steward our resources (living and natural systems that support us) together at different scales? How do we move from chaos to harmony in stewardship of natural resources?

Our definition of Bioregional Urbanism is that it is the collaborative metabolic practice of building just, resilient, regenerative bioregional systems that measurably contribute to global self-sufficiency and support local communities (all species). The goal of Bioregional Urbanism is equitable “One Planet Living”, a term developed in the UK to promote the idea of people living within the fair share of the earth’s resources (Desai and Riddlestone 2002).

### **Action Step 0: Build Diverse, Cross-Disciplinary Teams**

Fundamental to this step is that every living being in the bioregion is needed. The challenge is in how to facilitate this and to optimise all contributions. In our practice, we are learning that we need to create local and bioregional teams that:

- Utilise bioregional leadership thinking, values, and operations;
- Identify shared livings system goals;
- Consciously design and curate Bioregional Urbanism efforts to support livings system goals;

- Collaboratively establish practices that support all involved;
- Encourage each team member to understand him/her/themselves in relation to the team and to the living system goals (skills, strengths, knowledge, living being needs, norms, biases);
- Identify collaboratively who needs to be involved at each step to fully optimise contributions equitably (Stone Soup method);
- Create terminology for new processes. For example, we needed language for the process of engaging many perspectives, and valuing all. We are now using the old fable “Stone Soup” to describe the process of co-creating thriving places together, using everyone’s contributions (Bissonnette).

### **Action Step 1: Define Bioregions and Their Boundaries**

When we assess a bioregional system, we need to define the bioregion and delineate boundaries for this assessment. Watersheds are a great example of this. Although the boundaries of watersheds are not recognised by political entities or nature, they serve a purpose. They enable us to understand and steward a geographic area based on how water moves and drains over a landscape.

A “bioregion” is a life place; it is simultaneously cultural (human) and ecological (living beings). We identify a bioregion based on a major city within the region that supports it with natural resources. Another way to understand a bioregion is “the life region of the city” (Loheed). Fundamental to this practice is identification of life regions that can be consciously stewarded by the people (and other species) of the place. We experientially know our bioregion, its climate and its living beings and the natural resources that support us, because we interact with it every day and depend on it. We have an experiential understanding of how our bioregion supports us, how it feeds us, how it inspires us. People have a long history of establishing cities (cultural centres) based on the bioregional living and natural systems, and the resources they provide. Building on this historical pattern, in which humans and life regions have worked together for eons, we are working to identify the bioregions of the planetary system, and how resources flow within and between them. By understanding the boundaries of bioregions, we can begin to understand them, making their living systems and their resources visible to all. This transparency, about our bioregional global resources, is essential for transformative harmony.

To delineate bioregions, we identify major urban centres (cities such as New York) and the life regions that support these urban centres. To determine the bioregions of the United States, we overlay the EPA’s ecoregional map with a crowdsourced cultural map—the major city by which voters feel most influenced—to delineate the boundaries. The final boundaries correspond to the county scale

so that we can use county data for bioregional assessment. This method responds to our criteria: 1) it assesses both ecosystems (EPA ecoregion) and human cultural systems (the urban centers with which people feel connected, and so want to steward); and 2) it is easily translated into practice (county data is accessible).

As we work internationally, our goal is to use natural systems maps similar to the EPA ecoregion maps, along with a crowdsourced (e.g. participatory) method, to delineate bioregions of the planet. Collectively we need to “tile the earth” (Loheed) with bioregions. By doing this, we will be able to collectively understand how bioregions relate to each other in terms of their living system resource flows, and how bioregions relate to overall global sustainability. We can begin to make current resource dynamics transparent, so that we can move towards more balanced harmonic stewardship and distribution, as opposed to current invisible habits of exploitation and over-consumption.

Why do we need to establish bioregions? Why do we not just use watersheds or political boundaries such as states and nations? Each of these geographic delineations provides us with different information, informing our actions differently. With Bioregional Urbanism, we are interested in establishing a decision-making frame, with ways of obtaining information, to enable us to act for and with humans and living systems simultaneously. The goal of this practice is to improve the relationship between humans and all life, as we shape and form our cities, towns, farms, landscapes and settlement patterns. Watershed delineation is not informed by culture, human systems, and so we find it limiting to only use watershed frames to inform the development of our urban areas. We can, and need to, use watershed information in the practice of Bioregional Urbanism, but watersheds alone do not provide us with a fulsome enough frame to accomplish our goals. We need frames that enable us to collect the needed information about life systems, including human systems. Thus, we need the bioregion.

## **Action Step 2: Map and Assess Bioregional Risks, Resources, and Opportunities**

After we establish bioregional boundaries, we can begin to map information about the bioregion so that we can better steward it. It’s all about how people interface with ecosystems and each other. When we use the “services” of ecosystems, and people systems, we call them resources. How do we interface with these living systems respectfully so they can continue to support us, without creating chaos? What do we need to know? What data do we need to collect, first at the bioregional scale, and then at different scales such as local, national and global. During this step we need to co-knowledge build about the bioregion, with a focus on identifying key living systems and resources, how they are stewarded and distributed. How can



we map the chaos within each bioregion? How is this chaos (risks such as poverty, pollution, etc.) negatively affecting the harmony of life in the region? Our goal is to move from mapping of chaos to capacity for harmony. Opportunities are processes and solutions that optimise harmony – the resiliency, and regenerative capacity, of living systems. Risks are factors that threaten capacity for harmony such as poverty, disease, drought, flooding, forest fires, water contamination, diminished ecosystem health, overuse of ecosystems, storm surges, poor nutrition, unaffordable housing, income and education inequalities, institutional discrimination, concentration of land ownership, dependence on fossil and non-renewable resources, and more.

### **Action Step 3: Map and Assess Local (Community) Risks, Resources, and Opportunities**

Communities (of living beings) are key actors in a democratic harmonic system. They need to understand their own needs and responsibilities, and how these relate to the bioregion. How can the bioregion support the community? How can the community support the bioregion? Each community also needs to map and assess its chaos and its capacity for harmony. It will mapping chaos such as poverty, and also map opportunities that lead to resiliency and just sustainability (harmony).

### **Action Step 4: Score Bioregional Resiliency**

We are currently developing an index to measure the resiliency of bioregions, to facilitate collective stewardship. Life resiliency is the ability of the bioregion to provide core resources for all life, humans and ecosystems. Why is an index needed? Indexes are snapshots of systems. The most commonly known example is the Dow Jones Industrial Index, aims to measure the “health” of the U.S. economy. The Gross National Happiness Index aims to measure national well-being, as an alternative to economic indexes. The Bioregional Resiliency Index offers us a “snapshot” of a bioregional system. The index aims to measure the ability of the bioregion to support the well-being of humans and living beings. It establishes indicators for each of the following life-dependent core resources: water, food, energy, biodiversity, waste as resource, land and people. The ability to assess a region’s ability to support life is essential for preventing resource wars, and addressing justice issues, and working towards global sustainability and peace. We have established a diverse, international, interdisciplinary advisory board to advise and review the construction of the index and the indicators as well as its usability for a broad audience. The advisors ask: How can we help the bioregion’s life systems move from chaos to harmony, measurably? How do we measure capacity for harmony within each resource (water, food, energy, etc.) or define



what is considered ‘harmonious’ for each resource using index? How close is the bioregion to harmony, e.g., sustaining its life system?

### **Action Step 5: Set Benchmarks, and Design Goals at Both Regional and Local Scales**

Together, we can establish goals, priorities, and benchmarks for how our solutions, actions, policies, and designs can transform chaotic conditions, at different scales, and what steps need to be taken. This is possible because we have created a system that enables us to measure “harmony” and “chaos” based on the well-being of living systems, at local and regional scales. We can use the Bioregional Resiliency Index, and mapping data to inform the priorities and benchmarks at the local and regional scales. For example, priorities for the bioregion might include: people-increase regional self-sufficiency knowledge leadership; food-increase sustainable food access and production; energy-increase renewable energy access and production; water-utilize available regional water for food production; biodiversity-expand native habitat and address invasive species; waste-increase waste recovery systems; land-balance farmland with wild/forestland, ensure majority local/regional ownership, sustainable/organic practices and improve land health; risks-address flood management and storm surge risk and rising sea level impacts. While community level priorities in a wealth-poor community might include: people-improve equity in education, improve economic development opportunity, improve affordable housing stock; food-improve local food production and access; energy-increase community production and ownership; water-improve stormwater management and local use; biodiversity-create native habitat as part of projects; waste-address street trash issue, create reuse/recycle/reclaim infrastructure; land-increase local ownership and improve land health; risk priorities-poverty, incarceration, lack of wealth building and, quality employment for residents, perception of community. It is important to emphasize that the process of setting benchmarks, priorities and goals needs to be informed by living systems at the different scales, and underscores the need for consciousness in how we create our teams and our practices.

### **Action Step 6: Identify Strategies**

This action step is where we begin to apply values, information, and knowledge. It is essential that in this step, we work to co-create win-win strategies that optimise goals, priorities and benchmarks. We need to co-develop and innovate strategies that address local and regional priorities at different scales, creating as many opportunities for harmony without privileging one scale over another. Examples of strategies we are developing with communities include: bioregional building typologies for regional resiliency and resource self-sufficiency,

community corridors with green infrastructure for regional resiliency and resource management, community heritage projects to improve regional people well-being, applied STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, and Arts) education centers to improve regional people capacity, and bioregional economic strategies. We believe this action step offers unlimited opportunities for innovation in many sectors globally.

### **Action Step 7: Co-design and Implement**

Collaboratively design and co-create systems for transformative harmony. What do we need to co-design—policies, practices, buildings, neighbourhoods, corridors, websites, even language—to bring about harmonious systems at different scales? What are the new typologies and types that we need for a harmonious world? Co-design can happen at the different living systems scales, from small group to community, to bioregion, depending on who is part of the team. For truly robust solutions, I would suggest that we need to have a diversity of teams across a bioregion, as well as in other bioregions, testing this approach and sharing their findings.

### **Action Step 8: Evaluate**

Essential to working with and for living systems, is the capacity to iteratively reflect on and evaluate the effects and impacts of the framework, and the decisions we make that are informed by it. We iteratively evaluate the effectiveness of our process and our work. In our practice and projects we ask: are we improving living systems, communities, and bioregions, and moving from chaos to harmony? What needs to change in our work and our process? Again, using life systems combination of bioregional and community metrics, group processes and organisational learning, and experiential learning techniques. In the tradition of experiential learning, we find that it is essential to: act, reflect, assess and evaluate, revise, and then apply again. This chapter itself is an example of reflection. However, it is only small effort for needed ongoing evaluation. As with the other action steps, we believe the topic of evaluation using a life systems frame requires depth and attention, which we hope to explore in future publications.

### **Case Studies: From Chaos to Harmony in Action**

In this section, I will look at our organisation and core work through the lens of the values construct and methodology for better understanding.

## Earthos as a Living System Lab

Organisations are part of the relational living systems construct. Earthos, as an organisation, serves as our test ground for better understanding this. Earthos is itself an inquiry—why does it exist?, how is it structured?, how does it operate?, and what is it doing? The way we think, value, operate, and structure ourselves directly determines, and is inseparable from, the work we do and the outcomes we achieve. Our mission is to relate human systems with natural and living systems for just One Planet Living. The organisation acts as a container for working towards this mission, and the codesign and co-operation of the container is crucial.

In the *Transformative Harmony* foreword, Dallmayr reminds us “The return from chaos to harmony requires more than a set of new procedures or bureaucratic structures; it requires an ethical turn around or transformation, that is, a re-awakening of conscience”. Responding to Dallmayr’s call, the name “Earthos” is the idea that we need a new ethos, or ethics for relating to the earth, coupled with the the idea that we do need new operating systems and new ways of operating our systems that benefit the earth and the people on the earth.

Earthos is a self-organised practice collaborative that is created by people who recognise the need for these new ways, and are committed to developing these new ways and testing them collaboratively. Our co-founders have deep knowledge in livings systems constructs: one co-founder brings community systems thinking, another co-founder brings natural systems thinking and “Design with Nature” (McHarg 1971) approaches, another co-founder brings historical landscape and cultural systems as an anthropologist-environmentalist, another brings landscape design systems thinking, and the fourth co-founder brings knowledge in land trusts and legal systems. The parable *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn was a foundational and influential text that catalysed Earthos. The story of Ishmael, in which a gorilla reflects on our society through a living system lens, gave our founding team a way of articulating ourselves. It also helped catalyse our first collaboration, exploring the idea of an ecological bill of rights, which then informed our first project “Self-Sufficient Boston.”

How do we structure the way we work? On reflection, I would suggest that we attempt to use authentic structure and authentic discipline, operating ourselves in response to real needs of life, of people and of communities. I would suggest that authentic structure follows the logic of natural systems, the logic of operating from what is actually needed by living systems. This informs how we structure our work days, teams, partnerships, practice collaboratives (no hierarchy), and even our administrative systems (e.g. using shared systems) to co-create. Bissonnette reflects on his experience using this model during his summer internship: “During my internship with the Earthos Institute this summer I experienced a radically

different way of operating within a professional space. My colleague and I along with the Executive Director, Sarah, began our work together in a collaborative and non-hierarchical manner. We spent almost a week brainstorming together, co-creating goals, a vision for the summer, and an actionable work plan. This plan was revisited throughout the summer and constantly evolved as our projects unfolded. Each of us took on tasks that best matched our skills, knowledge base, and experience and we also collaborated when necessary. In this way, each of our own contributions were valued and optimised in order to realise the common goal for our work. This way of operating was highly effective and yet did not rely upon archaic systems of power and authority” (Bissonnette).

We use collaborative practice inquiry as a way of finding ourselves into the methods and into the solutions together. In this, we take steps using an inquiry-based relational frame, then evaluate as we go in terms of the mission goals, in terms of whether or not it is actually contributing bioregional resiliency (life resiliency). This is process driven. The challenge is that we as a society are averse to process, often actively belittling it, pitting it against effectiveness. A process of integrity is working with living systems, rather than imposing predetermined norms. The alternative is that we use predetermined frames and processes, and existing research. What is problematic with this? I would suggest that most of our existing practices do not allow us to co-create with living systems, but rather superimpose on systems. Many of these practices and processes have actually helped create the problems that we are trying to address. We can learn from what others do, and from research, but ultimately communities need to develop responses themselves through an iterative co-design process with evaluation feedback.

Albert Einstein proposed, “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.” To co-create new ways with new outcomes, we need to shift our thinking and acting towards a more conscious, living practice processes. We are testing out new ways, and it often feels strange and uncomfortable, requiring perseverance and fortitude. Our interns and collaborators (I would include myself) often tell us that when they first learn of Earthos ways of operating and its bioregional practices, they seem “weird and ineffective.” However, as they learn to use them to generate deep, root level ideas and solutions with diverse collaborators, they realise this approach can actually be more effective, and even efficient, for addressing issues of resiliency, justice and sustainability.

## **The Boston Bioregion Project**

This section offers snapshots of bioregional leadership and urbanism in our practice, and what we are learning about living systems. Our primary practice research arena has been the Boston bioregion, ourselves, our membership,

network, and communities within the bioregion. How did we choose the projects? Each project addresses one or more of the key issues obstructing harmony in our bioregion, and which we have identified through the action steps of Bioregional Urbanism. Modelling the iterative experiential learning approach, I will reflect on the initiatives that the relational living systems construct teaches us about our work. I will also reflect on our attempts at operating within/with livings systems for transformative harmony. How does the construct assist us in moving towards life resiliency and transformative harmony. And how can we adapt it, apply it again, and further develop it in our future work, as a living working methodology and practice? For each Boston bioregion initiative, I will introduce the project, identify the key issue(s), and articulate a journey from chaos to harmony using the relational livings systems values construct (interdependent scales), bioregional leadership (the ways), and Bioregional Urbanism (co-creation action steps), focusing on how the initiative both benefits from and benefits the bioregion.

### **Roxbury Memory Trail**

We are working with a coalition to co-create a 2-mile long cultural heritage trail in the centre of Boston that celebrates and memorialises the diverse histories of the city, emphasizing African-American histories. The key bioregional [chaos] issue this project aims to address is “wealth distribution inequality and related displacement particularly along racial lines, and the inability of individuals and community groups to independently reverse the trend.” We believe that one of the reasons for poor wealth distribution is lack of societal value of, and subsequent investment in, cultural assets of these communities. By co-creating an internationally significant cultural trail in the heart of Boston, and drawing investment, we as a coalition seek to address this.

The chaos is the unrecognised artists of colour; it is the un-memorialised histories; it is a community that is threatened by displacement; it is the inability to access and express authentic pride in one’s own culture; the inability to make a living with these cultural assets; it is the lack of community-generated public art supported and recognised by the City of Boston; it is a lack of public and private capital to create infrastructure by, and in the likeness of, the people of the place. Many (communities of colour, First Nation/Native American, immigrants, women, LGBTQ and so on) have been minimised and excluded from the narratives, from memorialising, from positive imaginations, and from co-creating with dominant power structures. This doesn’t mean that these groups haven’t been creating their own narratives, memorialising, contributing and co-creating. Indeed, the opposite has been true, despite the hurdles.

A significant contributing factor to the chaos is the unequal relationship between the community and the city in which it resides. From what we are observing, city officials and planners are not working to create place together with the community. Rather, in planning projects, we observe city representatives interacting with community in three ways: 1) present a project or idea to the community, and obtain community input; 2) host a community charrette to solicit community ideas; and 3) listen to ideas from community actors who meet with the officials individually. Regardless of input, city officials choose for the community, denying them agency in creating place. The general attitude is: "How can you convince us that what you are proposing is worth our time and money." Co-creation is not possible with this way of thinking and acting, and from what we are seeing, this way of operating has led to little investment—in the arts, green space, etc.—by the city and by private entities.

We have been working towards harmony by co-building a bioregional coalition of equitable partnerships with the community of colour leadership to shift the power dynamics. In working towards harmony, we are realising that the leadership needs to come from the community of colour, in partnership with a bioregional coalition that stands in solidarity, bringing support and resources. W.E.B. DuBois said, "The problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the problem of the colourline." Perhaps the solutions of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century are found along the colour line (and gender/sexual orientation lines), with those who have been in some way disenfranchised, who have understood firsthand the power-over mentality, and how it needs to change. Transformative harmony requires a shift from linear, siloed thinking, which leaves certain people out of the decision-making process. It requires not only "getting community input/feedback", it requires actually creating structures for leadership and co-creation and co-decision making with communities, and it requires learning to listen to and value diverse cultural, racial perspectives. Ultimately, it requires creating participatory governing and budgeting methods. In this racially challenged city, there is a need for participatory collaborative design and policy making to generate solutions that address living system needs, rather than using the same planning and policy methods that created the problem.

I would suggest that this cross-sector community-driven bioregional coalition is attempting to create a model for this by creating structures that reinforce the community leadership: 1) governance body hosted and led by the community with broad representation; 2) funding platform based in the community, with all funding first going to community-based organisations; 3) shared digital platforms to ensure transparent access to project materials by all coalition members; and 4) social media postings of meetings and materials.

This project engages relational living systems in the following ways:

- **Living Being Scale** Valuing, capturing and memorialising the diverse stories of the people (and eventually other living beings) of this community through history
- **Community of Living Beings Scale** Supporting communities that have historically struggled with access to political and financial agency in co-creating their places
- **Bioregion of Living Communities Scale** Creating a bioregional coalition that supports this community, and helps other communities in the bioregion learn and benefit from the effort

This initiative uses Bioregional Urbanism (actions steps) in the following ways:

- Identifies overall relevance to the key issues of the bioregion – displacement and unequal distribution of wealth
- Co-creates a dynamic, diverse, cross-disciplinary, community-led bioregional team
- Maps community and bioregional assets, maps risks and opportunities to inform the development of the project – displacement, cultural assets, identified the community as central to Boston’s ability to respond to climate and social resiliency
- Addresses Bioregional Resiliency Index—people resiliency—if one community is not accessing its fair share of resources, it is unable to engage itself to full potential, and subsequently the entire bioregional resiliency is impacted
- Applies collaborative design strategies in the Roxbury Memory Trail Master Planning

## **ARTfarm for Social Innovation**

The ARTfarm Project is a mixed-use, open space project in the Boston metro area. It is located on a former waste site in the centre of the very dense City of Somerville, MA. It is currently experiencing rapidly rising land values. The project was initially conceived as: “[The community] is converting a former 2.2-acre waste transfer station and incinerator site into a self-sustaining creative common, market and growing space. [The community] is transforming the site into a center for community and art-based social, economic and educational innovation. Building on Somerville’s historic concentration of artists and immigrants, this project would co-locate multiple creative uses, including farm and food-related activity, as well as create a welcoming open space” (from Somerville Arts Council Website).



The key bioregional [chaos] issue this project aims to address is “wealth distribution inequality and related displacement, and the inability of individuals and community groups to independently reverse the trend.” In this instance, the chaos is specifically: lack of open space and studio space for artists and community members; displacement of the socio-economic diversity that has been historically characteristic of this community; abused land; and little to no space for other living beings in one of the most densely populated cities in the country.

Towards harmony, Earthos, with a partnership team of city and community actors, worked together to catalyse and co-create this much needed project, co-designing and obtaining funding and resources together. At first, this was a community-driven initiative: leadership came from the community through a coalition of actors, with a resident-artist as champion for the project. This project was possible because the City asked the adjacent artist community to activate the site for 5-10 years. This was an unusual opportunity for the community to decide what should happen on city-owned land. The coalition conducted an initial round of community sessions to develop the core principles to drive the project, ensuring the project met the needs of the complex diverse neighbourhoods. These sessions informed an initial schematic design that seemed to resonate for many. One resident commented “I am really excited about what I’m seeing here, it provides a lot of opportunity for growth in the community and in the city.” In an effort to be transparent, the coalition posted the material from the meetings online.

This project engaged relational living systems (interdependent scales):

- **Living Being Scale** Worked to create affordable and needed spaces for vulnerable communities (youth, artists, immigrants) and other living beings (such as pollinators) of the community
- **Community of Living Beings Scale** Supported communities in co-creating their places
- **Bioregion of Living Communities Scale** Created a coalition that supports this community, and helps other communities in the bioregion to learn

This initiative applied Bioregional Urbanism (actions steps) in the following ways:

- Co-created a diverse, cross-disciplinary, community-led bioregional team
- Mapped bioregional resources and worked to provided access to these resources (waste as resource, land, biodiversity, people, water, food)
- Developed strategies to support biodiversity (i.e. pollinator park) in industrial urban areas, and supported access to open space for a community with no open space

- Developed strategies to use the open space to benefit human and ecological communities in just, equitable ways to provide opportunities for art and education (artist make-and-sell space, adjacent to pollinator park)
- Co-designed solutions aimed at stimulating economic access for those who may not otherwise have it
- Assessed bioregional strategies – because of its location near regional transit and highway systems, and the size of the growing-making-selling spaces, it could benefit from and contribute to the bioregional economy. We explored: How does the community and region utilise its own resources to build its own economy for resiliency?

What happens when chaos returns? As the project gained momentum, it went from a community-based short-term pop-up project to a much bigger development project as the city became more involved again. The ARTFarm project is now being developed through the city with private partners, and is driven by this rather than collaborative design. The initial coalition that worked together to facilitate co-creation disbanded, and the community participation process (which needed to be expanded and deepened) ended. Many might consider this project to be a success because it is moving forward. However, through the transformative harmony lens, this outcome does not meet needs of living beings because it is no longer community driven. We have been learning that processes of transformative harmony, which can be strengthening, are at the same time vulnerable, just like living systems. When we face the disintegration of our efforts, how do face this? Instead of capitulating to these forces, we need to use them galvanise us to continue to tap into our deep reservoirs of creativity and resilience, which are inherent in our living systems to find new solutions—to galvanise new solutions politically, socially, and culturally.

Perhaps most importantly, we learned that these projects require oversight and management by an entity that has broad community representation, and which has a mandate to be in service to the community. Under the direction of a city or a private developer, it is too easy for the special interests of investors and/or the tax base of the city to become the driver. Although we mentioned this need to the city as an important element, we should have advocated for such an entity with much more emphasis, and engaged others in the community in such as conversation. It was an important lesson for us. Through this project, we also discovered how important it is to have a community champion who embodies bioregional leadership, and can rise above his/her/their special interests to advocate for the “highest and best use” of such as community asset. We also learned effective bioregional coalitions needs to continually deepen and strengthen their bioregional leadership and co-creation skills. Our team was able to co-create concepts together, but was not able to bring the project through to fruition in the co-creation model. This was because

we inconsistently applied bioregional leadership skills, and ultimately handed the project back to the city before establishing co-operational structures, in large part because we pursued a very costly design solution.

### **Alewife-Mystic Corridor**

This initiative is an effort to build a trans-municipal, bioregional coalition to address the climate vulnerability in this important corridor, and to develop alternative solutions to development in the floodplain. The key bioregional issues include: climate change-related flooding in densely populated socially and environmentally vulnerable areas, and the inability to work across town lines to address these issues in planning and policy.

This corridor is a central transportation and watershed corridor at risk for sea-level rise impacts and storm surges. Thousands of people from throughout the region access it every day to move in, out and through the urban centre. In the event of a major storm, it could become impassable, trapping people in the floodplain of the Boston basin. Many species of wildlife consider it home; some use it for migrating. Chaos includes, environmental exploitation, urban development in flood zones, human and biodiversity displacement, turf battles between organisations along the corridor, cross-municipal boundary challenges, concentration of low-income neighbourhoods in some of the wealthiest municipalities in the country. In addition, this corridor is at the edge of 5 municipalities which struggle to consider planning beyond their own boundaries, have not prioritised its resiliency, often making decisions that undermine resiliency.

We are currently finding our way into the harmony. We have created a team to implement a model for community-based river restoration, with participation by many of the key groups along the corridor, with a focus on participation of and leadership development of youth. Ways forward may include: sustainable development of floodplain and “making room for the river”; inclusive collaborative design of solutions to inform planning efforts of each municipality, with inclusion from low income vulnerable communities and wildlife advocates; collaboration between municipalities along the corridor, cultivating bioregional leadership in the adjacent organisations; and a bioregional coalition of all entities affected by the corridor to provide a balance of power to the developer-driven agendas of some of the municipalities.

This project engages relational living systems in the following ways:

- **Living Beings** Prioritizes people and biodiversity of the place of the corridor, with an emphasis on vulnerable and low income, rather than development or car-centric transportation

- **Community of Living Beings** Creates inclusive ways for groups along the corridor to participate in the creation of this space
- **Bioregion of Communities Works** to bring municipalities and communities together, to build an inclusive coalition across boundaries

This initiative uses Bioregional Urbanism (actions steps) in the following ways:

- Hosts an Earthos Conversations to explore the co-creation of a coalition
- Works towards creating a diverse, cross-disciplinary, community-led bioregional team
- Maps living systems and their resources of the corridor, and as part of the bioregion
- Works with actors in the corridor to begin to identify community and bioregional priorities
- Co-develops strategies that address key issues and Index resources—people, land, biodiversity, water
- Facilitates collaborative design of Alewife Corridor Projects applying mapping and strategies

## **Earthos Public Conversations**

Earthos hosts a monthly public conversation series intended to build bioregional knowledge by examining the bioregion as a whole, and learning about it together with the public. We explore how to build sustaining, resilient bioregional system to support local efforts and contribute to global sustainability. During each conversation, we probe a bioregional theme, – from resources (land, food, energy, etc.), to projects, to “wicked problems” (such as displacement). We then collaboratively building knowledge with all participants, approximately 15-35 practitioners, researchers, community actors, and citizens from across the bioregion. The chaos is the lack of ability to create knowledge together; it is dissonance between members of a diverse interdisciplinary team (i.e. jargon, silos, privilege, etc.); lack of places that do not belong to one group or another (neutral turf); overuse of natural resources; lack of understanding of our regional resource base; lack of understanding of how our consumption impacts this bioregion and other bioregions; and lack of ability to work together towards measurable improvements in human and ecological well-being.

These conversations employ a deliberate structure to help participants understand and use the bioregional frame so that they are able to contribute meaningfully. This structure includes: 1) introduction of all participants as contributors; 2) Earthos introduction of the bioregional frame as it relates to the resource being discussed;

3) 3-5 thought-provoking “talks” from people throughout the bioregion; and 4) facilitated collaborative knowledge building session. The Conversations are intended to bring us towards harmony by fostering: bioregional leadership in all of us, the ability to co-create knowledge, establishing neutral turf, bridging different disciplines and scales, common language and methods for understanding our common living systems and their resources, and connecting people from across the bioregion. We are learning that: we can co-build knowledge with facilitation based on bioregional leadership principles; the knowledge generated is useful, relevant, and unpredictable; and we need time to bring people into this way of creating knowledge, but it is possible within a 3-hour time block.

This project engages relational living systems in the following ways:

- **Living Beings** Creates a place for practitioners who care about living systems to explore knowledge and ideas, and receive inspiration and support
- **Community of Living Beings** Creates a bioregional learning community
- **Bioregion of Communities** Helps practitioners throughout the bioregion to connect to each other, and to connect their communities to each other, creates a bioregional network

This initiative uses Bioregional Urbanism (actions steps) in the following ways:

- Facilitates an *ad hoc* bioregional team
- Curates diverse speakers across disciplines, scales, communities
- Maps and researches resources at the bioregional level
- Co-develops strategies for bioregional resiliency
- Builds knowledge about the resources of the index, and what needs to be measured

## Bioregional Resilience Index and Data Initiative

We have been co-developing the Bioregional Resiliency Index, informed by our work with communities, with a core team of Earthos staff and board members, interns, partners, and advisors. The index is intended as a practitioner and citizen tool to enable all of us to better steward our living systems and their renewable resources to benefit our communities and regions. It measures seven core resources that humans depend on including water, energy, food, land, biodiversity, people, and waste-as-resource. It is intended to help us understand how well we are living on our renewable resources. It can help us identify priorities in the bioregion and in communities. Although we are working to generate an initial static Index, our vision is to create a digital Index platform that uses real time data of living systems,

and is accessible to all. With current remote sensing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), online mapping tools, and satellite data, our collective ability to do this is becoming more of a reality.

The chaos is that we do not know how our bioregion is doing as a living system, and therefore we are unable to effectively steward it; and we do not have ways of measuring the collective impact of our decisions in the bioregion. As we co-develop this index, we learn from our partners that this could be a powerful tool to change our ability to work together with living systems. We are also learning that we need to first test it with many different groups, communities of living beings, throughout the Boston Bioregion and other bioregions, before launching it in full-fledged manner. It will need iterations to ensure it advances our goals of living system equity, resiliency and sustainability.

This project engages relational living systems by:

- **Living Beings** Prioritizes living beings in the measurement tool
- **Community of Living Beings** Enables the communities of living beings in the bioregion to understand how they can benefit from and contribute to bioregional resiliency
- **Bioregion of Communities** Provides a snapshot of the “health” of the bioregion

This initiative uses Bioregional Urbanism (actions steps) in the following ways:

- Establishes a cross-disciplinary, diverse, bioregional advisory group
- Develops step 4 of Bioregional Urbanism
- Facilitates collaborative practice of Bioregional Urbanism

## **Boston Bioregion Voices**

While working together, we have learned that we need to engage people from across the bioregion to share their work and stories, and use of current digital media can facilitate this. As a result, we recently launched “The Boston Bioregion Project” to collect and share stories and practices to build awareness and consciousness about the life region that supports us. We are working towards participation of many voices from throughout the bioregion. Our vision is to have a living platform for bioregional voices to share experiences, knowledge in the co-creation way. We are just starting this. We have set up a social media site to collect stories and I will walk segments of the bioregion this summer engaging people in the conversations, and collecting stories on this site.

This project engages relational living systems by:

- **Living Beings** Curates stories of living beings
- **Community of Living Beings** Creates a community of people engaged in bioregional discourse
- **Bioregion of Communities** Aims to help communities throughout the bioregion connect and learn from each other

This initiative uses Bioregional Urbanism (actions steps) in the following ways:

- Through discourse, this will help inform the bioregion as living entity that is worthy of stewarding

## Conclusion

After walking across the regions of Spain, I decided to continue bioregional explorations by walking my home, the Boston Bioregion. In August of 2014, I walked from Boston, MA to Burlington, VT, eating, tasting, smelling, feeling, talking, connecting, learning, and listening. Since this walk, I have felt deeply connected with my homeland. And I re-learned the lesson of my Spanish walk – we cannot heal living systems and bring about sustainability through our minds alone; we need to engage our minds with our bodies, hearts, stomachs, soles, souls, and spirits. I learned another very important lesson – we cannot do it by ourselves, we need a bioregion of citizens who love their life places, feel connected with them, and are engaged in stewarding them.

I believe that to realise transformative harmony we need a relational living systems value construct, which inform frames of valuing, thinking, and operating, and can help us into a bioregional, living systems practice. We need practices that engage us from the inside out, that enable us to walk out of power over/scarcity/chaos into transformative harmony. This chapter is a reflection on our work in this arena from my perspective, and what I think we have learned as we have attempted to engage with living systems in practice. My co-authors, colleagues, partners, interns all have their own perspectives on this work, which are as valuable and important to the discourse. And we are only one group engaging in the work of transformative harmony; many others have insights, inspirations and methods that will bring us towards this goal. My hope and prayer is that my reflections contribute in some way to the discourse on transformative harmony in our professional practices, and that many others pick up the call to engage and contribute as well.

My final note is that this is not easy work, it is cultural change. We need faith and hope to keep us going. As Carrie Newcomer reflected in an interview



on NPR's *On Being*, "There is the kind of hope that's wishful thinking and then there's a kind of hope that's gritty. It's the kind of hope that gets up every morning and chooses to try to make the world just a little kinder place in your own way. And the next morning gets up and does it again. And the next morning you have been disappointed and you do it again." In this work, I test myself at all levels, and I often have to find trust and "gritty hope." In a living systems model, the results are often not predictable, and are sometimes disappointing, but often they are infinitely more meaningful and impactful than we even imagine if we allow.

## References and Bibliography

- Aberley, David. 1993. *Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment*. New Catalyst Bioregional Series. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- . 1994. *Futures By Design: The Practice of Ecological Design*. New Catalyst Bioregional Series. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Agyeman, Julian. 2005. *Sustainable Communities and the Challenge of Environmental Justice*. New York: New York University Press.
- Agyeman, Julian and Alison Hope Alkon (eds). 2011. *Cultivating Food Justice: Race Class and Sustainability*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Agyeman, Julian, Robert D. Bullard and Bob Evans. 2003. *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Alexander, Don. 1996. "Bioregionalism: The Need for a Firmer Theoretical Foundation." *The Trumpeter Journal of Ecosophy*, 13(3).
- Allenby, Brad and Jonathan Fink. 2005. "Toward Inherently Secure and Resilient Societies." *Science*, 309(5737):1034-1036.
- Bayne, Derek. Fall 2009. "Bioregionalism and Environmental Regulation: A Policy Consideration For future Environmental Reform." *University of Baltimore Journal of Environmental Law*, 17(1):1-31.
- Benyus, Janine. 1997. *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.
- Berry, Thomas. 2007. "Bioregions: The Context for Reinhabiting the Earth." *Ecospirit: A Journal of Ecological Spirituality*, 1(1). <https://ecospiritjournal.wordpress.com/2007/12>
- The Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. "National Biodiversity Indicators Portal." Accessed August 20, 2012. <http://www.bipnational.net>
- Brown, Brene. 2012. *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. New York, New York: Gotham Books.
- Bruckhorst, David J. 2000. *Bioregional Planning: Resource Management Beyond the New Millennium*. Germany: Harwood Academic Publishers.

- Brush, Stephen B. and Doreen Stablsinsky (eds). 1996. *Valuing Local Knowledge: Indigenous People and Intellectual Property Rights*. Washington D.C. and Covelo, California: Island Press.
- Building Resilient Regions: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California Berkley. "Resilience Capacity Index." Accessed March 17, 2017. <http://brr.berkeley.edu/rci/>
- Bullard, R.D. (ed.). 2007. *Growing Smarter: Achieving Livable Communities, Environmental Justice, and Regional Equity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- The Center for Strategic and International Studies with the Global Strategies Institute. 2009. "Global Resource Security: Scanning the Horizon on Food, Water, Energy, and the Environment Experts' Workshop Summary." Accessed October 1, 2012. [http://csis.org/files/attachments/091001\\_Global%20Resource%20Security\\_Summary.pdf](http://csis.org/files/attachments/091001_Global%20Resource%20Security_Summary.pdf)
- Capra, Fritof. 1996. *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Capra, Fritof. 2002. *The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Cato, Molly Scott. 2013. *The Bioregional Economy: Land Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness*. New York: Routledge
- Cavallo, David. 2004. "Models of Growth – Towards Fundamental Change in Learning Environments." Accessed on May 12, 2016. <http://www.media.mit.edu/publications/btj/Paper11Pages96-112.pdf>
- Christopherson, Susan, Jonathan Michie and Peter Tyler. March 2010. "Editor's Choice: Regional Resilience: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy, and Society*, 3(1):3-10.
- Cole, Luke W. and Sheila R. Foster. 2001. *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. New York: New York University Press.
- Community and Regional Resilience Institute. 2013. "Definition of Community Resilience: An Analysis. A CARRI Report." Accessed on March 17, 2017. <http://www.resilientus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/definitions-of-community-resilience.pdf>
- Conklin, Jeff. 2009. "Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems. Rotman Magazine, the alumni magazine of Rotman School of Management, Winter. Accessed March 20, 2017.
- Cooke, Philip. 2007. *Growth Cultures: The Global Bioeconomy and Its Bioregions*. London and New York: Routledge.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity. 2012. "About the Convention." Accessed August 20, 2012. <http://www.cbd.int/convention/>
- Cutter, Susan L., Christopher G. Burton, and Christopher T. Emrich. 2010. "Disaster Resilience Indicators for Benchmarking Baseline Conditions." *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 7:1-22.
- Cutter, Susan L. 2006. *Hazards Vulnerability and Environmental Justice*. UK and USA: Earthscan.

- Cutter, Susan L., Lindsey Barnes, Melissa Berry, Christopher Burton, Elijah Evans, Eric Tate and Jennifer Webb. 2008. "CARRI Research Report 1 - Community and Regional Resilience: Perspectives from Hazards, Disasters, and Emergency Management." Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute.
- Dahlberg K. "What are Food Systems? Local and Regional Food Systems: A Key to Healthy Cities" Paper presented at the International Healthy Cities Conference, December 1993; San Francisco, CA.
- Davidson, Stewart. 2007. "The Troubled Marriage of Deep Ecology and Bioregionalism." *Environmental Values*. Vol. 16 (Issue 3):313-332.
- Dawley, Stuart, Andy Pike and John Tomaney. 2010. "Towards the Resilient Region? Policy Activism and Peripheral Region Development." SERC Discussion Paper 53.
- Desai, Poorsan and Sue Riddlestone. 2002. "Bioregional Solutions For Living on One Planet." Schumacher Briefing No.8. Published by Green Books for the Schumacher Society.
- Dettman, Stephen. 2006. "The Mesoamerican biological Corridor in Panama and Costa Rica: Integrating Bioregional Planning and Local Initiatives." *Journal of Sustainable Forestry* 22 (1/2):15-34.
- Dolezal, Joshua A. 2008. "Literary Activism, Social Justice, and the Future of Bioregionalism." *Ethics and the Environment* 13 (1):1-22.
- Donovan, Shannon M., Chris Looney, Thor Hanson, Yaniria Sanchez de Leon, J.D. Wulforst, Sanford D. Eigenbrode, Michael Jennings, Jodi Johnson-Maynard, and Nilsa A. Bosque Perez. 2009 "Reconciling Social and Biological Needs in an Endangered Ecosystem: the Palouse as a Model." *Ecology and Society* 14:1-24.
- Dreier, P., J. Mollenkoph, T. Swanstrom. 2001. *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-First Century*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Edward O. Wilson. 2002. *The Future of Life*. New York: Vintage Books of Random House.
- Evanoff, Richard. 2007. "Bioregionalism and Cross Cultural Dialogue on a Land Ethic." *Ethics, Place and Environment* 10 (2):141-156.
- Evans, Patricia. 1992. *The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognise It and How to Respond*. Avon, Ma, Adams Media.
- Forman, Richard T.T. 2014. *Urban Ecology: Science of Cities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foster, Kathryn A. 2007. "Snapping Back: What Makes Regions More Resilient?" *National Civic Review* 96 (3):27-29.
- First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit. 1991. "17 Principles of Environmental Justice." Accessed August 2012. <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.pdf>
- Foster, Charles H.W. 1984. *Experiments In Bioregionalism: The New England River Basin Story*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England.

- Foster, Katherine. 2010. "Regional Resilience How Do We Know It When We See it?" Paper presented to the Conference on Urban and Regional Policy and Its Effects, May 20-12.
- Friere, Paulo. 1968. *Pedegogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Giri, Ananta Kumar. 2011. "Transformative Harmony: An Invitation for Dialogue" (Unpublished manuscript, Chennai: Madras Institute of Development Studies).
- Gleick, P. 2000. *The World's Water*. Island Press.
- Greene, Sarah (ed). K.Norman Johnson (ed), Frederick Swanson (ed), Margaret Herring (ed). 1999. *Bioregional Assessments: Science at the Crossroads of Management and Policy*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.
- Gunderson, Lance with Emory University. 2009. "CARRI Research Report 5 - Comparing Ecological and Human Community Resilience."
- Gyoval, Christine Muehiman. 2009. "Creating a Bioregional Vision." *PermacultureActivist* 73:48-50.
- Hawken, Paul. 2007. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw it Coming*. New York; Viking Penguin.
- Holling, C.S. and Lance H. Gunderson. 2002. "Resilience and Adaptive Cycles." In *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*, edited by Lance H. Gunderson and C.S. Holling, 27-33. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Hoffman, Gene Knudson, Cynthia Monroe and Leah Green. "Compassionate Listening: An Exploratory Sourcebook about Conflict Transformation." *New Conversations*, 2012. March 20, 2017. [http://www.newconversations.net/pdf/compassionate\\_listening.pdf](http://www.newconversations.net/pdf/compassionate_listening.pdf)
- Hoornweg, Daniel with Laura Thomas. 1999. "What A Waste: Solid Waste Management in Asia." Working Paper Series Nr. 1. Urban Development Sector Unit. East Asia and Pacific Region. The World Bank. Page 5.
- Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity Ecosystem Services. 2017. "About IPBES." Accessed March 20. <http://www.ipbes.net/about-us>
- Karl-Henrik, Robert. 1997. *The Natural Step: A Framework*. Cambridge: Pegasus Communications.
- Kelly, Marjorie. 2012. *Owning Our Future: The Emerging Ownership Revolution*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Kindon, Sara (Editor), Rachel Pain (Editor), Mike Kesby (Editor) 2008. *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place*. New York: Routledge Studies in Human Geography.
- Kolb, D.A. 1984. *Experiential learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall
- Lappe, Frances Moore. 2011. *Eco-Mind: Changing the Way We Think to Create the World We Want*. New York, Small Planet Institute.
- Lebel, Louis, and John M. Andries, Bruce Campbell, Carl Folke, Steve Hatfield-Dodds, Terry P.Hughes, and James Wilson. 2006. "Governance and the Capacity to Manage

- Resilience in Regional Social-Economic Systems." *Ecology and Society* 11(1):19
- Litovsky, Alejandro and Paulina Villalpando. 2012. "Land Security Agenda: How Investor Risks in Farmland Create Opportunities for Sustainability." London: Earth Security Initiative.
- Martino-Baro, Ignacio. 1994. *Writing for a Liberation Psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McCullum, Christine, Ellen DeJardins, Vivica I Kraak, Patricia Ladipo and Helen Costello. 2005. "Evidence-Based Strategies to Build Community Food Security." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 105(2):278-283.
- McDonough, William and Michael Braungart. 2009. *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. London: Vintage.
- McGinnis, Michael Vincent (ed.). 1998. *Bioregionalism*. Hoboken: Routledge.
- . 2000. "The Bioregional Quest for Community." *Landscape Journal*, 19(1-2):84-89.
- McHarg, Ian. 1971. *Design with Nature*. New York, Published for the American Museum of Natural History.
- Meadows, Donella H., Dennis Meadows, and Jorgen Randers. 1992. *Beyond The Limits: Confronting Global Collapse Envisioning a Sustainable Future*. Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing Company.
- Merrill, Alexandra. 2014. "Mapping the Territory of the All Female Group." alexandramerrill.com. Accessed on March 20, 2017. [http://alexandramerrill.com/?page\\_id=85](http://alexandramerrill.com/?page_id=85).
- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Biodiversity Synthesis*. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.
- Miller, Kenton. 1996. *Balancing the Scales: Guidelines for Increasing Biodiversity's Chances Through Bioregional Management*. New York: World Resource Institute.
- Morrow, Betty Hearn. 2008. "CARRI Research Report 4 - Community Resilience: A Social Justice Perspective." Oak Ridge TN: Community and Regional Resilience Initiative.
- Mulvihill, Peter R., Robert G. MacDonald, Jennifer Macmillan. 2006. "Fostering Sustainability in Headwaters Country: Using Bioregional and Social Capital Strategies in Support of Sustainability." *Local Environment*, 11(6):663-682.
- Nabhan, Gary Paul. 1997. *Cultures of Habitat: On Nature, Culture and Story*. Washington, DC: Counterpoint.
- Olweus, Dan. 1997. "Bullying/Victim Problems in School: Facts and Intervention." *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 12 (4):495-510.
- Pastor, Manuel, T. William Lester and Justin Scoggins. 2009. "Why Regions? Why Now? Who Cares?" *Journal of Urban Affairs* 31 (3):269-296.
- Pike, Andy and Stuart Dawley, and John Tomaney. 2010. "Resilience, adaptation and adaptability." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy, and Society* 3:59-70.
- Quinn, Daniel. 1992. *Ismael: An Adventure of the mind and Spirit*. New York: Bantam Books.

- Postel, S.L., G.C. Daily and P.R. Ehrlich. 1996. "Human Appropriation of Renewable Fresh Water." *Science*, 271:785.
- Randall, Bob. 2009. "Bioregional Organising in Cities." *Permaculture Activist*, 73:14-19.
- Rittel, Horst, and Melvin Webber. 1973. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning." *Policy Sciences*, 4:155-169.
- Robert, Karl-Henrik. 2008. *The Natural Step: A Framework*. British Columbia: New Catalyst Books.
- Rosenberg, Marshall B. 2003. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press.
- Sale, Kirkpatrick. 1985. *Dwellers in the Land*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Senge, Peter. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*. New York: Currency Doubleday.
- Serageldin, Ismail (ed). 1997. *The Architecture of Empowerment: People, Shelter and Livable Cities*. London: Academy Editions.
- Simmie, James and Ron Martin. 2010. "Editor's Choice: The Economic Resilience of Regions: Towards an Evolutionary Approach." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy, and Society*, 3:27-43.
- Stibbe, Arran (ed.). 2009. *The Handbook of Sustainability Literacy: Skills for a Changing World*. UK: Green Books.
- Steinitz, Carl. 2012. *A Framework for Geodesign: Changing Geography by Design*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press.
- Thayer, Robert L. Jr. 2003. *LifePlace: Bioregional Thought and Practice*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tippett, Krista. 2016. "James Doty: The Magic Shop of the Brain: An Essay on Risk, Certainty and Shaping One's Orientation." *On Being*. Podcast audio, February 11, 2016. <http://onbeing.org/programs/james-doty-the-magic-shop-of-the-brain/>
- United Nations General Assembly, Fifty Sixth session. 2001. "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, Report of the General Assembly."
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. 2012. "Urban Natural Resources Stewardship: Measuring Park Access and Environmental Justice in Baltimore." [http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/urban/environmental\\_justice/baltimore/](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/urban/environmental_justice/baltimore/)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2009. "Opportunities to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Materials and Land Management Practices." Accessed on March 20, 2017. <https://www.epa.gov/region-9-documents/opportunities-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions-through-materials-and-land>.
- Wetherill, Thomas D. 2005. "Integrated Solid Waste Management Scoreboard: A Tool to Measure Performance in Municipal Solid Waste Management." United Nations Environment Program. Accessed on October 1, 2012 [http://www.unep.or.jp/ietc/publications/spc/iwm\\_scoreboard-binder.pdf](http://www.unep.or.jp/ietc/publications/spc/iwm_scoreboard-binder.pdf)

- Water Footprint Network. 2012. "Global Water Footprint." Accessed on August 28.  
<http://www.waterfootprint.org/?page=files/GlobalWaterFootprint>
- Young, Terence. 2009. "Belonging Not Containing. The Vision of Bioregionalism."  
*Landscape Journal* 19 (1-2):46-49.



## CHAPTER 19

# Biohappiness and Holistic Harmony

## The Vision and Mission of M.S. Swaminathan

*James Ponniah*

This chapter aims to explore non-agenarian living legend M.S. Swaminathan's concept of biohappiness and to study the impact of the idea as envisaged and implemented by agricultural scientist Swaminathan, and to research on how it contributes to the idea of transformative harmony. As a scientist, Swaminathan believes in the impact of science in transforming the world but as a humanist, he strongly believes that such transformation should be all inclusive and totally empowering, and it should result in the accrual of benefits to societies and communities everywhere. To enable this, he proposes the idea of biohappiness which refers to a state of joy, an outcome of holistic transformation that is premised upon the interrelated and interdependent nature of our universe. It is this belief in holistic framework that translated itself into his projects and programmes such as 'ever green revolution', 'biohappiness', 'sustainable food security for all' at the disposal of which he placed science and technology as described in this chapter.

### **Defining Moments of M.S. Swaminathan's Life**

Monkombu Sambasivan Swaminathan was born on August 7, 1925 in the family of a medical doctor at Kumbakonam, a town near Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. The following three important events in his life shaped his personality and career:

1. The selfless commitment of his father to public service, who led a successful campaign towards the eradication of diseases like malaria, filaria and elephantiasis by involving men, women and children to fill up the pools of filthy water and clear garbage to rid of mosquitoes. It is from his father that he learnt a significant lesson that ‘if people work together synergistically through broad-based public education, social mobilisation and community action, they can transform their society’ (Dil 2004:38), a view that would guide all his research projects.
2. Gandhi’s visit to his town and stay in his father’s hospital premises was the second important event in Swaminathan’s life. Gandhi’s early influence on him is twofold: A) His teaching that ‘all human beings are the same before God and that caste and other social distinctions are detrimental to human society’ (*ibid.*:39). His family remained committed to these humanistic principles and opened their door to people of all castes and religions but as a backlash suffered excommunication from their own caste men—the orthodox Brahmin priests of the village who refused to perform the traditional religious rituals in their home on the occasion of his paternal grandmother’s death. B) Gandhi’s concepts of *Sarvodaya* (progress of all at all levels) through *Antyodaya* (uplift of the weakest).
3. The third incident that shaped his life was the Bengal famine of 1942 which claimed the life of more than 2 million people. This catastrophic event shaped his career change from a medicine man to an agriculture researcher, much to the dismay of his family, who had expected him to take over the administration of the family hospital – one that was built by his father who died in the prime of his medical career when Swaminathan was just 11 years old.

In the aftermath of Bengal famine, Swaminathan decided to pursue his career to study ‘science in the hope of developing new and better seed varieties for rice, wheat, the potato, and other crops, and for improving farming methods and production’ (*ibid.*:41). With this began his dream of politically independent India in which people would be self-reliant in food and other basic necessities. To actualise this dream he carried out his master plan of green revolution<sup>1</sup> through which he wanted to convert the agricultural nation of India from a food-importing country to a food-exporting nation. On completion of his successful term as the Director General of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines, he returned to India and used his World Food Prize money of two hundred thousand US dollars to establish M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in Chennai in 1988. The mission statement of MSSRF reads: “Organise research and training designed to promote a job-led economic growth in rural areas, based on pro-nature, pro-poor and pro-woman orientation to technology development and dissemination” (*ibid.*:50). The work motto of MSSRF fosters ‘partnership’ and it

was envisaged as an ‘institution without walls’ (*ibid.*) to make it accessible to the various stakeholders, especially the poor farmers and women. The programmes of the foundation were planned to combine the best of traditional and new frontier knowledge and technologies needed for transforming agriculture and other key areas of social cultural development. The following five major areas were chosen to form the core of the research activities: 1) Coastal Systems Research; 2) Biodiversity and Biotechnology; 3) Ecotechnology and Food Security; 4) Gender and Development; and 5) Informatics.

## Swaminathan for Harmonious Life

Alongside his dedicated efforts for food security, M.S. Swaminathan remains focused to establish harmony with nature for fellow human beings. The logo which Swaminathan designed for MSSRF advocates ‘the open-ended, many-sided, and continuous evolution of humankind-nature interaction’ (*ibid.*). The architectural design of the buildings and the landscape of the centre reflect the spirit of ‘harmony with nature.’ Appreciating his love for nature, one of his biographers and compiler of his works, Anwar Dil, writes, “As I see it, Professor Swaminathan’s excellence, as both a person and a scientist reformer, is rooted in his love of Life – not only of human beings, but of every life form in the Universe, especially flowers, plants, and trees” (*ibid.*:53). In this context the same author also recalls the very words of M.S. Swaminathan, “At the heart of agriculture, there is a simple truth that in the growing of green plants, we can capture the energy of the sun, our most precious asset, and turn it into food, fuel, fodder, and other products.....Agriculture is what you call applied ecology. Ecology means remaining in harmony with nature, and agriculture means using natural resources in a sound and scientific way. Therefore, anybody who is interested in agriculture, not only today but also for the future, has to think of the conservation of nature and natural resources” (*ibid.*).

Harmonious life, by definition, aims at the harmonious well-being of all, unlike disruptive industrialised modern life which seeks the development of a few at the cost of the well-being of many. It is in this regard that M.S. Swaminathan has envisaged an all inclusive ‘evergreen revolution’ and implemented a whole range of action plans that seek the well-being of all. By ‘evergreen revolution’ he meant increase of productivity in perpetuity without ecological harm. According to Swaminathan, organic farming practices of our modern times is indeed the display of ever green revolution in implementation (Rajyasabha TV 2015). Organic farming recycles the wastes of the nature for the better nurturance of nature just as it recognises and affirms the mutually enriching characteristics of the different life forms of one mother earth.

Swaminathan's various programmes are founded upon inclusive thinking that does not shy away from critiquing the present lifestyles and thought processes which are polarised and self-centred. "One-third of the world's people who live in developed lands consume nearly eight times more energy per capita than do citizens in poorer countries" (*ibid.*:131). Swaminathan warns us that the present consumption mode at this pace would mean that the consumption scraps of a few (minority) will unjustly surpass the real need of the majority. "The garbage cans of the richer nations may contain more protein than the total quantity of protein consumed by the poor of the developing world" (*ibid.*). To overcome this disruptive and inhumane consumption style Swaminathan emphasises 'the need for spiritual globalisation' for our contemporary world. For this along with growing food, we would also have to 'grow our heart' (Giri 2017).

As the process of development spreads across the globe to the poorer nations and developing countries, it is imperative that these nations and their citizens require energy proportionate to their population. Hence we can 'not merely consider each part and aspect as an isolated problem' (Dil 2004:131), but view the problems of the world today as a whole. He propagated the concept of 'One Earth' that looks at the earth and its resources from the viewpoint of the world's poor, especially the poorest of the poorer countries to create a hunger-free world. To achieve this goal, Swaminathan, in the capacity of a Genetics and Agriculture Scientist, looked at the multiplicity of factors and the complexity of issues that produced poverty and hunger. To overcome this situation, he worked relentlessly and innovated various programmes and projects of MSSRF Foundation, and harnessed science and technology for the best use of resources both at the national and international levels to optimise for the well-being of society. According to Swaminathan, any neglect of science and technology would only result in the creation of an unjust society and will not contribute to the growth and well-being of the people of developing countries. He said, "We live in a world of sad scientific ironies and economic enigmas. The regions where man first settled down to cultivate plant and thereby initiated what we now call "agriculture" are also the regions which contain the greatest number of hungry people today. The regions which scientists designate as the centre of a crop plant are strangely enough, the areas where the same plant is today giving one of the poorest yields. The Jeypore tract of Orissa, which is believed to be an ancient centre of origin of rice, is a good example. The regions where technical skills were of high order in ancient days are today characterised by relatively poor quality of output and workmanship" (*ibid.*).

## Biohappiness and Harmonious Nature

Stemming from his ideas of harmony with nature and one earth is the notion

of biohappiness. The notion of biohappiness recognises the fundamental truth that reality is both one and many. Behind this multifaceted reality there is an underlying unity. In the web of life, the quotient and notion of happiness in life is a co/dependent category. All things in the universe/pluriverse, be it animate or inanimate, are inter-connected, inter-related and inter-dependent. It is founded upon a simple principle that one's happiness cannot be isolated from that of the rest. The happiness (the well-being) of the one part of the world is not only dependent on the well-being of the whole, but also on the other parts of the world. As Swaminathan warns, "climate change leading to the melting of ice will not only cause floods in the plains but also a rise in sea level over a period of time" (*ibid.*:114). Hence, he strongly held that 'harmony with nature should become a non-negotiable ethic,' (*ibid.*:116) because he argued that 'the rise and fall of great civilisations in the past have been related to the use and abuse of land, water and other natural resources' (*ibid.*). However, he is optimistic about the ordinary human's holistic view of the world. "Everyone in the village now understands the symbiotic relationship between mangroves and coastal communities, that the root exudates from the mangrove trees, enriches the water with nutrients and promotes sustainable fisheries" (Swaminathan 2011:xi).

Biohappiness is the outcome of sustainable and equitable use of biodiversity leading to the creation of more jobs and income. This view is built on four-fold principles: 1). Sustainable development is inseparably linked to the principles of ecology, social and gender equity, employment generation and economic advance. 2). The use of biodiversity should be seen producing sustainable livelihood security by the local people who would voluntarily and happily develop an economic stake in conservation. 3). There is an 'integral link between food security and environmental security. Working on both security in a spirit of engagement and transcendence bring happiness to our lives' (Giri 2017). 4). Growth and progress should be made reliable and dependable, and maintained at an even and steady pace.

Biohappiness, hailing from sustainable use of bio-resources, is a wake-up call for universal happiness. Unless this wake-up call resonates with all and is understood, accepted and acted upon, we are moving towards an era and a tsunami of bio-sadness. The rich areas of biodiversity in the globe are also inhabited by the poor people. The poverty of the people is a stark contrast to the prosperity of nature in a given place (especially in the hills and forests). There is a paradox: the nature is so bountiful but the people are so poor. The challenge is how to convert the wealth of the bio-resources of the area (the habitat) into the wealth of the local people so that their capabilities can be enhanced, to conceptualise development as proposed by Amartya Sen. In this regard M.S. Swaminathan and his foundation have taken very concrete steps to increase the bio-happiness of the village folk across India. For instance, in Kolli hills, according to 2013 report, they have brought about the

cultivation of nutrition rich millet, which has high vitamins, minerals and folic acids essential for the growth of young children under the age of 3, in 30 of 250 villages in the hills. He holds that 'by integrating modern science and technology with traditional wisdom we can cultivate a wide range of crops, the orphan crops or under-utilised crops, we can bring about ecological conservation... Such measures will also help the inhabitants of the area who have grown them, conserved them for centuries and prevented their extinction, and will make the biodiversity hot spots into happy spots' (Biodiversity Video 2011). Swaminathan also laid down a road map to achieve bio-happiness. In one of the interviews he proposes that three aspects of biodiversity, viz. conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing, have to be realised by three methods, namely, education, social mobilisation and regulation (*ibid.*). The education of the people concerns the whole purpose of biodiversity and makes people realise that it is in the interest of one's own, one has to protect and promote diversity in nature, as variety is the spice of life and it cannot be destroyed. Secondly, social mobilisation is required to make people realise that if they, forced out of poverty, take too much from the earth, it would endanger their future generation; finally, biodiversity has to be safeguarded and nurtured by state regulation. All three are necessary to ensure that biodiversity is conserved. For biohappiness what is necessary is not huge quantity of food but the availability of nutritious food locally. "That is where agricultural biodiversity can and has to play a very crucial role, if you want to solve the problem of malnutrition, which is one of the plagues of this century. If we do not make better use of a greater number of species and varieties that have better nutritional properties, and if we are not going to look at how they can improve people's lives, very serious problems await us in the future" (Rajyasabha TV 2015), warns Swaminathan.

## Biohappiness, Women and Eradication of Poverty

According to Swaminathan, biohappiness, which is dependent on the promotion of biodiversity, cannot be achieved without the promotion of gender equality, reduction of poverty and the creation of livelihood opportunities. Crucial to the project of conserving biodiversity and realising bio-happiness is the role of women. "Women in particular tend to conserve and improve plants of value in strengthening household nutrition and health security. It is, therefore, imperative to give explicit recognition to the role of women in genetic resource conservation and enhancement" (Swaminathan 2011: xiii). Since women are key players in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources, 'mainstreaming the gender dimension in all conservation and food security programmes is a must' (*ibid.*:11). As managers of the households, women possess natural skills in conservation ethics. Should they be supported with required infrastructures, it

would go a long way in conserving biodiversity. Further, as Swaminathan observes, agro-biodiversity is the result of cultural diversity, one significant aspect of which is culinary diversity. Since it is no secret that women are the main architects of culinary varieties, their lead role in this regard too needs to be recognised. Hence, Swaminathan proposes that necessary steps 'be taken to recognise and preserve cultural diversity and blend traditional wisdom with modern science' (*ibid.*). It is to be noted that the MSSRF Foundation had conducted a series of research works to focus on rural women's contributions towards biodiversity conservation which resulted in a book entitled *Gender Issues in Biodiversity Management* in 1997, the first publication of its kind globally. Through the advocacy for a legislation on women's Intellectual Property Rights regarding biodiversity, Swaminathan and his MSSRF Foundation have been relentlessly working for the recognition of women as traditional knowledge holders. To further the cause in this direction, MSSRF with help of government agencies has set up India's first and only Women's Biotechnology Park at Siruseri village near Chennai to assist women professionals to take to a career in biotechnology.

Further biodiversity cannot be conserved and enhanced without tackling the question of poverty. Poverty alleviation can effectively take place only when 'we can convert biodiversity into jobs and income on a sustainable basis' (*ibid.*:xiii). In this context, Swaminathan proposes the creation of bio-villages and bio-valleys. "In bio-villages, the conservation and enhancement of natural resources like land, water and biodiversity become primary tasks" (*ibid.*), while at the same time they would enhance the 'productivity and profitability of small farms and create new livelihood opportunities in the non-farm section' (*ibid.*:xiv). According to him, 'bio-valley is to biotechnology what the Silicon Valley is to information technology' (*ibid.*:7). Bio-valley is a biodiversity habitat site wherein the local communities bring together biodiversity, biotechnology and business in a mutually-reinforcing manner. In such a purpose-driven ambiance, the local people aim not only to conserve rare plants and species but also convert the food and medicine made out of them into 'value-added products based on assured and remunerative market linkages' (*ibid.*:xiv). This would lead to the formation of biohappiness society. In this regard, Swaminathan also advocates launching of biodiversity literacy movement so that right from childhood 'everyone is aware of the importance of diversity for the maintenance of food, water, health and livelihood security as well as a climate-resilient food production system' (*ibid.*:xiv).

## Biohappiness and Public Policy

If biohappiness is universal in character, it can be achieved only through a process of collaboration and partnership. M.S. Swaminathan intoned the need



for collaboration in one of his interviews “without (such) hands of collaboration between scientists, politicians, villagers, government officials and the banks, Green Revolution would not have been possible” (Giri 2017). It is in this regard Swaminathan calls for bio-partnerships which should guide public policies relating to biodiversity and biotechnology. M.S. Swaminathan hopes that through public cooperation ‘biodiversity hotspots’ can be turned into ‘biodiversity happy spots’, ‘where the sustainable use of biodiversity helps to generate new jobs and incomes’ (Swaminathan 2011:10). National biodiversity conservation strategy should integrate community *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation methods. *In situ* conservation starts from the field, while *ex situ* conservation methods include sacred groves, heritage trees as well as botanical and zoological gardens. Swaminathan strongly advocates that government policies should be such that biodiversity conservation and sustainable management should become the national ethics (*ibid.*:11). Public policies and legislations should be introduced to involve government agencies and various local self-government authorities like village *panchayats* in imparting biodiversity literacy and in creating necessary infrastructure like Seed Banks, Grain Banks and Gene Banks (especially for climate-resilient crops) at the local level. Through special training programmes the local communities should be made aware of the relationship between biodiversity and human health and farm animal survival. They also need to be educated about ‘the provisions of the biodiversity and protection of plant varieties and Farmer’s Rights Act, particularly with those relating to prior informed consent, access and benefit sharing as well as the gene and biodiversity funds’ (*ibid.*).

To bring about transformation in the lives of common people, there is a need for synergy between technology and public policy. ‘Public policies should promote the diversification of food habits resulting in the revitalisation of former food traditions which involved the use of wide range of food plants’ (*ibid.*:8). Public policies should be such that conservation, cultivation, consumption and commerce should be carried out in an integrated manner. When public policies ensure local-level food, water and health systems’ accessibility to everyone, biodiversity conservation would automatically become everybody’s business. The government should also recognise and reward primary conservers of biodiversity through initiatives like the Genome Savior award.

## Bio-happiness, Science and Well-being

M.S. Swaminathan, a scientist by training and instinct naturally places science and technology at the epicentre of promoting biohappiness. “It became his (Swaminathan’s) dream to use science and technology to make his people self-sufficient in food as the first step towards a life of dignity”, writes Dill (2004:41).

His related idea of evergreen revolution, mentioned earlier, relies on small scale farmers to combine 'their traditional approaches with breakthroughs in modern science and technology' (*ibid.*:53). He subscribes to mainstreaming environmental considerations in technological development and dissemination. His idea of ecotechnology is 'the blending of the ecological prudence and technologies of the past with the best in frontier technologies of the present, particularly biotechnology, information and digital technology, space technology, nuclear technology, and management technology' (*ibid.*). Using biotechnology, Swaminathan's MSSRF has done many marvels in the agriculture sector. For instance, by transferring salinity-tolerant genes from mangroves to rice, MSSRF has produced salinity-resistant rice. Similarly, MSSRF has developed reproducible *in vitro* propagation protocols for 80 rare RET (rare, endangered and threatened) plants and species. Further, MSSRF has developed different types of biological software, including Trichoderma cards and bio-fertilisers to increase the productivity of poor farmers and fishermen.

According to Swaminathan, science shows the way for a better future. You can either use or abuse science. In one of his interviews, his message to the younger generation was: "Make friendship with science. To do so you need not be a scientist. Science enlightens you. It frees you from superstition. The future belongs to science. Modern information technology is a transformational technology. They not only transform the way in which you communicate but they also transform the way in which you live and think. During my time we were struggling to get opportunities. Now opportunities are awaiting young people thanks to the proliferation of information technology" (Rajyasabha TV 2015). However, he is critical of mindless growth in science and technology. "Emerging technologies tend to promote jobless economic growth. In population-rich but land-and-water-hungry countries, there is a need for job-led economic growth" (Swaminathan 2011:114). Jobless growth is joyless growth in population-rich countries like India. Since livelihood opportunities in developing countries depend on the use of natural resources like land, water, forest and biodiversity, new technologies in these countries should be developed to ensure livelihood security and enhance biodiversity. The latter can be achieved by introducing technological innovations in farming and fishing. A science-based, people-centred and process-oriented approach is required both to conserve already existing biodiversity regions and to restore the lost mangrove wetlands. In this regard, Swaminathan talks about sustainability science which is both multidisciplinary and multidimensional. He further writes, 'sustainability science involves both anticipatory research, as for example in the case of meeting the challenges of climate change, as well as participatory research and knowledge management with rural and tribal communities in order to ensure that the recommended practices are socially compatible and economically feasible' (*ibid.*:116).

By delivering the right information to the right person at the right time, cell phones and the internet could launch an ‘evergreen revolution,’ one that can feed the world’s population in perpetuity without harming the environment. To actualise this grand vision, one of the concrete steps taken by Swaminathan and MSSRF is the founding of Village Resource Centers (VRCs) and Village Knowledge Centers (VKCs) in different parts of India. The goal of VRCs and VKCs is to ‘leverage best-fit ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) and function as a conduit for information, knowledge, and skill transfer to rural communities’ (M.S. Swaminathan Foundation 2016). They endeavour ‘to bridge the knowledge, gender, and digital divides and empower the rural community by fostering inclusive development and participatory communication through land-lab, lab-lab and land-land approaches’ (M.S. Swaminathan Foundation 2016). The target group of VRCs and VKCs are the households of the socially and marginally marginalised rural communities which are provided with equitable access to information and knowledge, and helped to make informed decision and improve their livelihoods through the effective use of ICT. The VRC-VKCs enshrine the 5 Cs of a thriving knowledge ecosystem outlined by M.S. Swaminathan in July 2004 (M.S. Swaminathan Foundation 2016): Connectivity (reliable and affordable), Content (dynamic and relevant), Capacity Building of grassroots torchbearers, Convergence of knowledge stakeholders from public and private sectors, and civil society, and Care (community-centric) and management of knowledge centres.

## **Biohappiness, Equity, and Transformative Inclusiveness**

Principles of ethics and equity in benefit sharing are a pathway to an era of biohappiness. Pursuing bio happiness demands that we end ‘the prevailing irony where the primary conservers remain poor, while those using their knowledge become rich, and the paradoxical situation in which ‘grain mountains and hungry millions continue to coexist’ (Swaminathan 2011:99). His idea of equity includes both intra-generational equity and inter-generational equity, i.e., safeguarding the interests of the future generations. For instance, M.S. Swaminathan is quite concerned about overexploitation and pollution of the aquifer which ‘will deny opportunities for groundwater availability to the generations yet to be born. Similarly, the melting of ice and glaciers resulting in water shortage in cold desert areas like Ladakh will force the future generations to migrate from the area’ (*ibid*:114).

Another important dimension of bio-happiness is the principle of inclusiveness. Swaminathan’s ideal of hunger free world, in order to be materialised, has to take everyone along, especially the poor, the underprivileged, the women and the children. In this context, Swaminathan observes that ‘in spite of numerous

measures and social safety net programmes, the number of undernourished persons has increased from about 210 million in 1990-92 to 252 million in 2004-06. About half of the world's undernourished children are in India. Also, there has been a general decline in per capita calorie consumption in recent decades' (*ibid.*:99). To overcome this grim situation, he suggests that it is not enough that populous countries like India have in place 'food security legislation' that seeks to ensure food security for all. But in line with its international partners, India's view has to broaden the notion and involve 'physical, economic and social access to a balanced diet, safe drinking water, environmental hygiene and primary health care' (*ibid.*:101), just as it cannot ignore 'availability of food in the market, the ability to buy the needed food and the capability to absorb and utilise the food in the body' (*ibid.*). Thus 'food and non-food factors (i.e., drinking water, environmental hygiene and primary health care) are involved in food security' (*ibid.*). Towards this end, he offers suggestions such as common and differentiated entitlements, and zero-hunger programme. The common entitlement of food security states that an universal PDS (Public Distribution System), clean drinking water, sanitation, hygienic toilets, and primary health care should be made available to every citizen of the country, while the differentiated entitlements are to be restricted to those who are economically or physically handicapped to provide them with pulses at affordable prices so as to overcome 'hidden hunger caused by micro-nutrient deficiencies like iron, iodine, zinc, vitamin A and vitamin B<sub>12</sub>' (*ibid.*:102). The purpose of food security should not be merely to provide calories required for existence, but also an opportunity for a healthy and a productive life. In this connection, he draws our attention to Brazil's model of 'zero-hunger,' which takes a holistic view of food security to include measures to enhance the productivity of small holdings as well as the consumption capacity of the poor (*ibid.*), which will happen in India only when we can upscale the purchasing power of the poor rural farmers.

## Conclusion

To encapsulate, Swaminathan's advocacy of contemporary ideas such as bio-happiness, biodiversity, hunger free world and evergreen revolution, and his implementation of various schemes and projects to achieve his goals are a singular contribution to India in particular and to other developing countries of the world. The path that he relentlessly pursued in this regard was *antyoadya*, a bottom up approach that sought to empower the poor rural famers, the fisher folks, the women and the tribal people. His strong faith in *antyoadya* propelled him to seek partnership between various stakeholders, the institutions and the community, the scientist and the disadvantaged groups, the policy makers and the policy

beneficiaries. He subscribed to a view that ‘only *antyoadya* approach to bridging the digital, genetic, technological, nutritional, gender, and other divides will be effective in solving the tremendous problems of the modern world’ (Iyer 2002:117). Remembering the Roman Philosopher Seneca’s words ‘a hungry person listens neither to reason, nor to religion, nor is bent by any prayer’ (*ibid.*), Swaminathan, rightly envisaged that hunger-free world is integral to a peaceful and harmonious world. All his projects of development and transformation moved consistently in this direction, pursuance of which can only be described as urgent, non-negotiable and irreversible, especially in our era of globalisation wherein 795 million people (one out of nine people on earth) do not have enough food to lead a healthy and active life (World Food Programme 2017).

## Endnote

1. Many criticisms, perhaps uninformed ones, have been wielded against Swaminathan about his contribution to Green-revolution. Responding to his critics, once he said: ‘Green-revolution became a greed revolution. That is why in my science congress address at Varanasi in 1968, I warned against excessive use of pesticide, excessive use of ground water which resulted in salinisation of soil. What I wanted to promote was evergreen revolution, which called for integrated pest management, integrated nutrient supply and use of anything in farming sector in moderation.’ (Rajyasabha TV ‘Eureka With Swaminathan,’ You Tube video. 28:35. Posted (Feb 2015). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M7QqZcY\\_Z4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M7QqZcY_Z4)).

## References

- Biodiversity Video. 2011. “In search of Biohappiness - Swaminathan book launch at Biodiversity International.” You Tube video. 6:38. Posted on May 25, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVBdIJBmM8>.
- Dil, Anwar (ed.). 2004. *Toward a Hunger-free World: Life and Work of M.S. Swaminathan*. Chennai: East West Books (Madras) PVT. Ltd.
- Giri, Ananta Kumar. 2017. “Evergreen Revolution and a New Ecology of Hope.” Manuscript.
- Iyer, R.D. 2002. *Scientist and Humanist: M.S. Swaminathan*. Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- MS Swaminathan Foundation. 2017. “Hub-Spokes Model for VRC-VKC.” [mssrf.org](http://mssrf.org/?q=content/hub-spokes-model-vrc-vkc). <http://mssrf.org/?q=content/hub-spokes-model-vrc-vkc> (accessed on 20 Jan 2017)
- Rajyasaba TV. 2015. “Eureka With Swaminathan.” You Tube video. 28:35. Posted [Feb1,2015]. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M7QqZcY\\_Z4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M7QqZcY_Z4)

- 
- Swaminathan, M.S. 2011. *In Search of Biohappiness: Biodiversity and Food, Health and Livelihood Security*. Singapore: World Scientific.
- World Food Programme. 2017. "Hunger Statistics." wfporg. <https://www.wfp.org/hunger/stats>. Accessed on 21 Jan 2017.





## CHAPTER 20

# Self-Knowledge—Balancing Subjectivity and Objectivity—as the Key to Social Harmony

*Felix Padel*

In their book *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World*, Prince Charles, Tony Juniper and Ian Skelly start with a demand for a revolution in how we humans think about ourselves and our relationship with Nature:

This is a call to revolution. The Earth is under threat. It cannot cope with all that we demand of it. It is losing its balance and we humans are causing this to happen.... The many environmental and social problems that now loom large on our horizon cannot be solved by carrying on the very approach that has caused them....

The Earth's alarm bells are now ringing loudly and so we cannot go on prevaricating by finding one sceptical reason after another for avoiding the need for the human race to act in a more environmentally benign way—which really means only one thing: putting nature back into the heart of our considerations once more. But that is only the start of it. We must go much further. 'Right action' cannot happen without 'right thinking' and in that simple truth lies the deeper purpose of this book (Wales, Juniper and Skelly 2010:3).

...lies the key to transforming human life on earth! Of course, Prince Charles' call for a sustainability revolution is not unique, and has been

little heeded in mainstream circles, where it is cynically and politely mocked, as usual. But the simple truth is that what we do to nature, we also do to each other: forms of domination, exploitation, rape and murder that are as evident in our wars and the norms of our news media as they are in the ways we continue to plunder our planet, relentlessly and blindly destroying the ecosystems that nourish and sustain us.

So my own starting point for this essay has to be my recent witnessing of a high-level government meeting, where a very restrained critique by an environmental team of a very ambitious dam that would destroy countless life forms was attacked by a team of national consultants as ‘too subjective’ and ‘unduly negative’. To be more ‘objective’ they said that the environmental appraisal should start from the urgent need for this dam and the benefits it would bring, instead of harping on the problems it would cause.

I was immediately aware that I was witnessing an inversion of what seemed the proper usage of these two terms, ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’. I would like to make this inversion the springboard for an exploration of methodology – not just for the social sciences, but as a foundation for what we call knowledge. At school, children’s heads are filled with ‘facts’ about the world, on which they are tested in exams; and as we rise higher in the education system, we are increasingly taught ‘not to bring in our feelings’, but to be objective, as if the world out there was completely impervious to our interaction with it. There is a deep confusion between information and knowledge here. The inert nature of information being transposed to the active, dynamic processes that go to create knowledge, through self as actor, interacting with one’s own essential being as well as our surroundings. Unless one knows oneself, and one’s relationship with one’s own feelings, as well as one’s connectivity with external objects—with the subject of one’s study, be they other people or any other phenomena—can we actually be objective at all?

Do most schools teach self-knowledge in any form? Do they even consider self-knowledge to be a valid form of learning, or foundation for other branches of knowledge? The essence of self-knowledge is simply being aware of one’s emotions, feelings, actions, thoughts and ideas, and one’s specific location in space and time, which is vital if we are to relate with the natural and social world with full consciousness.

This is the essence of what the Buddha taught, along with other spiritual teachers, from *rishis* and prophets through Jesus and Mohammed, to Aurobindo’s concept of ‘integral education’ (Akhter 2014) and Krishnamurti’s emphasis on the key importance of self-knowledge and consciousness in education and every walk of life (Krishnamurti 1949; 1953).

According to Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, education does not end at the physical and mental training, or on literacy or the gathering of information, it should lead to the highest end, namely: integral development of the individual and society (Akhter 2014:94).

The basic human psychology that Buddha and other spiritually enlightened people have taught boils down to how to recognise the onset of hurt, anger, envy or greed in oneself, and how to free oneself from such negative emotions, and transform them through compassion. In Krishnamurti's words, questioning the foundations of much mainstream education, Self-knowledge is a process.

So, to understand the innumerable problems that each one of us has, is it not essential that there be self-knowledge? And that is one of the most difficult things, self-awareness... but to know oneself does not imply a withdrawal from relationship. And it would be a mistake, surely, to think that one can know oneself significantly, completely, fully, through isolation, through exclusion, or by going to some psychologist, or to some priest; or that one can learn self-knowledge through a book. Self-knowledge is obviously a process, not an end in itself; and to know oneself, one must be aware of oneself in action, which is relationship. You discover yourself, not in isolation, not in withdrawal, but in relationship... but to discover how you react, what your responses are, requires an extraordinary alertness of mind, a keenness of perception (under January 23).

Without self-knowledge, experience breeds illusion... Self-knowledge is the discovery from moment to moment of the ways of the self, its intentions and pursuit, its thoughts and appetites (under January 25).

There is no method for self-knowledge. Seeking a method invariably implies the desire to attain some result... Authority prevents the understanding of oneself, does it not? ... Authority in its very nature prevents the full awareness of oneself... There can be creativeness only through self-knowledge (under January 26).

Right thinking comes with self-knowledge. Without understanding yourself, you have no basis for thought; without self-knowledge what you think is not true.

You and the world are not two different entities with separate problems; you and the world are one... You are the centre of the whole, and without understanding yourself you cannot understand reality.

We have an intellectual knowledge of this unity but we keep knowledge and feeling in different compartments and hence we never experience the extraordinary unity of man (under January 30) (Krishnamurti 1995).

This has huge implications for how we use thought and rationality. What is our starting point? Is it ‘the ground of basic goodness?’ (Trungpa 1984; 2002) Or is it self-interest in some form, often bound up with unconsciously repressed resentment? What are the basic assumptions we start from? In Goethe’s words, ‘when making observations it is best to be fully conscious of objects, and when thinking to be fully aware of ourselves’ (Naydler 1996:75). In other words, we need to be honest and open about how one knows what one knows.

Could it be that to achieve a proper, balanced objectivity or neutrality, we need to start by training our subjectivity? Our self-knowledge, recognising one’s feelings, biases, loves and hates, what makes one angry, what drives one’s interest and motivates us towards any subject? Goethe again—‘The manifestation of a phenomenon is not independent of the observer’ (*ibid.*:72). The object of our study—however expert and ‘professional’ we are, and whether we are an academic or journalist or a judge sitting in judgement on a terrible crime in court—can only be looked at objectively if one has trained one’s awareness or subjectivity to understand how any manifestation, and the power structure that connects us, affects one’s emotions.

In anthropology and the social sciences generally, I have become increasingly aware how much pseudo-objectivity there is, and how, in analysis of tribal society in particular, this adds insult to a long and sordid history of ‘subjection’ – what B.D. Sharma called an *Unbroken History of Broken Promises* (Sharma 2010; Dungdung 2013; Dungdung and Padel 2015).

An antidote to the standard ‘objectification’ of tribal society is Madhu Ramnath’s new book *Woodsmoke and Leafcups: Autobiographical Footnotes to the Anthropology of the Durwa* (Ramnath 2015), for its careful balance between objectivity – very precise description of material culture, plant knowledge and use, death rituals and role of spirit possession, rivalries within the village (among a multitude of subjects), without any judgement and from authentic identification with the people on basis of having learnt from and identified with them over many years—with subjectivity; in other words, precise, neutral observation from a basis of fellow-feeling with the people described—subjective involvement.

By contrast, the pseudo-objectivity in most anthropology of Indian tribal societies, from its colonial roots till the present, manifests in an ‘objectification’ of the culture—seeing it as an object separate from the observer, full of ‘primitive

survivals’—a methodology inseparable from the ‘subjection’ involved in the ‘pacification’ that incorporated tribal societies into British India, which consisted of often violent conquest aimed at making highly autonomous communities ‘subject’ to a central government, whose junior officials extorted bribes and humiliated villagers on a regular basis right from the start as part of the power structure. The conventional approach analyses tribal cultures as if they were discrete entities, without analysing the power structures maintained over them by outsiders, and without clarity about how knowledge is sourced (see Padel and Das 2010:242–287).

This is the essence of the seminal critique of anthropology made by Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in her influential book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Smith 2012), which argues that decolonising research methods is vital to reclaim control over indigenous ways of knowing and being, which in turn is vital if we are to invert the power structure and start to actually learn from indigenous cultures and their models of symbiosis with nature that are sustainable in the long-term, instead of perpetuating these people’s subjugation and dispossession.

Similarly in History: In India, Hindutva revisionist history such as a book arguing that the Taj Mahal was originally a Hindu temple by P.N. Oak, who set up an Institute for Rewriting Indian (and/or World) History (Oak 1989, 2003), shows a highly subjective and tendentious selection of sources akin to ‘holocaust denial’ (Lipstadt 1993). These may seem the ‘lunatic fringes’ of history. But mainstream history, as many say, is ‘written by the victors’. American history still tends to see the indigenous inhabitants of America, who lived throughout the continent before it was ‘discovered’ by Europeans, as uncivilised savages who had to be tamed, and their lands put to rational productive use, instead of the genocide after genocide of many tribes that it actually was (e.g., Brown 1975), with cultural genocide of survivors, who were forced onto reservations in a policy of ‘assimilation’, using schools that stole children from their families (e.g. Padel 2010:239–241), to ‘kill the Indian, save the man’ – the ‘stolen generations’ recently critiqued in Australia and Canada as well as the USA. Similarly with British history – mainstream history books emphasize the Industrial Revolution as the prime source for Britain’s rise, with little emphasis on the exceedingly exploitative slave and opium trades that brought wealth and made Britain ascendant as a world power from the 1720s to the 1860s; and little also on the atrocious conditions enforced in mines and iron/steel/copper factories in remote areas of 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century Britain, with severe repression against all attempted assertions of basic human and working rights by the labouring classes.

Similarly, above all, in Economics – The concept of economic growth is one example – a concept built on quicksand when one understands the implicit divorce from ecological realities: the earth's natural resources are limited, we have reached or are about to reach peak oil, gas, coal, everything, and the danger of runaway global heating from passing a tipping point of no return threatens our collective future, as well as life on earth (e.g., Heinberg 2007, 2011; Ahmed 2010). This links to climate change denial (e.g., Conway and Oreskes 2010; Bidwai 2012), but also to the ignoring by mainstream economics of the centrality of unrepayable debt to the economic system, as well as of the arms industry and trade, which is central to the world economy, and almost every national economy, and fuels wars as well as some of the largest-scale corruption (Rowbotham 1998; Klein 2007; Korten 2009; Roubini and Mihm 2010; Feinstein 2011; Shaxson 2012; Padel *et al.* 2013).

Climate change denial brings in the pseudo-objectivity embedded in large bodies of what passes as 'science', which follows from the corporate funding of much scientific research. As one out of countless examples, the current practice is to be sceptical about the link between aluminium and Alzheimer's disease, even though this link is well established through understanding that residues of aluminium ingested from water supplies, cooking pots and packaging that is supposed to keep foods fresh and 'safe' build up in bone and brain tissue and cannot be excreted (Exley 2001; Padel and Das 2010:325-328); while the aluminium industry's funding for Alzheimer patients and 'research' ensures a stifling of information about this link.

### **Similarly with 'Big Pharma' on Countless Issues**

Similarly also with journalism: It has often been noted that the media pretends bogus 'neutrality' during climate change debates (e.g. Conway and Oreskes 2010), as also during wartime, when a country's media tends to demonise and dehumanise the enemy, while masking atrocities by one's own side. Edward Herman, Noam Chomsky and John Pilger are among many writers who have pointed out that in terms of funding terrorist attacks and regime changes in other countries, by far the worst offending country is the USA, since the Vietnam War and before, up to and including the 'War on Terror' (Herman 1982; Herman and Chomsky 1988; Pilger 1998, 2011; Parrish 2005).

Similarly, at an apex level of public life, with the functioning of law, and a number of key judicial commissions and their reports: This applies to the Warren Commission Report, which promoted the 'lone gunman' theory of President Kennedy's assassination through bizarre distortion of the evidence (Smith 2013), and to the 9/11 Commission, whose omissions and distortion of the evidence on what happened on September 11, 2001, when carefully examined, turn out to be extreme (Griffin 2005; 2008).

The fault extends to the functioning of our democracies. In today's world, it is increasingly apparent that the democratic functioning of what we call our democratic systems is vitiated by corporate funding of political parties, ensuring 'payback' by elected politicians, and biased decision-making behind closed doors.

Even the discovery of the Unconscious by Freud and Jung has been largely forgotten by mainstream psychiatry. Its main use was apparently hijacked by PR companies and intelligence agencies, via Freud's nephew Edward Bernays, 'father of the PR industry', who developed techniques in collaboration with the CIA of manipulating people's fears and desires in corporate advertising, and propaganda for political and military campaigns, and helped create the unholy fusion between capitalism and 'democracy', that we still tend to take for granted, through the New York Fair in 1939, with its 'democro-city' exhibition (Curtis 2002).

In the model of *Demokratia* developed in ancient Athens—for all its faults, such as the exclusion of women and slaves—it was every citizen's duty to serve as a politician and judge; professional judges and funded political parties were not allowed (Forrest 1966). So why aren't our students of political science, economics and sociology taught to examine the faults in the modern systems we have inherited, and encouraged to formulate and experiment with better systems of power and exchange, to try and develop collectively systems that can short-circuit exploitation and corruption, to prevent power corrupting and reverse our present descent into increasingly destructive wars?

Above all, where have our traditions of self-knowledge disappeared to, and how can they be revived? Ancient Greeks inscribed 'know thyself' at the entrance of their holiest shrine at Delphi. Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* (1982) represent an extremely ancient Indian tradition of self-knowledge based on yoga, *pranayama* and confronting one's illusions through meditation.

Since both Eastern and Western traditions valued self-knowledge in ancient times, what have we done with these traditions? How aware are most people of what really motivates them? When a 'revenge motive' goes septic among abused children, how often does it resurface as an unconscious justification for terrible acts later in life? What do we do with our anger, and how can we learn to channel and transmute it into positive energy? The Buddha evolved a psychology based on facing one's illusions and getting free from harmful emotions. Can we humans wake up, collectively, and develop beyond the addiction to war and competitiveness that our society is still immersed in?

Education into non-violent modes of thinking is essential, as Ananta Giri's essay emphasizes at the start of this book, and as Aurobindo, Krishnamurti, Rudolf Steiner and others have shown us what this means is introducing children to non-



hierarchical, non-dominating, non-exploitative ways of understanding and relating to the world. We need to understand that the Earth is our mother, and to respect Her, along with our fellow species and fellow humans, and to contain or balance our desires rather than indulging our acquisitive tendencies, knowing that money really cannot buy happiness (Waldinger 2015); that being and sharing bring far greater pleasure than having and winning (Fromm 1976). Where mainstream culture emphasizes a need for competition at every level of social life—economics, politics, law, sport, education—indigenous societies have tended to emphasise sharing, consensus and reconciliation – for example, in labour-exchange, decision-making through consensus rather than competitive voting, legal process aimed at reconciling contestants rather than making one party right and the other wrong, dancing as a key sport rather than winning-losing games, and a complete absence of grading in how knowledge is passed on (Padel 2015).

How could so many lies and so much propaganda have found their way into our history and anthropology books, legal judgements and media, producing so many wars, if our leaders and leading thinkers were as objective as they claimed to be? Being objective does not mean cutting off from one's feelings and disembodiment oneself. On the contrary, it should mean embracing one's deepest self whole-heartedly, fully aware of one's emotions, thoughts, past actions and feelings—verbal and non-verbal—and one's guiding values and beliefs; each of these intermingling and affecting the others; extending one's awareness from one's own self to the self of another and others, and to the natural and social world that exists outside oneself. It is only when we accept and are mindful of ourselves that we have the genuine capacity to know another person and external phenomenon in their fullness and independent existence, rather than as we would like them to be, or believe/imagine them to be.

To see reality as it is, with all its nuances and textures of coarse and soft, bitter or sweet, and the whole variety of touch and tastes which lie in between, without forcing them to be boxed into one end of the spectrum or the other – one can only attempt to do this if one is in basic harmony with one's own feelings, and feeling-responses to different sights, smells, sounds and tastes of different peoples, landscapes, cultures.... Training one's subjectivity involves sharpening one's senses to experience reality in its fullness, appreciating its multiple dimensions, and subsequently engaging with it critically and objectively. A trained subjectivity has learnt to be mindful of one's place in the universe as a whole, with respect for the different life forms which co-inhabit and share the common pool of resources that belongs to our universe; aware of one's humble location in the power structure of our life on earth, constantly engaged in attempting to free oneself from the distortion of our individual and collective illusions.

The concept of harmony demands that we continue to develop, beyond our present societies' addiction to conflict and war, beyond the forms of hierarchy and domination that still control us, freeing ourselves collectively from the pathology of our present industrialising mode of production and the ruthless competitiveness it has promoted. In terms of real development—learning to share the Earth's resources instead of wastefully destroying them in escalating resource wars, like spoilt brats—we have developed little in the last 2,000 years. Can we develop, collectively, to the stage that jailed Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan calls a democratic civilisation? (Öcalan 2007; Padel 2012). Can we develop individually to a stage of *Being Peace* (Nhat Hahn 1987), and free ourselves collectively from our present stage of 'war on terror', without any end in sight, to progress to a stage where we start to implement peace on earth, through dialogue and accepting our differences? Or shall we cynically scoff at such a possibility, and continue on our well-worn path towards self-destruction, perpetuating our inherited addictions and illusions?

## References

- Ahmed, Nafeez Mosaddeq. 2010. *A User's Guide to the Crisis of Civilisation and How to Save it*. London: Pluto.
- Akhter, Rukhsana. 2014. "Sri Aurobindo Ghosh: Pioneer of Integral Education." *International Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 3 (6), August:92-95.
- Angell, Marcia. 2004. *The Truth about the Drugs Companies: How they Deceive us and What to do about it*. USA: Random House.
- Bidwai, Praful. 2012. *The Politics of Climate Change and the Global Crisis*. Delhi: Orient Black Swan.
- Brown, Dee. 1975 [1970]. *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee: an Indian History of the American West*. New York: Pan.
- Conway, Erik and Naomi Oreskes. 2010. *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. USA: Bloomsbury.
- Curtis, Adam. 2002. *The Century of the Self*, 4 part documentary. London: Channel 4.
- Dungdung, Gladson. 2013. *Whose country is it anyway? Untold stories of the Indigenous Peoples of India*. Kolkata: Adivaani.
- Dungdung, Gladson and Felix Padel. 2015. *Mission Saranda: A War for Natural Resources in India*. Ranchi: Deshaj Prakashan.
- Exley, Christopher (ed.). 2001. *Aluminium and Alzheimer's Disease: The Science that Describes the Link*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Feinstein, Andrew 2011. *Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade*. London: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

- Forrest, W. George. 1966. *The Emergence of Greek Democracy: the character of Greek politics, 800–400 BC*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Fromm, Erich. 1976. *To Have or to Be?* London: Bloomsbury.
- Griffin, David Ray. 2005. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*. Northampton, Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press.
- . 2008. *The New Pearl Harbour Revisited: 9/11, the Cover-up, and the Exposé*. Northampton, Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press.
- Heinberg, Richard. 2007. *Peak Everything: Waking Up to the Century of Decline in Earth's Resources*. Canada: Claireview.
- . 2011. *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality*. Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Herman, Edward S. 1982. *The Real Terror Network: Terror in Fact and Propaganda*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press.
- Herman, Edward S. and Noam Chomsky. 1988. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. NY: Pantheon.
- Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capital*. New York: Metropolitan.
- Korten, David. 2009. *Agenda for a New Economy: From Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Krishnamurti, J. 1949. 'On Self Knowledge.' 3rd talk in Rajahmundry, at <http://www.jkrishnamurti.org/krishnamurti-teachings/view-text.php?tid=337&chid=4657>
- . 1953. *Education and the Significance of Life*. UK: Krishnamurti Foundation.
- . 1995. *The Book of Life: Daily Meditations*. Available online at <http://english.lanuevaeradeacuaro.com/data/documents/the-book-of-life.pdf>
- Lipstadt, Deborah. 1993. *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*. New York: Free Press.
- Naydler, Jeremy. 1996. *Goethe on Science*. Edinburgh: Floris books.
- Nhat Hahn, Thich. 1987. *Being Peace*. Berkeley: Parallax Press.
- Oak, Purushottam Nagesh. 1989. *Taj Mahal: The True Story*. Texas: A Ghosh, summary at [http://www.hindunet.org/hindu\\_history/modern/taj\\_oak.html](http://www.hindunet.org/hindu_history/modern/taj_oak.html).
- . 2003. *The Taj Mahal is a Temple Palace*. Delhi: Hindi Sahitya Sadan, available at [https://ia700407.us.archive.org/5/items/EnglishBooksOfP.n.Oak/TheTajMahalIsATemplePlace\\_text.pdf](https://ia700407.us.archive.org/5/items/EnglishBooksOfP.n.Oak/TheTajMahalIsATemplePlace_text.pdf)
- Öcalan, Abdullah. 2007. *Prison Writings, volumes I. The Roots of Civilisation* (translated by Klaus Hoppel). London, Pluto Press.
- Padel, Felix. 2010. *Sacrificing People: Invasions of a Tribal Landscape*. Delhi: Orient BlackSwan. 2nd edition (first edition 1995 as *The Sacrifice of Human Being: British Rule and the Konds of Orissa*).
- . 2012. "The Kurdish Quest of Countering Capitalism to build a Democratic Civilisation: Review of Abdullah Öcalan's Prison Writings." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 13 October, available at <http://peaceinkurdistancampaign.wordpress.com/>

resources/abdullah-ocalan/road-map/the-kurdish-quest-of-countering-capitalism-to-build-a-democratic-civilisation/

———. 2015. Foreword to Dungdung 2015.

Padel, Felix and Samarendra Das. 2010. *Out of This Earth: East India Adivasis and the Aluminium Cartel*. Delhi: Orient BlackSwan.

Padel, Felix, Ajay Dandekar and Jeemol Unni. 2013. *Ecology, Economy: Quest for a Socially Informed Connection*. Delhi: Orient BlackSwan.

Parrish, Geov. 2005. 'There is no War on Terror', Noam Chomsky interviewed by Geov Parrish." *Working For Change* 23 December, at <https://chomsky.info/20051223/>

Patanjali. 1982. *Effortless Being: The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Translated by Alistair Shearer, UK: Wildwood House.

Pilger, John. 1998. *Hidden Agendas*. London: Vintage.

———. 2011. 'Breaking the Silence: Truth and Lies in the War on Terror', *Youtube*, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGIUKLPMc3k>

Ramnath, Madhu. 2015. *Woodsmoke and Leafcups: Autobiographical footnotes to the anthropology of the Durwa*. Noida: Litmus, HarperCollins.

Roubini, Nouriel and Stephen Mihm 2010. *Crisis Economics: A Crash Course in the Future of Finance*. New York: Penguin.

Rowbotham, Michael. 1998. *Grip of Death: A Study of Modern Money, Debt Slavery and Destructive Economics*. Charlbury, UK: Jon Carpenter.

Shaxson, Nicholas. 2012. *Treasure Islands: Tax Havens and the Men who Stole the World*. London: Vintage.

Sharma, B.D. 2010. *Unbroken History of Broken Promises: Indian State and the Tribal People*. Delhi: Sahyog Pustak Kuteer.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed. 2nd edition (first edition 1999).

Smith, Matthew. 2013. *Who Killed Kennedy? The Definitive Account of Fifty Years of Conspiracy*. Edinburgh: Mainstream.

Trungpa, Chogyam. 1984. *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of a Warrior*. Boston, USA: Shambhala Publications.

———. 2002. 'Basic Goodness or Original Sin?' *Lion's Roar*, 1 November, at <http://www.lionsroar.com/basic-goodness-or-original-sin/>

Waldinger, Robert. 2015. "What makes the good life? Lesson's from the longest study on happiness?" *Ted Talks*, November, at file:///Users/felixpadel/Downloads/Robert%20Waldinger:%20What%20makes%20a%20good%20life%3F%20Lessons%20from%20the%20longest%20study%20on%20happiness%20%7C%20TED%20Talk%20%7C%20T.webarchive

Wales, HRH the Prince of, Tony Juniper and Ian Skelly. 2010. *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at the World*. London: Blue Door, HarperCollins.



## CHAPTER 21

# Social Harmony or Cooperation as the First Principle of a Happy Society

*W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz*

Perfection is expressed in harmony – in the beauty that can be found in nature, art, and human conduct. Today's world is a domain of turbulence and dissonance. There is still much to do on the road toward the moral perfection of humanity.

Given today's technological advancement and the mutual interdependence among states consequent to globalisation, the current disharmony in the world is a serious threat to the continued existence of all humankind.

—*Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*

Imagine a perfect world. It would be a world of harmony. Social harmony is neither an artificial unity provided by a world sovereign nor the dull equality of a classless society. It is not uniformity or sameness. It is rather social richness – the special composition of diversity and difference, in which we find mutual complementarity and moral virtue.

In this essay, I set out to prove that once we correctly identify human nature and organise our world according to the principle of cooperation, we can arrive at a world of social harmony. The current disharmony in the world, which can be

observed, especially in the field of politics and economics, is largely related to the erroneous modern Western philosophical assertions identifying the human being with an individual moved by desires and the will to power, and the phenomenon of life with an endless conflict. An additional influence is provided by the flawed postmodernist conceptions of culture and family. These errors have enormous implications with regard to how we portray the world in which we live. I want to show that cooperation is an integral part of human nature, and that the society organised according to the requirements of nature is a truly happy society. I support my argument by statements from my latest book, *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*.

## Social Harmony and Its Effects

Harmony is related to an agreement between things that are not necessary, the same or similar. It is vital to a good life. Just like in music, harmony brings different tones together to form a melody, social harmony brings members of society together and produces order and peace (Prasad 1999:89). Its effect is the development of fine things and fine manners. It is an aesthetic idea<sup>1</sup>. Our human environment, both natural and cultural, then becomes perfected, and thus beautiful.

To live in social harmony means to live in beauty and the latter can be expressed in the three main aspects of culture: material, social and spiritual. The beauty of the material culture is articulated, among others, in fine-looking design of utensils and other everyday items; the health and good look of our bodies; our cleanliness and tidiness; the way we dress – our fashion; cultivated landscape and splendid architecture; and our scientific and technological achievements; the beauty of social culture, in fine conduct and refined customs; joyful songs and dances; beautiful poetry, literature, music and fine arts; and our excellent social and political organisation; and then, the beauty of spiritual culture, in high philosophical and religious ideas; and in our self-knowledge and moral perfection, whose highest expressions are inner purity, love, and other most elevated virtues<sup>2</sup>.

At the level of human conduct, we find the beauty in politeness, benevolence and love, and these are conducive to happiness. Ultimately, the perfect world, the world of harmony, is the world of beauty and joy. We then live in happy societies.

## The Problem of the Current World's Disharmony

Harmony can be associated with peace, happiness, and physical, social and spiritual beauty. By contrast, disharmony includes something dreadful and ugly, and leads to conflict. It is the domain of dissonance, in which things do not fit together.



Usually, this is because one person wants to forcefully dominate the other and the latter opposes the former's domination. Thus, to say this simply, the world of disharmony is the world of struggle, dominance, and power – the one which we know so well from everyday news. Can there be another world?

To be sure, in the real world of today, we do not only find the struggle for dominance and power, and moral ugliness related to this, but also a lot of goodness and beauty in all its cultural aspects, and this can be proven by numerous examples. However, given today's technological advancement, especially in war machinery, as long as this world remains largely the domain of dissonance that is expressed in military build-ups, numerous wars and other conflicts, and the domain of turbulence that is related to frequent changes, revolutions and other unexpected political events, there is indeed a serious threat to the continued existence of all humankind. In the era of globalisation and mutual interdependence among states, what happens in one place of the world has an effect on other places, and a local armed conflict can easily turn into a global war. How can we then turn from the current disharmony to the world into a social harmony? How can we come to live in happy societies?

In order to solve a problem we always need to identify its source. There are some scholars, who often call themselves 'political realists', who say the world disharmony is unsolvable. They claim that social disharmony—particularly disharmony in international relations as the power struggle among states, and domestic disharmony, as the political and economic struggle among individuals and groups—has always existed. They describe all politics as a struggle for power (Morgenthau 1948:25). For them, wars may be indeed the ugly things, but they should occur again and again (Layne 1994). Their source is human nature. They believe human beings are egoistic creatures, embodiments of the will to power.<sup>3</sup> Their view, grounded in the political philosophy of modernity, has been very influential until now.

The image of human beings as individuals moved by their desires and the will to power can be found in Hobbes and Nietzsche, but also, in a more disguised form, in Locke and his liberal successors (Korab-Karpowicz 2012:211–222). This image has influenced the development of the social sciences and, in particular, the formation of the discipline of international relations.<sup>4</sup> The question of power, especially of its distribution and importance in maintaining the *status quo*, is central to today's postmodern thought.

Social theory is associated with practice. Theories do not only explain; they have also a function of praxis. They are a part of social practice, and thus, they shape our reality. The modern assumptions about human nature have led to the replacement of traditional, classical and Christian, ideals by today's materialistic

Western civilisation that rapidly develops into a global culture. They have moulded human beings into one type and have contributed to the standardisation and mechanisation of our lives. They are replaced by ideologies and our capacity of independent reflective thinking. They forced us into a spiritually impoverished existence in a world full of conflicts.

A flawed theory that only partially explains phenomena provides us with conclusions that lead us to a wrong social organisation and wrong behaviours. This imposes a moral obligation on every philosopher to correct whatever is wrong and always seek truth.

## Human Beings, Culture and Civilisation

The basic characteristic of human beings is that we create culture. Unlike other animals, we do not live in a natural environment, but in the artificial setting of a unique culture – culture, which consists of a particular system of education, morality, law, politics, economics, entertainment, philosophy, religion, science, and art. The ability to create culture, or our artificial environment, consisting of material, social and spiritual factors, is a characteristically human trait. Even if we find that some animals are characterised by a high level of organisation and develop some customs, they do not, like human beings, continuously and consciously transform their environment, and they do not engage in intellectual and moral reflection upon their lives. Let me now quote a passage from the *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*:

- 2.514 Only human beings are able to seek the truth, to see beauty and harmony in the world, to engage in moral reflection, and to reflect on their own lives.
- 2.521 Only in the human world does there exist a difference between good and evil, that is, the sphere of morality. Also, only in reference to the human being can we talk about moral degradation.<sup>5</sup>

Given the above, reducing human beings to one simple characteristic—egoism or a desire or will to power—as many modern philosophers do, it does not result in a correct representation of human nature, but merely simplifies it and degrades humans into the level of other animals. In the animal world, desires indeed play a fundamental role, and one can observe there the ruthless struggle for domination and leadership. By contrast, human beings create an artificial, cultural environment that significantly modifies their behaviour. They can be very gentle in relation to one another, but they can also behave more violently than savage animals. Individuals or groups can be guided by untrammelled selfishness (especially when encouraged to do this by social acceptance) to pursue their desires at the expense of others, and

to ruthlessly fight for power and domination but thanks to education, they can also improve morally and acquire such traits as honesty, diligence, peacefulness, kindness, and mercy. And in the end they can recognise themselves as spiritual beings.

- 2.43 An excellent, fully civilised society is a society of virtue. It consists of ennobled people, cooperating with each other and sharing a sense of community.

Civilisation can be defined as culture that reaches a higher level of material, social, and spiritual development.<sup>6</sup> Of the three cultural aspects: material, social and spiritual, the latter is most important. There cannot be a proper perfection of humankind, of which the sign is a fully developed civilisation, without peoples' moral perfection as manifested in their virtues and behaviour. We can find examples even from recent history of well-organised societies that were equipped with advanced technologies and developed superb arts and sciences, and yet engaged in extreme destruction and genocide, for they would fall to a low level of civilisation, bordering on barbarism when it came to adherence to ethical principles. For with respect equally to both the individual person and the whole of civilisation, we can speak of moral development and of moral degradation. Ultimately it is ethics that is the sign of a civilisation. It is the presence of ethics both in the public sphere and in private lives that makes us fully human and civilised beings.

Therefore, when we submit any civilisation to an assessment, or when we think about the development of our own country and make plans for its future, we should always consider all three of these cultural aspects (material, social, and spiritual) and not merely the level of economic development or technological advancement. The greatest achievement of humankind is not merely advanced technology or material wealth, but in fact complete civilisation – insofar as it includes ethical principles and elevates the whole society intellectually and morally. It is indeed civilisation, particularly in its moral aspect that provides us with our human dignity and gives us a unique place among all creatures.

## **On Human Nature**

Our essence is to think – we homo sapiens. Thinking constitutes our true nature. Because of our ability to speak, to discuss issues and to reflect on them, and to include in this reflection thinking about ethical issues, we are not only rational beings, but also moral ones. Moreover, because of our inherent ability to transcend our own desires and biological instincts and to shape our way of life, we are also free beings.

Freedom is not just an absence of restrictions or an ability to do what we like; it is rather the increasing control of human beings over their environmental constraints and over themselves – freedom is self-determination, and also the possibility of self-realisation.

Reason, morality, and freedom are our alpha and omega – they are the departure point of humanity, but also our great task to be completed: the point of destination. To develop them to a full degree and to recognise our spiritual nature is our human destiny.

The purpose of the evolution of life is its fullness and perfection. The evolution of life is a journey to ever greater freedom and moral perfection.

The humanity that reduces its essence to animal desires and the will to power, fabricating hostility and consuming material, social and spiritual resources for military build-up or for excessive consumption, and that is torn by frequent wars and other conflicts, will not fulfil its task any soon. Yet this, which seems to us so difficult and so far away—reaching the point of destination and realising our destiny—is actually so easy and so close. It is to discover and to properly identify our own human nature, and to implement it in social practice.

We are rational or intelligent beings who can think in a discursive manner, but who are also endowed with intuition that allows us to grasp higher truths; we are moral beings, capable of ethical reflection, of inventing principles governing our behaviour, and of morally perfecting ourselves; we are free beings, who can transcend their animal nature, control their desires and shape their lives. And furthermore, we are social beings who can live and develop only in a group, and do this on the basis of a fundamental principle of humanity, which is cooperation.

## **Cooperation: The First Principle of Humanity**

The philosophy of modernity is established on a myth, which is the social contract said to be made at no specific time or place, among abstract individuals moved by their desires, especially by ‘a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceases only in death’ (Hobbes 1973:XI 2). As viewed by Hobbes, human beings, subject to blind, mechanistic drives, are moved by desires and ruled by passions. It is by passions such as acquisitiveness, fear, and pride that they are driven to wage war against one another; it is also through passions (especially fear of violent death) and only partly through reason, that they at last want to achieve peace (Korab-Karpowicz 2012:168-169). Their desire for security in the face of growing conflict among them leads them to conclude the social contract and to agree to live in a society under the rule of a sovereign.

However, in contrast to the abstract individuals who enter into the social contract and thus establish a society, the real human being is always a member of a smaller or larger historical community (the most essential component of which is the family). The relationship to a particular community and cooperation within its framework is an inherent, natural context of each individual human life. Without belonging to a community, we could not develop our skills; we would quickly die; and, for that matter, we would not even be born. Hence, we cannot live without being part of a community. At most, we can change the country of our residence and replace one community with another.

- 2.53 Human beings are by nature social beings. They have a natural disposition to live in a society, cooperate with others, and reap the benefits of social life.
- 2.531 The individual as a stand-alone being is a fiction.

We act as a part of a group, but at the same time each of us is an individual being with his own needs and ambitions. In addition to the common group interest, there also exists the self-interest of each of us. These group and individual interests are powerful forces that can stimulate human activities and lead humanity to development. However, on the negative side, they may be related to egoism. Self-interest is a morally neutral notion and has to be distinguished from selfishness or egoism, which is a vice—‘Selfishness is not simply love of self but excessive love of self’ (Aristotle 1962:29). Selfishness or egoism means pursuing self-interest regardless of the negative consequences this might have for others, and involves cooperation with others only when it serves our interests.

Let us now assume that people are egoistic individuals and, if we ever act together, it is ‘not so much for love of our Fellows, as for love of our Selves’ (Hobbes 1973:XIII 13). According to this assumption, we interact or cooperate with others only when we perceive in such an action the forwarding of our self-interest. This self-interest can pertain to achieving a particular goal with others; for example, obtain food through a common effort, band together to get rich by looting someone’s property, or defend oneself against an attack in concert with others. If, however, there are no specific self-interests to be achieved, then there will be no need for egoists to cooperate, and each selfish individual, moved by his passions, can live his individual life without having to have any contact with others. It is such a view of human beings and their behaviour that emerges from the philosophy of Hobbes and his numerous disciples. But there is probably no view that is further away from the truth.

An egoistic individual can ruthlessly and at the expense of others pursue his own goals and come into unstable relationships with others only if, in his opinion, this will bring him a benefit. Being overwhelmed by the desire of power, he can

seek to dominate others and to destroy all competitors who stand in his way. But such an individual will never be more than an ordinary cheater. This is because he hides from others, and also often from himself, the fact that the first principle of humanity is cooperation. Without cooperation no one, whether he is a good person or a bad one, will be able to accomplish anything; he will not even be able to affirm himself in his own humanity.

- 1.5 Cooperation (as opposed to conflict or the struggle for power) is the fundamental fact of human existence and the essence of politics.
- 10.141 Cooperation is a mutual exchange of services. Within the framework of cooperation, each person and institution in society performs a suitable function.

Let us look around. This room, where we are now, is the product, and an example, of cooperation. Someone once designed this building, and many others then built and equipped it. We must also look at the clothes we are wearing and consider the upbringing and education we have received, as well as reflect on aspects of the wider world, including our country, our language, and our civilisation. All this, to a large extent, we owe to others.

Cooperation is indispensable for human existence and development. In pursuing egoistic goals we may not want to admit to ourselves a simple truth: namely, that our lives are fundamentally linked to the lives of others and are dependent on them. By our own strength alone and without the efforts of so many, mostly anonymous, other people, we would never been able to transcend our animal state and to develop our culture and civilisation.

## **Diversity and Social Classes**

Society is not merely a collection of individuals. It is a diverse community linked by the bonds of cooperation. It consists of people who differ from each other in their level of affluence, intelligence, and education, as well as their habits and character traits. They all need to work together to achieve individual and common goals. The ideas to remove all differences, make all people alike, and arrive at a classless society are neither compatible with human nature nor conducive to social progress. As human beings, we all want to be recognised and respected by others. Even if social classes were artificially removed by law, there will always be individuals striving for more wealth, better looks, and greater power than others. Therefore, instead of exclusion of a certain class from society, in the form of its abolition, marginalisation, or removal from influence in political and economic life, it is better to recognise its real existence and to make it to cooperate for the

common benefit of the whole society. Classes are groups of people differing in wealth, education, employment, values and traditions. Distinct social classes are an important element of society's diversity.

- 3.2125 A classless society can only be an artifice.
- 3.2126 A diversity of people, social classes, cultures, religions, and nations, melded together through cooperation, comprises a variety of complementary skills, talents, experiences, and values.
- 3.214 The basic values of the three main classes of contemporary society—labour, business, and honour—are freedom, entrepreneurship, and nobility. All these values should be present in a well-organised society and should be represented by certain social groups.

Distinguishing elements related to social classes are their values. These can be summarised as freedom, entrepreneurship, and nobility. Classes are not artificial constructs, but they have roots in human psychology – in the different human values and needs, often related to personal upbringing and family traditions.

Some people value wealth and are ready to devote their life energies to pursue it and take appropriate risks to obtain it. These people can be in general classified as the Business Class. Other people feel that they are well qualified to organise social life and wish to devote their life energies to the welfare of society. They are even ready to risk their lives in the defence of their country. Insofar as they want to serve others and not just their own aggrandisement, they are individuals of virtue and honour. They form the Honour Class. Finally, most of us simply want to live a quiet life, devoted to our families and properties. We despise oppression and value our freedom. We just desire to have a stable employment and a decent salary, recognition in the form of promotion, as well as enjoyable vacations and other small benefits that our employers and the society at large can offer us. This class of people who want simply a quiet life are presumably the most numerous. They form the Labour Class. There can be one more class, namely of those rather rare individuals, who sincerely want to devote their lives primarily to spiritual pursuits, as thinkers, writers, poets, monks, priests, or other religious or secular spiritual personalities. They form the Spiritual Class. However, as these are individuals of virtue, they can form one class with the Honour Class. They are a part of the society's elite of honour and merit.

- 6.731 The elite of honour and merit is the minority group, comprising people who are noble, resourceful, and educated, that in every generation contributes to the maintenance and development of various aspects of culture; and if these people are replaced by others who are less diligent and less talented, culture declines.



In many societies of the past we would find traditional social classes that could be identified with either Labour, Business, or Honour. These traditional social classes would often develop some form of class egoism and this egoism would in the end often lead to social revolutions and produce their destruction. However, the fact that human beings can develop egoism does not mean that they are bad by nature, nor does the fact that social classes can develop egoism mean that the division of society into social classes should be altogether rejected. There is class egoism, but there is also class benefit.

- 5.82 Citizens' nobility comprises the civic virtues: courage, honesty, respect for the law, diligence, and, above all, love of freedom and of one's country.
- 5.821 A nation that loses its nobility goes into decline, experiences internal quarrels, becomes divided, and turns into a passive, lifeless collection of people who can be easily manipulated and enslaved.
- 6.66 In a society where there is no room for wisdom and nobility, political power is gained by the worst.

Our lives are largely shaped by our cultures. Just as individuals can be educated in virtue and restrain their selfishness, so also can social classes, especially if with time they develop their own distinct moral traditions. As they represent three different but complementary values: Labour – freedom, Business – entrepreneurship, Honour – nobility, they can all contribute to the well-being of society, and this is their benefit. Without their contribution, societies decline – materially, socially and spiritually.

If nobility is missing in social and political life, then politics becomes corrupted. It becomes a mere play of different, mainly commercial interests. It is dominated by individuals who lack virtue and often do not have other proper qualifications for leadership<sup>7</sup>. There is also decline of spiritual aspects of life. Social life becomes increasingly pragmatic, professionally oriented, manipulated by media, commercialised and superficial, and there is no place for poetry and for a deeper philosophical or religious reflection. Then, if entrepreneurship is missing and the country's economy is organised by the state administration, we end with inefficiency and eventually with poverty. If there is no freedom, we end with exploitation at the work place or with a political tyranny.

The social classes representing the values of freedom, entrepreneurship, and nobility can be established in a formal way and defined by law, or they can develop in an informal way and be defined by custom and social recognition. In the latter sense, they can exist and contribute to the social well-being even in a democracy. Their cooperation becomes a unifying factor in the community life of the people. They create a unity out of apparent diversity.

## Today's Conflicts and Their Solutions

People need to cooperate to achieve individual and common goals. The bonds of cooperation break down, however, if there are conflicts among them. People can be divided by different values, especially those related to their distinct civilisations and ideological formations, as well as by their different interests.

- 1.54 Cooperation is based on the common good and common values; it is destroyed by quarrels and hatred.
- 8.7841 To avoid civilisational conflict, the culture of a society should be based on the dominant native culture, while ensuring tolerance for others.

If incompatible values of different civilisations find themselves in one society, they contribute to that society's divisions and lead to conflicts. Bringing different cultures into close contact and removing from the national one a dominant role, produce the sense that one's own culture is under threat, giving rise to anti-immigrant movements and ethnic clashes, as we have seen in many parts of the world. Therefore an appropriate solution to the civilisational conflict is not multiculturalism, which dethrones the dominant national culture, leads to splitting the society into separate cultural groups, each claiming its distinctiveness, and contributes to a potentially unstable and dangerous environment of "culture wars," but nativeculturalism – the principle of domination in society of the native national culture, with tolerance for other cultures. Nativeculturalism is of particular importance for older countries; those that have for centuries developed on the basis of one dominant culture.

There can be conflicts between civilisations and these are called inter-civilisational or between epochs or ideological formations. These are called inter-epochal. In addition, there are also intra-civilisational and intra-epochal conflicts.

Although there were major civilisational differences between the traditional societies of the past, particularly with regard to religion, there were many common values related to all of them. Members of those societies valued family, morality, religiosity and community. These are the main values of a traditional society. In the epochs of modernity and postmodernity, both initiated by the West, these values came under challenge.

- 7.623 The greatest moral and cultural loss of modern humanity is the collapse of traditional beliefs that establish moral values in human beings, and their replacement by religious fundamentalism and secular ideologies.
- 8.7611 In the name of the truths of reason and empirically verifiable knowledge, modernity refutes truths based on faith and custom. Modern individualism contributes to the destruction of traditional social ties

and replaces them with groupings of people with similar interests or an artificially constructed national unity.

- 8.762 Postmodernism, in turn, undermines the national unity of the modern state through its notions of diversity and multiculturalism. It weakens the nation-state and deconstructs its sovereignty. By its affirmation of diversity in relation to sexual preferences, it also weakens the traditional family based on heterosexual relationships.

Our time is an era of grave conflicts. Not only there are still traditional, intra-epochal conflicts: political, economic, ethnic, religious, and civilisational, but also there are those that have been introduced by the impact of modernity and postmodernity. The idea that human beings are moved by their desires and motivated solely by interests has weakened human ties and undermined traditional communities. The idea that there is no longer any privileged sexual orientation, but just a diversity of desire, has led to the weakening of traditional family values. Therefore, notwithstanding of their positive impact, both modernity and postmodernity have contributed to social turmoil and to today's world disharmony. Postmodernity, whose practical manifestation today is the processes of globalisation, does not bring humanity to a better, more peaceful world.

- 8.792 Postmodernity can be regarded as merely a short-lived episode in the history of humankind, but one nonetheless fraught with consequences. Postmodernity, which coincides with globalisation and weakens the state, has become an expression of political irrationalism, leading to the disappearance of professional diplomacy and to an era of uncontrolled violence.
- 8.821 Our time represents the breakdown of cultural constraints and the triumph of desires. Equipped with the newest technological achievements and the vastest powers, humanity is returning to a state of primitivism.

Solutions to all today's conflicts cannot be discussed here. Let me only address two important issues. First, the solution to today's multisexuality, namely, to the postmodern idea that there is no longer any privileged sexual orientation, just a diversity of desires, is parentsexuality – 'the principle of privileging in society the traditional sexual relationship between a man and a woman, who unite to establish a family and to have children' (7.851). It is obvious that without traditional parental sexuality, in the long run any society is doomed to extinction. Should it not die first on its own, it will be dominated or conquered by sexually traditional societies based on large families. Secondly, the solution to today's discord in international relations is political rationalism. It expresses itself in the pragmatism of action, aiming at a good life, and in the knowledge of the highest goals of humanity and of everyday human behaviour. Its first principle says that 'the main objective of

international politics is to build a strong international community based on shared values, respect for international law, and cooperation in advancing the prosperity of all humankind' (9.51). In the world of international harmony, the goal for each state is to work with other states and ensure its own safety and that of its citizens.

The fundamental feature of the traditional (pre-modern) civilisation of the West, but also of other ancient civilisations, is the conviction of the unique, rational character of human beings and of human capacity for moral reflection as a consequence of this rational nature. The successful ending of many today's conflicts depends on our capability to return to the classical rationality – to reason, whose activity is not reduced to thinking merely about the optimal use of available resources to achieve the desired goals, but includes a reflection on what is morally right or wrong, and on the meaningful human life. It is through our axiological reflection—rational thinking about values, especially values related to cooperation, freedom, and our destiny—that we can understand what constitutes a good life for us, individual human beings, as well for our communities, and arrive at the idea of a harmonious and happy society.

## **Happiness and Illusion**

There are some philosophical schools that deny real existence to the observable world and regard it as an illusion. According to their view, the world is unreal and the only reality is the eternal spirit or pure consciousness (Sivananda 2007:45-74). It is also present in us as our own self. The illusionary world of sensory experience takes us away from our self and confronts us with everyday life permeated by sorrow. The only way to be liberated from sorrow and to obtain happiness is to turn our mind inwards and regain our self in the process of ascetic practice and meditation. Otherworldliness and the pursuit of individual liberation thus become the main aims for spiritual seekers. Society is seen as a hindrance to the spiritual progress. On the other hand, there are other philosophical schools that reduce the reality to the world and the world to the totality of facts (Wittgenstein 1974:1.1; 2.063). There is no other reality but the observable, material world. Happiness is merely what we can sensually experience as pleasant. It is 'a continual satisfaction of desire, from one object to another' (Hobbes 1973: XI1).

The schools described above both represent a one-sided view of the reality. They define the reality as either facts or the spirit. Let me propose a different view. Reality is a multilevel manifold. The facts that we can observe and the spirit that we can experience are two of its dimensions. We need to add one more – values. If our human world is considered, "the world is the totality of values, rather than the totality of facts" (7.2021).

From the perspective of facts, it makes a real difference whether something is or not, whether an event happens or not, whether we are hungry or not, whether something runs fast or goes slowly. From the perspective of values, it makes a difference whether there is religious tolerance or religious prosecution, whether we have a good or corrupted government, whether something is beautiful or ugly, whether we are at peace or at war. From the perspective of the spirit, it makes difference whether we have developed love or hate, whether we are morally virtuous or fallen, whether we subject our lives to moral and intellectual examination or live without any reflection.

There are three different dimensions of reality—facts, values, spirit (consciousness)—that correspond to the three aspects of culture – material, social, and spiritual. None of them is an illusion. Each in its own way exists and has a vital impact on our lives. They complement each other. For example, if we did not have anything to eat, or if we lived in a society in which there was religious prosecution, then we could not study books of ancient wisdom and pursue freely our spiritual path. The world really exists in all its three dimensions of reality and perhaps in some additional levels that can still be discovered. Each of them is of relative importance. To use the famous example from Vedanta philosophy, if we mistake a rope for a snake at dusk, it does not yet mean that the world is an illusion, for in this case the rope is an observable fact. It truly exists as a material object. So also, if we take a corrupt government for a good one, this does not mean that all politics is an illusion and nothing can be improved. It makes a real impact on many human lives whether a country is well or badly governed. Consequently, our material and our social worlds are not illusions. They are vital parts of the overall reality. Reality is the manifold in which facts, values and the spirit are included.

Our world is not an illusion, nor should it be associated with sorrow. Even if there are events that can make us sad, our world is also the place where we can experience happiness at different levels. Life is not a continual flow of desires; it is rather a continual flow of experiences. If those are joyful, fulfilling experiences, then our lives are happy. Happiness may be related to both good experiences and our fulfilment or self-realisation.

We have come to this world to be happy and, perhaps with the exceptional cases of some incurable illnesses, happiness is obtainable by all. We should work together to provide good experiences to all members of humanity. Each of us deserves a good, fulfilling life. However, we should not expect the same expression of happiness from a child as from a mother, a scientist, or a yogi, for we can experience happiness in different ways and levels. We can indeed be happy in this world as individuals, and as societies. We do not need to liberate ourselves from it. If we strive for perfection, we give priority to the spiritual world. But the quest

after the spirit, which is beyond appearances, should not lead us to forsake facts and values, but to build on them. To pursue spiritual fulfilment does not mean that we should neglect other dimensions of reality. They all complement and mutually influence each other.

Happiness is not just a fleeting moment of pleasure. It does not consist in identification with mere material objects. But neither can it be reduced to a mystical state that is available only to a few spiritual seekers. Considered as a permanent value, happiness is linked with freedom; that is, with the possibility for individuals and groups to achieve self-realisation. Human beings differ in their wealth, level of intelligence and education, age, customs, and character traits. Each community is characterised by an enormous diversity of human talents, skills, and ambitions in life. Some people will find self-realisation in a happy family life, some in enlarging their wealth, some in service to humanity, some in pursuing scientific research, some in the religious worship and the quest for God, and finally some in exploring and bringing to fulfilment their inner spiritual nature.

- 3.411 A good life is a complete life.
- 3.4111 All people have the right to develop their natural talents and utilise their acquired skills, so long as these contribute to their personal development and do not cause harm to others.
- 10.23 A happy society is a community of diversity, comprising different classes and espousing complementary values of freedom, entrepreneurship, and nobility.

A happy society is a diverse community whose members (individuals and groups) have the opportunity to achieve self-realisation, and thus pursue happiness as they best understand it themselves, and in all of its cultural aspects: materially, socially, and spiritually<sup>8</sup>. A society is happy because of the happiness of its members, and these are happy if they can grow and develop their life possibilities. However, they can never pursue their own happiness at the expense of others, because then we would not have a happy society, but only prosperous individuals or groups within a society. The fundamental moral imperative related to happiness is that our self-realisation can never be associated with a harm of another human being.

## **Conclusion: Happiness and Social Harmony**

Social harmony is social richness – the special composition of diversity and difference, in which we find mutual complementarity and moral virtue. Diversity, difference, complementarity and moral virtue are all prerequisites for cooperation – the first principle of humankind. People can efficiently work together if they are

diverse in terms of their skills, if they are different in terms of their social position (some performing leadership roles and others being guided), if by their education and abilities they complement each other, and if their relations are based on justice, mutual respect, friendship, solidarity and other virtues. Social harmony produces order and peace. It helps to achieve common goals. It leads to the development of fine things and fine manners. It makes our world beautiful and happy. Its indispensable part is happiness. Social harmony is actualised when all members of society have opportunities for self-realisation.

The world can be reduced neither to facts nor to the spirit. It is an integral wholeness, including material, social, and spiritual aspects. As it is our human world, it can be described as the totality of values. The values that we adopt have an impact on personal lives, organise our societies, and shape the course of history. In order to live in a better world—a world that is more prosperous, safer, and happier—we need to reflect on the value of cooperation. Moreover, we need to consider that we are not merely moved by desires as lower animals, but that we can largely control our desires and are rational, moral, free, and ultimately spiritual beings.

Desires can be increased in human beings by the employment of such cultural means as propaganda and indoctrination. Advertisements can make us desire certain futile things. The fabrication of fear and hate can be used to create enemies and justify military spending. In this world that is far from being perfect, it is essential that we guard our true identity and do not allow ourselves to be transformed into mere consumers or militants. Spirituality constitutes the full humanity.

## Endnotes

1. See Piet Strydom' article in this collection.
2. Inner purity, manifested in love, peace and joy, can be considered as the highest moral quality. It is the original characteristics of the human soul, as mentioned by Plato in *Phaedrus*. It is what we have lost and to what we can come back. It signifies the inner divinity that according to Vedanta philosophers constitutes our forgotten identity that can be rediscovered by self-reflection and brought again to enfoldment.
3. Neorealists, such as Kenneth Walz, do not speak directly about human nature, but it is implied in their notion of an egoistic state that is motivated by its security interests, dominance and so on.
4. One of the most influential thinkers, whose ideas contributed to the formation of the theory of realism in international relations, was Hans Morgenthau, for whom all politics was a struggle for power.



5. W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz, *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*. The citations that follow are from the same book.
6. Characteristics that are often associated with the development of civilisation are: the creation of urban and administrative centers; the invention of political, social, and economic institutions; the division and specialisation of labour; the expansion of external trade; the creation of a complex religious life; the development of the arts and sciences; and the invention of a written language.
7. Someone can argue that we cannot find any social groups that can be regarded as nobility, and that all people pursue always only their egoistic interests. However, cases from history can provide us with evidence to the contrary. We can find many examples of virtuous rulers, upholders of righteousness, who devoted their lives to the service of the well-being of people.
8. Spirituality is a positive transformation of our consciousness and of our attitudes to the external world. Its effect is self-knowledge and moral perfection. To be transformed, human beings need to connect with God or the Eternal reality or the Divine within by prayer and meditation. In this there lies the importance of all religions. Without this connection, by our efforts alone, we are usually too weak to overcome our moral weaknesses.

## References

- Aristotle. 1962. *The Politics*. [c 335 BCE]. K. J. Arrow (ed.) Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1973 [1651]. *Leviathan*. London: Dent.
- Korab-Karpowicz, W. Julian. 2012. *On the History of Political Philosophy*. Boston: Pearson.
- . 2015. *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*. Kety: Derewiecki.
- Layne, Christopher. 1994. "Kant or Cant: The Myth of Democratic Peace." *International Security*, 19(2).
- Morgenthau, Hans J. 1948. *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Knopf.
- Prasad, Onkar. 1999. "Sound as Harmony", in S.C. Malik (ed.), *Dhivani: Nature and Culture of Sound*, pp. 87-90. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld.
- Sivananda, Swami. 2007. *Jnana Yoga*. Shivanandanagar: Divine Life Society.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1974 [1918]. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London: Routledge.



## CHAPTER 22

# Towards JHS Vision for Social Harmony Without Hierarchy

*Subhash Sharma*

### Introduction

This chapter presents the idea of harmony without hierarchy. A quick look at history suggests that the world has been ruled through Division (Divided-vision) Approach. Although there have been attempts to overcome divisions, these attempts led to new divisions, for example, religion(s) emerged to unite tribes; however they turned into supra-tribes and carried forward the same ideology of binary thinking of us and they got divided into the forms of believers and non-believers. Believers got united, but they got united to oppose the non-believers. With the advancement of science and development of democracy new ideas emerged. The Nation-State concept emerged as a new idea to unite people of different ethnicity, religions, creeds, etc. However, world got divided into different nations carrying forward the tribal-religion mentalities of binary thinking. In addition, many *isms* contributed to the binary thinking. In today's world, religions, *isms* and nations tend to reinforce the divisions. For creating a world based on harmony, we need to transcend the Division (Divided vision) Approach to life and move in the direction of a 'Unified vision' through 'Planetary Realisations'. Giri (2013a) in *Knowledge and Human Liberation*, notes that, 'Planetary realisations refer to the challenge and process of realising our potential and aspirations as children of Mother Earth going beyond exclusion of many kinds of such as class inequality, nation-state centred rationality

and anthropocentrism'. This implies a change in consciousness and a movement towards higher consciousness beyond religions, *isms* and nations. Such movement will be transformative in nature as it will take us towards harmony.

Why there is so much of killing, rage, violence, negative energy, anger? This is because JHS (Joining of Hearts and Spirit) is missing among people, religions, ethnicities, *isms*, and nations.

## **Towards Manthan (Churning) Theory of Social Evolution**

### **Dialectical Chakra and ARIMA Foundations of Harmony Creation**

To create harmony, a new approach is needed. We refer to it as ARIMA (Action-Reaction-Interaction-Mutual Adjustment).

Division (Divide and Rule) Approach leads to an unending Action-Reaction cycle creating spirals of revenge and negative energy in society. To understand this process, Sharma (1996) in *Western Windows Eastern Doors*, developed the concept of 'dialectical chakra' as a tool of socio-analytics based on Hegelian dialectics and Indian metaphor of Chakra. Chakra is indicative of rotation. When dialectical forces get rotated, 'Dialectical chakra' is created and it provides the momentum for social change. However, when dialectical chakra goes out of control because of 'dialectical intensities' (*ibid.*), societies have to pay heavy price in terms of death and destruction. 'Dialectical intensity' refers to the intensity of dialectics between two dialectical forces. Dialectical intensities once unleashed in a society can make 'dialectical chakra' go out of control because it leads to Action-Reaction (A-R) cycles. This has been the experience of human societies as human history is full of such Action-Reaction cycles at the micro, national and global levels, wherein 'dialectical *chakras*' have gone out of control. When such things happen it may take long time for the healing process to take place in human society in spite of Reconciliations.

In view of such human experiences, there is a need to move to from Action-Reaction (A-R) to next level, viz. Interaction (A-R-I). This implies conversation and a continuing dialogue with 'Others' who are different from Us. Such Interactions and conversations will lead to Mutual Adjustment (MA), thus leading us to ARIMA Model. In Kannada language this process is also represented by *Swalpa adjust madi* (kindly adjust a little). In fact, this phrase (Pease adjust a little) is at the foundation for Harmony and Healing to take place. 'Live and let live' was Mahavira's way of stating the same. Sometimes, 'Let go' attitude also helps. For ARIMA to be effective, Live, Let live and Let Go state of mind is helpful in mutual adjustment and creation of harmony.

Action-Reaction (A-R) cycles create negative energy (*tamas*/violent energy) in society. When we move from A-R cycles to Interaction level, we move towards vibrant energy (*rajas*) and as we move towards Mutual Adjustment, we recognise the significance of vibrant and silent energies in human relationships. Thus, ARIMA model is in consonance with *Tamas*, *Rajas*, and *Sattava* (TRS) approaches to human relationships in society. As we move further, we move in the direction of 'Harmony and Oneness' transforming TRS into SRS (*Sattava*, *Rajas*, *Sattava*).

It may be indicated that social progress has been taking place through the Evolution-Revolution-New solution (ERN) processes. Dialectical *chakras* in society create conditions for *Manthan* (Churning) within the society. When dialectical intensities become unmanageable, Evolution creates conditions for Revolution. However, post-revolution, there is need for new solutions otherwise the Revolution fails, e.g. Communist revolution failed because it could not find the new solutions needed by the society. New solutions are needed to restore the Harmony at the higher level of society's evolution through revolution. New solutions also imply Innovations in society including technological innovations. For example, many technological innovations have flattened the caste system in India. The *Manthan*/ Churning Theory of social evolution suggested here implies that Evolution-Revolution-New solutions process should lead to 'Harmony without hierarchy' because this process reduces the impact of hierarchy based on certain social parameters, e.g. race, caste, gender, region, religion, class, etc.

Further, it may be indicated that the idea of Harmony should be viewed within the perspective of 'Great Order and Disorder' (GOD) process in nature (Sharma 2010:41), In nature, we observe both order and disorder, i.e. cosmos and chaos. Harmony is essentially a dynamic process of relationship between cosmos and chaos. A proper understanding of Nature's OD (Order-Disorder) is essential to understand the harmony in social context. Once we understand nature's OD processes, we can have a better understanding of ARIMA processes in society as order-disorder leads to a new order. Once a new order is established a new Order-Disorder Process starts leading to next level of evolution. Thus, social changes take place through ODN (Order-Disorder-New order). ODN Process has been at work in human history. Transition from tribes to religion to nation-state to globalisation has happened through ODN. Order-Disorder Process is already at work in the context of Globalisation and next order could be movement towards 'Harmonic Globalisation' to achieve a balance between four fundamental forces, viz. Force of Market, Force of State, Force of People and Force of Self.

Giri (2013) has pointed out; harmony should not be seen to reinforce hierarchy in society. Idea of harmony based on reinforcing hierarchy is not based on proper understanding of nature in terms of OD (Order-Disorder) processes. Chakraborty

(2011) in her book, *Colours of Mind and Other Essays*, has also made a similar observation. In societies, we find manifestations of various colours of mind and we need to understand their dynamics for a proper view on Harmony. In fact, in politics, colours of mind acquire different colours in terms of ideologies leading to a divisive and conflict enhancing unleashing of dialectical forces. Many times 'Dialectical *chakras*' go out of control and the society's atmosphere of harmony is disturbed leading to various forms of violence in society.

In social context, JHS (Joining of Hearts and Spirit) provides a way to achieve Harmony without Hierarchy – 'Harmonious Oneness' (HO). It takes the ARIMA Process to higher levels of consciousness leading to harmonious coexistence. While it recognises the Order-Disorder dynamics and play of 'Dialectical *chakras*' as a social process, it also takes this dynamics to the level of 'Dynamic Harmony' (Giri 2013). In the field of Religion, there have been many attempts on achieving harmony among religions through inter-faith dialogues, however, in many such dialogues, JHS (Joining of Hearts and Spirit) is missing and so dialogues remain at the 'Head' level. While 'Head' may play some limited role in achieving harmony in society, for 'Transformative Harmony' a movement in the direction of JHS (Joining of Heart and Spirit) at individual, society, nation and global levels is needed. This is the essence of JHS Vision and JHS route for achieving harmony without hierarchy. Through JHS we can liberate the world from Division (Divided vision) Approaches to life, living and relationships and move in the direction of harmony without hierarchy.

## Identity Cone Model of Human Beings

To further understand the JHS Approach to harmony without hierarchy, we propose I7 (Seven levels of Identity) model in terms of an Identity Cone (Icon). Sen (2005) talks about multiple identities of an individual that are manifested in varying forms in social and political discourse both at individual and collective level. Model proposed here identifies various levels of identities of human beings. This model also has a linkage with evolution of human societies through the historical experiences of transitions through tribes to religions to nation-states to Globalisation and beyond. Seven-levels of Identity (I) in terms of I1, I2, I3, I4, I5, I6 and I7 are as follows:

I1: My Tribe, My Hometown, My Caste/Community, My Region

I2: My Religion

I3: My Nation

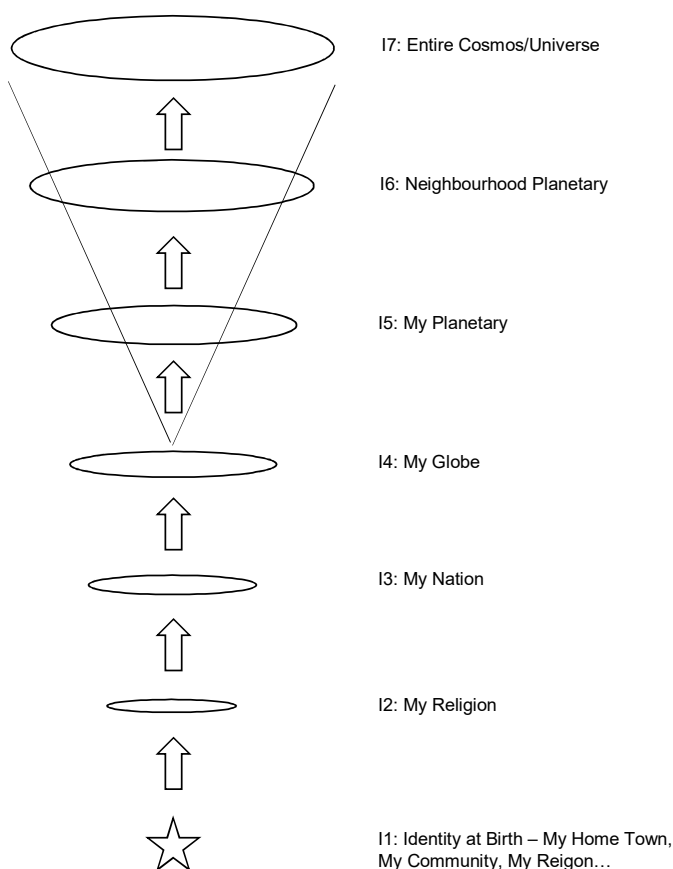
I4: My Globe

I5: My Planetary system (My milkyway)

I6: Neighbourhood Planetary system (other milkyways)

I7: Cosmos/ Entire universe

These seven levels also represent seven expanding circles of consciousness and are presented in Figure 1 in terms of a spiral model of an expanding spiral of identities. It can also be referred to as Diamond Model on the basis of its V shape.



**Figure 1** Seven-Levels Identity Spiral Model

It may be indicated that an individual manifests his/her identities depending upon the social contexts. Thus, a person at one point of time may intensely display his/her religious identity and at another point of time display national or global identity. It may be indicated that this model can also be considered as a model



for self-evolution representing evolution of mind. In this context, I7 can also metaphorically represent the 'seventh heaven' metaphor.

Globalisation has taken the human consciousness to level 4. However, as Giri (2013) argues, we have to strive for 'Planetary Realisations' which imply transcending beyond caste, class, religion, gender, nation and move beyond I4 level of identity. In our subsequent discussion we present Theory O as a framework for expansion of the circles of identities to the cosmic level represented by Theory O. Physical travel has made it possible to realise our I4 level of identity and in future human beings may travel to other planets and thus it may become physically possible to realise higher levels of identity. Till then we need to rely on psychological and spiritual approaches to realise the higher levels of identities and establish Oneness with cosmos leading to harmony among human beings.

Above presented model can be viewed in terms of 'SO-SO Window of Consciousness' (Sharma 1996) wherein interaction between two individuals (Self and Other) takes place from different levels of identities. This window can be presented in terms of 7 x 7 Matrix to analyse which levels of interactions are dominating in interpersonal interactions and thereby in the society as a whole. A large number of identity conflicts take place in societies because human beings operate from different identity levels and humanity as a whole has not moved to higher levels of identities. Further political systems and politicians tend to exploit the identities to create vote banks restricting the society to move up in the evolutionary spiral. This leads to 'identity politics' that we observe in the political arena. I7 model serves as a socio-analytic tool to understand the dynamics of identity discourse and identity politics in democratic societies. Further, ARIMA Model discussed earlier provides us a basis to resolve the identity conflicts and move in the direction of harmony without hierarchy. When Joining of Heart and Spirit (JHS) takes place, human beings move up this identity ladder and reach the level of Harmonious Oneness represented by I7. For this they need to begin with developing their Heart Skills (Kapadia 2009).

## **Need For Cosmotivistic Perspective of Societies**

Harry C. Triandis (1995) suggested the framework of Individualism and Collectivism for study of societies. He suggests, "Collectivists are closely linked individuals who view themselves primarily as parts of a whole, be it a family, a network of co-workers, a tribe, or a nation. Individualists are motivated by their own preferences, needs, and rights, giving priority to personal rather than to group goals". In contrast to individualists, collectivists are mainly motivated by the norms and duties imposed by the collective entity. He also explores wide-ranging

implications of individualism and collectivism for political, social, religious, and economic life.

This framework has been widely used to study cultures of different societies in terms of their individualistic and collectivistic orientations. It has also impacted the Management field, particularly Organisation Behaviour and Organisation Theory. However, the framework lacks another important dimension of cultures, viz. cosmotivistic orientations of societies. By cosmotivistic orientation we imply the view and world view of a society in terms of its relationships with cosmos. A society's/nation's culture is not only shaped by its individualistic and collectivistic orientation but also by its cosmotivistic orientation. Cosmotivistic orientation is indicative of a culture's linkages with cosmos and is expressed in many ways through philosophy, art, literature, creation myths, poetry, etc. When we focus on individualistic and collectivistic categories only, we ignore a large and significant aspect of shaping of society's/nation's culture by its 'cosmotarian' perspectives. As an illustration Indian society has a strong cosmotivistic orientation as reflected in its mythology, philosophy, its ethos, its festivals, its rituals, its arts and literature and in thoughts of its many well-known thinkers from ancient to modern times.

Thus, by introducing the idea of cosmotivistic orientation to the study of societies we get a better framework that is three dimensional, viz. Individualistic, Collectivistic and Cosmotivistic. In every society there is a dynamic interaction between these three orientations, hence, societies differ in their configurations arising from the interactions between individualism, collectivism and cosmotivism and this gets reflected in economic, political, social, identity and spiritual discourse and world views. When viewed from the perspective of Market, Society and Self (Spirituality), individualism, collectivism and cosmotivism reflect their dominant paradigms of thinking. Interaction between the three determines the configuration of society that keeps changing depending upon intensities of interactions.

It may be indicated that societies also differ in Yin and Yang-oriented cosmotivistic view. In Yin-oriented cosmotivistic orientation, relationship with cosmos is viewed in feminine perspective. Hence, culture dominates in terms of feminine metaphors and phrases and there is a desire to seek harmony with nature and cosmos. In Yang-oriented cosmotivistic view, masculine metaphors dominate and there is a desire to conquer and dominate nature. In Indian culture both OSHE (Oneness, Spiritual, Humanistic, Existential) represented by Yin and OSHA (Oneness, Spiritual, Humanistic, Animalistic/Aggressive) represented by Yang, are part of the cosmotivistic orientation. The aim is to achieve the harmony between the two and this is reflected through the concepts, such as Shiva-Shakti union, Purusha and Prakriti, etc. This concept also represents the idea of 'harmony without hierarchy' as there is no hierarchy between Shiva and Shakti.

## **Harmony-Based Cosmopolitanism: A Step in the Direction of Planetary Realisations**

Cosmotivistic orientation also has a linkage with cosmopolitanism. In fact in cosmopolitanism, an 'ism' is hidden. When we consider ISM as an Idea, its Spirit and Manifestation of spirit, we get an interesting perspective on cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan is rooted in Cosmo + Polis, i.e. a city with cosmic perspective. This also implies a city (place) where inhabitants of the city (place) have cosmic perspective. Thus, a city/society/nation is cosmopolitan in its character if its inhabitants have cosmic perspective represented by I7 identity level.

Thus, cosmopolitanism can be considered as an expansion of consciousness. The expansion can be in the following forms:

1. From local to global to cosmic level
2. From ego to eco to cosmic level
3. From human values (justice, rights and duties) to spiritual values (love, compassion and devotion) to cosmic values (satyam, shivam, sundaram)

Expansion of consciousness also has linkages with developments in human thinking. Broadly there are three perspectives in human thinking, viz.

1. Geo-centric
2. Helio-centric
3. Cosmo-centric

These correspond to significance of Earth, Sun and Cosmos in human thinking. 'Discovery' of Earth moving around the Sun led to a shift from Geo-centric view to Helio-centric view. With the discovery of many planetary systems, we are moving towards cosmo-centric view. Thus, there is an expansion of human consciousness. This expansion also finds its manifestation in human relationships and human societies. While some societies are still Geo-centric, others have become Helio-centric and in future we may see transition towards cosmo-centric societies. This will facilitate the idea of cosmopolitanism in human affairs and will lead us towards cosmonity taking us beyond the idea of modernity through 'modification of modernity'. Modernity was largely a result of Helio-centric view of the world. Its modification implies moving towards cosmo-centric view of human existence. I7 model presented earlier takes us in the direction of cosmo-centric perspective on evolution of human thinking.

We can also look at the future emergence of the idea of cosmonity in terms of historical perspective of evolution of human thought systems in terms of Religion (s), Science and Spirituality. This view is presented below:

Religion(s) → Science → Spirituality → Cosmonity

The concept of Planetary Realisations (Giri 2013) has its equivalence with the idea of cosmonity presented in this chapter. In fact, the idea of Planetary Realisation can serve as a foundational concept to integrate Religions, Science and Spirituality for everyone's benefit. For this we need the calling of practical spirituality (Giri 2010).

### Indian Illustrations of Cosmonity/ Cosmic Thinking

The following ideas from Indian thought provide an Indian perspective on cosmopolitan thinking:

1. *Vaisudhaiv Kutumbakam*: Entire world is a family
2. Swami Vivekananda's idea of 'Brothers and Sisters': Brotherhood and sisterhood is beyond one's own community, region and nation
3. Unity in diversity reflecting the cosmic reality
4. Live and let live (Mahavira)
5. Viswarup Darshan (Ch 11 of Gita)
6. *Sarve bhavantu sukhina* (Welfare and happiness of all)

### Harmonic Thoughts from India for 'Modifications of Modernity': Towards New Age Modernity (NAM)

Ancient literature provides us many clues for the 'harmonic cosmopolitan' outlook of many ancient Indian thinkers. Their thoughts are reflected in many popular 'wisdom statements' in varying forms. In the discussion below we draw upon the thoughts of three globally known modern Indian thinkers to provide an essence of Indian thought on Cosmopolitanism. Elsewhere we refer to them as ViGA (Vivekananda, Gandhi and Aurobindo). Trinity of modern Indian thought who have influenced modern thought leading to 'modifications in modernity' leading us towards a 'new age of modernity' beyond post-modernity and trans-modernity. 'Modifications in modernity' have largely been brought out through new consciousness in human thought to overcome the negative side effects of modernity as well as its limitations.

Three modern Indian thinkers of Harmony and Oneness, mentioned above essentially crystallise the essence of the 'ancient wisdom and historical experience' of a long Indian tradition of consciousness-based thinking. Their thoughts have also entered Western thinking (e.g. Goldberg 2010). Their cosmopolitan ideas can be summed up in terms of the following:

1. Theology of Swami Vivekananda
2. Economics of Mahatma Gandhi
3. Spirituality of Sri Aurobindo

The words of Swami Vivekananda, “Each soul is potentially divine and aim is to manifest this divinity”, lead us towards manifesting our ‘inner divinity’ in the form of dignity. Swami Vivekananda further captured the idea of Cosmopolitan thinking through his famous liberating words, Brothers and Sisters reflecting the oneness of all human beings. In the past the idea of brotherhood/fraternity was largely restricted to one’s community, religion or nation.

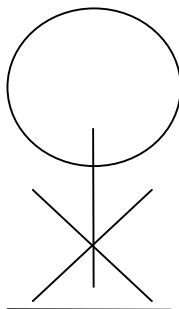
Mahatma Gandhi’s famous expression, ‘There is enough for everybody’s need and not for every body’s greed’ takes us towards a Cosmopolitan view of the resources of the planet. This view implies recognition of the rights of all human beings on the resources of the earth and their sustainable utilisation for benefit of everyone. There is a message of sustainable consumption and sustainable living. A narrow view leads to greed maximisation by a few nations, a small segment of persons within a nation or by a few Global Corporations leading to conflicts and disharmony with nature and other human beings.

Spirituality of Sri Aurobindo is reflected in his vision of evolution of human mind and consciousness to the cosmic level. Circle of consciousness should expand to get connected with entire cosmos. This connectivity is the essence of spirituality. Once this connectivity is established, a cosmopolitan perspective develops.

Swami Vivekananda’s Theology, Mahatma Gandhi’s Economics, and Sri Aurobindo’s Spirituality, provide us a framework for overcoming negative side effects of modernity. Ideas of these thinkers also provide us foundation for developing a non-hierarchical harmonic society. In the Indian as well as world context, their visions can transform a divided society (divided in terms of race, religion, caste, class, gender, region, etc.) to a more tolerant and harmonic society with an outlook rooted in a cosmic view of life. This is also the essence of Theory O perspective of life, living and relationships, leading us towards the idea of New Earth Sastra (Sharma 2012) wherein soil and soul are interconnected in a harmonious way. Hierarchical harmony envisaged by modernity has led to wounded soles (Giri 2013). Time has come to find new ways to heal soil, sole and soul. This will be possible through ‘modifications of modernity’ to the requirements of ‘harmony without hierarchy’. This implies a movement towards New Age Modernity (NAM), wherein limitations of modernity are overcome through spirituality and cosmonity.

## ‘Omega Circle’ As Symbol of Harmony And Oneness

The idea of ‘Omega circle’ is an extension of the idea of ‘dialectical chakra’ and is based on the idea of ‘chakra’, wherein different spokes of the chakra represent various viewpoints or perspectives (Sharma 2007). It is also rooted in the *syadvad/ anekantavad* philosophy of Jainism.



**Figure 2.** Omega Circle

‘Truth is one; it has many manifestations’ declared Upanishad. When viewed through the ‘Omega circle’ concept, it implies a 360 degree view of reality. As a circle of consciousness wherein different perspectives find integration, it represents the essence of harmony without hierarchy and is also a symbol of cosmopolitanism, cosmic outlook and cosmonity.

## A Cosmic Rhyme of ‘Harmonious Oneness: Harmony and Oneness’

In 1993 in *Creation from Shunya* (p 1), I had written a poem titled as “Why Run the Race?”. In 2007 I extended it as follows (based on general observations of astronauts as well as an imagination of an astral view of harmony):

When I fly to the space And look at the human race,  
 I find people and nations running a destructive race,  
 They are divided along regions and religions,  
 Without any rhyme and without any reason,  
 They have created a climatic change,  
 It is now affecting the entire range,  
 They are creating a new chaos,  
 From Washington to Laos,  
 There are many thought divisions,  
 Hence the need for a new vision,

A vision of harmony and cosmos,  
 To save humans from turmoil and loss  
 Next time when I will go to the space,  
 And look at the human race,  
 I hope to find a billion of cosmic persons,  
 Leading humanity through a new vision.

This poem provides us a vision of ‘Cosmic Human Beings’ (CHB) through an expansion of human consciousness to the level of Harmonious Oneness (HO) – Harmony and Oneness, represented by I7 in the Identity Spiral model. It represents the evolution of human beings from citizens to netizens to ‘cosmic beings’ or ‘cosmic citizens’.

### **Towards Theory O of Harmony Without Hierarchy**

Extending his work, Sharma (2013) in his *EARTH Conversations with Daniel Albuquerque* (2013) suggested Theory O in terms of expansion in one’s circle of consciousness to the cosmic level to achieve Oneness (O) with cosmos. O is essentially a circle and in a circle there is no hierarchy. A circle is essentially is a symbol of ‘harmony without hierarchy’ – Harmonious Oneness (HO). Theory O not only has its roots in ‘dialectical chakra’ but can also be considered as an extension of the idea of Omega circle. Further it also has connectivity with the I7 model of ‘Identity cone’. At the I7 level one’s circle of consciousness expands to cosmic level and a person acquires cosmotivistic worldview and thereby hierarchical thinking disappears.

Theory O implies realisation of deep-rooted Oneness of everything in cosmos from quantum level to cosmic level through ‘Quantum ropes’ and ‘Quantum threads’ (Sharma 1999). This was the Vedantic view and in Physics, string theory envisages the same. Once such a realisation of deeper connectivity dawns an individual, her/his circle of consciousness expands and her/his world view becomes inclusive and holistic. A person moves away from Division (Divided vision) Approach to Cosmic Vision Approach to life, living, relationships. Sharma (2014) further develops Theory O as a foundational concept for Enlightened Leadership in the context of Organisation and Management.

During evolutionary journey of human society from Tribes to Religion to Nation State to Globalisation, human beings have strived for Harmony. However this striving was for ‘Harmony within Hierarchy’ as Pyramid structures were built to manage societies. Modernity also reinforced the hierarchical structures. New hierarchical structures of modernity were based on Science in contrast to earlier hierarchical structures that were rooted in Religion.



Drawing upon Indian model of *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva* qualities of nature and human beings, Bussey (2013) classifies harmony in terms of *Tamasik*, *Rajasik* and *Sattvik*. He observes, “*Tamasik* harmony is of the kinds found in the feudal system of Europe and the caste system of India. *Rajasik* harmony is characteristic of the topsy-turvy flux of modernity and capitalism in general. *Sattvik* harmony implies a spiritual dimension at work that reinvigorates consciousness and reframes material considerations”. So far, world has largely operated on the idea of harmony within the hierarchical systems. Even *sattvik* harmony could be within the framework of hierarchy. We need a new framework of *sattvik* harmony in non-hierarchical context. As *Tamasik* harmony and *Rajasik* harmony ideas have failed to create social harmony, *Sattvik* harmony idea represents a future hope for the humanity. While Cyber revolution has partly demolished the hierarchies and the pyramids representing the same, it has not yet moved in the direction of *sattvik* harmony and eco-sattvik view of the world. In future societies may move towards ‘mandala’ like structures, wherein every part is interconnected. To manage and lead such systems, one’s level of consciousness should rise to O level (Level I7 in the Identity cone model) and in terms of ARIMA Model, societies should move beyond Action-Reaction (A-R) cycles to Interaction (I) and Mutual Adjustment (MA) processes. This may ensure emergence of *sattvik* harmony in a non-hierarchical context. In fact, Theory O can be considered as a theory for creating new structures for society based on harmony without hierarchy. This implies creation of sacro-civic society with roots in eco-sattvik view of the world.

Three interrelated ideas presented in this paper, viz. Dialectical chakra(s), Omega circle, and Theory O constitute the foundational concepts for moving towards Harmony without hierarchy. Dialectical *chakras* can be moderated through Joining of Hearts and Spirit (JHS) because when Hearts and Spirit join, positive energy is generated and dialectical *chakras* in society move in harmonious manner generating goodwill among different communities, nations and identities including gender identity. JHS ensures ‘unity in diversity’. Omega circle thinking helps in integration and synthesis of multiple perspectives about social realities and thus helps in resolving conflicts. Theory O helps in raising society’s consciousness to higher levels and shows a path to leaders to view things and events from a higher level of consciousness to achieve harmony among communities, religions, nations, regions, etc. All three ideas provide us ways to operationalise the JHS approach to create sacro-civic societies. They create a shift in human thinking from ‘Division’ (Divided vision) Approach to Cosmic Vision Approach wherein the circle of consciousness expands towards Planetary Realisations. Today world needs new leadership based on such ideas to transform hate, violence and conflict-ridden humanity to a new ‘sacro-civic society’ based on harmony without hierarchy.

## Acknowledgement

This chapter is an extended version of a thought note that was prepared for the Workshop on 'Transformative Harmony and Calling of Peace: Self-Development, Social transformation and Planetary Realisations', Kathmandu, Jan-3-4, 2012 and is largely based on ideas this author has been developing since last two decades. The author extends his thanks to Prof. Ananta Giri, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai for the conversations and dialogues that he has been having with him with respect to the themes of practical spirituality, harmony and human development and related ideas. Discussions with him have helped in refinement and enrichment of the ideas presented in this paper. The author also thanks Dr. Daniel Albuquerque, Seat of Wisdom Educational Society, Goa and Prof. Meera Chakraborty, Jain University, Bangalore, for various conversations and inputs that have enriched the material presented in this paper. An earlier version of this paper was published in *Gandhi Marg Quarterly*, 2013, 35(1):45-60.

## References

- Bussey, Marcus. 2013. "Culture, Harmony and Prama". *Gandhi Marg*, 35(1):25-30.
- Chakraborty, Meera. 2010. *Colours of Mind and Other Essays*. Delhi: New Bharatiya Corporation
- Daniel, Albuquerque and Subhash, Sharma. 2013. "EARTH Conversations", *3D ...IBA Journal of Management and Leadership*. 4(2), p. 53
- Giri, Ananta. 2010. "The Calling of Practical Spirituality". *3D ...IBA Journal of Management and Leadership*. 1(2), pp. 7-17
- Giri, Ananta. 2013a. *Knowledge and Human Liberation: Towards Planetary Realisations*. London: Anthem Press
- Giri, Ananta. 2013b. "Rethinking on Sustainable Development: Self Development, Social Transformation and Planetary Realisation". *3D ...IBA Journal of Management and Leadership*. 4(2), p. 29
- Goldberg, Philip. 2010. *American Veda: From Emerson and Beatles to Yoga and Meditation – How Indian Spirituality Changed the West*. New York: Harmony Books
- Kapadia, Mala. 2009. *Heart Skills: Emotional Intelligence for Work and Life*. New Delhi: Excel Books
- Sen, Amartya. 2005. *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*. New York: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Sharma, Subhash. 1993. *Creation from Shunya*. Anand: Anand Press
- Sharma, Subhash. 1996. *Management in New Age: Western Windows Eastern Door*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers
- Sharma, Subhash. 1999. *Quantum Rope: Science, Mysticism and Management*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers

- 
- Sharma, Subhash. 2007. *New Mantras in Corporate Corridors: From Ancient Roots to Global Routes*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers
- Sharma, Subhash. 2010. *Shunya Poems: My Experiments with Corporate Rhymes*. Bangalore: IBA Publications
- Sharma, Subhash. 2012. *New Earth Sastra: Towards Holistic Development and Management (HDM)*. Bangalore: IBA Publications
- Sharma, Subhash. 2014. "Towards Theory O of Consciousness: Management, Leadership and Spirituality". *3D ... IBA Journal of Management and Leadership*. 6(1), pp. 90-97
- Triandis, Harry C. 1995. *Individualism and Collectivism*, Boulder CO: Westview Press



## CHAPTER 23

# Harmony of Individual and Collective

## A Philosophy of a Future Civilisation

*Artyom Goncharov*

Harmony of development of the society is defined primarily by the harmony of relationships between people. One of the most important aspects of the relationships is interactions between a person and a society, an individual and a social life, to be more precise – value beliefs lying in the basis of this interaction. The degree of this harmony depends on the degree of harmony between people in common.

First, we should put a question—are the relationships between individual and collective, offered by the existing tradition harmonious? Relationships between individual and collective are a key issue. We need a value approach expressed in our outlook or ideology. Individualism, existing as the essence of a western way of thinking has become more attractive than collectivism and it happened to be a dangerous approach.

To become aware of all reasons of the disharmony of relationships is a huge theme, but we can at least look at one of the most important ones. One of the most important reasons of disharmony is a principal approach on the basis of ideology. Economical and social-political models of liberal-democratic and social camps were only consequences of dominant beliefs on a place and role of a person in society, existing in this or that civilisation. Individualism laying at the basis of a western way of thinking happened to be more attractive than collectivism—but

it has become a weapon of slow action. In order to understand how it is possible we should recollect the history of appearing the system of ideas of liberalism, beginning with humanists of Middle Ages.

Any archaic society is always a collectivistic one. Simply because it was difficult for people to survive by being alone, while collectivism creates an effective tool for survival. Ideas that created a basis of a modern western civilisation appeared in mostly collective environment. It is an ideological foundation for human rights, as psychologically natural protest against the dictate of a society. It inevitably led to giving birth to a belief about the ossification and evil qualities of collectivism, and to a belief about progress and goodness of individualism. In fact, it is inertia of thinking. This is the way that an ideological system of the west happened to be oriented exclusively on an individual. At the same time, a declared individualism and a collective tradition acted in the same society simultaneously. The time of great development of a European civilisation was the time of approximate balance of both tendencies – individual and collective. A personal origin was rooted in ideas of humanists of the late middle ages and enlighteners of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while public rested on the power of tradition. The best of ideas born by a western civilisation—for example, an idea of civil responsibility—were born on the edge of personal and public origins.

Time goes on and on and traditions change too. The moment arrived when the power of tradition is tried out. The European ideologists for centuries have been developing the same direction – an individual one, considering the drawbacks of a collective tradition to be evil and its virtues as something natural. To tell the truth, we should say one thing – there was one more social-communist trend. It was not a development of the tradition but rather a protest against an individualistic mainstream. In addition, later it was reformatted into an individual format.

However, it could not last forever. The inertia while being not supported by anything would have to try out.... A modern western society is in the state of a society lacking traditional values as for several centuries nobody seriously thought about supporting their values... Now there is an escalation of ideology of individualism. If in the past there were ideas of “a good Christian”, “a citizen” or in a Soviet variant—“an honest communist”, now there is a dominant image of a “leader”, “a successful man”. Of course, we cannot consider it a creation of our times; something similar was in the past—an American “self-made man”, for example. Now “a successful man” notion is widely spread. However, we should realise that an image of the successfulness does not contain the values of the balance of interests. “A successful man” gets success for himself but there is nothing telling what he gives out for the world for his success...

This idea looks like this “I+”, educating the values of the “I+, you-” civilisation of egoists. However, the public ideas (the ones of people) of different civilisations in different times oriented a man for the values favourable for people around him. An ideal of a modern civilisation is, in fact, a man oriented on values, favourable only personally for him. It is not defined directly, but in set of values and qualities of “a successful leader”, an orientation on the wealth of other people is absent. It cannot but lead to destruction of public connections and consequently—to decrease of rights of that very person for the sake of which everything should exist, as people are social beings and almost nobody is capable to survive alone. The majority of people in this or that way need support from other people—but who will provide this support in a society, educated on values, in fact, of egoism. It results in loss of capacity of a society to defend itself...

Now, after realising the problem, it is natural for a question to arise: “What to do?” The most important thing is to change our consciousness. Traditional visions have not been able to pass exams of time and could not compete with western individualism; i.e., a variant “backward to the caves” will obviously not fit. However, we cannot bare the drawbacks of the outlook, suggested by a modern civilisation—it is also not the case. Its negative consequences, though not always evident, are here. In addition, it is natural for people to develop and find new ways.

To solve this task I suggest looking attentively at the human values, which used to be opposed by the modern society. Educated on ideological beliefs of a western civilisation people have been accustomed to oppose interests of an individual and society. However, is it really so? If a person wants to live in a physiologically comfortable society—are these interests considered his own ones, is it so? In addition, what about the right of a person that is sacred for him? “A state, that does not defend its citizens from abusiveness of the things that people consider to be the most sacred, cannot demand for those people to consider themselves as citizens of the whole society” (Shpeman 1999:49).

Every human being is a part of a society and in fact, everybody’s interests are interconnected with the interests of other people. H.H. Dalai Lama expressed not the same but some similar vision: “The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater our own sense of well-being becomes. Cultivating a close warm-hearted, feeling for others automatically puts the mind at ease...” (Gyatso 1991:4).

However, if we deeply think, what happens? ... In fact, interests of the society consist of the ones of all its individuals, multiplied by a long-term perspective. These are the interests of individuals, which will become valuable for them decades years later. Though at present a few people think about it—but which are taken into consideration by the social mechanism. It means that opposing an individual and a society, beside defending an individual from a social dictatorship, contains



an aspect of opposing interests of one individual to interests of other ones (but in real life they are one!), and there is a conflict between “here and now” and “a long term perspective” interests.

If we think about the purpose and a way of existence of a society, in connection with an individual and collective issue, we can say this way:

- Interests of an individual are the one for sake of which a society exists. Only in a society where the human rights are valued, a human being can really fully develop.
- Interests of a social life are the ones with the help of which a society and all his individuals exist. Only a society, which takes into consideration public interests, will be able to survive in a long-term perspective.

A pure collective society can successfully survive—traditional societies of the past manifested it during millenniums. However, such a society does not fulfil its function—creating conditions for a full value development of a personality. A pure individual society provides an achievement of its aim—but only in its “short term” perspective sacrificing its own future. Recourses necessary for achievement of individual wealth and development are here for the refusal of a long-term interests of an entire society—t.i. finally, these very individuals. Opposing personal and public is opposing a precious aim and necessary for that means that is nonsense in its essence.

We can use an image – a priority of a person values over social life is a priority of values of interests of a fish over the ones of an ocean. We do know that without an ocean a fish cannot survive. It is necessary to refuse to think about a society as an enemy element in connection with a person, instead accepting a society as a nourishing environment without which a person cannot only develop but also simply survive. It does not mean that we should deny defence of individual rights. However, we should treat this not from the position of fight against something (it is a conflict consciousness belief) but from the position of improvement of the quality of life (constructive consciousness belief) in connection of a successful safeguarding it in the future.

We may conclude that the most important task now for a modern philosophy—is creating a very new ideological concept, based on balance of both individual and collective. It might sound very strange, but human rights doctrine has ceased its constructional potential. The doctrine of social interaction and mutual interests should take its place. In fact we should deny the very question—what is more important an individual or society, as incorrect. The humanity tends to think in a contradictory way—“either this or that”, but let us at last, become conscious people and come to a golden balance. Only in case of acceptance of an individual

and a society values as equally important and, to tell more, totally interconnected, a real harmony of interaction takes place. “There is a kind of feedback between the Good Society and the Good Person. They need each other; they are *sine qua non* to each other. I wave aside the problem of which comes first. It is quite clear that they develop simultaneously and in tandem. It would, in any case, be impossible to achieve either one without the other” (Mische 1987:180).

Finally, the entire humanity needs to solve the task of acceptance of an individual and a society value as equally important. Eventually, even through ages and millennia all the civilisations of the Earth will face it. The civilisation that will be able to become the first to solve this task, will get a great advantage—an effective harmonious society and a chance to form a creative model—for all (and to make this ideological model a leading one) in a scale of the entire Earth. Some people may think about a kind of competition and a wish to dominate, but it is a too narrow vision. It is only perception of the reality; in which any effective innovations give advantages to those who applied it, in spite of the fact how we will name it or estimate it. If the humanity will not solve this task, an individualistic society is doomed. It will not be able to survive. In a new society, we want to build, an ideal of a human being orienting him to the harmonious combination of self-esteem and mutual respect.

If a modern individualistic civilisation wants to survive in the future, it will have to abandon the extreme individualism, to find a reasonable coherence with the values that embody long-term interests of a society. The task of modern civilisation in the field of a world outlook is to create a holistic view, based on the balance of rights and responsibilities, balance of interests of an individual and a society. Even in case the fruits of a harmonious consciousness we personally will be able to sense fully some time later, they should be planted now. The sooner the humanity becomes aware of the mutual interconnection between individual and collective, the better it is.

## References

- Gyatso, Tenzin, the Fourteens Dalai Lama. 1991. *Compassion and the Individual*. p 4.  
 Patricia Mische. 1987. “Solutions for a Troubled World.” p.180  
 Robert Shpeman. 1999. “Values against people”. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 102:49.



PART THREE

THE WORK AND DANCE OF  
TRANSFORMATIVE HARMONY IN  
SELF, CULTURE AND COSMOS



## CHAPTER 24

# Towards Harmony Between Communities

*C.T. Kurien*

A community is a group of individuals. If we want to understand the significance of community, we must recognise that these individuals who constitute community are basically very unlike one another. In other words, one must accept that a community of individuals is basically one of diversity. I think it is tremendously important to understand that the underlying element of community is diversity. Take an individuals—the individual is an entity with different attributes—physical features, mental capacities, aesthetic sensibilities, religious or spiritual aspirations and all that. And the community consists of individuals like this who themselves are a set of attributes, who are, in one sense, the personification of diversity.

There is a second aspect of community that I would like to touch upon, again from a common-sense point of view. You will notice that as an individual I belong to different communities. My family is something of a community—a very important community for me. The apartment complex where I live, that is a community also, however, it is a different kind of community. The professional associations to which I belong—these are communities too—and the religious group of which I am a member, if I am a member, that is also a community. That is, if diversity is an important aspect of community, a second important aspect of community is multiplicity, variety of communities. We must recognise the existence of diverse communities within a society, a country or whatever it may be. Therefore, in real life we are surrounded by, we are members of, a multiplicity of communities,

each one consisting of different kinds of individual members. Strange as it may appear, it is because of their diversities that individuals seek communities and create communities. For it is only in a community that an individual has a sense of belonging, a sense of identity, a sense of recognition.

Therefore, although a community consists of diverse individuals, these diverse individuals will themselves strive to achieve some kind of commonality within the community or for the community of which they are members. A community, if one may put it that way, is reconciled diversity, and this reconciliation of diversity may come by recalling traditions of the past, by subscribing to a common objective, but also through a series of practical arrangements, some mundane, some very obvious, but some not very obvious. One of these arrangements may be called authority. Authority has meaning or effect only to the extent that those over whom it is exercised accept it as authority. Indeed you accept authority because you know others will also accept that authority. So there are many ways in which the diversity within the community gets reconciled. This is a very tenuous way of existence. There will always be tension between the members who constitute the community, the individuals who constitute the community, and the community itself. Hence, I think it is important to think of community as a vibrant fluid entity-organisation, association or whatever it may be.

Let me now turn to a third dimension of community, which arises from diversity and multiplicity. If there are multiple communities, these communities will overlap also. Look at it from your own perspective. If you are a member of a large number of communities, there will be some overlapping among these communities of which you are a member. It is in the very nature of social relationships that while these relationships may be mediated through communities, the communities overlap. Hence, overlapping is a third feature of communities. Associated with this overlapping is what students of society would describe as boundary. Any community has a boundary, which sets itself as distinct from others or other communities. If there is overlapping, this boundary is bound to be porous and yet one of the features that we see in life is the tendency for the boundary to become rigid. A boundary, any boundary at all, will separate those inside it from those who are outside it. We may refer to it as "us" versus "them" or "us" versus "others". That is fine. But, when the boundary becomes hardened, the others become almost enemies. We become suspicious of them. We then begin to hate them. In this sense, communal harmony and communal discord are separated only by a mathematical line. As long as the boundary is porous, you can work towards communal harmony. If the boundary is made rigid, one can be sure that it is the beginning of communal discord.

Religion has certain positive attributes that can contribute towards communal harmony. Let me mention a few—I imagine that all religions fundamentally and



basically will accept the equality of all human beings. This is a strong point that religion can emphasise in the search for communal harmony. Religions also speak about the need for transcendence, transcending all narrow boundaries, narrow loyalties, rising above all of these. This is another positive factor that religion can contribute. But religion can also become a corrupting factor in the search for communal harmony. How does this happen?

Consider first the accent on equality. While religions, in principle, or in the abstract, affirm the equality of all human beings, in practice, they set different standards. Most religions effectively give a lower status to women than to men, surprisingly in the very core of their activities, religious duties such as priesthood. Theological justifications have been put forward for claiming that human beings with certain skin complexions are superior to all others. Some religious doctrines consider people doing manual labour inferior to those who claim to work with their brains. According to certain religious considerations, people who by the accident of their birth belong to some geographical territories are more privileged than others. And most religions consider the adherents of their faith more equal than others! In practice, therefore, religions tend to betray the commitment to equality of all human beings that they claim in principle.

Secondly, while religions can contribute to the transcendence of boundaries, there is a tendency to say that that transcendence is not of this world, but of the world to come. Here on earth, there are boundaries and tensions, but in the world beyond they would be overcome. In other words, religions spiritualise the concept of transcendence taking it away from the earthly realities, tensions and problems.

There is a third and possibly bigger distortion that religions bring about in matters related to community relationships. In one of his writings on the subject, the theologian Wesley Ariarajah refers to religious traditions as “an intellectual dogmatic deposit that has become part of the understanding of life and reality”. This dogmatic deposit consists of converting all earthly realities into religious categories. Totally overlooking all other dimensions of human life, religions tend to reduce human beings into one-dimensional religious entities such as Christians, Hindus, Muslims and so on. And ignoring the many non-religious experiential shared spaces of these human beings religions tend to separate them into clear-cut communities, which can be only hostile towards one another. Sometimes, it may be, as a temporary expedient for easy identification, but when religious authorities give a label, whatever may be the purpose behind it, it sticks—communal boundaries become hardened on the basis of these alleged religious differences and tensions, and hatred begins to emerge.

It is because of these subtle and blatant distortions, which are all too common in our midst, that a proper understanding of community is a prerequisite to

promote communal harmony. Let us accept diversity as the basic ingredient of community and so celebrate diversity. Let us, at the same time, strive to reconcile our diversities. Let us hold on to equality as the prime means to that reconciliation and justice as the binding thread. Let us recognise that each one of us belongs to a plurality of communities and while being loyal to our legitimate communities let us strive to transcend them without absolutising any. And, while we continue to dialogue our differences—for we are different—let us explore, expand and strengthen the shared spaces that unite us. Thus may we experience the blessedness that comes when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity.

### **Acknowledgement**

It was first published in *Meeting River* Series, no. 28, of Pippal Tree and Fireflies, Bangalore.

## CHAPTER 25

# Towards a Culture of Transformative Harmony

*S. Painadath S.J.*

Harmony of religions evolves at the level of spirituality. Spirituality is the perception of the structural orientation towards transcendence. Religions are culturally conditioned expressions of this perception. On the landscape of religions there is a rich diversity, but at the level of spirituality one can trace converging lines because there is only one transcendent reality, the divine, and only one humanity. The mind perceives diversity, but the intuitive faculty (*buddhi*) experiences unity, the deep inter-connectedness that evokes harmony. Harmony is not a static reality, but a dynamic process that makes human spirit creative and explorative. Harmony means respect for the otherness of the other and recognition of the oneness with the other. A culture of harmony is the only liberative way to the future of humanity.

Tree is the primal teacher of humanity. Tree is a living symbol of harmony. On a tree, there is an immense diversity and a deep unity. Unity in diversity is the basic principle of harmony. Before applying this principle on the landscape of religions let us reflect on the distinction between spirituality and religion.

### **Spirituality and Religion**

Spirituality literally means the experience of the Spirit. Spirituality is the experience of being gripped by the aspect of the ultimate concern. Spirituality is awakening to

the dimension of self-transcendence. The existential awareness of the finitude as finitude is a pointer to the essential orientation to the Infinite. Spirituality is this structural awareness that dawns in the human intellect (*buddhi/nous*). It connotes the state of being grasped by the sense of the Sacred, of being rooted in the Ground of being, of being graced by the Divine. Spirituality is the awe-inspiring as well as fascinating (*tremendum et fascinosum*) awareness of the all-pervading and all-transcending mystery of reality. This means the deep awareness of oneself, of the cosmos and of the Divine—all ultimately in One.

In this sense spirituality is a universal experience. Every person has some element of spirituality. No one would be able to say: I do not need any ultimate meaning in my life. Spirituality is the virtue which takes a person beyond the small concerns of daily life to the ultimate concern, that which renders a perennial meaning to life and work. Spirituality is the all-embracing vision-and-way of life. It nourishes the life process with ethical values and binds the hearts of persons in social concern. Spirituality is the core of social bonding and the heart-beat of civic peace.

Religion is an articulation of spirituality. The universal experience of spirituality finds concrete expressions in particular religions. The unitive consciousness of the divine Spirit unfolds itself in and through the diversity of religions. The underlying sense of the mystery of reality is expressed through the concrete forms of religions. Symbol is the medium through which spirituality finds concrete expression on the religious landscape. “Symbols identify, assimilate and unify diverse levels and realities that are to all appearances incompatible.”<sup>1</sup> A symbol is that which brings together (*syn-ballein*) and integrates diverse elements.

There are basically four areas of symbolisation on the religious landscape: creed, cult, code and community. These are like the four pillars of the religious edifice. Every religion has all these four elements of symbolic representation. These symbolic elements are supplied either from the cultural milieu outside or from the psychic fabric inside. Religious symbols evolve out of this two-fold formative process. This gives rise to a rich variety of religions, and diversities within every religion itself. This is also the basic cause of ambiguities on the field of religions.<sup>2</sup> Though spirituality emerges out of the pure well-springs of the Spirit, religions as they flow down like a river collect a lot of sediments of culture, like political concerns, economic interests, power struggles and expansionist ambitions. In every religion, there is a constant struggle between the divine Spirit and these factors of estrangement. The power and presence of the divine Spirit is articulated through mystics and prophets in every religion.

What then is the dialectics between spirituality and religion?

- Spirituality is the core of religions, religion is the form of spirituality.

- Spirituality is the content of religion, religion is the language of spirituality.
- Spirituality is a universal experience, religion is a particular perception.
- Spirituality is the experience of the Ultimate, religion is exposure to the concrete.
- Spirituality is the pole of the ultimate unity of reality, religion is the point of diversification of forms.
- Spirituality wakes up in the intuitive intellect, religion evolves in the analytical mind.
- Spirituality is like the root dimension while religions evolve like branches which grow in different directions.
- The unity at the depth of spirituality has to be recognised, and the diversity at the level of religions has to be respected. This is the principle of inter-religious harmony.
- One could think of a two-fold approach to the realisation of transformative harmony: vertical and horizontal.

## The Vertical Process Towards Harmony

The vertical process refers to the experience of unity at the depth of spirituality. While accepting the diversity of religions, if one goes deeper into the wellsprings of spirituality, one discovers converging lines, based on the unity of humanity and the ONENess of the Divine. There is only one humanity in which all human persons are created as spiritual beings with an inherent quest for the Ultimate. Unity of human race, equality of human beings and dignity of human persons are fundamental truths of human existence. Based on this one can speak of unity at the depth of spirituality. Besides, the ultimate reality too is ONE. There cannot be two Absolutes; there are not two divine realities. Ultimately all genuine religions evolve out of the experience of the one divine reality, however, the full grasp of it eludes the human mind. The Divine is an incomprehensible mystery. There is no last word about God. All religions are fragmentary perceptions of this all-transcending mystery. Hence the perceptions on God in religions do have a rich variety. But the foundational experience of the Divine cannot but be one. Religions are therefore the diverse ways in which the one human reality seeks the encounter with the one divine reality, or, the different languages in which the one divine reality addresses the one humanity.

*Ekam sat, vipra babudha vadanti!*

This mystical perception of the unity in spirituality is the vertical process of harmony. Genuine harmony is experienced at the deeper realm of the unity in spirituality. This however is not a static perception. It is rather an evolving experience, a dynamic intuition. The ultimate reality is not a static being, but an eternal movement, not a motor immobilis, but a motor moves. This is in fact the perception of the great world religions. Hindu sages use the terms like *Atma* or *Brahma* to describe the Divine. *Atma* means breathing (an = to breathe), *Brahma* means expansion (brh = to grow, expand). In the Buddhist experience, the ultimate reality is *sunya*, which does not indicate its static emptiness but its dynamic nature as movement, as vibration (swi = to expand). In the Taoist perception, the entire cosmos is propelled by the ultimate force called *Tao* or *Chi*. Jews experience the Divine as *Yahweh*, which does not denote a God above the clouds, but the God who moves with the people: I am who am with you; it is the God who puts shelter among the humans (*shekina*). In the Christian experience God is Spirit (*ruach/pneuma* = breath), which is again a reference to the dynamic nature of the Divine. The divine Word (Logos) is the vibrant presence of the Divine in the cosmos: the Life and Light. In Christian theology this dynamic nature of the Divine is interpreted in terms of the Triune God. There is a dynamic compenetration (perichoresis) between the Father, Son and Spirit. In Islam the Divine is addressed as Allahu akbar. The term Akbar (the most high) refers to absolute transcendence; the term Allahu (He in whom I take refuge) connotes the nearness; Allah is experienced as Rahim, the compassionate one.

Although the names used to speak of the Divine are different due to the cultural contexts, all these religions emerge out of the basic perception of the Divine as the wellspring of Life, of Love, of Truth, of Beauty, of Compassion. The God of religions is not a God who sits somewhere above this universe; God is with us, within us. We live in a divine ambience. The entire reality is permeated by the divine power and presence. We breathe the breath of God – this is a perception in many Holy Scriptures. The Divine is not a static reality resting in itself, but a dynamic reality pouring itself out constantly. In this sense, all religions speak of God as Love. Love is not an emotion that our ego produces, rather it is a divine energy percolating in the universe, binding our hearts and transforming our relationships. We can only open ourselves to this divine energy stream. This is the unifying spirituality.

A little story will clarify this perception of harmony in spirituality. Deep in the ocean, once a small fish asked a big fish: where is the ocean? The big fish said: you, little one, you are swimming in the ocean, realise it. But the small fish was not satisfied with this answer. It went on asking everyone, where is the ocean, show me the ocean... Religions ask the question: where is God, who is God, how to reach God...? In spirituality one comes to the realisation: we live and move and have our

being in the Divine. The human mind is inquisitive and hence it should continuously ask: where is God? The human intellect is intuitive and hence it senses the dynamic immanence of the Divine. The mind operates on an I-thou structure of perception; hence the mind objectifies everything: the Divine becomes inevitably a personal God in the mental perception. The *buddhi*/nous senses the unity of reality; hence it intuitively senses the ultimate subject of everything: the Divine is experienced as the ultimate Ground of reality. The mind pursues the logic of things; the *buddhi* explores the mystique of reality. In general it may be said: religions evolve at the extrovert level of the mind and spirituality unfolds at the introspective depth of the *buddhi*. As long as we humans are endowed with both these faculties of perception, we need both religious quest and spiritual experience. Respect the diversity of religions and recognise the unity of spirituality—this is the principle of the process of harmony.

## The Horizontal Process Towards Harmony

The horizontal process refers to respect for the diversity of religious expressions. Harmony is not the denial of diversity, but the acceptance of it as a rich heritage of human evolution. Diversity is beauty—this is what we experience in nature. No two trees are exactly alike. On every single tree, there is a rich diversity: no two leaves are exactly the same. No two mountains are of the same shape, no two rivers flow in the same way. Diversity is the secret of beauty in nature.

Diversity is beauty in human creativity too. There are so many languages, customs, styles of art, and forms of dance; there is a rich diversity in philosophical reflections, scientific explorations and political ideologies. Together with these one could assess the diversity of religions too. The fact that there are many religions can be taken as the richness of human search and as a gift of divine grace too. As long as the Divine remains an incomprehensible mystery, as long as human search continues to be a relentless process, as long as human creativity explores infinite horizons, diversity of religions will nourish the spiritual evolution of humanity.

What then is the meaning of the harmony of religions? Harmony is the creative process of realising the unity in spirituality, while respecting the diversity of religions. A few simple imageries could clarify the meaning of harmony:

Take the case of a musical concert. There are so many musical instruments at play. Each instrument has its own sound and rhythm. But in the process of the concert there is a beautiful symphony. The sound of each instrument merges into that of the others, without however losing its identity. Before the concert starts, the musicians sit and tune the instruments. This is the process towards harmony. But in this process the violin does not become the sitar, a tabla does not turn out to be a drum and the flute does not cease to be what it is. Each instrument has a

unique contribution to make to the process of symphony. One does not lose one's identity in the other; one does not go against the other; one alone does not make the concert either. Symphony is not a static reality, rather it is a dynamic creativity. Harmony is not something that already exists, rather it is an evolving process.

Look at a tree. No two leaves are alike, no two branches grow in exactly the same direction. There is a tremendous diversity on the tree. Yet the whole tree is one. From the root to the top the tree is one. The inherent flow of the one vital sap keeps the tree in its live diversity and preserves the tree in its biological unity. The sap does not do away with diversity, on the contrary, the vital flow nourishes the diversity of colours and shapes, and enables the emergence of flowers and fruits. In this process each branch, each leaf, preserves its identity. Each one has a unique contribution to make to the well-being of the entire tree. One leaf does not just become another leaf; one branch would not tell the other branch, you have no place here. All branches grow together. Whatever is created through photosynthesis on each leaf is shared with all other leaves. Tree is not a static reality, as it may appear to be. There is an enormous dynamism within the fabric of the tree. The tree changes itself at every moment; yet the tree continues to be one living reality. The tree is an embodiment of colourful diversity evolving out of organic unity. In this sense tree is a powerful symbol of harmony. Harmony is not what already exists; it is a becoming, an event of life.

And our body! There is marvellous diversity in the human body, yet the entire body is one. The body is made up of so many limbs and organs. One organ does not become another one. The significance of one cannot be replaced by another one. The eye cannot do the function of the heart, nor can the brain do the work of the kidney. Each organ has its own function for the well-being of the body. There is a vital force that unites all the organs and integrates the function of all cells. The cosmic stream of *pranah* energy percolates through all the organs and sustains the entire body in its smooth functioning. The spiritual dimension of the soul is the life principle in the body. The entire body is just one living organism. When something happens to one part of the body all the other parts are alerted. Health consists in the harmonious functioning of all the limbs and organs in the body. At every moment we live out this harmony. The harmony between unity and diversity is a reality that we experience constantly in our bodily existence.

Another apt example is that of dance. In the process of a classical dance so many bodily gestures and facial expressions evoke an aesthetic experience of harmony. Each *mudra* has its significance, every step has its meaning. They do not fall apart, but form a beautiful stream of communicating the experience. In the process the dancer and the dance merge into a dynamic unity. Dance evolves as the existence of the dancer. The being of the dancer is a becoming. In this process there



is a harmony between the diversity in the forms of expression (*rupa*) and unity in the aesthetic experience (*bhava*). In a sense the entire cosmos is a single dance harmonising the tremendous diversity in the deep oneness. Even the inherent presence of the Divine could be described as dance. In the Hindu perception Siva is the dance-form of the gracious divine presence. In Christian theology the Trinitarian dimension of the Divine is described as dance (peri-choresis = dancing together).

Many more examples could be brought in. They all point to the dynamic nature of reality, human, cosmic as well as divine. There is nothing static as such. From the core of the atom into the orbit of the galaxies everything is in movement, everything is a becoming. Modern physics confirms this dynamic nature of reality: matter is energy, reality is vibration! Harmony is a conscious participation in this process of becoming. On the landscape of religions harmony would then mean a constant compenetration of religions. No religion can be really understood independent of the others; no religion can really survive without the others. All religions are part of the universal spiritual evolution of the human spirit. In all religions there are moments of a deep divine-human encounter. Religions are articulations of the self-transcending dimension of the human. In the process of their historical and cultural evolution they take diverse forms of expression. But if one pays attention to the heart-beat of spirituality in them the world religions are like one mystical dance communicating the experience of the Ultimate; they are like one mystical concert articulating the symphony of the divine Truth. All religions ultimately evolve from the one divine root though they do branch off in diverse directions; they are nourished by the one sap of the divine Spirit. With all religions complementing one another humanity forms one body of the divine Spirit. Harmony is the genuine realisation of this compenetration and complementarity. Respect the diversity of religions and recognise the unity in spirituality—this is the abiding principle of a culture of transformative harmony.

A concrete way of promoting a culture of harmony is that of inter-religious encounter. It can take various forms. The stage of talking on religious experiences in the form of inter-religious dialogue (*dia-logein*) may be a later stage of encounter. What is basic is to foster genuine inter-religious friendships. When we have good friends belonging to other religious traditions, we take interest in knowing their belief systems in depth. This would invite a respectful reading of the Holy Scriptures and the spiritual classics of other religions. The sages, symbols, festivals, customs, values, etc., of other religions help one to broaden the mind and open up the heart. With astonishment one comes to know the liberative potential of religions and their ennobling value systems. At the same time there is always a place for a prophetic critique on the dehumanising elements which religions in the course of time might have advocated. These have to be mentioned in the dialogue

process that would then lead to a critical introspection in each religious tradition. A critico-creative encounter of religions is the way to the future of humanity. Gradually one comes to the realisation that the one divine Word vibrates in all Scriptures, the one divine Spirit transforms the lives of all human persons into divine life, the one divine Light enlightens the minds of all, the one stream of divine Love nourishes all into a universal communion. This is the perspective of harmony on the landscape of religions, very much needed in the multi-religious and pluri-cultural context of India.

## **Endnotes**

1. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns of Comparative Religion* (London, Sheed and Ward, 1958) p.455
2. S. Painadath SJ, *We are Co-Pilgrims* (Delhi, ISPCK, 2012) pp. 26-39

## CHAPTER 26

# Realising Transformative Harmony

## *Vipassana*, the Art of Self-Transcendence, and a New Social Mutuality

*Swati Desai*

### My Epiphany

I would like to present my own story first because I discovered the transformative power of *Vipassana* from my personal experience. It has been gratifying to see that my experience was supported by numerous research studies, especially in last decade, using behavioural and neuro-scientific methods. *Vipassana*, translated as Mindfulness or Insight Meditation in the West, has become the most studied tool for psychological well-being with over 2000 studies published in last decade (Black 2014). I will also present some key research supporting the generalisation of my personal experience.

When I was undergoing my own existential crisis, I went to a ten-day long silent Vipassana retreat by Mr. S.N. Goenka. As a practising psychotherapist, I had always been curious about the Vipassana technique of meditation because of its reputation as a Buddhist Psychological tool. *Vipassana* training consists of meditating over one of the four objects: breath/body, feelings, mental habits/patterns, and the eight-fold path prescribed by Buddha for alleviating suffering. Meditating over these objects starts with deciding which of the four objects would be the focus of your meditation and then paying total attention to the experience of that object, withholding usual judgments, with total acceptance, without immediately reacting

by an action, but simply observing what that object is bringing to you moment by moment. For example, if you choose the body sensations as the object of your meditation, you pay attention to all subtle and obvious sensations in the body, one part at a time, carefully examining it. When your mind wanders around and you notice that it was wandering around, you bring it back to where you had left it. If a body sensation is unpleasant, you simply observe that it is unpleasant, without taking any action, without panicking, or without taking seriously the mind's stories around the pain, simply sitting and noticing what that experience is bringing to you. This technique is based on Buddha's *Satipatthana Sutra*, explained in the most comprehensive analysis by the German/Sri Lankan monk Analayo (Analayo 2004).

In this process of awareness and observing, you are supposed to internalise the notion of Emptiness from the Buddhist teachings. Emptiness means that no object has a permanent, absolute, and independent existence (Epstein 1995, 2013). This comes from two laws, Law of Impermanence (everything is changing, everything will pass), and the Law of Dependent Origin (Everything has a cause and effect; nothing happens out of nowhere, nothing has an independent identity). Understanding this takes away the bricks of attachment (consisting of craving and aversion) and then the house of misery collapses. Another thing happens as you are meditating. All your years of habits and pains (physical and mental) come up and want you to get out of the meditation. But you still stick to simply observing the temptations and keeping the meditation going. As a result you are training yourself to slowly let go of unwanted, unwholesome habits (*sanskaras*) and to accept the deep awareness of the reality. In the process of this deep and deliberate awareness, with gradual calmness, you will get an insight into your own answers to your predicaments, or insights into your own psychological makeup, or insights into Emptiness of objects and phenomena – including the Emptiness of self-image and the Emptiness of judgments against others.

Personally, as I was going through the excruciating process of nothing but the awareness of the breath and the body, all my past pain and unmet needs were churned out from their depths and brought to surface. After struggling with this for a couple of days, I found myself beginning to restructure my sense of Self. I realised that all my life I had attached so much significance to achievements that my self image consisted of the degrees, awards, praise, or the external validations that came to me. I could clearly see the ways in which I had found unwholesome ways to take care of myself and to preserve my sense of superiority, and how in that moment I had ignored the hurt I may be causing to others. I also realised that in the process of proving my sense of superiority to myself, I had failed to connect to people in a real way. As if whatever suffering people were going through was really their own doing and that I would not go through that same suffering because I had a better control over situations. I was shocked to see how I had inadvertently

isolated myself psychologically – something that an outside observer would not have guessed. The most curious thing was that, for the first time, I felt fine about accepting it to myself. I had joined the “common humanity” and I had shifted into finding solace into the universality of all basic human emotions we all go through: pain and pleasure. I did not have the burden of being special anymore!

On the last day of the retreat, while contemplating over Buddha’s eight-fold path, we did meditations over Loving-Kindness Compassion. My heart was filled with a sense of togetherness and empathy for the whole humanity, in the way I had never experienced before. I experienced joy in the last morning’s community service we were expected to do and felt connected with all other participants regardless of what they were going through and regardless of their class and appearance. Accepting and rebuilding my own reality had opened my eyes to the reality of everybody else and to the reality that we all would be dealing with it at some point or the other.

After the retreat, when people asked me what was the most significant thing came out of my experience, my spontaneous answer was “I have stopped taking myself so seriously”. Since this transformation, I have felt a sense of freedom to try out new things without worrying about failing, to connect with people when I was in pain, and to hold people’s problems with compassion, not in pity or disdain. It certainly helped me to become a better therapist.

## Research

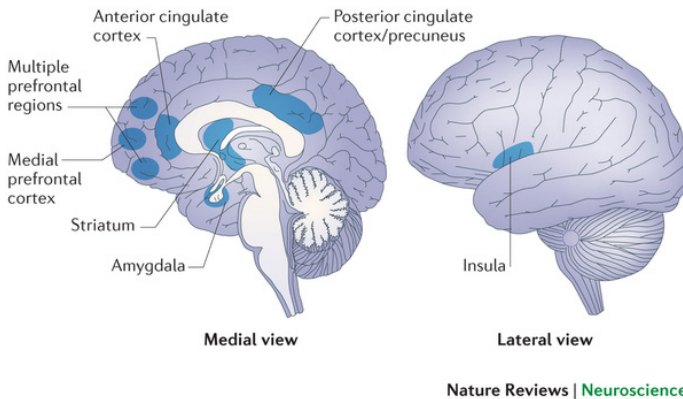
After doing several more retreats and continuing the practice I felt a sustained sense of what I had experienced in my first *Vipassana* retreat. After teaching meditation workshops myself and following up on research studies, I found two types of studies offering striking evidence of my own experience with the transformative quality of Vipassana training: first on the self-transcendence and second on compassion. On self-transcendence, there are two significant studies, first by Farb (Farb *et al.* 2007), and second by Brewer (Brewer *et al.* 2011).

Mindfulness training is shown to increase cortical thickness in insula in the brain. Insula is supposed to play a role in self-awareness explaining the greater self-awareness reported by Mindfulness meditators. But more importantly, Farb *et al.* (2007) show that after Mindfulness training, the right insula and medial Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) show greater uncoupling and right insula and dorsolateral PFC region show increased connectivity. The authors interpret these observations as more detached and objective analysis of what is noticed in the internal and external physiological sensations. They believe that this implies a shift away from subjective

self-referential processing based on stories our mind makes and based on affective states.

DMN (Default Mode Network) which includes midline structure of the brain has been widely believed to be responsible for self-referential processing. This processing would mean holding perceptions based on how we interpret the past and the future for ourselves, without paying attention to the reality of the present moment. DMN shows high activity during mind wandering. Brewer *et al.* (2011) show diminished activity in the regions of DMN (the Medial Prefrontal Cortex and Posterior Cingulate Cortex) in fMRI of meditators compared to the controls. This has been interpreted as diminished self-referential processing. The functional connectivity analysis in this study also suggests that a meditator has greater access to the internal states while forming perspectives, as opposed to making stimulus-independent projections.

Figure 1 is taken from a review of neuro-scientific studies on Mindfulness Meditation training (Tang *et al.* 2015). It shows various brain regions that get affected by Mindfulness meditation training. This also covers the regions mentioned in Farb and Brewers' studies.



**Figure 1.** Schematic view of some of the brain regions involved in attention control (the anterior cingulate cortex and the striatum), emotion regulation (multiple prefrontal regions, limbic regions and the striatum) and self-awareness (the insula, medial prefrontal cortex and posterior cingulate cortex and precuneus).

What these studies support is that mindfulness training creates a shift towards more non-attached objective analysis of the experiences that come to us. It is less self-centred, and less based on our usual patterns of the way we interpret past

regrets and future worries. This is an important shift for reducing the habitual “personalisation” we tend to do which is known to create discord and disharmony with our environment.

## Loving-Kindness and Compassion

The second type of studies offering evidence on how *Vipassana* training creates harmony through social mutuality is on Loving Kindness and Compassion. Loving Kindness is defined as a positive emotion of wishing happiness, joy, and peace for others. Compassion is defined as empathy for the pain of others along with the sincere wish that the pain be reduced.

Three researchers require special mention here. Richard Davidson (Lutz *et al.* 2008), the founder of the Centre for Investigating Healthy Minds at University of Wisconsin, was one of the first neuroscientists to use fMRI technique to study the neurological changes due to Mindfulness, particularly from the Loving-Kindness Compassion meditations. The findings from this particular study indicate that neural circuitry associated with empathy response (insula and cingulate cortices) is activated more amongst the expert meditators of Loving-Kindness and Compassion compared to novices. This also indicates the possibility of increasing empathy by compassion training. Further studies conducted at the same centre show more precisely that mindfulness meditation training and compassion meditations increase the level of empathy but also the ability to respond altruistically by setting aside more egocentric fear-based responses to disturbing events (Weng *et al.* 2013).

The second researcher Tanya Singer, Director of the Department of Social Neuroscience at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig, Germany, is the world’s leading expert on empathy. Empathy is the ability to feel the emotions of the other person in distress as if it is happening to you, and compassion is empathy followed by the wish that the pain of the other be alleviated. Amongst other things, Tanya Singer and her colleagues show that although empathic response may generate burnout, compassion training may reflect a new coping strategy to overcome empathic distress and strengthen resilience (Klimecki *et al.* 2014). This is an important finding in the realm of social behaviour and social mutuality where the compassion training in *Vipassana* meditation would in fact generate extending towards others in need, first by a sincere wish and eventually by taking some action.

The third researcher with significant contribution to the understanding the benefits of positive emotions and authentic social connections is Barbara Fredrickson, the Director of the Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Laboratory at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In her studies to



measure the positive resonance people feel when they encounter someone else's positive mood, she looked at something called Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia (RSA), which is a variation in heart rate affected by a cranial nerve called the Vagus nerve. Fredrickson found that people with higher RSA report more moments of close, warm, positive connection with other people – and the more they report these moments, the more their RSA increases throughout the day. In addition, her studies show that loving-kindness meditation training leads to increased RSA, in conjunction with positive emotion and social connection. Her results indicate that meditation may encourage an upward positivity trend and compassionate connection to others (Fredrickson *et al.* 2013).

## Conclusion

The power of *Vipassana* lies in understanding the Emptiness of a permanent, static, and all-independent self-image that we dearly hold on to. This makes us egocentric and less empathic in social situations. *Vipassana* trains the practitioner in internalising this Emptiness, and ironically creating freedom from externally defined self-image. At the same time, the Loving-Kindness and Compassion training which is also part of *Vipassana*, gives rise to increased empathy without the expected burnout. The non-attachment created by *Vipassana* training balances the possible emotional overload when we encounter someone else under distress. We are more likely to help. Loving-Kindness and Compassion also creates positive emotions and the observer of such emotions responds to it by feeling the same, leading to an upward positive spiral. Such positivity generates social connections and social mutuality, leading to increased sense of well-being.

With the above observations, one may safely say that a community practising *Vipassana*, including Loving-Kindness and Compassion training, may have the power of transforming into a harmony within oneself and with others.

## References

- Analayo, 2004. *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realisation*. Birmingham: Windhorse Publications.
- Black, D. S., 2014. Mindfulness-Based Interventions: An Antidote to Suffering in the Context of Substance Use, Misuse, and Addiction, *Substance Use and Misuse* Vol. 49, Iss. 5, 2014.
- Brewer, J. A. *et al.* 2011. Meditation experience is associated with differences in default mode network activity and connectivity. *Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA* 108, 20254–20259.
- Epstein, M. 1995, 2013. *Thoughts Without a Thinker*. New York: Basic Books.



- Farb, N., Segal, Z., Mayberg, H., Bean, J., McKeon, D., Fatima, Z., and Anderson, A. (2007). Attending to the present: mindfulness meditation reveals distinct neural modes of self-reference, *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 2(4), 313-322.
- Fredrickson, B. *et al.* (2013). Social Connections Drive the 'Upward Spiral' of Positive Emotions and Health, *Psychological Science*, May 9, 2013. <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/social-connections-drive-the-upward-spiral-of-positive-emotions-and-health.html>
- Klimecki O. M., Leiberg S., Ricard M., Singer T. 2014. Differential pattern of functional brain plasticity after compassion and empathy training. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 9, 873-879.
- Lutz A, Brefczynski-Lewis J, Johnstone T, Davidson R.J. 2008. Regulation of the Neural Circuitry of Emotion by Compassion Meditation: Effects of Meditative Expertise. *PLoS ONE* 3(3): e1897.
- Tang, Y., Britta K. Hölzel and Michael I. Posner. 2015. The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation, *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 16, 213-225.
- Weng HY, Fox AS, Shackman AJ, Stodola DE, Caldwell JZK, Olson MC, *et al.* Compassion training alters altruism and neural responses to suffering. *Psychol Sci* 2013; 24:1171-80.



## CHAPTER 27

# Harmonising Body, Mind and Soul

## Healing and Developing New Consciousness

*Manisha A. Mehrotra*

### Introduction

Today the whole world is going through a paradigm shift, in the concepts of economic development and human development, in terms of how we define our growth. Classical Economists like Adam Smith, J.B. Say and others equalled happiness with only material things, that is, when the economic development began to be measured only in terms of income employment, savings, capital formation and so on. The classical concept of free market economy was challenged by J.M. Keynes and this led to the growth of new dimension of state intervention in Keynesian economics which brought into light the concepts of maximum social welfare at its centre stage. Most of the post-World War countries had been engaged in either developing their macro economic variables like national income, per capita income, capital formation, savings and investments and the like or they focused in shifting their growth strategies on the development of human welfare through social sector, i.e. health education, housing, etc., and increasing the standard of living of people directly. But lately it has been accepted now that neither of two approaches has been accurate because it did not bring happiness to its people, rather created more consumerism, which led to the greed for more power struggle and exploitation of natural and man-made resources to its highest level and consequently resulted in

emptiness inside every human being. However, after the rise of globalisation in the late 1980s, the world started shifting from measuring economic development through pure monetary transactions to social sector development and new concept of Human Development Index came into the fore which focused on social aspects. It was realised that from Classical to Liberal the economic growth had led to gross inequalities in allocation of resources, distribution of goods and services, income and assets and more so by creating a wide gap between the haves and have-nots. Thus the whole global village became the playground for segregated class of conflicts arising at every corner. This made the proponents of globalisation rethink the different aspects of human lives in which the quality of life was also given importance along with quantitative development. Therefore, the countries which gave due importance to its people and not just their infrastructural and industrial growth, became predominant. The Scandinavian island nations like Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and others topped the developmental phase by giving great value to the development of its Social beings. Hence United Nations adopted for Human Development Index as a better benchmark in measuring the paradigm of development.

However, today the New World Order which is very much being talked by the Human Conscious Groups has raised attention on focusing Global Happiness Index replacing Economic and Human Development Index and being projected as only mechanism of assimilating and balancing all growth strategies with inner happiness of humanity.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The Global Happiness Report is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness. In July 2011, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution inviting member countries to measure the happiness of their people and to use this to help guide their public policies. On April 2, 2012, this was followed by the first UN High Level Meeting on "Happiness and Well-Being: Defining a New Economic Paradigm," which was chaired by Prime Minister Jigme Thinley of Bhutan, the first and so far only country to have officially adopted gross national happiness instead of gross domestic product as their main development indicator. It drew international attention as the world's first global happiness survey. The report outlined the state of world happiness, causes of happiness and misery, and policy implications highlighted by case studies.

The first report was published in 2012, the second in 2013, and the third in 2015. The World Happiness Report 2016 Update, which ranks 156 countries by their happiness levels, was released in Rome in advance of UN World Happiness

Day, March 20<sup>th</sup>. Denmark took the top spot as the 'happiest country' in the world, displacing Switzerland, according to The World Happiness Report 2016, published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a global initiative of the United Nations. Switzerland was ranked second on the list, followed by Iceland (3), Norway (4) and Finland (5).

India was ranked 118<sup>th</sup> in the list, down one slot from last year on the index. The report takes into account the GDP per capita, life expectancy, social support and freedom to make life choices as indicators of happiness. The report said that India was among the group of 10 countries witnessing the biggest happiness declines, along with Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen and Botswana. India comes below Somalia (76), China (83), Pakistan (92), Iran (105), Palestinian Territories (108) and Bangladesh (110). A string of African countries are at the bottom of the list, including Togo, Benin, and Burundi – along with some other countries, like Bulgaria (144<sup>th</sup> place) and Georgia (134<sup>th</sup>).

The report ranks the countries across six categories: GDP per head, "healthy life expectancy," "having someone to count on," "perceived freedom to make life choices," freedom from corruption, and prevalence of generosity. Each country gets a score out of 10, with Denmark achieving 7.7, and the average being 5.1. Togo, at the bottom, has 2.9.

This year, for the first time, the World Happiness Report gives a special role to the measurement and consequences of inequality in the distribution of well-being among countries and regions. In previous reports the editors have argued that happiness provides a better indicator of human welfare than do income, poverty, education, health and good government measured separately. In a parallel way, they now argue that the inequality of well-being provides a broader measure of inequality. "People are happier living in societies where there is less inequality of happiness. They also find that happiness inequality has increased significantly (comparing 2012-2015 to 2005-2011) in most countries, in almost all global regions, and for the population of the world as a whole," the report said.

Leading experts across fields—economics, psychology, survey analysis, national statistics, health, public policy and more—describe how measurements of well-being can be used effectively to assess the progress of nations. The reports review the state of happiness in the world today and show how the new science of happiness explains personal and national variations in happiness. They reflect a new worldwide demand for more attention to happiness as a criterion for government policy. The recent report reflects growing global interest in using happiness and subjective well-being as primary indicators of the quality of human development. Because of this growing interest, many governments, communities

and organisations are using happiness data, and the results of subjective well-being research, to enable policies that support better lives.

Happiness plays three roles on the path to the good society. First, as Aristotle emphasised, it is the *Summum Bonum*, the supreme good. Defining the sources of happiness has engaged the labours of philosophers since Aristotle first set out the goal in *The Politics* and *The Nichomachean Ethics*. Yet human happiness has remained the end goal, the telos of social organisation.

Second, happiness has become metric, a quantitative benchmark. Thanks to the work of hundreds of psychologists and other social scientists in recent decades, we have arrived at systematic, tested and widely accepted measurements of self-reported (or subjective) happiness.

The World Happiness Report has emphasised the two main dimensions of happiness: evaluative and effective. Evaluative happiness, for example, as measured by the Cantril Ladder featured in the World Happiness Report (Huppert and So 2013), asks individuals for an evaluation of the overall quality of one's life. Affective happiness, by contrast, measures the fluctuating emotions at a point of time, including both positive and negative emotions. Third, happiness metrics offers a way to test alternative theories of happiness and the social good. Moral philosophers from ancient times until now could argue their case, but not test their theories. Now we can use survey data on happiness to weigh alternative theories of "the good society." In effect, happiness studies represent an important advance of moral philosophy since age-old questions about human well-being can now be tested.

Hence, researchers have become interested in alternatives – in particular, measuring happiness more systematically (though one recent study claims it's nearly impossible to create an economy based on happiness). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development now produces a Better Life Index, while Bhutan – a great advocate for happiness research – publishes a "Gross National Happiness" index.

The U.N. published a similar study last year, covering the years between 2005 to 2011; the latest report looks at 2010 to 2012. The good news: happiness has improved in 60 out of 130 countries. The bad news: it has worsened in 41 (some couldn't be compared from last time). The United States had a slight decline in its happiness number (minus 0.283) – about the same fall as Japan, Hungary, and Finland. Egypt and Greece saw the biggest drops of all, presumably because of political unrest in Egypt and economic woes in Greece.

Happiness gains were most common in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Two-thirds of South Asian countries experienced decreases. Europe was

split: six of 17 countries had increases, but seven had decreases (including Portugal, Italy, Spain, and Greece, which were hit by the financial crisis). Happiness was down in much of the Middle East and North Africa.

The report postulates that happiness is desirable not only as an end goal but also because it has beneficial side-effects, namely, that happier citizens are more productive, live longer, earn more, and contribute more to society. For that reason, the authors write, governments should invest as much in mental health and public services as they do in promoting economic growth.

The OECD also scores European countries highly for happiness. Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, and the Netherlands are also in its top 10 (Australia is first). Meanwhile, the Happy Planet Index, produced by the U.K.'s New Economics Foundation, has Costa Rica, Vietnam, and Colombia as the top three. That report, however, focuses more on environmental impact than the other indexes.

The Danes' reign as the happiest nation on Earth and take up half of the top 10 places on an exhaustive and increasingly influential index of global well-being.

The study, edited by a group of international academics, including the celebrated US economist Jeffrey Sachs and Richard Layard, head of the Well-Being Programme at the London School of Economics, ranks countries by a series of factors, some nationally determined, for example GDP per capita and healthy life expectancy. Others are worked out through information gathered via the Gallup World Poll, a vast system of surveys that began in 2005 and now covering more than 160 countries.

The idea of assessing population by contentment rather than just wealth has proved influential, and is promoted by both the United Nations, whose Sustainable Development Solutions Network publishes the index, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. While the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan remains best known for its "gross national happiness", David Cameron was another pioneer, in 2010 instructing the Office for National Statistics to collate data on contentment. Speaking to reporters Sachs said that what he called "social capital" had as much impact as economics as we have to pay attention to the strength of society as well as the strength of economies when we consider well-being."

This partly explained the relatively low ranking of US, he said, because rising wealth had been than those of men – on average 0.09 higher on a 10-point scale – although there were some matched by lower levels of trust in government. The 2015 report was the first to consider the findings by gender and age. Women's evaluations of their well-being tended to be slightly stronger variations by region.

Differences by age were both bigger and more varied, with the overall picture showing the positive outlooks of younger people tending to fall by almost 0.6 points by middle age, then remaining flat. However, even these were tiny compared with the overall differences between or within nations.

Despite the greater average optimism of youth, the report also focuses on mental health in children found 10% of people under 18 have a diagnosable illness, such as depression or anxiety. More than half of these will go on to experience mental illness in adulthood.

Layard, said the findings emphasised the need to treat the issue seriously: “As we consider the value of happiness in today’s report we must of course also consider the need to invest early on in the lives of our children so that they grow to become independent, productive and happy adults, in turn contributing socially and economically.” Therefore, it is very obvious that only economic growth cannot bring sustainable development in the lives of human rather we need to revisit our growth and development paradigm and see how the Happiness is manifested in our lives only then growth of humanity is possible at the highest levels.

## How to Achieve the State of Happiness

This question remained unanswered for many centuries after the classical economists Adam Smith, J.B. Say and others equalled happiness with only material things. However, the recent quest of developed nations for creating harmony amongst Body, Mind and Soul has led to the outbursts of new revolution in alternate therapies. These alternate systems of Energy Sciences based on ancient Indian system of Yoga, Meditation are becoming new craze on the global platform. There are many more advanced Spiritual Technologies which were earlier kept secret by Great Teachers and only practiced by Esoteric groups, are now becoming more open as it has been experienced by the modern day science, especially Quantum Physics that energy shift is taking place in Higher Consciousness of not only the people but the whole planet Mother Earth.

This new phase of realisation of the inner self is helping the masses in achieving true happiness.

One such advanced system of Spiritual Technology is called Pranic Healing and Arhatic Yoga which uses the Cosmic Energy called *Prana* – the Life force based on the Universal Law of Energy. This Bioenergy is the life sustaining energy of the Universe. Pranic Healing is a highly evolved and tested system of energy medicine developed by Grand Master Choa Kok Sui that utilises *prana* to balance, harmonise and transform the body's energy processes. *Prana* is a Sanskrit word



that means *life-force*. This invisible bio-energy or vital energy keeps the body alive and maintains a state of good health. In acupuncture, the Chinese refer to this subtle energy as *Chi*. It is also called *Ruach* or the Breath of Life in Hebrew.

Pranic Healing is a simple yet powerful and effective system of no-touch energy healing. It is based on the fundamental principles that the body is a self-repairing living entity that possesses the ability to heal itself and that the healing process is accelerated by increasing this life force that is readily available from the sun, air and ground to address physical and emotional imbalances. Master Choa Kok Sui says, "Life Energy or prana is all around us. It is pervasive; we are actually in an ocean of Life Energy. Based on this principle, a healer can draw in Pranic Energy or Life Energy from the surroundings."

As long as man has been walking on two legs there has been a tradition of "laying on hands" which implies people of the ancient cultures, e.g. Sumerians, Mayans, Egyptians, Greeks and many others knew the art of self healing by using these cosmic energies. There are close to 50 cultures around the world that have been identified as understanding the concept of 'life energy' in one form or another; e.g., *Ki* (Japanese), *Chi* (Chinese), *Prana* (Sanskrit), *Neyatoneyah* (Lakota Sioux), *Num* (Kalahari Kung), *Ruach* or *Roohah* (Hebrew), *Rooh* (Persian), *Lung* (Tibetan), and so forth. All of these cultures have their energy healing modalities. Pranic healing is one such advanced modality which can be used as complementary method to modern medical science for the successful treatment of various chronic and psychosomatic diseases like blood pressure, depression, diabetes, anxiety, fear and phobia and stress to name a few.

Grand Master Choa Kok Sui (GMCKS) founder of Modern Pranic Healing and Arhatic Yoga was a chemical engineer and businessman of Chinese descent who grew up in the Philippines and researched extensively on oriental forms of therapy to come up with the concept of advanced healing techniques. Recognising multiple applications for the use Prana or Pranic Energy, Grand Master Choa Kok Sui is one of the greatest Masters of Energy of our generation. He being an Internationally acclaimed author of more than 20 books, some of which have been published in 37 languages and read in over 80 countries worldwide. He also taught over 20 different courses on Pranic Healing, Arhatic Yoga, and higher spiritual courses around the world and had seen 100 centres in over 90 countries before passing away on March 19, 2007.

For seekers on the spiritual path, Master Choa has developed Arhatic Yoga which is an advanced meditational technique that proportionally balances three aspects of Universal Love, Intelligence and the Will. Practitioners are thereby able to develop higher intuition, advanced mental powers, stable emotions, clearer qualities of good character and are able to move more rapidly towards

becoming totally integrated beings of Divine Light. These powerful techniques use ancient technology in original and creative combinations in order to activate and align the *chakras* and to awaken the *Kundalini* energy or the "sacred fire." According to Master "The knowledge of being able to deal with simple ailments is quite empowering." His spiritual gurus included Lord Mahaguruji Mei Ling, and his disciple Chohan Jig Mei Ling. By degrees, Master Choa has gone on to expand consciousness in multiple ways – including the current disciplines of Arhatic Yoga, Crystal Healing, Pranic Self-Defence and Superbrain Yoga. What makes pranic healing stand apart from other alternative medical practices is that this system is faster and more effective. It is non-invasive and does not require physical contact with the patient. The use of colour pranas at the advanced levels is unique; its techniques are more scientific. Is modern pranic healing a distillation of other existing systems such as Chinese Chi Kung, Reiki, Christian 'laying on of hands,' or the Tibetan healing arts? Master says, "Yes, you could say it is a synthesis of the important points from each system. Healing was an art then, not a science. Our spiritual thesis was to develop the healing art into a fully developed healing science. The preparatory work began when I was a teenager. It took more than 18 years to develop Modern Pranic Healing."

Its potent call was evident in the 2,250-strong, pan-Indian attendance during Philippines-born Grand Master Choa Kok Sui's 54<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration at Bangalore's Christ College auditorium on August 15, 2006. The gathering included practitioners from among 90,000-plus Indian Pranic healers, including 12,000 based in Karnataka alone. The attendees were drawn from 16 healing foundations across India and abroad. Master Choa's discourses drew a significant IT and BPO presence. On August 16, over 520 pan-Indian pranic healers met him at Bangalore. At Kolkata, close to 1,000 people attended Master Choa's meeting on August 21.

## How Healing Works

For Physical ailments the simple yet powerful Pranic Healing techniques have been designed by Guru "Master Choa" which is based primarily on two concepts –removal of dirty *prana* from the concerned body part and to energise it with clean and healthy *prana* drawing from Cosmos.

For physical beautification, weight loss and body rejuvenation the best energy solutions are Pranic Facelift, Body Sculpting and Rejuvenation which keep our body mind and spirit uplifted by defying age, reshaping our bodies and revitalising our inner selves.

For Emotional and Mental issues the permanent solution for many psychosomatic problems like stress, anxiety, fear, anger the answer is Pranic Psychotherapy.

For Financial and Material problems the Guru has designed the course of Kriyashakti, Spiritual Business Management and Pranic Feng Sui.

For Spiritual Healing and Growth the most potent advanced system is Arhatic Yoga. For seekers on the spiritual path, Master Choa has developed Arhatic Yoga which is an advanced meditational technique that proportionally balances three aspects of Universal Love, Intelligence and the Will.

The efficacy of the healing depends on the level of scanning done by the healer. One of the most unique features of Pranic healing modality is scanning taught at the basic level by the two hands for diagnosis of the root problem in the etheric and physical body. The affected body part along with the *Chakras* of the patient is then treated energetically and gradually the problem is healed.

## **Practising Meditation is the Key to Balance Body, Mind and Soul**

Meditation is very important for those of you who want to achieve calmness and stillness, or to have a healthier body, purer mind, or maybe to attract positive things, people and increase your good luck. Your intention might even be to become happier, more intelligent, to develop intuition or achieve illumination. It can also be more selfless towards creating a better world for all.

One such powerful technique created by Master Choa is Meditation on Twin Hearts (MTH) which is a pillar of light for Pranic healers and Arhatic Yogis. It brings Peace, Illumination, Self Awareness and acts as a Bridge between Soul and Incarnated Soul. It is a powerful technique for stress management. Once the divine energy flows through the practitioner, it naturally flushes the used up and unwanted energies within the system; so after the meditation one becomes a fresher and energetic thereby reducing stress, anxiety and depression.

It even disintegrates the unwanted emotions and thought forms within our *chakras* and aura. Thus it makes the mind sharper and leads to greater happiness. Its secret relies on activating the human energy centres, the Heart and the Crown without which illumination is not possible.

Research and Scientific studies have been completed on the neurophysiological, psychological, and sociological and psychospiritual effects of the Meditation on Twin Hearts. These studies have been conducted in the most part by Glenn

Mendoza, M.D. in New York City, New York and by Dr. Vrunda and Supriya Ghorpadkar and Mr. Sundaram in Bangalore, India.

Another such research conducted by senior practitioner De Anna Graziano, a pure lifestyle trainer and coach, brought to light that Twin Heart Meditation has a very positive effect on Psychological functioning and Quantitative EEG (Brain mapping) (P300 event related potential). The test was conducted on 12 non-meditators and 12 meditators. All subjects showed significant decrease in anxiety immediately after the meditation, with experienced meditators scoring lower anxiety premeditation than the non-meditators. Non-meditators showed their happiness scores increase significantly. Higher baselines levels of “positive traits” such as happiness and calmness were significantly higher at baseline in the experienced group than the non-meditators group. Experienced meditators scored significantly higher than the non-meditators on both problem-focused coping and stopping unpleasant thoughts and emotions suggesting that experienced meditators are better equipped to manage difficulties in life.

However, there are many ways of activating the heart and crown *chakras*, such as Hatha yoga, yogic breathing techniques, chanting mantras and visualisation techniques. All of these techniques are effective but not fast enough, while one of the most effective and fastest ways still remains the Meditation on Twin Hearts. Various other meditation techniques have been taught by GMCKS for Soul Realisation and Achieving Oneness with Higher Soul which is exclusively practiced by the Arhatic Yogis.

This advanced mode of healing may seem to challenge the faculty of Science, which has no room for paranormal or unfounded theories but the successful applications of Pranic healing over last twenty-five years on various patients done by the doctors themselves bring a drastic change in the perception of the medical fraternity. This advanced scientific energy system intends to bring permanent change in our different levels of the body, namely emotional, mental and spiritual or causal as mentioned by Maharishi Patanjali in *Yogasutra* and the basic books of Theosophy. Human beings cannot see much of the visible light spectrum, there is a whole world of unseen energy that can be difficult for the mind to grasp without scientific measurements for verification.

One method to bridge this gap is bioelectrophotography. The goal of this is to capture these energy fields seen as a light around the body. Several doctors also testify to the Kirlian photography and aura imaging which has proved the presence of an energy field around entities, and the fact that living beings exist within an energy field has been given the nod by science, says R.K. Tuli, a qualified doctor, and currently head of the Department of Holistic Medicine at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Delhi. “Modern medicine has its limitations, in that it can only heal

the physique, but falls flat when it comes to emotional healing. It is only with alternative therapy that a complete cure can be arrived at," adds Tuli, who's been dabbling in alternative therapy for more than three decades.

It was to unite the conventional with the alternative and get the best out of both practices that the Apollo Group of Hospitals founded a holistic medicine department at its Chennai unit ten years ago after the successful cure of Dr. Pratap Reddy, the chairman of the Apollo Hospital Group, Chennai by Pranic Healing. Subsequently, they opened similar departments in Delhi and Hyderabad, to offer patients a complete wellness package. Apollo Hospitals' Wellness Centre in Chennai witnessed a demonstration of Pranic healing by Grandmaster Choa Kok Sui on August 18, 2004. Dr Prathap C. Reddy, Apollo Hospitals Chairman, provided the audience with a background to the Wellness Centre and said the "millennium vision was to move away from illness to wellness. "The Wellness Centre provides alternative healing systems such as Aroma Therapy, Pranic Healing, Ayurveda and a dietetics programme.

Another such example is Dr. Swarna Das, MBBS, MD, working at Apollo Hospital, Chennai has a long experience of using Pranic healing in IHD Patients as documented by Gas Discharge Visualisation and Cardiovascular Cartography at International Symposium on Yoga and Lifestyle, Dharan, Nepal. She has authored a curriculum book for AICTE certified course on Pranic Healing Health Management. Various clinical applications fused with Pranic healing have been recorded by Dr. Ramesh and Sir Cliff Saldana.

World Pranic Healing Foundation Research Centre established in 2012 in Mysore, does extensive research on application of pranic energy on various aspects of biosphere of our planet Earth and the higher consciousness. One such controlled group survey was conducted by them in collaboration with Aayush Department on 150 people which brought out the amazing experiences of different people on emotional level like happiness, stress, anxiety, etc. Karnataka Open State University has accepted Pranic Healing as a part of Yoga curriculum.

Modern Quantum physics has already shed some light on the role of consciousness and reality. There are multitudes of studies and phenomenon that also show how they are intertwined. One example is human aura and intentions. A Russian scientist and Princeton Biophysics Professor, Dr. Konstantin Korotkov, demonstrated that the human energy field called Aura is responsible for changing the physical material world. It's the action of mind on matter. They are developing the idea that our consciousness is part of the material world and that with our consciousness we can directly influence our world. With our emotions, with our intentions we can directly influence our world.

One such experiment is the “Global Consciousness Experiment” initiated by the Institute of Noetic Sciences alongside Princeton University. The detection of bio-electric activity is old, and many contemporary ideas of it were actually developed years ago. Bioelectric and bio-magnetic fields formed by the body have a direct effect on the physical material world. This is one example of known science within the mainstream which could have tremendous implications for health care and more.

## **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that now the modern medical science has started accepting the existence of Bioenergetic force called as Life Energy which has tremendous effect on our every level of existence. We Indians should be very proud that our ancient Vedas and Upanishads had known these long back but now the world is looking upon us to take the lead in bringing spirituality and science together, and in this respect the alternate therapies like Pranic Healing and Arhatic Yoga play significant role in harmonising it in our day to day life for healthy, wealthy, wiser, holistic life and motivating us to inculcate a balance between material and spiritual life.

Further the global world’s basic issues of inequality, poverty and unemployment, etc., can only be addressed if the human race understands that the mutual harmony is the most essential condition for our all round development and it cannot be achieved by ignoring any one aspect of our existence, say, it be nature or modern scientific technological development. The balance between the both is necessary and sufficient condition for our sustainable development on this planet. As rightly pointed out by Einstein that Spirituality without Science is Blind and Science without Spirituality is Lame. Hence, for shifting the vibrations of our planet to higher dimensions and reaching to the point of critical mass which is said to be the level when whole planet mother Earth would shift from Third Dimension to Fifth Dimension. It is imperative for all of us to move ahead of our vested caste, creed, colour, monetary conflicts and bring in a new paradigm of development where every country would share equally the Happiness Index and every member of the civil society would have equal rights to live with dignity, which has been aptly summarised in the words of J. Krishnamurti, only then the highest function of education to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole would be materialised. This would surely bring in New World Order of harmonious lifestyle where we would have equilibrium between resources, wealth and production processes. The mass awakening is definitely taking us way ahead in this direction and common people are able to understand that there is something

much higher than Body, Mind and Soul thereby, resulting to the advancement of our Realisation with Self and Universe.

## References

World Happiness Report 2015

World Human Development Report 2014

World Happiness Report 2016

Christopher Shields, *The Summum Bonum in Aristotle's Ethics Fractured Goodness*

Huppert, F.A, and So, T.T.C, *Flourishing Across Europe: Application of a New Conceptual Framework for Defining Well-Being, Social Indicators Research*, Springer Open Choice, 2013

<http://www.gnhcentrebhutan.org/what-is-gnh/the-story-of-gnh>

Jeffrey D. Sachs: World Happiness Report, Director, The Earth Institute, Columbia University.

Lanza, Dr. Robert, *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness Are the Keys to Understanding the Nature of the Universe*, SOTT.Net, September 16, 2016.

<https://pranichealing.com>

<http://www.globalpranichealing.com/en/pranic-healing/master-choa-kok-sui>

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1061002/asp/atleisure/story\\_6785552.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1061002/asp/atleisure/story_6785552.asp)

Healing Breath, 14 September 2006, Hindu Business Line – India

<http://www.globalpranichealing.com/en/pranic-healing/meditation-on-twin-hearts>

<http://www.pranichealingandwellness.com/meditation.html>

How to Heal Yourself, The Telegraph – Kolkata, India, 2 October 2006

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2004/08/19/stories/2004081900561900.htm>

<http://www.apollohospitalsbangalore.com/index.php/general-medicine-clinical-team/dr-swarna-das>

<http://noosphere.princeton.edu>

<http://noetic.org/research/project/global-consciousness-project/>

<http://www.collective-evolution.com/2013/11/18/psychokinesis-science-fact-not-fiction>





## CHAPTER 28

# Harmony and a Journey with Wholeness

*Minati Pradhan*

At first, these talks were to be called “From Chaos to Life.” In the process of writing them, however, I felt I should call them “Becoming Human.”

“Is this not the life undertaking of us all... to become human.” It can be a long and sometimes painful process. It involves growth to freedom, an opening up of our hearts to others, no longer hiding behind masks or behind walls of fear and prejudice. It means discovering our common humanity.

Strangely enough, this process of becoming human occurred most profoundly for me when I started living with men and women with intellectual disabilities, people who are not very capable on the intellectual or practical level but extremely gifted in relationships. They are people of the heart, people of trust. With them I began to discover that human maturity comes as we begin to bring our heads and our hearts together. In my early adulthood, I had developed my intellectual and rational capacities, living with people who had disabilities called me to develop my capacity to relate to others. With them I learned how to become more open and vulnerable to others, especially to those who are different.

—Jean Vanier 1998:1-2

Harmony calls for realisation of wholeness which is a journey. In this chapter I share my journey of growing up with a differently-abled child and moving together towards harmony and wholeness. To me wholeness means “embracing the brokenness as an integral part of life. It does not mean perfection” (Giri 2017). Perfectionism is that which oppresses the soul. On the contrary, wholeness liberates it. In this context, when the question of “WHY ME?” arises, the school where my son had studied, a preschool for young deaf children, provided me the listening ear and counselling. It was to embrace life as it is. To enjoy my kid's childhood, before it's gone forever. They say, if God closes one door, He definitely opens a window. I observed most of the deaf students of that school were really very talented. Personally, I believe that every human being is talented in some way or other.

Hearing impairment is a disability where the affected child can be helped to live a life that is almost like normal. The children have to be fitted with the suitable hearing aids and give them special training, and they will acquire language and speech. There is also another surgical option of cochlear implant which sends sound signals to the brain. If you look at the other forms of disabilities, they are more difficult to rehabilitate fully. As a mother, you can give your child the best gift ever—that's the gift of language. Oral language, not the sign language, as almost all the hearing people are expected to communicate with.

When my son was around eight or nine years, he started asking me the same question as I was asking initially to myself, “WHY ME?” I took him to different places to show persons with other forms of disabilities, to prove that he was much better off. God has given him that to embrace that unlike his classmates who were full-term babies at birth and without any family history of deafness. He was a pre-term baby of 26 weeks, with a very low birth weight of 1.3 kg. So, with other under-developed organs and medical complications, it was the first priority of doctors to save his life as he spent his first forty days in an incubator. They provided him with high antibiotics to save his life, which might have disrupted the growth of inner hair cells or maybe the low birth-weight would have caused the hearing loss after a few months. Ours was not a marriage among relatives as it is the main cause of disability among South Indian families. Not all the relative marriages and pre-term babies face these problems, but these are the probable causes of disability. I was consoling myself that if this could happen to any normal full-term born children, then my son...

As they had said, the same crying mothers would grow to be better persons, after few years, just because of their children; it was turning true for me. I became emotionally stronger and could provide support to others. I grew much matured than my age.

After four years, my son completed his preschool there. He was admitted into the mainstream of education in his first standard. During those years, wholeness was all about solitude and community.

- **Solitude** It is not about living apart from others, it's about not living apart from you (living with yourself in true sense).
- **Community** It is about living face to face with others and never losing the awareness that we are connected to each other.

These two things we all mothers followed religiously. Every day, after leaving the children in the school we spent enough time to discuss each other's lessons, new ideas, the setbacks and the possibilities remained topics of discussion. Collectively each of us, mothers, learnt that every child is unique, and so is his/her learning.

We all live in communities. Apart from the school group, each mother-child duo belonged to some other community too: like neighbours, colleagues and relatives. Without fearing of being mocked at, we exposed the children every aspect of life – be it a marriage, a function, any socio-cultural event, public transport, etc. They attracted some unwanted attention; but we taught them to ignore such things; be a bit thick skinned. We encouraged them to interact with others when their mothers were around. As the mother understood her child the best, we helped in the communication. Two hearing impaired children were not allowed to communicate each other outside the school, as it would lead to children using sign language which was easier than oral communication for them at that time. We also took enough care to discourage people from using sign language with them. Apart from the speech clarity of the children, we were measuring the physical, emotional and intellectual, and language development of our children with their hearing peers. Surprisingly, every time, it was always equal or more and never less.

There are six pillars of wholeness:

- The power of kindness
- Courage and creative life
- Belongingness and humanity
- Creative integrity
- Learning to count on oneself
- Creative rebellion

First one, the power of kindness and empathy (not sympathy) will go a long way to wipe out the-me-alone feeling from the caretakers mind. This is very important as it gives the sense of belongingness.

Secondly, the courage of choosing a not so easy path and being creative in every now and then will lead to a different level of achievement.

We all face the same challenges and standing for each other will lead to strong community sense.

Learning to count on yourself is about your progress, at the end of the day. Co-learning with your child and working on your own drawbacks and weaknesses .

Creative rebellion is thinking out of box ways to fit in the curriculum and making learning fun.

In wholeness, Art is an important aspect of wholeness.

While education is imparted, it is imparted in a complete circle. Wholeness education includes training, counselling, wellness coaching, intellectual education, physical education, spiritual education and life skills coaching. All these are imparted by the institution.

## **Promoting Wholeness and Well-being in Education, Especially in Disabled Sector**

- **Awareness** Creating awareness about the hearing-impaired children go a long way in creating empathy among teachers, other students and the society. Early intervention and rehabilitation of hearing-impaired children will lead to a near normal life for each of them.
- **Positive School Community** There should be a positive attitude about the schooling, bringing them up and a strong teacher-parent relationship.
- **Parenting Support and Education** Counselling parents, providing technical and para-medical support, coaching parents and providing speech therapy.
- **Be a Role Model** Be a role model for them and practice whatever habit you want them to cultivate.

Moving towards harmony and wholeness in challenging conditions like the above, calls for acts and breaths of love. I wish to conclude with the following words of mine about our need to hear the call of a love child:

### **Love Child**

I'm a love child  
Don't call me otherwise.  
I want a family  
And care of my mother

I want a home and  
Acceptance of my father.  
Then, why do you bother?

To punish me for  
The mistakes of others.  
I am not guilty  
But, your society is faulty  
Some hide love to protect their chair  
Some show artificiality  
And that's not fair.

I suffer silently,  
For no fault of mine  
Seeking some solace  
In smoking and wine.  
Walking the road of life  
As each day gets rougher  
It's a tight rope walk  
May be even tougher.

When all are equal  
Why, there's an invisible race?  
Need some dignity, rights and  
A heart that can give some place.

## References

- Giri, Ananta Kumar. 2017. *Learning the Art of Wholeness: Integral Education and Beyond*. Madras Institute of Development Studies: Manuscript.
- Vanier, Jean. 1998. *Becoming Human*. New York: Anchor Books.



## CHAPTER 29

# Mandala Art, Healing and Harmony

*Viviana Siddhi*

The word mandala, derived from Sanskrit, means sacred circle of life. It is a symbol of healing and wholeness in spiritual traditions around the world since ancient times. In many traditions and cultures, sacred symbols are used in the mandala art as tools of concentration and meditation. These also serve to assist physical, psychological and spiritual renewal. This tradition is quite ancient in archaic societies; man viewed himself as part of Nature, and Nature as integral to himself. In possession of this unity, he used sacred symbols which enabled him to see himself as part of the sacred cosmos, breathing and moving with life wherein all elements of existence were interlinked.

Sacred circular symbols and other universal geometric forms are the symbolic languages of living spirit. If they are made in a meditative state, they are pure information from the universe. As soon as we open our hearts to this creation, we gain deep peace. Our life is a learning journey of unconditional love. Mandalic forms and scintillating colours are purveyors of health and transformation.

I have been painting mandalas for more than 30 years, and step by step I have discovered the way to my inside.

When I paint, my soul becomes one with the colours and forms and together they create the mandala. Each step follows the other, as I enter a meditative state and contemplative union where time doesn't exist and all is one. In this way, I learned to be present during each moment of my life. By gazing on the artwork,

the viewer is invited to enter the same meditative and spiritual state. Art created in this dual awareness offers direct access to non-dualistic spirit.

In the human body along the spine are seven major mandala vortexes of creative energy called *chakras*. Each of these centres contains different vibratory rays of coloured light and sound, which regulate the body and mind. Mandala's art is a spiritual path where each individual discovers their soul. Each conscious or unconscious thought is a vibration of energy, that takes expression in the form of a mandala bringing a personal message. After realising these messages in life, questions and problems begin to disappear and peace takes instead.

Mandala, symbolises the uniting of darkness and light in inner harmony, synchronising both halves of the brain, affecting higher degrees of concentration and fostering increased creativity as well as deeper understanding of ourselves and others. Through painting Mandalas, we can tune into the natural rhythm of the universe, and connect with the wheel of life in our hearts. We begin to experience ourselves as a single focal point in a great stream of unified energy. Through this awareness, we become attuned to the natural rhythms of our universe.

Through regular practice we spiritually grow and gain the following:

- Clear mind
- Deeper active meditation
- Subconscious mind with awake state
- Increase insights
- Inner peace and mental balance
- Positive transformation in any aspect of our life
- Transformation of blockages and reaching the goals in natural way
- Work through traumatic experiences
- Cope with stress
- Resolve conflicts and challenges
- New perceptions enabling positive changes, growth and healing
- Discover what's really most important to you in your life
- See daily choices for an effective, balanced and fulfilling life
- Learn to eliminate any obstacles that stands in your way
- Learn to keep the intention for your goals and create your life
- Higher degrees of concentration
- Regain self-confidence and be present in each moment



## CHAPTER 30

# Human-Nature Harmony and Nature Worship

## Reappraisal of Indigenous Faith in Eastern Himalaya/Northeast India

*N.K. Das*

The symbiotic relationship between humans and the natural world is a universal truth. In tribal societies, divine power is rooted in environment and natural world. Anthropologists have described many aspects of ritual and myth associated with ecosystem. They view religion of tribes both as belief and thought as also ritual action. Notions of 'sacred' and ritual in primeval cultures have been cornerstones of anthropological thought (Emile Durkheim, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Victor Turner). Turner (1967:19) defines ritual as "prescribed formal behaviour for occasions .... having reference to beliefs in mystical beings and powers." Cosmology is a crucial component of indigenous religion. Edmund Leach perceived cosmology as (part of) 'the system of beliefs and practices' which social anthropologists refer to as primitive religion (1982:229). Cosmology entails ideas about the universe and the place of humans in the universe. A cosmology involves explanations of the past, present and future and it deals with the origins as well as the destiny of humans and of other forms of existence. All cultures have cosmologies which can be religious or non-religious, as means to interpret a society's entrenchment in the universe, earth, and biosphere and within humanity. The cosmologies of indigenous societies invoke respect for nature and for human well-being.<sup>1</sup>

Tribal people believe that everything in this world has life and is animated whether plants, minerals, animals or the natural phenomena. There are souls who influence and interfere in the life of the living persons. The tribal religion (also referred here as indigenous faith) is not just 'animistic', confined to veneration of celestial objects, sun and moon, and terrestrial objects such as water and fire. There are precise indigenous 'philosophies' and worldviews, which are often overlooked. The physical environment is accorded a sacred status and sacred groves and sacred landscapes are duly venerated. Myths and ceremonial recitations, rituals, legends, and folktales are used by numerous tribes of northeast to ponder the cosmology while heightening people's consciousness about need to achieve balanced existence within the world and universe.

In view of aforementioned conceptual framework, the author intends to discuss in this article the pattern of human-nature relationship and environmental ethics as reflected in worldview, nature worship, ritual, folklore and cosmological myths which are entrenched in tribal social systems. In doing so this article intends to situate the discourse of 'human-nature' harmony within the theoretical paradigm of what Ananta Kumar Giri has articulated as the 'transformative harmony', which is seen as part of a continuum, which reflexively involves a craving for 'harmony within selfhood, society, nature and divine even though it keeps struggling with disharmony, chaos, disorder, disjunction and domination'. Scholars have also viewed the perspective from global collaborative dialogue, where too harmony seems to be inescapable from disharmony (Semashko 2009). Taking clue from what Giri proposes as the 'transformative harmony', which is seen as part of a continuum and inclusive of 'inter-group empathy' and 'peaceful coexistence', this article seeks to explore aspects of religious beliefs and ethical conventions, which highlight numerous continuities sustained by cosmological worldviews and shamanic priesthood in northeast India and contiguous eastern Himalaya regions. Side by side this article also discusses the historical pattern of 'syncretistic restructuring', influenced by processes of cultural exchange, reformism and revivalism, which led to coexistence of dual belief systems.

## **Nature, Humankind, and Divinity: Confluence of Cosmos, Humankind, Earth, Mountains, Flora and Fauna**

In northeast India societal norms, spirituality and indigenous knowledge are central parts of the holistic worldviews of tribes. The tribes, engaged in agrarian activities, characteristically meet a substantial proportion of their resource requirements from a relatively small catchment area in which they have been living and they maintain a perfect harmony with their spiritually tuned environment (Saraswati 1991).

The blessed human-nature linkage and environmental ethics are distinctly visible in its pristine form in most hills areas, where we notice unique nature worship, environmental preservation practices and reverence of cosmos (Das 2003, 2014). Forest remains a crucial source of economic sustenance as also a sacred space. The sacred specialists invoke the deities of the earth and sky; appeal them to keep a balanced harmony between earth, universe, and the biosphere. Harmony between the cosmos, humankind, and divinity among the tribes of northeast is reflected in numerous folktales, myths, rituals and 'priestly' hymns. In the context of indigenous religion, Verrier Elwin made a very significant statement: "We should not speak of 'animism' but of the 'Wancho religion' or the 'Adi religion', which will suggest that the tribal faith has for its adherents just as much authority and dignity as the faith of the outside world. There is nothing to "be defeatist" of the tribal religion. It is worthy of preservation" (Elwin 1958). It is in the foreword to this volume 'A Philosophy for NEFA' that Jawaharlal Nehru's five-principles of tribal administration were articulated. The tribal cosmology and cosmogony are visible in mythic tradition of several tribes of the region. Saraswati has discussed the cosmogonic myths among several tribes of Northeast India (Saraswati 1995). The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, for instance, refer to water, egg, cloud, rock, wood and the great personage as the self-existing elements of the first order. According to the tradition, from these were created elements of the second order: earth, sky, sun, moon, wind, fire and all living creatures. The third order of elements was then formed: colour, direction, form, smell, etc. The fourth order was attributed to knowledge (Elwin 1968).

Nature-dependent tribes of northeast endow natural resources with divine character and animistic attributes; sometimes animals are attributed with mythical-symbolical attributes. Following this standpoint author explicates below at first how mythological cosmology is demonstrated in indigenous beliefs and practices. The complex linkages between nature, humankind, and divinity are then discussed in specific ethnographic contexts wherein the creation myths and worship patterns of tribes demonstrate the confluence of cosmos, humankind, earth, mountains, flora and fauna in Northeast/Eastern Himalaya.

## **Nature Worship and Harmony of Earth and Sky: Karbi and Bodo Mythical Cosmology**

### **Karbi Mythological Cosmology**

Cosmology exists as wide-ranging and fascinating notion and is entrenched in the legends of the Karbi and Bodo tribes of Assam. The Karbis sing 'Masira Kohir' during the death ritual Chomangkan narrating legend of human creation. Masira

Kohir (also called Mosera) refers to a mythical bird, voplakpi laying hundreds of eggs in order to give birth to the Karbi and other human groups. From the thousands of eggs of the Plakvut couple, some were laid by the erect rocks, some laid by the precipices. Out of these eggs emerged the Karbis, Chomangs (Khasis), Ahoms, Nakas (Nagas) and numerous other human groups (Karbi Studies 2008:8). Another Karbi folktale 'Karbi Keplang' describes the creation of earth and water, rivers and mountains, flora and fauna, and men and women by divine intervention of 'Hemphu' and 'Mukrang', the Karbi deities. According to this myth Hemphu-Mukrang duo created the first Karbi parents 'Sum' and 'Sang' who in turn gave birth to five brothers who established principal clans of the tribe. In the 'Mosera' tradition, creation is attributed to 'eggs', but in Karbi Keplang myth, 'Hemphu' and 'Mukrang' deities are the creators (*Ibid.*).

Author had studied the folk culture and economic transformation among the Karbis tribe during 1983-1984, in some selected villages of the Lumbajong and Howraghat development blocks, such as Rongkangthir and Era Gaon. A popular Karbi myth collected by author from Rongangthir village tells that at the beginning of creation all the inhabitants of earth and animals spoke a common language and lived together. Author was informed that there is a karjong (soul) in every living and non-living being such as humans, animals, birds, as also water, rocks, hills, forests, etc. The superior harmonised and humanistic philosophy of the Karbi indigenous faith is visible in the rituals conducted during killing of any domestic creature like fowl, goat or pig for food. Such ritual is conducted to seek clemency from the gods. The Karbis believe that death means the absence of karjong, soul, from the body. Hence elaborate death rituals are performed so that the soul may be bid farewell (Sarma and Barpujari 2011). During the 1980s the Karbis were still pursuing indigenous religion, which contained elements of shamanist 'mysticism', ancestor worship and sacrificial and rice-beer oblations to the outer deities and village deities (Das 1989:175; 1994:210-211). The author was surprised to note the unique Karbi philosophy of 'celebration' associated with Karbi funerary ritual. Karbi scholar, Dharamsing Teron (2008) has rightly stated that the death to a Karbi is only a transition to a new identity, both physical and spiritual – through time and space. 'Chomkan' or 'Karhi' is a celebration of death. 'Charhepi', the dominant female character of the festivities, guides the soul of the dead to the 'village of ancestors'. Beyond death, there is life, connected by the immortal soul that has many avatars. 'Cho-jun' is an essential part of the ritual of 'ancestor propitiation' in the Karbi religious tradition. 'Sining' is a term that describes sky. Dharamsing Teron has stated that there is no corresponding term that gives any nearest meaning to 'hell'. *Norok* is borrowed from Assamese Hindus by the Karbis. *Hi:i-Arnam* is a phrase coined by the Karbi ancestors to show the incongruous domains of 'divinity', demon and deity. The unity and duality of the

‘negative’ and ‘positive’ forces and the ‘balance’ between them are what constitutes the philosophical basis of the Karbi folk religion’ (Teron 2008).

Elements of Hinduism had only nominally entered into the Karbi culture and as the author had observed tribal deities and tribal rituals remained intact in Rongkangthir village, though a few Hindu deities were worshipped too, along with sacred trees, sacred forests, sacred animals and sacred streams, were venerated in the village. Further, the Karbi villagers venerated innumerable supernatural powers both benevolent and malevolent and they held rituals throughout the year where the sacrifice of fowls, and sometimes even goat or pig, and offerings of harlang (rice beer) were indispensable. Author had also studied the Karbis living in Dimapur rural areas, adjoining Assam Karbi district. Here tribal religion is followed and Donri is their main tribal festival. Both tribal god Hempu and Hindu god Shiva were worshipped. The Karbis here also worshipped other Hindu deities and exchanged food and water with the Hindus, though the Karbi elders and priests did not accept food from the Hindus (Das 1994:211). The Karbis living in interiors of Assam forest areas did pursue passionately the environmental ethics, cosmologies and religious beliefs of the past. At the same time new forces have led to the gradual erosion of traditional belief systems (Sarma and Barpujari 2011).

## Bodo Mythological Cosmology

Five cosmological elements of *Bar* (Air), *San* (Sun), *Ha* (Earth), *Or* (Fire) and *Okhrang* (Sky) shape and exemplify the Bathou religion of the Bodos, who call themselves as “Saba mw dai ni fissa” (children of five elements) and “Badosa” (children of five gods). The creator of these five elements is called *Bathou Bwrai* or the God. In the Bodo religious conviction nature-worship is associated with mythical harmonious unity of earth and sky. The following verse<sup>2</sup> exemplifies this unity:

Oh, father God *Bwrai Bathou*; Save your ignorant children; You are the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. You are the holder of the three bhuban (heaven, earth and hell) You are the one in three and three in one.

The plant Sijou (*euphorbia indica*) is central element of nature focused Bathou religion. The Sijou plant is the living symbol of *Bathou Bwrai*, the supreme god. The Bathou altar is the main place of Bathou worship. Bodo families must have a Bathousali in the north-eastern corner of the courtyard. Apart from this, each village has to set up a Bathou altar in the community land, where should be planted the sijou plant and fenced with 18 pairs of small bamboos strips folded with five fastening which symbolises five ethical-spiritual principles of Bathouism as well as

the eighteen gurus and deities (Barmahalia 2012). The Bodos do not harm natural objects like trees, earth or soil during 'Amthisua' ritual as they believe that this period is a period of menstruation of Mother Earth. Influenced by mythological cosmology and folk beliefs Bodos follow the taboos associated with totemic clans such as Mosahary (a tiger clan) Ouary (bamboo clan), Boisomuthiary, (Earth clan), Goyari (areca nut clan), and Hajoary (hill clan), etc. Clan members never harm and protect the totem. Whenever Mosahary clan members learn of the death of a tiger they believe that their family member is died. So they perform a ritual called 'Udrainai' (a 'purification' rite) in their family praying for the departed soul.<sup>3</sup>

## Humankind and Animal World: Mythical Harmony Among Adi And Naga

The Adi tribe is divided into fifteen distinct sub tribes, who have their own distinct social systems, customary laws, village chiefs and priests. Among the Adi Milang tribe, a mythical figure Keyum occupies important position (Singh 1995:89). Several myths are common among various Adi tribes, who now collectively follow *Donyi-Polo* religion. Keyum-Kero (emptiness) is name of a parable popular among the Adi tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Keyum-Kero, a longish narrative, helps these people to trace the origin of the cosmos and of all the living things of nature, including the humankind. Human-nature interconnection is depicted in the following passage drawn from Keyum-Kero:

In the beginning emptiness (*keyum-Kero*) pervaded the cosmos. A tiny, imperceptible patch of darkness gradually developed from *Keyum-Kero*. It was called *Yumkang*. After a long time, that imperceptible patch of darkness generated *Kasi* (nothingness). It had no form, no size and no existence. Then, *Kasi* brought forth *Siang*, from which particles resembling clouds, known as *Bomuk*, came out. It hovered in the space known as *Mukseng*, where *Sedi* and *Melo*, the first physical manifestations emerged from the incomprehensible *Keyum-Kero*. *Sedi*, a female turned into the earth, while *Melo*, the male became the sky. In order to continue the creative process, they married each other and began to produce various offspring in the world. Their first progenies were Sepi Yokmo and Sepang Yokmo who were gods of smiths (ironsmiths, silversmiths, goldsmiths). *Dinom Yokmo* was born next. He was the originator of wild birds and animals. *Sedi* and *Melo* also created *Sengo Orne*, the god of light; *Yidum Bote*, *Doying Bote*, *Litung* and *Limang*. *Litung* and *Limang* married and they gave birth to *Pedong Nane*, who married *Yidum Bote*, the God of wind, and they together gave birth to millions of offspring who filled the

earth. Their children were the divinities, human beings, snakes, frogs, monkeys and many other beings.<sup>4</sup>

As seen in above myth, the cosmological descend from sky to earth is a common theme found in folklore of most tribes. A myth common among several tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam narrates the chronology of human origin, and human descend from sky to earth by means of ladders. The Akas believe that different ladders were used and the royal blood came down through a golden ladder and shaped the 'royal' clans, while the remaining Akas came using a silver ladder. In another version of the folktale, it is believed that the Monpas were given a ladder of iron. Similarly, bamboo ladder was used by several communities such as the Cacharis (Assam) and the Khoas used a plantain ladder (Thakur 1999).

Among most Naga tribes we find myths depicting common origin of human, animal and forest. It is particularly popular among the Angami, Chakhesang and Mao Nagas, who have many similarities in terms of pattern of social structure, kinship values and elevated status of elders. The Rengma and Konyak Nagas also have identical myths. The Rengma Nagas believe that the Nagas and the tiger are the sons of the same mother. On the other hand, the Konyak Nagas treat the tiger as a family member.

Once upon a time, the god, tiger and human lived together as a happy family. They lacked nothing. Everything was abundant. They had no fear of death. They spoke the same language. The tiger was elder and the human was younger. One day, the human told the family members that when the mother died, he should live in the village. But the tiger argued that he being the eldest should live in the village. One morning, the mother was sick, and the god requested that the tiger should bring some good meat for her. After the tiger left to hunt, the mother passed away. Hence, the god and human quickly buried the mother under their fireplace (oven) and start cooking food on the burial place. The tiger arrived with deer meat. The tiger asked for the mother. The god said to the tiger that the mother died and disappeared within a twinkle of an eye. The tiger continued to insist that he should live in the village and human should live in the jungle. So the god said to both of them that they will compete: the one who touches banana leaf at a distance first would be allowed to live in the village. The tiger was extremely happy because he was very sure that the human cannot compete with him. However, the god made a bow for the human to shoot the banana leaf from a distance. On that fixed day, they competed and as instructed by the god, the human shot his arrow from a distance and claimed that he touched the banana leaf first. So the god asked tiger to live in jungle to take care of animals and birds, and the human was asked to live in the village. The god said that he would be watching over them and extending help to both of them. However, the tiger was not willing to go to the jungle so



the god gave a buffalo horn to the human to blow at the back of the tiger. Human blew the horn loudly. It frightened the tiger, who ran into the forest and lived there since then (Das and Imchen 1994:20-21).

## **Nature/Plant Worship and Veneration of Sacred Groves: The Meiteis and Dimasa Kacharis**

The Meiteis of Manipur have a rich tradition of nature worship. The Meitei King Charai-rongba introduced the Hindu Vaishnava sect in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. However, soon there was resistance to Vaishnava sect, which had sidetracked the indigenous Sanamahi faith (Laishram Subhash 2013). The Meitei (Mee-Tai) and Tai-Ahom of Assam are two branches of Mongoloid ethnicity, who have linguistic affinity with Kachin of Burma (Hudson 1908:10). Fact remains that the Hinduisation process did not obliterate the indigenous religion and thus the Meiteis sustained and revived the indigenous Sanamahi religion, including their nature-worship rituals. Cultural and religious revivalism among the Meiteis is traceable to a gathering of prominent leaders at Wang-Khei Thambal Khong, Imphal, who denounced the Vaishnavism and urged the people to expand Sanamahi religion. An organisation called Meetei Marup was formed on 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 1945, which spearheaded the movement to revive traditional culture, traditional script-Meetei Mayek, customary practices, and traditional religious ceremonies relating to the Sanamahi religion. One by-product of Sanamahi revivalism was that the practice of 'untouchability' associated with Hindu Meiteis was abandoned.<sup>5</sup> Under the revived Sanamahi faith creator god Sanamahi (Asheeba) and his brother Paakhangba (Konjin Tukthapa) came to be worshipped. Lai Haraoba is the festival of the recitation of the creation stories wherein the first origin of this universe and evolution of the plants and animals through the will of Atiya Shidaba are eulogised.<sup>6</sup> Umang Lais (sacred groves) are an integral part of the Manipuri tradition of nature worship. About 364 sacred groves are present in Manipur and adjacent Cachar district of Assam. Several species of plants are protected in these groves, including trees having magical-religious significance. Fishes, waterfowl and other aquatic animals like snails, insects and crustaceans are very common items in the diet of the Meitei. Indeed, many of these animals are not eaten during certain periods, following certain anthropocentric motive of sustainable harvesting and conservation (Singh *et al.* 2006). Several folklores reflect Meitei ecological worldview. A folklore called 'Hijan Hirao' vividly portrays the lamentations of the parents of a young tree that had grown tall and strong, and consequently had been marked to be felled for making a boat. Trees are sacred and it is a custom for the Maiba-Maibi (priest and priestess) to always ask forgiveness of a tree whenever it is cut. The practice of worshipping plants and animals by associating them with gods and attributing magical-religious values to



plants and animals suggest that the Meitei environmental ethics recognises the philosophy of man-nature symbiosis.

Nature worship and veneration of sacred groves is a prominent element of indigenous faith among the Dimasa Kacharis of Assam. In the vocabulary of this tribe, names of specific plants are associated with specific clans and village sites. Medhi and Borthakur (2013) have located thirteen main plant species considered as sacred and associated with worship. They discovered 23 areas/villages which are associated with plant names in Dimasa dialect. In this tribe 34 clans are also named after the plants. The Dimasas, who are famous for unique double-descent system, have both male and female clans. Names of five male clans (Sengphong) are derived from the names of one landrace of *Oryza sativa* and four other plant species. Likewise, 29 female clans (Jaddi/Zaluk) are derived from the specific plants. Sacred groves, called Dikhos, contain plants considered to be sacred by them. Medhi and Borthakur (2013) have located the twelve sacred groves among the Dimasas. In most of these groves as many as 34 sacred plant species of the Dimasas are preserved till date.

### ***Donyi-Polo: Sun-Moon Faith and Nature Worship***

*Donyi-Polo* faith is largely a reformed syncretic religious sect based on common beliefs, myths and practices pre-existing among fifteen sub-tribes within Adi conglomeration, and Apatani, Nishi, Hill Miri, and Mishing. A major factor which brought several tribes together to form a larger sect in Arunachal Pradesh was their distress over gradual erosion of indigenous cultures and particularly the rapid expansion of Christianity (Rukbo 1998). One important feature which united and drew several tribes together was their belief in common cosmological myths. The fact remains that most tribes of Arunachal Pradesh believe that they are descended from the union of the earth and sky, who are regarded as wife and husband (Elwin 1968). The supreme quality of *Donyi-Polo* faith is seen in the harmonic integration of humankind with Sun (*Donyi*) and the Moon (*Polo*); hence this faith is referred to as the 'religion of the Sun and the Moon'. In this religion Sun (*Donyi*) is regarded as Mother while Moon (*Polo*) is father. This shared belief is reflected in the phrase "Donyi O, Polo Ome", meaning "children of the sun and the moon".<sup>7</sup> Several public leaders like Talom Rukbo highlighted the threat to indigenous faiths and they played major role in giving shape to *Donyi-Polo* and contributing towards sacred literature Bédang (Ering 1994, 2010; Borang 2008; Rukbo 1998). Since the 1990s temples have been built in entire Arunachal Pradesh by the followers of Donyi Poloism. All Tanis including Adi tribes believe that all celestial bodies including 'earth' originate from one source, *Keyum* (nothingness or the void). *Donyi-Polo* is the combined glacial force that generates all stars and

entire cosmos, the earth as well as the humanity.<sup>8</sup> In *Donyi-Polo* faith fountain god associated with cosmos is referred to as Sedi by the Minyong and Padam tribes, while the term Jimi is used by the Galo tribes people. Among the Apatani Ui is the supreme deity of creation. In Galo beliefs, *Melo* (Sky) and *Sidi* (Earth) intermingled and thus gave birth to all things and beings, including *Donyi* and *Polo*. *Donyi-Polo* followers, as the author observed in Apatani villages, perform rituals that coincide with lunar phases and agricultural cycles. The shamanic priests explain the oneness of all living creatures. They recite the origin myths of all Tani tribes and convey that soul resides within all men, plants, animals, and the land and nourishes them, thus establishing a strong harmony between nature and humans. All rituals involve rice beer oblation to sun and moon deities.

The *Donyi-Polo* religion can be located in a continuum, stretched between indigenous faith at minimal level and reformed larger *Donyi-Polo* faith situated at maximal inter-tribe level. At one end we notice individual tribes pursuing their own ritual performances and local festivals by involving tribal priests/shamans. At the same time all component tribes follow the reformed mode of worship by uttering *Donyi-Polo* hymns following Angun Bédang (Sacred book) in the *Donyi-Polo* temples located in all villages. At the same time all past rituals associated with local agricultural operations invoking local deities are strictly followed under the guidance of the local shamans. The term Ui is a common term which Apatani use to refer to god and creator as also to numerous benevolent and malevolent 'spirits' and even ancestors. Yampi (2012:26) writes that the "concept of god is embedded and is reflected in notions of *Danyi-Polo* (supreme power sun and moon) and Pinii (creator) among the Apatanis. The term Ui includes sun, moon, creator god and many other gods who are all appeased through rituals for ensuring good harvest and prosperity. Tado (2008) writes that Tanii Popih is the religion of the Apatani. Among Apatani the gods and goddesses are divided into three groups such as Pinii Siyo (and Yarnii Gornii), as Myorii Sii and Nili Kirii. These various deities are Ui. They are associated with homestead, agricultural fields, bamboo and pine groves, streams, rivers, forest, hills and mountains. These deities are meticulously worshiped by Apatani priests, uttering hymns in priestly language not known to villagers. Though declining after the sectarian-reformation, the primal Apatani religion is definable also by traits of witchcraft and magical rites associated with ordeal to gain certain objectives. Radhe Yampi who has done a Ph.D. on the theme of *Donyi-Polo* religion among the Apatanis, has noted elements of syncretism in Apatani religion and culture. She has at length referred to characterisation of religious syncretism elucidated by Das (2003) and she has titled her book as *Religion and Syncretism in Apatani Society* (2012).

This author had conducted fieldworks in Apatani villages during 2009-2010 and made special studies of indigenous knowledge related to agriculture and

indigenous faith and festivals Video cameraman accompanying the ASI team had filmed the rituals and hymn recitals by shaman-priests running into hours. During 2009 author had conceptualised, scripted and directed an ethnographic film titled 'The Apatani-Sacred Landscape and Indigenous Agriculture in Eastern Himalaya', which was submitted on behalf of Indian government to UNESCO for proclamation as 'Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity' (2009). The film captures many facets of Apatani agriculture rituals and performance of shaman priest Nyibu during various agricultural festivals. Author had participated in the nature worship after Myoko festival in Ziro village. At the end of Myoko, Murung and Subu festivals the villagers visit the agriculture fields and nearby forest and specially the pine or bamboo groves to offer special veneration. It is believed that deities of the nature (located in entire landscape, agriculture fields, groves and water channels) must be appeased through offering of rice, meat and millet beer. Also venerated are the village outskirts and 'deities' of distant forests called Myorii Sii. Myorii Sii is indeed the nature deity of the Apatani. Big trees located even outside the 'sacred groves' are never cut. Bath calls this belief system as 'naturalism' among the Apatani (2004).

Nyibu, the shaman-priest of Apatani is the custodian of Apatani mythology and Miji, the sacred folklore. Nyibu performs several important rituals and recites the folk legend on special occasions, yet he is neither a shaman nor priest in strict sense. The shamanic Ui-Inii Nyibus performed their rites in secrecy. Like Apatani, the Mishings are followers of Donyi Polism. Their officiating priest is known as the Mibu who is believed to possess supernatural powers to communicate with supernatural beings.<sup>9</sup> Through their prolonged contact with the Hindu communities, the Mishings have adopted some elements of Hinduism and blended them within Donyi Polism. Such blending of Hindu divinity and tribal beliefs and practices, observable intensely among tribes, such as Kachari and Karbis as well, seem to have been possible because many nature-related ethical and ritual practices of Hinduism are complimentary and they match with tribal belief of sacred ecosystem (Das 2003a,b).

## **Nature Worship, Mythological Cosmology and Syncretism – Vajrayana-Tantrism, Bon and Buddhism, Naturalism and Shamanic Tribal Religion**

Buddhism practiced in eastern Himalayan regions is generally classified as Tibetan Buddhism, which embodies and blends three major paths of Buddhism – Hinayana (Theravada), Mahayana (the great vehicle) and Vajrayana. In Buddhist cosmology several realms of beings are recognised, besides humans and animals,

including deities [*deva*], malevolent spirits [*yaksha*], ghosts [*pretas*], and tormented beings. Incorporated into the early texts are instructions to the laity regarding the performance of rituals to propitiate these gods and spirits (Lehman 1971; Sangharakshita 1990:81-85). In this Himalayan culture area observers identify three faiths: the divine *dharma* Buddhism (Iha chos), Bon *dharma* (bon chos) and mi chos or indigenous religion, constantly intermingling. Indigenous religions of the region have rich cosmological worldviews. In indigenous religion, the universe has three parts: sky and heavens, earth, and the lower regions. Each of these has its own distinctive spirits, many of which influence the world of humans (Philip and Lieberman 2003). Vajrayana that flourished in eastern Himalaya has its roots derived from Indian texts, the Tantras. It influenced many indigenous traditions in the area. Thus, the religious practices in this cultural world received the monastic order and absorbed the incantation of mystic, magical formulas, the exorcism and destruction of demons, divination, auguries, oracles, and symbolic sacrifice and ransom, aspects associated with shamanism (*ibid.*). Here we see the smooth transformation of spirituality through due recognition of earlier shamanic priesthood.

There are two classes of tribes in East Himalaya culture zone, one section is that of Buddhist tribes, who historically recognise shamanism and among whom the tenets of Bon, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, always survives. Then there are those tribes who are not Buddhist, but shamanism is integral to their indigenous spirituality. Shamans propitiate, exorcise, and pursue divinatory performances that allow them to predict the influences of the spirit world and take appropriate measures. The fact remains that the Bön, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, is described as 'indigenous shamanistic religion' of Tibet (Sangharakshita 1990a:21). According to Philip and Lieberman (2003), Bon brought a multiplicity of gods, demons, and spirits of nature into the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon, where they joined the gods absorbed from Indian tantrism. According to legend, indigenous gods, some benevolent, others malignant, were vanquished and then "converted" by Padmasambhava, who bound them over through mighty oaths to serve Buddhism in new roles as protectors or defenders of the law. Local deities associated with mountains, lakes, were integrated and lesser deities, with supernatural powers, became guardians of the entrances to sacred spaces, to defend against malicious spirits. The triumph of Buddhism was its ability to adapt the ancient, ingrained beliefs and customs without compromising its own fundamental insight and precepts, while teaching the new theology to the people and firmly establishing their acceptance and understanding of its ethical code.

It is in the above-mentioned historical backdrop that one needs to understand the 'tribal' religions and their harmonic discourse with other religions, which are rich with a large pantheon, elaborate rituals and ceremonies, including

nature veneration. During 2008-2011 this author had conducted fieldworks in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh in order to understand the tenets of indigenous faith, syncretic transformations, and indigenous knowledge systems including shamanism. Situated between Tibetan region and east/northeast regions of India are numerous communities of Eastern Himalaya (Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Darjeeling and parts of Nepal) who are Buddhists. Nevertheless, most of these communities pursue the tenets of Bon and local indigenous religions, often simultaneously. Side by side one also notices inclination towards nature worship administered by hierarchy of shamans. In general, the Tibetan Buddhists themselves (whether lamas, monks, or laity) frequently exhibit, strong lenience towards Bon and animist shamans. There are both Buddhist and non-Buddhist tribes in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh who are influenced by the Bön religion historically. Indeed, hills tribes such as the Monpa, Lepcha, Bhutia and others simultaneously follow tribal faiths, tenets of Bön and Buddhism often blending elements of diverse faiths (Das 2003, 2006; Dhar 2003).

Some scholars even argue that Donyi-Polo indigenous sect is derived from the Bön religion of Tibet which originated in ca. 16,000 BCE. Like Bon, Donyi-Polo focuses on the worship of the sun and moon, considered the eternal watch deities of the supreme gods, Bo and Bomong.<sup>10</sup>

The Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh, divided into several sub-tribes, continue to pursue nature-based tribal religions in different capacities, even though they are adherents of the Gelug sect of Buddhism, which they adopted in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time the elements of Bon remains embedded in belief system of Monpa tribes. Mahayana Buddhism in its Lamaistic form is what the Monpas pursue, but presence of Bön and 'tribal' religious elements provide a unique syncretic character to Monpa culture and religiosity. Such syncretic pattern is even more distinctly visible among the Sherdukpen people. The Sherdukpen religion is a fascinating mixture of Buddhism and 'tribal' magical animistic religious beliefs. They continue to believe in supernatural powers, the spirits, both evil and good. They celebrate Buddhist festivals and Chaam dances are commonly seen during Sherdukpen festivals. Lossar, the Tibetan New Year is also a special occasion for the Sherdukpen. Nevertheless, Khiksaba remains their important tribal festival which is dedicated to appease the forest deities and other mountain spirits. Rep Lapchang is the harvest festival which is also popularly celebrated. Such festivals are presided by the Jiji, local shaman instead of the Buddhist Lamas. Like Sherdukpen many tribes of eastern Himalaya, who have become Buddhists, also pursue simultaneously tribal religions. Another indigenous religion, Bon religion, as we noted survives among many tribes.

Sikkim, known as Demazong or the 'hidden valley treasure of fruits and flowers', is the land of nature worship where almost every landscape, including mountain, small or big, is treated as sacred, and Mountain Khangchendzonga is guardian deity (Kumar 2010). The Lepchas, the original inhabitants are nature worshippers. They regard the mountains as deities and worship them by offering fruits, grains, sacrificing fowls and goats to appease the gods and demons for peace and prosperity. The shaman-priests make special offer to demon gods. All communities of Sikkim regard Khangchen Dzonga as a major deity. Both Lepchas and Bhutias maintain a symbiotic sacred relation with the biosphere ecology and venerate deities related with nature and its components. The Lepchas of Sikkim worship the deities of nature and the mountains, by calling them through specific names. Their shamanistic faith called "mun" did not collapse even after their gradual adoption of Buddhism (influenced by the Bhutias in the 14<sup>th</sup> century) and later Christianity. Gradual penetration of Nepali communities (Hindu and Mongoloid), their linguistic subjugation, internalisation of democratic politics in Sikkim and ethnicity factor increasingly alerted the indigenous communities of Sikkim (Lepchas, Bhutias, and indigenous Kirata communities) to revive their cultural festivals, rituals, shamanism, linguistic heritage, and indigenous knowledge components including folklore, folk-dance, music, craft skills and cuisine. Rituals such as the worship of mountains and lakes, worship of nature, plants and agricultural land, were consciously revived.

One factor which supports the coexistence of tribal religion, Bon faith and Vajrayan Buddhism in eastern Himalaya is survival of institution of shamanism. Bönpo is still the designation for a shaman in many tribal regions, including Sikkim. During fieldwork in Kewzing (South Sikkim) in 2008, this author did meet many Bönpo-shamans. Despite lapse of centuries, the ecstatic shaman survives, though replaced by the priestly Lama or ritual expert in some places. The Bönpo-shamans invoke the gods and summon the spirits. In Kewzing author had discussed with Lamas the character of Bon in present Sikkim. Kewzing Bon monastery is located amidst calm and composite environs in Kewzing, South Sikkim. The monastery was established in 1980 AD by the late Yung Dung Tsultrim. Bon monastery is a religious pursuit of religion for all the Bon followers. During fieldwork over twenty young people were undergoing training. The monastery exhibits the fascinating paintings of Bon deities, Bon Demonical Buddha. The chanting of mantras, blowing of conch in the morning, and beating of drums promise to revive everyone's spiritual side. The shaman is an expert in the use of mantra and magical evocation. Mantra or ngak (sngags) is sound and sound is energy. Mantra is the primordial sound that calls the forms of all things into being out of the infinite potentiality of empty space which is the basis of everything. Sound or word has a creative power. But this term Bön po in ancient times appeared to cover a number



of different types of practitioner, whether shaman, magician, or priest.<sup>11</sup> In spite of presence of the Vajrayana Buddhism in Sikkim, we notice survival of Pon or Bön shamanistic religion which involves a mixture of nature worship, witchcraft and sorcery including the veneration of spirits and ghosts. The Bong is a male shaman who presides over religious ceremonies and seasonal festivals. The mun is a healer who exorcises demons, helps to heal illness and guides souls to the after-life. Even though the Lepcha people embraced Buddhism in the eighteenth century, the indigenous Lepcha religious beliefs and practices survived. Today both Buddhist lamas and Lepcha 'tribal' shamans preside at ceremonies and family level life cycle rituals in Lepcha Society.

## Resistance, Revivalism and Reformism

Cultural revivalism and religious reformation are more clearly visible in the growth of Seng Khasi, Heraka and Pau Cin Hau movements in parts of northeast. The Donyi-Poloism and Rangfraa faiths of Arunachal Pradesh too are revivalist though they show greater tendency of reformism. In instances of Herka, *Donyi-Polo* and Rangfraa sectarianism one also notices partial adoption of religious traits and symbols of major religions like Buddhism or Hinduism. Fact remains that these reformist/revivalist phenomena; are partly resistant, partly revivalist and partly reformist. *Donyi-Polo* faith originally had followers only among the Abotani tribes (the Abotani-Tani-speaking tribes). Since the late 1980s, a certain form of expansion, revivalism and institutionalisation of *Donyi-Polo* faith is observed involving tribes who are not part of Abotani. Observers have noted absorption of traits and symbols of Buddhism and Hinduism within *Donyi-Polo*. The Tagins are now adherents of *Donyi-Polo*, although two groups of Tagins, such as the Nah and Mra are adherents of Buddhism. They also stick to primal tribal faith of nature worship and thus, the most important festival of the Tagins, Si-Donyi, involves the veneration of the earth (*si*) and the sun (*donyi*). The emergence of new Rangfraa religion among the Tangsa, Tutsa and Nocte tribes of Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh is linked to the anti-Christian resistance in the area, which led to conflict between Christian sections and the revivalist groups. The Rangfraa deity is still venerated through shamanistic rituals and earlier beliefs. It is reported that new intermediaries have emerged providing cure and miracles among these people. The reformed Rangfraa religion preaches vegetarianism as an ideal and has banned sacrifices of animals for rituals. The Rangfraa idol looks like a Mongoloid white Shiva. This Shiva-like Rangfraa is said to be a creation of the RSS affiliates involved in Arunachal Pradesh and other parts of northeast who have turned Rangfraa into a clone of Shiva.<sup>12</sup> Indigenous Bodo religion, which gave birth to a Sanskritised *Brahma* movement (Saikia 1982), has been subjected to series of

reformist and revivalist engagements. The revivalism and reforming the traditional religion has been noted specially since 1992, when the All Bathou Religious Union was constituted. New religious priests such as the Gwthari Asari appointed by the organisation have since replaced the conventional priests, such as the Douri and Doudiniare. A new band of devotional singers has been introduced (who sing in a practice called Bathou Aroj). The Bathou temples have been constructed, where in pursuance of Hindu worship method; the partaking of *prasad* has become popular. Tuesdays are now most pious days. Sacrifices of animals and fowls, and offering of rice beer as modes of worship has been replaced by offering of flowers, fruits and the burning of incense.

The Heraka religion popular among the Zeliangrong tribes is a 'reformed' and revived indigenous religion which took shape partly to thwart the spread of Christianity in colonial era. Jadonang of Pailon came forward to launch the reformist Haraka religion by way of resisting the advancing Christianity as also to establish an independent Nagaraj. He focused on one high God in place of many, asked for removal of many superstitious beliefs and customs, sacrifices and costly feasts and organised temples, introduced hymns and discourses and tried to unite the people on the prophecy of a Kingdom of God for the Nagas (Das 1989:234-236). This author and his colleagues (Mukherjee, Gupta and Das 1982) had called Jadonang as reformer and revivalist. Authors like Fuchs, (1965) and Yonuo (1974) have described him as a Messiah and a Saviour of the Kacha Nagas at the time of their distress. The Zeliangrong people believe in the existence of one supreme God called Tingwang who is the creator of the Sun, Moon, Stars, Earth, Water, Air, Human, Animals and all living things. Tingwang literally means the Heavenly God, or God of the sky or Lord of the Universe. The creator god Ragwang or Tingwang is worshipped in Haraka religion. Elements of nature such as Fire, Water, Wind and the Earth are endowed with divine powers. Haraka people believe in rebirth and reincarnation of human soul. Ancestor worship (Kairo Kalummei) is part of Haraka (Kabui 1998; Kamei 2004).

Spread over Burma-India-Bangladesh borderland are tribes called Zo, Chin, Kuki and Lushai, with numerous sub-tribes. These tribes establish their common ancestry through tribal mythology. In Zo tradition the cosmos can be divided into three realms: vantung, leitung, and leinuai. Vantung is the realm above the sky, equivalent to heaven, leinuai is the under-world, and leitung is the flat surface of the earth, the natural world, what is inhabited. The Zo people encountered both British colonialism and Christian missionaries in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Christian cosmology posed serious challenges to traditional Zo cosmology. At this historical phase, Pau Cin Hau movement appeared which provided a reformed and revivalist faith to Zo people, who were heavily burdened with 'expensive' rituals and sacrifices. This spiritual movement originated as a



revelation from God through the prophet Pau Cin Hau, who incorporated pre-existing traits, beliefs and practices, and revived some cultural features. Pau (2012) has compared Pau Cin Hau movement with Heraka movement. Pau Cin Hau stressed four main areas: healing ministry, exorcism, teaching the people to worship God, and teaching writing with a new script, which worked quite effectively among the people. The curing ritual or healing ministry was the most significant one often performed by a palik or Pa-leik-thas, an elite group of the movement (Bennison 1933:44). Other practices included prayer for the sick, construction of a Sangbuk (shrine). Pau (2012) has tried to reappraise and re-interpret the reform of Pau Cin Hau, who defended the core Zo traditional values, as a sort of a “forerunner of Christianity”. Pum Khan is actually trying to see parallelism in the growing Christianity of the area with reform movement as both wanted to attack the overburden of costly sacrifices and ancestral worship, including abolition of holding extravagant feasts. Since the reformer wanted to focus on one supreme god instead of many has led some scholars to think that “This way Pau Cin Hau broke the boundary of the microcosm (lesser spirit) and enhanced the importance of the macrocosm in Zo cosmology (Supreme Being) (Dena 1988:87). According to Pau, Pum Khan by emphasizing a single god, Pasian, in place of the numerous spirits, Pau Cin Hau successfully reoriented Zo cosmology in line with Christian cosmology (Pau 2012). This approach of looking at the ‘reform’ of Pau Cin Hau seems to be a validation and justification of the missionary stratagem to replace indigenous spirituality. Heraka movement, which is compared with Pau Cin Hau by Pau (2012) too had emphasized the one god in place of many, and reformed the Zelianrong faith in the manner pursued by Pau Cin Hau and his followers, but Heraka movement survived and thwarted the assault on indigenous culture and faith. Indeed, the claim that the removal of the fear of Zinmang or dawī (spirit) paved the way for the easy access of Christianity to Zo beliefs (Pau 2012) needs further probing both ethnographically and philosophically.

The Khasis are descendants of the sixteen tribes, nine tribes in their heavenly abode and seven tribes who made their earthly abode in these hills; and that once upon a time there was direct communication and intercourse between the ‘Nine’ above and ‘seven’ below via the Diengiei Tree which grew on Diengiei Peak, west of Shillong” (Mackenzie 1884:220). Following the establishment of the Welsh Christian mission in 1841, the Christian missionaries became active spreading new religion in rapport with the British government in Khasi Hills. The spread of Christianity was seen as threat to indigenous faith of Ri Hynniewtrep, the Khasi people. It was at this juncture that visionaries like U. Babu Jeebon Roy on November 23, 1899 established the Seng Khasi organisation for the protection, preservation and promotion of the indigenous religion and cultural heritage of the Hynniewtrep people. Seng Khasi slowly grew in strength as a resistance

movement leading to consolidate the people bringing about an awareness of the customary usages in the social sphere, under the ancient tenet of Tipbriew Tipblei (self-realisation and God conscious), Tipkur Tipkha (to know the matrilineal and patrilineal lineage) and Kamai ia Ka Hok (to earn righteousness). The Seng Khasi revived many festivals which were earlier confined to a few villages. The Shad Suk Mynsiem, and other dances were revived along with Shad Suk Mynsiem, spring festival (Das 1989:232-233).

## Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated multiple forms of harmonious human-nature relationships as reflected in worldview, ritual, folklore and environmental ethics pursued by the people of Eastern Himalaya and Northeast India, particularly in the upland regions. Indigenous belief systems and tribal religions of the region encountered major religions in different historical phases, partially as royal initiative and largely through colonial era patronage of foreign missionaries. The cultural pasts of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are different from hills of northeast, where colonial era Christian missionary activities had led to precise cultural and religious transformation, leading to crumpling of tribal religious convictions, including decline of sacred human-nature linkages and nature-based rituals. People in general, as we discussed, are too conscious to preserve the blessed human-nature linkages supported by environmental ethics. Special constitutional provisions and restrictions imposed for outsiders in most of upland Himalayan and northeast regions, have allowed these regions to retain the primal ecological milieu. Forest remains a crucial source of economic sustenance as also a sacred space, where the shaman-priests periodically invoke the deities of the cosmos and appeal them to keep a balanced harmony between earth, universe, and the biosphere. Harmony between the cosmos, humankind, and divinity among the people is also reflected in numerous folktales, myths, rituals and 'priestly' hymns. Cosmology is a crucial component of indigenous religion.

Tribal cosmologies as this article elucidated include multiple human experiences expressed in larger cultural, spiritual, and ecological spheres. Nature worship is not a mere reflection of spiritualism but a way to reduce harmful environmental impacts. It is argued that "with the present accelerating social, economic, political, cultural and environmental changes due to globalisation these cosmologies and the indigenous modes of life are increasingly endangered worldwide. Among the world's indigenous peoples there are thousands of languages and equal or more numbers of cosmologies, and many indigenous cultures, languages and cosmologies are greatly threatened by extermination ... by dominant and majoritarian cultures and languages, if present trends are not deterred."<sup>13</sup>

Ethnographic examples cited above have largely displayed the cohesive and holistic characters of the cultures and societies where amity and balance is achieved by clinging to mythical narratives of common creation of humankind and cosmos and by acts of nature worship including funeral rituals which aim at seeking ultimate tranquillity. This article has tried to situate the discourse of human-nature harmony within the theoretical paradigm of what Ananta Kumar Giri has articulated as the 'transformative harmony', which is characterised as part of a continuum that reflexively involves a craving for 'harmony within selfhood, society, nature and divine even though it keeps struggling with disharmony, chaos, disorder, disjunction and domination'. Indigenous spirituality and tribal beliefs have survived and largely prospered in the uplands we are focusing in this article. Nevertheless, there are empirical evidence which demonstrate that spiritual milieus are not constantly symptomatic of steadiness and equilibrium; rather there are tendencies towards amendment, adaptation and severance of some elements.

We have discussed numerous cases of intense spiritual contacts and eventual absorption of fundamentals of new religions selectively. The selective syncretic transformations within religious spheres of tribes are prominently visible in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. Several communities of this vast eastern Himalaya/northeast region, often influenced by processes of cultural adoption and cultural exchange, also pursued the paths of reformism and in some examples, we also noted a tendency of revivalism (Meitei, Khasi, Naga, Lepcha). By and large the people pursuing traditional religions have nurtured immensely the ceremonial human-nature relationship unhindered, as our ethnographic instances drawn from vast Eastern Himalaya including northeast uplands have shown. Most of the tribes have adhered to varieties of animism, cosmology, nature worship and shamanic rituals. Many tribes among them, as we discussed, opted to reform their mode of worship, eliminating expensive rituals, shunning animal sacrifice and simplifying the ritual practices to suit the modern times. In doing so these people have shown tendency to co-opt some foundational elements from major spiritual systems (Buddhism/Hinduism) and absorb elements from such systems selectively. Thus, in the ultimate analysis, the cultures of nearly all people in this borderlands display varied patterns hybridity, combination, and syncretism.

## Endnotes

1. <http://timeo-habla.blogspot.in/2008/09/cosmology.html/>
2. <http://thebodotribe.blogspot.in/2016>
3. Madhurima Goswami, [www.borjournals.com](http://www.borjournals.com)
4. <http://northeastdiariesmerinmathew.blogspot>

5. [http://www.e-pao.net/and\\_Religion.The\\_Revivalism\\_of\\_Sanamahism](http://www.e-pao.net/and_Religion.The_Revivalism_of_Sanamahism)
6. <http://www.revolvy.com/>
7. <http://www.oshonews.com/2014/>
8. <http://bhaskarpegu.blogspot.in>
9. [http://www.liquisearch.com/what\\_is\\_donyi](http://www.liquisearch.com/what_is_donyi)
10. <http://www.oshonews.com/2014/05/13/donyi-polo/>
11. [http://vajranatha.com/articles/traditions/Bön po.html?showall=1](http://vajranatha.com/articles/traditions/Bön_po.html?showall=1)
12. <http://www.business-standard.com/article/>
13. <http://timeo-habla.blogspot.in/2008/09/cosmology.html>

## References

- Barmahalia, Faguna 2012. Revivalism of Bathouism among the Bodos, *Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Volume 1, Issue 5 (Sep-Oct 2012), PP 42-45*,
- Bath, Nani. 2004. Religious beliefs and practices of the Apatanis in transition. In *Understanding Tribal Religion*, T. Mibang and S.K. Chaudhuri (Eds.) New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Bennison, J.J. 1933. Census of India 1931 Volume 11, Burma Part I Report. Rangoon: Office of the Superintendent Government Printing and Stationery, Rangoon, Burma.
- Borang, Gindu Tinling. 2008. "The genesis of Donyi-polo: A socio-religious History of Adis" in *Religious History of Arunachal Pradesh*. Byomakesh Tripathy and S. Dutta (Eds.), New Delhi: Gyan Publication House.
- Das, N.K. 1994. The Karbis. In *Nagaland State Volume. People of India*, N.K.Das and Imchen, C.L. (Eds.) K.S. Singh: General Editor. Calcutta: Seagull Books and ASI.
- Das, N.K. and Imchen, C.L. 1994. 'Introduction' *Nagaland State Volume. People of India*, General Editor K.S. Singh. Calcutta: Seagull Books and ASI.
- Das, N.K. 2006. Perspectives on religious syncretism: A Critique of Conceptions of Culture. *Humankind*. Volume 2, 2006 pp. 87-123. 2006
- Das, N.K. 2003a. Introduction: An outline of Syncretism, In *Culture, Religion and Philosophy: Critical Studies in Syncretism and Inter-Faith Harmony*. Jaipur : Rawat Publications.
- Das, N.K. 2003b. Religious syncretism and cultural Harmonisation in North East India, In *Culture, Religion and Philosophy: Critical Studies in Syncretism and Inter-Faith Harmony*. pp 295 - 324, Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- Das, N.K. 2009. Concept, Script and Direction of 'The Apatani- Sacred Landscape and Indigenous Agriculture in Eastern Himalaya'. (Ethnographic film submitted on behalf of Indian government to UNESCO for proclamation as 'Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity').

- Das, N.K. 2014. Indigenous Knowledge, Native Agriculture and Sacred Landscape: The Apatani of Eastern Himalaya. In *Traditional Environmental Knowledge and Biodiversity*. R.N. Pati, S. Shukla and Lawrence Chanza (Eds.). New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers. 2014
- Dena, Lal. 1988. *Christian Missions and Colonialism*. Shillong: Verdrame.
- Dhar, B. 2003. Buddhism, Lamaism and Bon Religion – Religious synthesis among the Monpas and Ladakhis. In *Culture, Religion and Philosophy: Critical Studies in Syncretism and Inter-Faith Harmony*. Ed. N.K. Das. pp 256-261, Jaipur: Rawat Publications
- Elwin, Verrier. 1958. *A Philosophy for NEFA*, Shillong: North-East Frontier Agency Administration
- Elwin, Verrier. 1968. *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India*. Shillong: North-East Frontier Agency Administration
- Ering, Oshong. 1994. "The concept of donyi-polo", Itanagar: ARSI, Vol-5
- Ering, Oshong. 2010. "Philosophy of Donyi-polo", in "Understanding tribal religion, edited by Tamo Mibang and S K Choudhuri, New delhi: Mittal publication
- Fuchs, Stephen. 1965. *Rebellious Prophets: A study of messianic movements in Indian religions*.
- Hudson, T.C. 1908. *The Meitei*. London: David Nutt
- Jeetendro, L Singh, N. Biraj Singh and Abhik Gupta, *Environmental Ethics in the Culture of Meeteis from North East India*, <http://www.eubios.info/ABC4/abc4320.htm>
- Kabui, Gangmumei. 1998. *The Zeliangrong Religion: Its theology and Philosophy*, North-east India: Ethno-cultural perspectives and process, 12, Indian anthropological society occasional papers. Edited by A.K.Danda, B.K.Das Gupta, A. Basu and J. Sarkar-Calcutta: Indian anthropological society
- Kamei, Gangmumei 2004, *The History of Zeliangrong Nagas from Makhel to Rani Gaidinlu*, New Delhi: Spectrum Publications
- Karbi Studies. 2008. *Karbi Young Writers' Guild (Diphu)*. Guwahati: Angik Publication
- Lehman, F.K. 1971. Doctrines, practice and belief in Theravada Buddhism. *Journal of Asian studies*. 31, 372-380
- Leach, Edmund. 1982. *Social anthropology* (1982) Glasgow: Fontana Paperback
- Mackenzie, Alexander 1884. *Northeast Frontier of Bengal*. Calcutta: Home Department Press.
- Madhurima Goswami, *The Bodo Culture and Society*, Blue Ocean Research Journal: [www.borjournals.com/](http://www.borjournals.com/)
- Medhi, Pramod and Sachin Kumar Borthakur. 2013. Sacred groves and sacred plants of the Dimasas of North Cachar Hills of Northeast India. *African Journal of Plant Science* Vol. 7(2), pp. 67-77, February 2013
- Mukherjee, D.P., P. Gupta and N.K.Das. 1982. *The Zeliangrong or Haomoi Movement in Tribal Movements in India*. Vol.1 Ed. K. S. Singh, Delhi: Manohar. 1982

- Pau, Pum Khan. 2012. Rethinking Religious Conversion Missionary Endeavor and Indigenous Response among the Zo (Chin) of the India-Burma Borderland. *Journal of Religion and Society* 14 (2012)
- Philip and Marcia R. Lieberman. 2003. <http://library.brown.edu/cds/Buddhist>
- Rukbo, Talom. 1998. "Donyi-polo faith and practice of the Adis", in "Indigenous faith and practice of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh", edited by M. C. Behra and S K Choudhary, Itanagar: publication.
- Saikia, M.C. 1982. The Brahma movement among the Bodo-Kacharis of Goalpara district. In *Tribal Movements in India*. Vol.1 Ed. K. S. Singh, Delhi: Manohar.
- Sanamahism (Laishram Subhash, 2013). (<http://www.e-pao.net/> and Religion.The\_Revivalism\_of\_Sanamahism).(P. 82 A History of Manipuri Literature By Ch Manihar Singh).
- Sangharakshita. 1990. New Currents in Western Buddhism: The Inner Meaning of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order. Windhorse Publications. [www.windhorsepublications.com](http://www.windhorsepublications.com)
- Sangharakshita. 1990a. Ten Pillars of Buddhism. Windhorse Publications. [www.windhorsepublications.com/](http://www.windhorsepublications.com/)
- Saraswati, Baidyanath. 1991. "Ritual space: Tribal Non-Tribal Context", In Concept of Space: Ancient and Modern, Kapila Vatsyayan (ed.). New Delhi, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Abhinav Publications.
- Saraswati, Baidyanath. 1995. 'Cosmogonic Myths in Northeast India-Forces of Nature', In Primal Elements: The Oral Tradition, B N Saraswati (Ed.). New Delhi-IGNCA
- Sarma, U.K., and Indrani Barpujari, (2011). Eco-Cosmologies and Biodiversity Conservation: Continuity and Change among the Karbis of Assam. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 2(4).
- Retrieved from: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj/vol2/iss4/10>
- Semashko, Leo. 2009. *Harmonious Civilisation. Global Harmony Association Innovative Projects*, with 119 coauthors from 34 countries, in 2 languages. St-Petersburg, Russia, "LITA ", pages 254: [http://peacefromharmony.org/?cat=en\\_candkey=379](http://peacefromharmony.org/?cat=en_candkey=379),
- Dharamsing Teron. 2008. Understanding Karbi Folk religion; <https://karbi.wordpress.com/2008/02/26/understanding-the-karbi-folk-religion/#more-56>
- Tado, P. 2008. Tanii Popih: A religion of Apatani. In *The Religious History of Arunachal Pradesh*. Byomakesh Tripathy and S. Dutta (Eds.), New Delhi: Gyan Publication House.
- Thakur, A.K. 1999. Socio-Cultural Vicissitude and Servitude in Arunachal Pradesh *Astha Bharati*, July- September, 1999, Volume 1 No. 1
- Turner, Victor W. 1968. *The drums of affliction A study of religious processes among the Ndembu of Zambia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Turner, Victor W. 1967. *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- 
- Umesh Kumar, 2010, Bio-Diversity, Anthropogenic Pressure, and Conservation: A Case of Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve, In Cultural Diversity, Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation. N.K.Das (Ed.). New Delhi: Serials Publications).
- Yampi, Radhe. 2012. Religion and Syncretism in Apatani Society. Itanagar: Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh
- Yonuo, Asoso. 1974. The Rising Nagas. New Delhi: Vivek Publishing House.





## CHAPTER 31

# Harmony and Deep Ecology-Based Corporate Social Responsibility

*Agung Wibowo, Ravik Karsidi, Bani Sudardi, Mahendra Wijaya*

### Introduction

Several failures of third-world development, such as environmental degradation and poverty, indicate errors in the implemented development strategies. The top-down development, in which the central government strongly dominates the regional development, tends to ignore local resource potentials (local culture, social capital, and local wisdom) called social energy, whereas in fact, they play a vital role in maintaining environmental sustainability and in overcoming poverty.

Development with environmental outlook principally seeks to realise sustainable development. The development with environmental outlook emerges as an attempt to develop local communities as well as the ecosystem to achieve higher productivity and level of need fulfilment; it is continuously accomplished in both ecological and social senses. Natural resource management should be done as efficiently as possible by maintaining ecological system to meet people's basic needs (Hettne in Amine 2005:151-152). In short, to achieve a balance between production activity and environmental carrying capacity, a change in the method of production and the consumption style is required.

Human ecology basically sees a mutual relationship between humans and their environment. It expresses the relationship between humans and the one and only God, human, among humans, as well as between humans and their surrounding environment (whether natural or artificial). Humans have the following two attributes underlying their relationship with their environment: (1) biological attributes and their instincts as biological creatures that need food, reproduce, produce human waste, need oxygen and movement space, (2) attributes related to values, norms, common sense/healthy mind (*akal budi*), attitudes, and perceptions on surrounding world and individual's position in it (Poerbo 1999:13).

The environmental ethical theory used as an analysis instrument in the present research is deep ecology proposed by Naess (1995:64-69). The theory emphasizes that humans basically live in harmony with their surrounding environment. This is seen as a new paradigm on nature and all its contents; attention is centred on not only humans, but also all creatures in connection with attempts to encounter living environment problems. Humans are no longer the centre of the moral world. Deep ecology centres its attention on all life on Earth instead of interest in all ecological communities.

Naess (1995:79-81) uses the term 'ecosophy' to give a philosophical justification for deep ecology. The term is derived from 'Eco' which means household and 'sophy' which refers to wisdom. Ecosophy, therefore, is defined as the wisdom to harmoniously dwell in a place, or a household in broader sense. The wisdom is transformed as a pattern of life or a way of life. The perspective involves a shift from science to wisdom. Living environment is not merely considered as a science, but a wisdom, a way of life, a pattern of life aligned with nature; this is the best way to maintain and preserve the environment.

There are several approaches to understand and solve living environment problems, particularly ecological problems. The present research will provide two approaches: linear approach and more fundamental or radical approach. The former attempts to solve specific problems with discrete solutions. A decrease in resources, for example, can be solved with an alternative technology, and overpopulation with family planning programmes. Each problem is, therefore, isolated and a specific solution is found (Ife and Tesoriero 2008:54). The latter views living environment problems as being merely the symptoms of a more significant underlying fundamental problem. They emerge as a consequence of a social, economic, and political order which is blatantly unsustainable and needs to be changed (ibid.:54-55).

According to Mangunjaya (2006:252-253), two important steps of the ecological approach which are required include: (1) planning and managing population settlements to meet physical, social, and other needs by maintaining a

balance between settlements and ecosystems; (2) trying to maintain the harmonic combination between man-made components and naturally existing ones to preserve the habitats.

Viewed from ecological perspective, the present research is based on four ecological principles: holism, sustainability, diversity, and equilibrium. The principle of holism requires that every event or phenomenon must be seen as part of a whole, and that it can properly be understood by referring to every other part of the larger system. Holism highly values generalist rather than specialist approaches to problems and the solutions. The principle of sustainability implies that systems must be able to be maintained in the long term, that resources must be used only at the rate at which they can be replenished, that renewable energy sources must be utilised, that output to the environment must be limited to the level at which it can be adequately be absorbed, and that consumption must be minimised. The principle of diversity underlines that a disturbance occurring in a system or organism does not always lead to destruction of the whole. If diversity is valued, then people should be allowed and encouraged to find their own solutions. The principle of equilibrium emphasizes the importance of the relationship between systems and the need to maintain a balance between them. In the natural world, this happens through dynamic equilibrium, in which changes are naturally monitored and alterations made so that the balance is maintained (Ife and Tesoriero 2008:91-99).

Poerbo (1999) points out that environmental sustainability will be achieved if the existing resources are not depleted without adequate compensation. Furthermore, societies should be ready to use the resources wisely. Regarding the use of the resources, Sutanto (2005:76) outlines the importance of local wisdom-based programmes. The programmes involve attempts to (1) maintain and enhance land productivity by making use of local resources (such as potential plant types, local superior seeds, green fertilisers, compost, and biofertilisers); (2) improve food crop diversification; (3) optimise integrated system farming; (4) cultivate and planting a lawn with useful plant types (one of which is medicinal plant) adaptable to local conditions, and make use of a technology which is easily adopted and operated by farmers; (5) improve mentoring, guidance, and trainings for farmers and farmer groups to encourage and enhance independence of farmers; (6) enhance women's roles in farming; (7) conduct a survey and a mapping on the food availability and insecurity aiming at obtaining the real overview of food resilience in Indonesia.

The present research examines the implementation of deep ecology-based Corporate Social Responsibility. In long term, it seeks to help government maintain environmental sustainability. Apart from that, it provides an understanding on farmers' strategies to maintain the environmental sustainability. It is expected that farmers from other areas with the same characteristics can replicate the implementation.

## Research Method

The research focuses on societies as the target of the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by PT Tirta Investama AQUA Lestari. The research locations include Mojo Tengah and Wonosobo subdistricts of Wonosobo regency. The locations were selected as both research locations and objects considering that: (1) they are included as poverty areas; (2) they show an improvement after the CSR; (3) they are programme recipients from a company with the absence of intervention from other companies; (4) they become targets of the CSR without the involvement of political interests. Qualitative method which centred on the examination of humans' ways to give meaning to their social life was used. The research sought to explore their tastes, motivation, and subjective experiences.

According to Daymon and Holloway (2008:4), qualitative method tends to be associated with subjective characteristics of a social reality, and therefore this method has a good capability to generate understandings from stakeholders' perspectives, as well as to enable researchers to perceive things as the actors do.

The research belongs to an explanatory case study, in which in order to differentiate Yin's research types, it is important to observe the identification of types of previously-posed research questions. The research questions in the present research involves 'how' and 'why'. Such questions are related to operational things which require time tracking instead of frequency of particular data value.

Yin (2011:18) has defined a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates phenomena within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. The case study is suitable if such research questions as 'how' and 'why' are posed, if a researcher only has a little opportunity to control events which will be investigated, and if the research focuses on contemporary phenomena within the real-life context. According to Creswell (2006:73), case study research involves a qualitative approach which explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving **multiple sources of information** (such as observation, interview, audiovisual material, document, and report) and reports a **case description and case themes**.

Pawito (2007:141) explains that a case study research requires a researcher to collect, organise and analyse data of certain cases related to problems which draws his attention, and subsequently compare or connect to the others (in case of multiple cases) by holding holistic and contextual principles. The researchers intend to understand social behaviours involved in interindividual interactions, particularly to understand the extent of the factors of macroscopic structures' and institutions'

influences on interindividual relationship. The social behaviours involve potentials of societies as CSR programme benefit recipient and stakeholders who implement the CSR.

Primary data of a qualitative research include words and actions, while secondary data comprise documents, etc. (Moeloeng 2009:112). Data of this research were collected through in-depth interview, participant observation, focus group discussion, documentation study. Each case is analysed using interactive analysis model (Miles and Huberman 1992:16) with three analysis components including data reduction, data display, and verification.

## Findings and Discussion

Living environment is regarded as a basic need for human life. To maintain its availability, living environment requires sustainability of its functions, such as water availability, fertile soil, and adequate air to support plant growth. Attempts and behaviours of farmers in environmental reservation are guided by their experiences and knowledge they have when managing the environmental sustainability. This is the manifestation of deep ecology. Deep ecology endorses a principle of biospheric egalitarianism, a view that all organisms and living things are alike in having values in their own right. The view is associated with a recognition that rights to life and reproduces for all living creatures (whether biological or non-biological) belong to unignorable universal rights. Deep ecology is reflected in societies' local wisdom. There are several local wisdom existing in the environmental preservation. *Mamayu hayuning bawana* is a slogan upheld by most Javanese people, particularly those living in Dieng Plateau when doing activities related to nature. The slogan literally means attaining salvation and prosperity. Looking after themselves and maintaining physical environment in ritual and symbolic ways are among behaviours which reflect the slogan.

Local societies have carried out rituals to gain supernatural power and to keep humans and nature in balance. They believe that the devastation of nature brings about harmful effects of disasters. Floods, landslides, and droughts are examples of disasters which happen due to human unwillingness to preserve natural resources. They expect that the existing values contained in the slogan can be included in school education since primary school so that all humans will realise the importance of natural sustainability.

*Nandur Kebecikan, ndheder kautaman; nandur kebecikan bakal ngunduh kabecikan* means planting kindness, habituating virtues; those who plant kindness will harvest kindness. For that reason, each individual is obligated to be kind to each other and put collective interest above individual interest. Societies have a local wisdom in

planting trees to maintain water sustainability. They planted such trees as avocado trees, weeping figs (*Beringin*), coral trees (*Dadap*), sugar palms (*Aren*) surrounding the spring streams. For them, such plants are important to grow to preserve their water resources. Self-help groups of societies, together with public figures, are willing to collectively grow more plants.

A universal teaching is represented in Javanese slogan *Urip iku ngalih keslametan dunya lan akherat*, and therefore to achieve the purpose of life, actions should underlie attempts which prioritise salvation in this world and in Hereafter. The purpose of life is elaborated in behaviours called *ambeg*, which include: (1) *ambeg mangeran* (worshipping God to be able to enter *awing awung*, an eternal world); (2) *ambeg makarya* (trying to earn a living to meet the basic needs (food, clothing) from generation to generation to hold a degree of honour or prestige); (3) *ambeg wardaya laras* (being merciful and kind, being well-organised and living peacefully, fulfilling promises); (4) *ambeg maseso dhiri* (being able to control passions); (5) *ambeg mardhika* (being unwilling to treat other people badly and to get involved in other people's business). The slogan *Dadio wong kang nandur wiji keli* (which literally means 'Be a person who plant seeds which drift') teaches to carry out a random act of kindness with no expectation of reward and to make a long-term charitable contribution. Humans will not only live in the world, but also hereafter.

*Alam parigane Gusti, mulo kito jogo alam iki* implies that humans and nature are God's creation, and therefore humans should keep, use, and preserve the nature well. Farmers' behaviours are highly influenced by the values of local culture. They consider that water resources are used for the collective interest. The slogan reflects societies' local wisdom in perceiving the water resources. They realise that the springs belong to common property resources which should be taken care of, kept, and preserved for the following generations. Moreover, such behaviour belongs to the implementation of Article 33 Section 3 of the 1945 Constitution stating that *Bumi, air, dan kekayaan alam yang terkandung dibawahnya dikuasai oleh negara dan digunakan sebesar-besarnya untuk kemakmuran rakyat* (the land, the waters, and the natural resources within shall be under the powers of the State and shall be used to the greatest benefit of the people).

The slogan *Ngegehi anak putu ben komanan* reminds people to keep natural resources for the following generations when using them. The local societies, therefore, understand this as a sustainable process. Modern societies often consider villagers' acts in interacting with surrounding nature as superstition. However, if we take a closer look at people's fear to cut down trees close to the springs, the fear is indeed because trees play roles in maintaining the existence of the springs, as well as in preventing erosion. Our ancestors formerly forbade us to cut down trees close to springs because of their knowledge and common sense when interacting with their environment and observing natural phenomena of trees.

The concept of Javanese thought of *Gemah Ripah Loh Jinawi, Tata Tentrem Kerta Raharjo* that is a way of thinking which puts together the Realisation of thankfulness to God for the abundant grace, in the form of land topography, soil fertility and natural beauty of Java island, along with its diverse flora and fauna is rigidly held by local society. The fertile land has provided plentiful crops which support the human life sustainability.

To express their gratitude, Javanese people have implemented the concept of *Tata Tentrem Kerta Raharjo* in their daily life. This concept requires us to maintain orderliness both in the life of society and that of state from our wake-up time to sleeping time. This is done in order to create a synergy among all elements in societies or society groups and to build harmony in daily life starting from environment.

The above explanation has proven that societies in Mojo Tengah and Wonosobo subdistricts of Wonosobo regency have clear attitudes towards environment, centre their attention on the impacts of pollution not only on health but also on whole life. The approach employed to cope with various issues of living environment is not anthropocentric, but rather biocentric and exocentric. The contents of the universe are not merely viewed as resources and neither are valued for their economical function. Nature has to be seen from its value, as well as its cultural, social, spiritual, medical and biological functions. CSR programme facilitators highly understand the condition of the local societies. The concept of deep ecology serves as a basis for a facilitator to facilitate CSR programme.

In order to understand societies in preserving nature, the present research was conducted based on four ecological principles, namely holism, sustainability, diversity and equilibrium. Societies maintain environmental sustainability since such behaviour is believed as a balanced relationship between humans and their surrounding environment. For them, humans cannot live without nature, but nature will be able to survive without humans. Therefore, humans are obligated to preserve the environment.

### **Societies' Principle of Holism in Environmental Reservation**

The principle of holism requires that every event or phenomenon must be seen as part of a whole, and that it can properly be understood by referring to every other part of the larger system. Holism highly values generalist rather than specialist approaches to problems and the solutions (Ife and Tesoriero 2008:91). The CSR programme carried out by PT Tirta Investama AQUA Lestari in cooperation with NGO, i.e. local LPTP (Lembaga Pengkajian Teknologi Pedesaan-Rural Technology Development Institute) raises awareness of societies receiving the programme benefits to act in a holistic manner. Holistic attitudes of CSR



programme facilitators are able to encourage societies to be creative and to strengthen cooperation network with all parties. This strong cooperation is the key to success of CSR programme implementation in Wonosobo regency. The holistic attitudes also support programme facilitators to keep developing their capacity. Facilitators with holistic attitudes can be role models for balanced life pattern to local societies. They keep making efforts to develop harmonious and balanced relationship with themselves, others, and God.

This can be indicated in how societies do not merely understand natural phenomena and relate the causes and effects of events, but rather they do more than that; they understand that suprastructure which influences the events exists. For examples, floods and landslides happening in some areas in Indonesia are considered not only an ecological damage, but also the presence of the suprastructure which results in ecological damage. Hence, societies realise that harmonious and balanced relationship is absolutely required for their life sustainability.

One important lesson for us is that humans do not only think about today's life, but they also have to work hard for the following generations. Such attitudes and behaviours of the societies can be an example of harmonious life with nature. However, we realise that our environment is God's creations, but humans' greed makes them ignore this and they do not consider natural environments equal so that they tend to spend/exploit what are available in nature.

Humans' life and environment are depicted by societies as one of subsystems in a lifecycle. They consider that if human do not do something in order to accomplish the lifecycle, sooner or later, the lifecycle will be left ignored. It means that humans live with their responsibility to do something with a result which will be benefited by the next generations, for example, planting coconut trees. Such attitude and behaviour reflect a harmonious life with nature and position nature equal with other God's creations.

On the basis of the description, it is clear that the role of facilitators in the field highly determines the success of CSR programme. Facilitators are required to have a competence to think, behave, and act in a holistic manner and to be able to become a role model in their life. The sense of serving is the main requirement to become a facilitator.

### **Societies' Principle of Sustainability in Environmental Preservation**

The principle of sustainability implies that systems must be able to be maintained in the long term, that resources must be used only at the rate at which they can be replenished, that renewable energy sources must be utilised, that output to the environment must be limited to the level at which it can be adequately be absorbed,



and that consumption must be minimised (Ife and Tesoriero 2008:91-99). The life principle of societies is in line with the concept proposed by Haris (in Fauzi 2004), in which the concept of sustainability is categorised into three aspects of understanding, namely: (a) economic sustainability, defined as development which is able to produce goods and services continuously to maintain the sustainability of governance and avoid sectoral imbalance which can ruin agricultural and industrial production; (b) environmental sustainability, a sustainable system of environment should be able to maintain stable resources, avoid natural resource exploitation and environmental absorption function. This concept also deals with preservation of biodiversity, stability of aerospace, and other ecosystem functions which do not belong to economic resource category; (c) social sustainability, a system which can reach equality, provide social services including health, gender education, and political accountability.

### *Economic Sustainability*

In order to maintain CSR programme sustainability, CSR programme in the optimisation of domestic plants or waste management in integrated agricultural system is economically beneficial. Sustainable agriculture can improve economic feasibility through various ways. In brief, improvement of land management and plant rotation will increase harvests, in both short and long terms, since it improves soil quality and water availability, as well as provides benefits for environment. Economic feasibility can also be achieved by reducing the usage of machines, chemical fertilisers, and pesticide costs (which many farmers cannot afford to buy), depending on the characteristics of production system. Societies' understanding of economic sustainability is reflected in farm production technique by planting various plants with crop rotation (*tumpang sari*) and diversification. With those patterns, optimum economic value of land will be achieved without ruining ecological balance.

### *Environmental Sustainability*

Societies' point of view on environment is deeply positive. The existence of Islamic boarding school (*Pondok Pesantren*) in the area is proven to be effective to persuade neighbouring societies to always act for the collective interest. Altruism spirit of local societies is so dominant that it develops their solidarity, cooperation, and togetherness. It can be indicated in how they have certain local wisdom on nature. They make use of nature sufficiently and never exploit it. Their perspective on water is *banyu podho ngombe* which means water is for all societies. With this lesson, societies tend to maintain the water availability, both the quality and the quantity. In order to maintain the water quality, they carry out some activities; they do not litter and do not do illegal cutting in water storage areas. Their perspective on land as the way they uphold the existence of land is reflected in their habit to visit

their agricultural field every day. They never forget visiting their fields. They have a principle that when they keep cultivating their lands, they believe that what they do will result in what they need to meet their necessities of life as long as they live. Agricultural fields are the resources for societies' life.

### ***Social Sustainability***

Social sustainability deals with the quality of life of people who work and earn a living from agriculture, and that of life of the neighbouring societies. This covers equal income of different stakeholders in an agricultural production chain. Before CSR programme was conducted, the area of Bumirejo village had many unemployed population. The existence of CSR programme is able to change unemployed societies into hardworking ones. They make use of land in their lawn, produce organic fertilisers by utilising potentials of their local area, and even organise in business groups. The existence of these groups will facilitate the establishment of good relations with stakeholders. The existence of programme facilitators is highly important to organise society. Societies consider that LPTP's assistance is effective.

Other activities also contribute to the development of productive economic business surrounding the societies' environment. People work on local potential-based food processing. This reveals that sustainable agriculture which promotes shared additional value for more members of societies through optimisation of available workers will improve social cohesion and justice. The existing management of society and awareness of selecting local materials instead of purchasing products from other remote areas are also significant elements of social sustainability.

Their principle in preserving nature is that human cannot live if nature does not exist, while nature will flourish rapidly if human do not destroy it. They realise that the existence of humans in the Earth is vulnerable, and therefore they always live in harmony with nature. Hence, to conclude, it can be affirmed that humans must be thankful to God for His blessings in form of nature and this is reflected in the existence of Islamic Boarding Schools around the area which can be a reference of their daily life and the existence of LPTP in that area.

### **Societies' Principle of Diversity in Environmental Preservation**

Jambean village societies have many ways to preserve nature. These are done in many technical ways, both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, there is a gap between programme facilitators and societies. The programme implemented by CSR programme facilitators was not directly welcomed by society. However, realising the effectiveness of the programme, they finally accepted it. This means

that the success of CSR programme implementation is determined not only by the facilitators but also by their patience.

Meanwhile, horizontal gap occurs among components of society. For instance, the gap exists between societies living in city border and those living far from city. As a result, a friction between the groups cannot be avoided. The condition requires a facilitator of empowerment, in this case is CSR programme facilitator, who should have a capability, to resolve the conflict. Conflicts among elements of society commonly happen during the implementation of CSR. By putting the principle of diversity forward, conflict escalation will be immediately overcome. This means that a disturbance occurring in a system or organism does not always lead to destruction of the whole. If diversity is valued, then people should be allowed and encouraged to find their own solutions. In principle, diversity is something that has to be praised rather than ruined. Everyone has their own perception and way of life. In other words, good things are not always done in one single way, but in many ways. People realise that what they have done are not the only and the best ways, but they make a maximum effort to do the best without ignoring others. People live not only for meeting the need of their group but also, and most importantly, for providing benefits for public.

### **Societies' Principle of Equilibrium in Environmental Preservation**

Kalibeber village societies hold a principle of *nandur pari tuwuh pari nandur jagung tuwuh jagung* or 'planting rice, harvesting rice and planting corn, harvesting corn' in their life. This proverb means that basically, people will seize a result that is incommensurate with what they have done. They believe that if they work hard to preserve environment, they will receive the best from the environment. What they get is equal to what they have done.

In principle, societies believe that what they do deals with balance. They assume that what they receive from nature should be equivalent to what they will give back to nature. With that principle, people always try to preserve environment by maintaining balance. Interaction among systems which are potentially in contraction is controlled in such a way that people are able to live in togetherness and even dependent on each other. The principle of equilibrium highlights the importance of relationship among systems and also the needs to keep them in balance. In the nature, it happens through dynamic balance, in which natural changes are well-maintained.

## Conclusion

Societies depict human's life and environment society as one of life cycle subsystems. They believe that if human do not do something in order to make the life cycle work, it will be left ignored in the long run. This means that people live with their responsibility to do something that will be relished by the next generations. Societies take the advantage of nature sufficiently and they do not exploit it for their profit. Their principle of preserving environment is that humans cannot live if nature does not exist, while nature will flourish rapidly if humans do not destroy it. This is in conformity with the simplicity of societies with simple way of thinking. In preserving environment, this study is based on four ecological principles, including holism, sustainability, diversity, and equilibrium. Societies maintain the environmental preservation, and this is believed as the balanced relationship between humans and nature. Therefore, humans are obliged to preserve the nature. They live not only to meet the needs of their group but also most importantly, to be beneficial for other people. They believe that if they work hard to preserve the environment, they will receive the best thing from their environment. Hence, the implementation of deep ecology-based CSR programme is highly effective.

## References

- Amien, Mappadjantji. 2005. *Kemandirian Lokal : Konsepsi Pembangunan, Organisasi, dan Pendidikan dari Perspektif Sains Baru*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Basrowi, S. 2002. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Perspektif Mikro*. Surabaya: Penerbit Insan Cendikia.
- Bogdan, R.C. and S.K. Biklen. 1982. *Qualitative Research for Education*. United States of America: Mc Graw-Hill, Inc.
- Creswell, John W. 2006. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Daymon, Christine and Immy Holloway. 2008. *Metode Riset Kualitatif dalam Public Relations dan Marketing Communications*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Bentang.
- Fauzi, A. 2004. *Ekonomi sumber daya alam dan lingkungan, teori dan aplikasi*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Hasan, P. 1999. *Lingkungan binaan untuk rakyat*. Bandung: Akatiga.
- Ife, Jim and Frank Tesoriero. 2008. *Communiy development: alternatif pengembangan masyarakat di era globalisasi*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Mangunjaya, F. 2006. *Hidup harmonis dengan alam: esai-esai pembangunan lingkungan, konservasi dan keanekaragaman hayati Indonesia*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
- Miles, Matthew. B and A. Michael Huberman. 1992. *Analisis Data Kualitatif*. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia.

- Moleong, L.J. 2000. *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- . 2009. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Naess, A. 1995. “The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects”, in George Sessions (ed.), *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-first Century*. London: Shambhala.
- Pawito. 2007. *Penelitian Komunikasi Kualitatif*. Yogyakarta: LKIS
- Sutanto, R. 2005. “Tantangan global menghadapi kerawanan pangan dan peranan pengetahuan tradisional dalam pembangunan pertanian”, in Francis X. Wahono, A. B. Widyanta, Titus O. Kusumajat (eds), *Pangan, Kearifan Lokal Dan Keanekaragaman Hayati: Pertaruhan Bangsa Yang Terlupakan*. Yogyakarta: Cindelaras Pustaka Rakyat Cerdas.
- Sutopo. 2002. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif: Dasar Teori Dan Terapannya Dalam Penelitian*. Surakarta: Sebelas Maret University Press.
- Yin, R.K. 1987. *Case Study Research: Design And Methods*. California: Sage Publication.



## CHAPTER 32

# Freedom, Culture and Transformative Harmony

## The Dialectical Dichotomy of Christianity and Pre-colonial Igbo Culture

*Sabine Jell-Bahlsen*

### Introduction

The idea of harmony in “Self, Society, Nature and the Divine” (Giri in this volume) is closely linked to freedom as a prerequisite. For without freedom, harmony remains a farce. In the absence of freedom there cannot be true harmony – neither for the individual nor within society. As Malinowski (1944) has shown, freedom is directly interconnected with culture for it frees human beings from basic needs and fears. Yet, according to Malinowski, individual liberty must end where it would infringe on the freedom of other members of the community. Moreover, civilisation also carries potentials for the opposite of freedom: when freedom is monopolised by some sectors of society, they infringe upon others who are then hurt and may even become subjugated in an uneven, imbalanced state of society. Medieval European civilisation, industrial, post-colonial, capitalist and communist societies all provide well-documented examples of oppression and deprivation caused by excesses of monolithic power structures, social disparities, one-sided accumulation of wealth, and the intolerance associated with monotheism. Such a

disharmonious and oppressive state of society negates prior cultural achievements proposed by Stanley Diamond (1974) to critique Western civilisation.

## **Pre-Colonial Igbo Civilisation and Its Religion**

Contrary to European-American civilisations and to the more centralised West African proto-states, pre-colonial Igbo civilisation was intrinsically democratic. This society emphasised the valour of power-sharing and negotiating, social equilibrium, respect for nature, acknowledgement of the female side of the universe, veneration of life, multiplicity of divinities and tolerance.<sup>1</sup> The Igbo people have provided us with a vision of a society in balance. Their nation has been challenged by slave trading, the onslaught of colonialism, Christianity, and near annihilation through civil war within the Nigerian nation-state, yet Igbo culture is exceedingly dynamic, her Igbo people have proven highly resilient and innovative, and have rebound “against all odds” to paraphrase Apollos Nwauwa and Chima Korieh (2011).

From a dialectical perspective, Igbo cultural tenets can provide potential clues towards a more benign future. The dialectical method explores history as a dynamic process resulting from the triad of thesis – antithesis – synthesis.<sup>2</sup> The thesis of pre-colonial Igbo culture has been negated by the antithesis of contemporary industrial capitalism, monotheistic intolerance and globalisation. However, a dialogue that takes inspiration from both sides could dialectically resolve the perceived dichotomy to arrive at a synthesis of transformative harmony involving freedom of oppression, progress, prosperity, human rights and well-being for all.

Despite centuries of slave trading, the citizens of Igbo-land have led a peaceful and highly productive life for ages. The economy was based on agriculture and sustained a large population. Igboland is one of the most densely-populated areas of Africa. Here, free men and women once worked on their own land; the producers owed nothing to lords or foreigners; the villagers ran their own affairs, were faithful, and created impressive works of art; they valued power-sharing, negotiation, and productive communal harmony; they respected nature, acknowledged the female side of the universe, and affirmed life; they honoured their ancestors, the forces of nature and multiple divinities.

Pre-colonial Igbo civilisation was essentially a democratic society. This indigenous democracy caused much dismay to the colonial masters who found the independent Igbo people hard to subdue and exploit.<sup>3</sup> The colonial administration expressed a strong preference for dealing with local despots who would serve the empire as envisioned by Lord Lugard in the emirates areas of Northern Nigeria.<sup>4</sup> Researchers have described the Igbo as “a tribe without rulers.”<sup>5</sup> This derogative



notion suggested lawlessness even though the opposite prevailed – at least in the past.<sup>6</sup> As a result of the Igbo people's "unruliness," the colonial regime introduced an alien, unwarranted and hitherto unknown and unnecessary system of warrant chiefs, "native rulers," and "customary laws".<sup>7</sup> The result was a fake indigenous government system that causes much confusion and dismay until this day, for example, in abuses of power and local scandals involving fights over positions of power, revenue and corruption.

Before the advent of British colonialists and their ideological entourage, Igbo society was held together by custom, founded in its religion and cemented by the arts.<sup>8</sup> The combined force of religious beliefs, moral codes, customary order and artistic expressions was very strong. These powers made a centralised monolithic power structure obsolete while at the same time acting as building blocks for a balanced society that maintained maximum freedom and a meaningful life for its members.

Tolerance once was a major value of Igbo culture. The virtue of tolerance and mutual respect was expressed in well-known proverbs such as *Egberere bere, ugo bere kwa. Nke si ibe-ya ebela, ya abola chi*, translated as: "Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch also. The one, who says no to the other, may his wings break."<sup>9</sup> Of equal importance were the desire for equilibrium and a dislike of extremes. These tenets provide us with a vision of a society in balance. From a dialectical perspective, pre-colonial Igbo culture and its values offer potential clues towards a more benign future.

The Igbo are a deeply religious people. Igbo civilisation was once based upon its religion; the religious beliefs held the people together, allowing them to live in peace, and their society to prosper. Until their conquest when their beliefs were undermined, Igbo theology<sup>10</sup> constituted the basis of custom. Igbo religion was complex; its cosmology was simultaneously abstract and concrete. Despite multiple deities and local variations, certain beliefs and cultural practices traditionally united the Igbo nation.

On the abstract level, there is the shared belief in a supreme being, Chi-ukwu – too grand to be contained in man-made images or temples and transcending shape, sex and gender. This notion furthermore manifests to humans in their individual chi, their life force and indestructible soul that re-unites with Chi-ukwu after death and may re-incarnate in a cyclical rather than linear concept of time.<sup>11</sup>

On the existential or concrete side, there are the people's forefather and foremothers, their ancestors who once founded the community, its way of life, its custom, *omenala*, and its underlying code of the *ogu*.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the people once acknowledged the forces of nature that locally enabled human existence. These were the life-giving Earth Goddess<sup>13</sup>, Ani/Ala of the town, the compound

and various farm lands, the life giving water deities of local rivers and lakes, such as the river Goddesses Imo and Idemili, the river God, Urashi, and the Goddess of Oguta Lake, Uhammiri/Ogbuide, as well as other deities.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore the people once acknowledged the value of life in gratitude. As descendants of their ancestors they revered those who lived before us and whose lives we carry on. They remembered their history, celebrated their arts, and respected those forces to which we owe our continued existence on earth.

## The Community's Custom, *Omenala*

*Omenala* can be defined as “how things are done on the land”.<sup>15</sup> These rules were attributed to the Earth Goddess, the Water Goddess and the ancestors, but preserved and enforced by local priests and elders. Certain creatures, e.g. the royal python were believed to act as messengers of the Gods.<sup>16</sup> The ancestors were venerated by their lineage descendants in addition to personal Gods. The community's male and female elders were believed to be closest to the ancestors and acted as mediators between humans and the spirit world. The elders were beyond sex<sup>17</sup> and deeply knowledgeable about their community's life. They were in charge of upholding the rules of the land that held society together; the elders expressed ancestral custom and aimed at maintaining social harmony as well as an equilibrium with the forces of nature. As a wand of office, the *ofo* signalled the ritual authority to carry out regulatory functions<sup>18</sup> while the *ogu* represented the underlying code of conduct.<sup>19</sup>

Igbo culture could once pride itself of very high morals.<sup>20</sup> Its standards included codes of conduct that regulated life. Strict rules defined reproductive norms to distinguish between animal and human behaviour: e.g. twin birth was regarded as inappropriate for humans who should only give birth to one child at a time;<sup>21</sup> the births of human children were spaced at a three-year interval enforced through post-partum sexual abstinence.<sup>22</sup> The customary codes of conduct also included other taboos, such as prohibiting land sale of extended family land without the consent of all,<sup>23</sup> and requirements such as respect for seniority, especially awe for motherhood expressed in the name, *Nneka*.<sup>24</sup>

## The Female Side of the Universe

Although most<sup>25</sup> Igbo communities are patrilinear societies, the female side of the universe was firmly acknowledged in Igbo cosmology.<sup>26</sup> Women held important ritual positions in Igbo culture.<sup>27</sup> According to Chinua Achebe, “Women stand for compassion.”<sup>28</sup> Okonkwo is the negative hero of Achebe's novel, *Things Fall*

*Apart*,<sup>29</sup> and in an interview with the Village Voice, Achebe has said explicitly, “Okonkwo’s failure was ignoring the female”.<sup>30</sup> The example of Okonkwo also illustrates how a person’s maternal side could harbour a fugitive as expressed in the proverb, “when in trouble run to your mother’s side.”<sup>31</sup> According to Nwando Achebe (2011), “In *Things Fall Apart*, human salvation ... is presented as matrifocal. It is through Okonkwo’s mother’s lineage that honour and dignity are restored to the exiled warrior.” With time, the female side can bring healing and forgiving. Furthermore, mutual respect and collaboration between husband and wife was expected and perceived as a pre-requisite for a productive life.<sup>32</sup> This is expressed in proverbs such as, *Di na nwunye di nizu ofu ibe ji ezuelu ha ugani*, translated as: “When husband and wife are in accord, a slice of yam can last them for the months of scarcity, *Aka iri kwo aka ekpe, aka ekpe akwo aka iri, ha abuo adi ocha*, translated as: “When the right hand washes the left one, and the left one washes the right one, the two will be clean;”<sup>33</sup> or *Ihe kwuru, ibe akwudebe ya*, translated as “when something stands, something else stands beside it”<sup>34</sup> or in names such as *Ibuadinma*, translated as “togetherness ensures the good”, and *Onyeabo*, “I have got the second one to cooperate.”<sup>35</sup>

Female fecundity was acknowledged as a life-giver. Life itself was considered sacred, and violent crime was nearly absent in Igbo villages of the past. Youngsters were educated in their society’s codes of conduct within the family. Initiation or the masquerade society was an additional important educational institution that taught the youth to bear responsibility for their actions; community acceptance was a supreme goal; ostracism, satire and the refusal of burial rites were more effective deterrents to anti-social or criminal behaviour than violent punishment.<sup>36</sup> Taboos and an avoidance of social expulsion made prisons obsolete.

## A Dynamic Culture

Igbo culture is inherently dynamic and flexible, rather than static. The moral standards of *omenala* were very high. Title taking was an avenue to upward social mobility, power was negotiable and all social positions had to be achieved, such as full recognition as adult male through compulsory initiation into a masking society. Yet, pre-colonial Igbo custom was also flexible and not static as the colonial masters imagined. Instead, *omenala* was vibrant, and customary rules were adapted to changing circumstances.<sup>37</sup> The Igbo nation has been challenged by slave trading, the onslaught of colonialism, Christianity, and near annihilation through civil war within the Nigerian nation-state. Yet, due to the inherent dynamics of their culture, the Igbo people have bounced back and proven highly resilient, innovative and productive.

There is no doubt that today's Nigeria finds herself in an increasingly precarious situation where chaos prevails, people constantly feel exposed to all kinds of risks and uncertainties, threatened, unsafe, insecure, and in an ethical and identity void. The youths have lost their morals, identity and respect for their elders and tradition. Crime is ever present, according to Oriji (2007), amorality prevails, especially the young find themselves stranded in an ethical void. Abdulaziz (2011), a young journalist from the North, characterises the general current dilemma as follows:

As a purely communal society, African society had ... a comprehensive mode of bringing up its offspring. We had a superb unwritten curriculum which provided an A to Z of grooming younger ones from childhood to adulthood... a series of activities that would boost his/her psychological and physical development. ...However, in Nigeria today, we have seen a generation which neglects its coming generation with disdain ... only concerned about itself ... the youth are ... only cared for through feeding. We, the youth, are not happy and as Ken Saro-Wiwa once said, we are angry with a society that has cheated us.

The dismal situation of the youth prevails in Nigeria's Islamic North just as much as in the country's South where international oil corporations reap their profits while the citizen find themselves in what Chidi Osuagwu has described as "a moral desert".<sup>38</sup> On top of this destructive setting, evangelists and proselytisers of all shades and backgrounds prey like vultures on what is left of what was once a rich cultural heritage.

## **Christian Conquest**

The earliest missionary efforts in Nigeria date back to the days of slave trading, when the king of Portugal attempted to establish a commercial alliance with Oba Uzoluo of Benin after the Pope had granted Portugal a monopoly of commercial and spiritual influence in this part of the world in 1472.<sup>39</sup> However, large-scale evangelisation in West Africa accelerated to full steam only towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the wake of the colonial enterprise. By this time, the capitalist economy, industrialisation and military power of Europe had greatly benefited from the 300 years of trans-Atlantic slave – and arms trading that had promoted inter-tribal African warfare.<sup>40</sup> The ensuing power shift enabled the exploration and European conquest, colonisation and underdevelopment of Africa.<sup>41</sup> This trend has in turn facilitated the subduing of indigenous societies and the destruction of the cultures that once sustained the people among the Igbo as much as elsewhere. The dismantling of beliefs that once united the people has paved the way for their

exploitation, impoverishment, crime, and the dismal situation of contemporary Nigeria and other African countries.

Against the African misery, the countries of Europe experienced a tremendous growth of inventions, industrial productivity and affluence at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. During the era known as “Gründerjahre” in Germany, the European bourgeoisie grew rich and powerful, the industrial revolution accelerated, the arts and intellectual life flourished, and even the peasants gained some modest prosperity.

## **Igboland and Christianity’s European Legacy**

In contrast to pre-colonial, independent and free Igbo farmers, European peasants had not been free throughout the middle-ages, as wretched serfs were bound to the land of their masters and forced to work the land of their Lords for centuries.<sup>42</sup> Peasants could be sold to the army and were not free to move or even marry as they wished due to their bondage and poverty. The largest land-owner of central Europe was the Catholic Church. Its bishops ruled the land and had a vested interest in exploiting and dominating nature<sup>43</sup>, rather than venerating that to which we owe our lives. The Catholic Church was also a power broker promoting unlimited population growth. It needed a growing army and labour force for tax revenue and land acquisition.<sup>44</sup> The peasants who tilled the soil were heavily taxed and forced to submit their services and the fruits of their labour to their Lords.<sup>45</sup>

After the French Revolution and ensuing rebellions throughout Europe, the peasants were liberated, and the nation states secularised. Land and judicial power were taken away from the Church, and the land was returned to the peasants who finally owned the land they had worked for centuries. Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of Europe had been secularised. A declining membership means declining revenue. At this time, a serious membership drive began to take shape in Africa and other parts of the colonial world where Churches of all denominations competed to increase their flock through varied strategies.

In Igboland, the Anglican Church first accompanied British commerce and conquest. The CMS was empowered by the British Colonial Office and initially gained influence through offering education and promising access to foreign wealth. Following Lutheran ideas, the CMS schools had promoted the Igbo language, yet villagers anxious to assimilate to their masters and hoping for better employment opportunities preferred the English language education offered by Catholic missions. In addition, French Catholic missionaries soon gained sympathies in South Eastern Nigeria due to the Protestants’ negative association with the Royal Niger Company, incidents of racial discrimination, British

bombing attacks, and other violent forms of colonial suppression.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Catholic hospitals provided healthcare for tropical diseases, especially for lepers. This strategy promoted the success of the Catholic membership drive even further, as did their protection and care given to twins and others ostracised by their native communities.<sup>47</sup> Other Churches also began to proliferate early. All of the Christian missions condemned, demonised and attacked the indigenous culture and its achievements.<sup>48</sup>

The successful evangelisation of South-eastern Nigeria was largely based on a presentation of Christianity as compassionate and peaceful. While this perception may be true to the gospel, the Church has played quite a different part in European history where commerce and violence are intimately interrelated, and where people, beasts and nature were reduced to mere sources of income and exploitation.<sup>49</sup>

The female side of the universe had already been increasingly denigrated by the Catholic Church in Europe where women were viciously suppressed from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The divine was monopolised and ascribed a male sexuality, whereas the female body, fecundity and sexuality were condemned, demonised and associated with sin. Eager to secure the sole control of its men, a power-hungry pope introduced the law of celibacy to its priesthood at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Laterankonzil in 1139.<sup>50</sup> This law became an authoritative tool for reining the servants in. According to Käppner and Denzler, the celibate was initially cruelly enforced by “sadistic and psychopathic bishops and great inquisitors like Konrad von Marburg.”<sup>51</sup> Women were excluded from all public spheres of life as Europe fell into the dark ages and a witch craze that lasted for 400 years from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century. Under Pope Innocent VIII, the reverends Kramer and Sprenger authored the *Malleus Maleficarum*, or *Hammer of Witches* in 1484, a book that was used by a fanatic clergy to torture and kill millions of women in Germany, Italy, France and other European countries for centuries.<sup>52</sup>

There are different theories on the witch craze and why the Catholic Church took to first demonising and later inhumanly suppressing the female half of society. Some argue that the anti-female mania was due to the rise of male dominated medicine getting rid of female herbalist competition;<sup>53</sup> others propose that cutting out the female impact on the men made them more servile and easier to dominate;<sup>54</sup> and still others link medieval witch hunting to climate change – a minor ice age in Europe – and a resulting decrease in agricultural productivity as well as to suppression of female herbalists and their birth control knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

Ironically, the timeframe of Europe’s internal barbarism coincided with the international slave trade and an increasing dehumanisation of non-Europeans that legitimised slave-trading and colonisation. Whatever their reasons, centuries of Christian inquisition practices, crusades and peasant exploitation were far removed

from Jesus' gospel of peace, compassion, humanity and gentleness. In Europe, the Churches ultimately had to find reason or face expulsion. However, in Africa, some Christian outfits still continue to practice barbarism in the name of their God, and sadly, some fanatic Christians even feel entitled, to engage in witch-hunting, exorcism, art destruction and other atrocities long banned in the civilised world.<sup>56</sup>

## **The Interface of Igbo Theology and Christianity**

The interrogation of the Igbo-Christian interface presupposes a degree of common ground between Christianity and Igbo theology. Thus, the first conference on "The Interface of Igbo Theology and Christianity" convened at the Whelan Research Academy at Owerri, Nigeria in July of 2012 called for mutual tolerance, respect and a dialogue between proponents of indigenous beliefs and Christianity. Participants at this important event explored the possibility of a dialogue rather than mutual condemnation and called for a deeper understanding of Igbo Traditional Religion (ITR). However, Europeans on the one hand may find it hard to forget the atrocities committed by the Catholic Church in Europe and might instead admire the tenets of Igbo theology. Igbo Christians on the other hand may be highly critical of their own culture,<sup>57</sup> ignore their history<sup>58</sup>, or feel bashful of their identity.<sup>59</sup> A peaceful dialogue is nevertheless conceivable. Moreover, a dialectical approach could potentially reap the best of both worlds to forget old-fashioned, hardened doctrines, and arrive at transformative harmony and new path toward more humane living.

## **The Dialectics of Dialogue and Synthesis**

The dialectical method explores history as a dynamic process resulting from the triad of thesis – antithesis – synthesis. The history and practice of Christianity may be perceived as domineering, negative, and destructive of earlier achievements of Igbo culture. Yet, this perceived dichotomy between indigenous Igbo values and intrusive Christian practice could be dialectically resolved towards a new synthesis.

Igbo theology firmly acknowledges the female side of the universe.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the Igbo people were also historically modest enough to revere and perceive the forces of their natural environment with awe; they knew that they needed to study and respect the powers of nature and to adjust to her requirements in order to survive; they maintained an equilibrium between humans and with their natural environment, taking from nature only what was needed to survive; they did not rob and impoverish the soil, deplete the forests, or pollute the waters in order to



sustain rulers living in luxury. Based on their knowledge and beliefs, Igbo villagers have developed a highly sustainable and productive relationship between men and women, as well as between man and nature, without the former taking advantage or exploiting the latter, as during colonialism and in later days. From what is known today, pre-colonial life was much less destructive and harmful than the colonial monoculture that followed, and the excessive exploitation, climate change and other scourges and insecurities we are facing today.<sup>61</sup>

## Clues From Pre-Colonial Igbo Civilisation

The major tenets of Igbo pre-colonial civilisation were: harmony, balance, peaceful co-existence, respect of one's elders, art and history, tolerance, acknowledgement of the female side of the universe, knowledge, acceptance and appreciation of one's identity, a recognition and reverence of multiple forces sustaining life, and a respectful and sustainable relationship between man and nature. There are also positive clues that may be taken from Christian theory: a desire for peace and compassion – yet without an eye on power and wealth; aid to and integration of vulnerable members of society – yet without greed and an eye on membership drive; education in modern skills – yet without rejection or falsification of the findings of modern science;<sup>62</sup> abolition of the *Osu* cast system<sup>63</sup> and of abandoning of twins.<sup>64</sup>

Many scholars including the eminent late novelist, Chinua Achebe regard today's Nigeria as a "failed state" whose citizens are suffering, and finding themselves in a dangerously chaotic world.

"[A failed state] is one that is unable to perform its duties on several levels: when violence cascades into an all-out internal war, when standards of living massively deteriorate, when the infrastructure of ordinary life decays, and when the greed of rulers overwhelms their responsibilities to better their people and their surroundings."<sup>65</sup>

Igbo youths were once educated in the antagonism of truth and chaos.<sup>66</sup> Yet, their indigenous culture, its history, wisdom and shelter is rapidly being destroyed for "turning the culture inside out" is – or hopefully was – the goal of evangelisation.<sup>67</sup>

However, the antagonism between the two opposing sides must be overcome in order to initiate a transformative harmony and progress. Such an improvement is possible if traditionalists on the one hand are willing to re-discover the tolerant, dynamic and adaptable qualities<sup>68</sup> of their own custom and tradition, and if Christians on the other hand could bring themselves to acknowledge the positive



contributions of Igbo theology, rather than condemning the culture and pursuing their own commercial interests, membership drive and power lust. Peace and mutual respect – once basic tenets of Igbo civilisation – can generate a fruitful new development. A synthesis of old and new is conceivable once Christian and Igbo theologians are prepared to learn from and accept each other. This dialogue could contribute to eliminating chaos and poverty, and instead result in progress, prosperity and well-being for all.

## Acknowledgement

The shorter version of this paper was presented earlier at the first conference on *The Interface of Igbo Theology and Christianity* at the Whelan Research Academy (WRAC) in Owerri, Nigeria, July 5-7, 2012.

## Endnotes

1. Obioma Nnaemeka, "Introduction" in *Sisterhood, Feminisms and Power. From Africa to the Diaspora*, edited by Obioma Nnaemeka, (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998); Victor Uchendu, *The Ibo of South Eastern Nigeria*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974); Richard N. Henderson, *The King in Every Man; Evolutionary Trends in Onitsha Ibo Society and Culture*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994); Sabine Jell-Bahlsen, *Social Integration in the Absence of the State: A Case Study of the Igbo Speaking Peoples of South Eastern Nigeria*. (Ph.D. dissertation, The New School for Social Research, New York), (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1980).
2. Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive. A Critique of Civilisation*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books 1974).
3. Hence the sub-title of Acholonu's book, Catherine Acholonu, *They Lived Before Adam. Prehistoric Origins of the Igbo. The Never Been Ruled. An Igbo Renaissance Handbook*, (Abuja: CARC Publications, 2008). The Igbo people's democratic socio-political organisation and philosophy provided a stark contrast to the feudal societies of Northern Nigeria used by Lord Lugard as a model towards the colonial policy of "Indirect Rule." Consequently, Igbo political organisation was deemed anarchy by foreigners, and the achievement oriented and industrious Igbo people were demonized as unruly misfits by the regime during Nigeria's colonial days and beyond.
4. Frederick Lugard and J.D. Baron (Lord Lugard), *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, (London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1922).
5. G.I. Jones, *Report on the Position, Status and Influence of Chiefs and Natural Rulers in the Eastern Region of Nigeria (The Jones Report)*, (Enugu: The Government Printers Eastern Region, 1956).

6. John Oriji, "The End of Sacred Authority and the Genesis of Amoralism and Disorder in Igbo Mini States", *Dialectical Anthropology*, 31, 1-3, 2007, pp. 263-288. See also Uchendu 1974, *op. cit.*
7. Adiele Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southern Nigeria 1891-1929*, (London: Longman Group, 1972); Adiele Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand; Studies in Igbo History and Culture*, (Ibadan and London: Oxford University Press, 1981); Lesleye Amede Obiora, "Reconsidering African Customary Law," *Legal Studies Forum*, 17, 3, 1993, pp. 217-252.
8. African art has been compared to the bible because classic African art contains a whole body of beliefs in a nutshell. Geoffrey Parrinder, *African Mythology*, (London: Hamlin, 1967). See also Herbert M. Cole and Chike Aniakor (eds), *Igbo Arts, Community and Cosmos*, (Los Angeles and New York: Fowler Museum of Art, 1984). Igbo arts are closely linked to myth, and as such define and enforce society's ethics and codes of conduct. Thus, masquerades were important agents of social integration, educating the youth and the public about their culture's tenets, and working "like the cement that glued us together". Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 196. Yet, due to their spiritual base, these prolific artistic expressions are scorned by religious zealots and wretched minds that pretend to be more British than their former colonial masters. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1965). See also: Nkuzi Nnam, *Colonial Mentality in Africa*, (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2007).

In Achebe's classic novel the zealot "cries louder than the bereaved", Achebe 1960, *op. cit.*, and he related the destruction of masquerades that once integrated society to the dismantling of "an entire eschatology" the "glue that held us together". Achebe, "Foreword: The Igbo World and its Art", in Cole and Aniakor (eds.) 1984, *op. cit.*, p xii. This art destruction ignores history and contributes to the loss of identity, moral decay, and the rise of amorality described by Oriji 2007, *op. cit.* crime as described by Biko Agozino, "The Intrusive Traits of Victor Uchendu," *Dialectical Anthropology* 31, 1-3, 2007, pp. 289-292, to the undoing of social integration, and ultimately acts as a catalyst for the crumbling of the entire culture as envisioned by Achebe 1960, *op. cit.* See also Sabine Jell-Bahlsen, "Falling Spirits, Crumbling Culture, and the Dismantling of Human Rights: Instances of Deteriorating Ethics and Codes of Conduct in Select Novels by Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Adichie and Flora Nwapa," *Mbari. The International Journal of Igbo Studies*, 1, 2009, pp. 22-43.

9. Achebe 1960, *op. cit.*
10. I am using the word "theology" here, even though Igbo eschatology has historically not been recorded in writing. The usage of Igbo theology was proposed by Prof. Catherine Acholonu, a co-convenor of the first conference on *The Interface of Igbo Theology and Christianity* at the Whelan Research Academy (WRAC) at Owerri, Nigeria, July 5-7, 2012.
11. Chinua Achebe, *The World of the Ogbanije*, (Owerri: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1984).

12. I am grateful to Chidi Osuagwu for illuminating the *ogu* concept to me (personal communication, Owerri, July 7, 2012).
13. Achebe 1984, *op. cit.*; Uchendu 1974, *op. cit.*; Jell-Bahlsen 1980, *op. cit.*; the *Chioha*, priest of the Earth Goddess, *Ani* of Orsu-Obodo, interviews and translations of prayers recorded during my field research 1978-1979. I am using the notion of multiple Gods and Goddesses perceived as a pantheon of Gods and Goddesses below the Supreme Being. The idea of multiple deities is challenged by Christians who emphasize the similarities between Igbo Traditional Religion and Christianity and insist on one (male) supreme God supported by lesser “spirits”, e.g. His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze (personal communication at the Interface conference at Owerri, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012) and other Igbo Christians at the same event.
14. Jell-Bahlsen, Sabine. 2008. *The Water Goddess in Igbo Cosmology. Ogbuide of Oguta Lake*, (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008). Other important deities are the God of yam, *Ji*, of thunder, *Oha*, and the sun, *Anyarwu*. The prominence of these deities varies in different locations.
15. Uchendu 1974, *op. cit.* See also Jell-Bahlsen 1980, *op. cit.*
16. Achebe 1960, *op. cit.*; Jell-Bahlsen 2008, *op. cit.*; Ogochukwu Okoye, “Uwa Ndigbo in Idemili LGAs: The Ethical Challenges of the Igbo Woman in a Modern World,” (Paper presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual *Igbo Studies Association* meeting at Howard University, Washington, DC, 2012).
17. Chinyere Ukpokolo, “Gender, Symbols and Traditional Peacemaking Among the Nanka-Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria,” *Human Affairs* 21, 2011, pp. 163-183.
18. Uchendu 1974, *op. cit.*; Edmund Ilogu, 1974. “Ofo – A Religious Symbol of Igboland,” (*Nigeria Magazine*, 82, 1964); Edmund Ilogu, *Christianity and Igbo Culture*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974).
19. Chidi Osuagwu, (personal communication, Owerri, July 7, 2012).
20. According to Elizabeth Isichei, the moral laws of Igbo religion had been so rigid that it had “created a whole class of unfortunates to whom Christianity was to come as liberation”. Elisabeth Isichei, “Ibo and Christian Beliefs: Some Aspects of the Theological Encounter,” *African Affairs. The Journal of the Royal African Society* 68, 1969, p. 129, quoted in Ilogu 1974, *op. cit.*, p 158 n. 45. Such persons included former cult slaves, *Osu*, twins, criminals, misfits and others who embraced Christianity and worked for their new masters towards the destruction of the old system and the growth of a new force.
21. Uchendu 1974, *op. cit.*
22. Jell-Bahlsen 2008, *op. cit.*; Sabine Jell-Bahlsen, “Flora Nwapa and Oguta’s Lake Goddess: Artistic Liberty and Ethnography,” *Dialectical Anthropology. Special Triple Issue in Honor of Six Prominent Igbo Scholars*, 31, 1-3, 2007, pp. 253-262.
23. Jell-Bahlsen 1980, *op. cit.*
24. Catherine Acholonu, *Motherism*, (Lagos: Nigerian Institute for International Affairs, 1995); Jell-Bahlsen 2008, *op. cit.*; Jell-Bahlsen, Sabine, “Nneka: Is Mother Still Supreme in Igboland? Reflections on the Biography of the *Eze Mmiri*, Madame

- Martha Mberekpe of Orsu-Obodo, 1934-2007." *Against All Odds: The Igbo Experience in Postcolonial Nigeria*, edited by Apollos O. Nwauwa and Chima J. Korieh, (Glassboro, NJ: Goldline Publishing, 2011), pp. 201-224; Obioma Nnaemeka, *The Politics of M(o)thering. Womanhood, Identity, and Resistance in African Literature*, (London: Routledge, 1997).
25. As with everything Igbo, there are important exceptions, e.g. to the general rule of patri-linear social structure, such as double-descent reported from Afikpo. Simon Ottenberg, "Double Descent in an African Society: the Afikpo Village Group," *American Ethnological Society Monograph Series*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968; Victor Manfredi, "Igbo Initiation: Phallus vs. Umbilicus," (*Cahiers d'etudes africaines*, 145, 1997), pp. 157-211; and matrilineity reported from the Ohafia and other Igbo sub-groups, see Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters and Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*, (London: Zed Books, 1987); Ifi Amadiume, *African Matriarchial Foundations: The Igbo Case*, (London: Karnak House, 1988).
  26. Amadiume 1987, *op. cit.*, Chinyere Ukpokolo 2011, *op. cit.*, Jell-Bahlsen 2008, *op. cit.*, Nnaemeka 1998, *op. cit.*, Acholonu 1995, *op. cit.*
  27. Amadiume 1987 and 1988, *op. cit.*; M.M. Green, *Igbo Village Affairs*, (New York: Praeger, 1964), Judith VanAllen, "Sitting on a Man; Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 6, 2, 1972, pp. 165-181; Gloria Chuku, "The Untouchable Vultures? Igbo Women in Resistance Movements 1980s – 1990s," (Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> *Igbo Studies Association* meeting, Ithaca, NY, 2003); Nnaemeka 1998 and 1997, *op. cit.*; Acholonu 1995, *op. cit.*; Jell-Bahlsen 2008, 2009 and 2011, *op. cit.*; Manfredi 1997, *op. cit.*; Okoye 2011, *op. cit.*; Ukpokolo 2011, *op. cit.*; Caroline Mbonu, "Women's Religious Culture in Etcheland: A Traditional and Biblical Perspective," (Paper presented at *The Interface of Igbo Theology and Christianity* conference at the *Whelan Research Academy*, Owerri, July 2012).
  28. Chinua Achebe in "Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* Turns 50 this Year. An interview with Chinua Achebe for the Village Voice," by Carol Cooper, (New York: *The Village Voice*, February 19th, 2008).
  29. Chinua Achebe 1960, *op. cit.*
  30. Chinua Achebe 2008, *op. cit.*
  31. Chinua Achebe 1960, *op. cit.*; Nnaemeka 1998, *op. cit.*; Uchendu 1974, *op. cit.*; Sabine Jell-Bahlsen, "A Murder Case; Igbo Conflict Settlement," *Dialectical Anthropology* 12, 1988, pp. 359-366.
  32. Ilogu 1974, *op. cit.*; Naemeka 1998, *op. cit.*
  33. Ilogu 1974, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
  34. Nnaemeka 1998, *op. cit.*; frontispiece and personal communication, 1992.
  35. Ilogu 1974, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
  36. Christine Ohale, *From Ritual to Art: The Aesthetics and Cultural Relevance of Igbo Satire*, (New York: University Press of America, 2003); Oriji 2007, *op. cit.*; the *Chioha*

- quoted in Jell-Bahlsen 1980, *op. cit.*, p. 186; Jell-Bahlsen 1988, *op. cit.*; Uchendu 1974, *op. cit.*
37. Obiora 1993, *op. cit.*; Chief Augustine Azogu, *Oguta Cultural Heritage and Practices: A Handbook for the Young Generation*, (Port Harcourt, 1998), and personal communication, at Azogu's home in Oguta, January 2009. Flora Nwapa, *Efurú*, (London: Heineman, 1961); Jell-Bahlsen, 1980 and 2008, *op. cit.*
  38. Chidi Osuagwu, personal communication at Owerri, July 7, 2012.
  39. Mary Noelle Ezech, Ethel, IHM, *You Shall be my Witness; The History and Contribution of Catholic Evangelization to Development in Nigeria 1868-1967*, (Abuja: National Mission Congress Series: Book Two, 2007), xi. Christianity and the Catholic Church were also active participants in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. According to Sidney Davis, the name of the first slave ship was *Ms. Jesus* and the expenses for building the Vatican were also derived from the purchase of slaves. Sidney Davis, "The African Origins of Judaism," (Paper presented at the *Interface of Igbo Theology and Christianity* Conference at the *Whelan Research Academy* at Owerri, Nigeria, July 2012).
  40. Williams, Eric, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).
  41. Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, (London and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania: Bogle-L'ouverture Publications, 1973).
  42. Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui, *Précis élémentaire d'économie politique, suivi du résumé de l'histoire du commerce et de l'industrie*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris, 1857), 156, quoted by George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature, or Physical Geography as Modified Human Action*, edited by David Lowenthal, (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2000 (1864)), 11; Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, (London: Routledge, 1961); George Dalton, (ed), *Tribal and Peasant Economies*, (Austin, TX: Texas Press Source Books in Anthropology, 1967).
  43. Max Weber has illuminated the economic importance of the religious doctrine proposing the possibility and goal of dominating nature. Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der "Geist" des Kapitalismus*, (Hanstein: Germany: Bodenheim - Athenäum, Hain, 1993 (1904/05)).
  44. Reichholf, Josef, H. *Eine kurze Naturgeschichte des letzten Jahrtausends*, (A brief history of nature's Course in the last Millennium), (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, 2007).
  45. Thus, in many European countries including Germany the members of a Church are forced to pay 1/10 of their income to their Churches to this day. The only escape is excommunication.
  46. Felix K. Ekechi, "The Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria, 1885-1920: Observations on Missionary Strategy," *African Studies Review*, 15, 2, Sep. 1972, pp. 217-239.
  47. Ekechi 1972, *ibid.*; Ilogu 1974, *op. cit.*; Isichei 1972, *op. cit.*; Ezech 2007, *op. cit.*; Nwando Achebe, *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria, Ahebi Ugbabe*, (Bloomington,

- IN: Indiana University Press, 2011); Ogbu Kalu, *The Embattled Gods: The Christianization of Igboland 1841–1991*, (Lagos: Minjai Publishers, 1996).
48. “The Christian missionaries had been operating in Eastern Nigeria since 1841 and like the British colonialists labeled the area the ‘citadel of Satan’. Ekechi 1972, *op. cit.*, p 237. They wasted no time in pioneering attacks against slavery, the killings of twins, and the activities of oracular institutions. The impact of three Niger expeditions - in 1841, 1854, and 1857 - heralded what Ogbu Kalu has described as the dawn of a new economic, social and religious reality in the lives of the Igbo. By 1857, a permanent Church Missionary Society had been established and the ‘scramble for souls’ had begun. Much of this ‘good news’ spread north to Enugu and south to Owerri under the direction of John Christopher Taylor, an Igbo from Sierra Leone. The phenomenal success of the Christian missionary enterprise owed part of its success to a close association with British colonialists who owned arms and the priority those missionaries placed upon education. See Ogbu Kalu 1996, *op. cit.*, p 80; and Edmund Ilogu, *Christianity and Igbo Culture*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1947), pp. 56–60; Nwando Achebe 2011, *op. cit.*, p. 253, n.113. See also Mudimbe, V.I. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986) and Fabian Eboussi-Boulaga, *Christianity without Fetishes: An African Critique and Recapture of Christianity*, translated by Robert R. Barr, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), cited by Mudimbe 1986, *op. cit.*
  49. The history of European commerce, Churches, states and power brokers is intimately interrelated and rather violent. European peasants were subjugated by the Church and condemned to suffer in silence, patiently hoping for a better life in paradise for centuries, rather than receiving aid or compassion. European peasant rebellions were brutally suppressed, and the dungeons and torture chambers of lord bishops bear witness to their brutality to this day, e.g. in the bishop’s fortress at Salzburg, Austria.
  50. Käppner, Joachim. “Heilige Versteinerung; Durch die Missbrauchsdebatte wird auch der Zölibat wieder in Frage gestellt. Mit christlicher Lehre hat der Zwang zur Ehelosigkeit der Priester wenig zu tun: Er entsprang der päpstlichen Machtpolitik im Hochmittelalter,” (München: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 105, 8/9, May 2010), p. V2/6. In this article, Käppner interrogates the requirement of celibacy for Catholic priests in view of recurrent worldwide allegations and discoveries of child molestation by the Catholic clergy.
  51. Käppner 2010, *ibid.*; Denzler, Georg, *Die Geschichte des Zölibats (The History of Celibacy)*, (Freiburg, Germany: Spektrum, 1993); Denzler, Georg, *Die verbotene Lust; 2000 Jahre christliche Sexualmoral (Forbidden Lust; 2000 Years of Christian Sexuality Morales)*, (München: Piper, 1991).
  52. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Witches, Midwives and Nurses*, (New York: The Feminist Press, 2010); Thomas, Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness*, (New York: Delta Books, 1971); Margaret Alice Murray, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1921).
  53. Ehrenreich and English 1973, *op. cit.*
  54. Käppner 2010, *op. cit.*; Denzler 1991 and 1993, *op. cit.*



55. Reichholf 2007, *op. cit.*
56. Jell-Bahlsen 2009, *op. cit.* and 2011, *op. cit.* Ironically, Christian violence on “traditionalists” and “pagans” in Southern Nigeria parallels terrorist attacks by Islamists in Northern Nigeria and elsewhere.
57. Jell-Bahlsen 2007, *op. cit.*
58. In response to *The Nation*’s report on “The Slaughter of the Gods,” Simon Ottenberg remarked, “A society that completely denies its past is a lost society. Or is it that Igbo society is a lost society so that it then completely denies its past?” Posted on: ISA-L@googlegroups.com, accessed Sunday, September 21, 2008.
59. Nnam 2007, *op. cit.*; Fanon 1974, *op. cit.*; Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie, *The Purple Hibiscus*, (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2003); Jell-Bahlsen, Sabine, “Ideological Impositions and Cultural Deterioration in Select Novels from Nigeria”. *Marginalised Identity. An Engagement with Art, Literature, Language and Ethnicity*, edited by Jumyr Basar, M.C. Behera and Lisa Lomdak, (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 2012).
60. Ifi Amadiume, “African Women’s Body Images in Postcolonial Discourse and Resistance to Neo-Crusaders,” *Black Womanhood, Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body*, edited by Barbara Thompson, (Seattle University of Washington Press, 2008), pp. 49-69; and Amadiume 1987, *op. cit.*; Acholonu 1995, *op. cit.*; Nnaemeka 1998, *op. cit.*; Obiora 1993, *op. cit.*; Ukpokolo 2011, *op. cit.*; Jell-Bahlsen 2008, *op. cit.*
61. Chidi Osuagwu, “Ubaghaji and Oronomics; Indispensable Agriculture and Unsustainable Raw-material exporting and Luxury Importing Economy,” (Paper presented at the 2011 Iriji-Ikeduru; Amaimo, Nigeria, 22 October, 2011).
62. The Catholic Church has rejected and attacked modern science and medicine for centuries, e.g. during the days of inquisition, when denying discoveries on the universe, banishing Galileo and condemning condoms to prevent AIDS or to regulate population growth in Africa and other Third World countries. US American evangelists also vehemently deny theories of evolution in favor of creationism even today.
63. During pre-colonial days, an Igbo person who had transgressed certain behavioural codes might be condemned to become a slave to a deity by his/her community. This status was extended to the person’s descendants and led to a cast of ritual slaves who were on the one hand bound to serve the respective deity, yet at the same time under the deity’s special protection, highly informed, and beyond harm. See also Nwando Achebe 2011, *op. cit.*
64. During pre-colonial days, the Igbo regarded human twin birth as an abomination, abandoned such babies and even punished women who frequently gave births to twins. See Uchendu 1974, *op. cit.* Christian missionaries rescued many twins and scored favourably among twins and their parents.
65. This assessment was evident from several papers presented at the *Igbo Studies Association* meeting at Howard University in April of 2012, and according to Achebe, Nigeria ranked no 14 on a list of “failed states” in 2011. Chinua Achebe, *There was*

- a Country. A Personal History of Biafra*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2012), 250. Quotation of Professor Robert Rotberg in James J. Forest, *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: International Perspectives. Combating the Sources and Facilitators*, Vol. 2. (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 97.
66. Chidi Osuagwu, "Truth and Chaos. Dynamics of Truth within Igbo Cosmology," (Paper presented at the Owerri International Symposium on "Religion in a World of Change," organised by the *Whelan Research Academy*, Owerri, December 2002).
  67. N. Caroline Mbonu, "Nwanyi Isi Nkpe na Uwa Ndi Igbo: A Biblical Perspective (Luke 18:1-8)," (Paper Presented at the *Igbo Studies Association 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference* at Howard University, Washington DC. April 12-14, 2012).
  68. Obiora 1993, *op. cit.*

## References

- Abdulaziz Abdulaziz. 2011. *Rage and Solace. Musings of a Reporter*, pp. 31-32. Kano, Nigeria: Century Research and Publishing Ltd.
- Achebe, Nwando. 2011. *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria, Ahebi Ugbabe*, p 67. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Diamond, Stanley. 1974. *In Search of the Primitive. A Critique of Civilisation*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1944. *Freedom and Civilisation*. New York: Roy Publishers.
- Nwauwa, Apollos and Chima Korieh (eds). 2011. *Against All Odds: The Igbo Experience in Postcolonial Nigeria*. Glassboro, NJ: Goldline Publishing.
- Orij, John. 2007. "The End of Sacred Authority and the Genesis of Amoral and Disorder in Igbo Mini States." *Dialectical Anthropology*, 31:263-288.



## CHAPTER 33

### Transformative Harmony

#### Lessons Learned and Best Practices from Indigenous African Communities

*Fidele Lumeya*

#### Introduction

When discussing Transformative Harmony from an indigenous Africans perspectives, Africans use three approaches: ontological, epistemological and phenomenological/methodological. Ontology is defined by Wand and Weber (1993:220) as “a branch of philosophy concerned with articulating the nature and structure of the world.” While ontology means a set of terms and their associated definitions intended to describe the world in question, epistemology denotes (Hirschheim, Klein and Lyytinen 1995:20) “the nature of human knowledge and understanding that can possibly be acquired through different types of inquiry and alternative methods of investigations.”

The ontological question refers to what Guba and Lincoln (1994:108) framed as the “what” question: “what is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?” The epistemological question according to Guba and Lincoln (ibid.) refers to the nature of the relationship: what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would be knower and what can be known? Last but not least transformative harmony from the perspective of an

indigenous Africans as to respond to the methodological or phenomenological question which I will describe as the “How”: How can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known.

From the perspective of indigenous Africans, harmony of the society and that of the world has to be comprehended from the nature of the world as it was, as it is and as should be (ontology); harmony as to do with human knowledge (epistemology), the nature of the reality of the world and what we know about the world and how do we know what we know (phenomenological). From this indigenous point of view, Semashko’s project of Tetrasociology consisting of “four spheres of resources – people, information, organisation, things – leading to formation of social spheres, informational spheres, organisational spheres and technical spheres or in short, sociosphere, infosphere, organisphere, tecnospheres” as presented by Ananta Kumar Giri in his opening essay is not complete as a crucial sphere – spiritual sphere – is excluded and missing here. The spiritual sphere from an indigenous African perspective is key for any project that aims to comprehend the disharmony and its causes. Indigenous Africans start their quest for transformative harmony from spiritual standpoint or the understanding of God. God is understood as a supreme being. A harmonious or disharmonious relationship with him impacts the sociosphere, infosphere, organisphere and technosphere. God, also known as Maweshi, a being with full knowledge and a being who have information, a resource person has to have the key to transformative harmony.

This chapter is more about the lessons learned and best practices of transformative harmony from the perspective of indigenous Africans for whom harmony is at the core of their lives. Indigenous Africans are not in search for a transformative harmony rather they are in search of sustaining harmony, which I call harmony sustainability.

## **Geographic Presentation of Africa**

Before the Scramble for Africa by the Europeans in 1885 at the Berlin Conference, Africa was internally divided by kingdom limits or chiefdom limits. Most of these limits were natural, for example: rivers or forests were considered to be the limits of kingdoms, chiefdoms or empires.

After Berlin, I will devise Africa geographically in referring to: Sahara Desert and the Kalahari Desert.

### **The Sahara Desert**

From the viewpoint of the Sahara Desert, Africa is divided into:

1. North of the Sahara Desert which is the land of the Berber people and the Arabs, and
2. South of the Sahara Desert where we have the Sub-Saharan countries, which are divided into three main regions:
  1. The Horn of Africa
  2. Central Africa
  3. West Africa

The Central Africa is also divided, with a distinct sub-region known as Great Lakes Region. In these Sub-Saharan countries live the Bantu people, the Nilotic and the Pygmies.

### **The Kalahari Desert**

South of the Sub-Sahara region (which contains the Kalahari Desert), is known as Southern Africa. In Southern Africa, live the Bantu people, the Bushmen and a minority known as coloured people and Afrikaners (white people).

### **Social Context**

There is a principle of society in Africa that we want to underline here: According to Laurenti Magesa: “The individual can exist as a person only in community; his or her well-being can be assured only in the context of the well-being of the community” (Magesa 1997:243). What Magesa is expressing here is the idea of transformative harmony as the superordinate goal of individuals living in the same geographic space and sharing the same worldview. To achieve this superordinate goal those in leadership position took into account the structural organisation of the society within mind its harmony. The pre-colonial society in Africa was a multi-ethnic society divided into clans, languages or dialects and multi-ethnic groups. Almost 800 languages are found in Africa according to Jannie Malan (Malan 1997:25, quoting Chazan). People in Africa can be classified into three groups.

In the Northern Africa, people are Nomadic and Semi-nomadic herdsmen or pastoralists. Most of them are from Arab and Berber groups such as the case of Algeria, Morocco, etc. In the South, people are predominantly Agriculturists (Deng 1995:182).

Inside some countries in the South, there is a coexistence of groups – the semi-nomadic people and the agriculturists as in the case of Sudan, Tchad, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), etc. Bantu groups coexist with the Nilotic and the

Pygmies, such as in the case of Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, etc. In other countries in Southern Africa, the Bantu coexist with the White settlers, the coloured and the Bushmen, i.e. South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, etc. The semi-nomadic and the nomadic people are cattle herders. Agriculturists may also keep livestock in limited numbers, while the pastoralists may cultivate, though their lives are dominated by cattle and other forms of livestock (*ibid.*).

### **Family Life Style as a Geo-Space Where A Transformative Harmony Takes Place**

Africans of this period were very family and community oriented. Communities were formed along ethnic and clan lines. Most communities were living in villages. Everywhere in Africa life is in the community. African societies idealise the community (Shenk 1997:10). Community is a circle of people who live together, who belong together, so that they share not this or that particular interest, but a whole set of interests wide enough and comprehensive enough to include their lives. A family comprising a man, his wife or wives, and dependent or unmarried children, usually lives in the settlement comprising several huts and cow barn (Deng 1995). Traditionally, most people in Africa (80%), live in spread-out settlements. Families or groups of families live in villages, with huts strung out individually or in clusters over a distance of several miles, each surrounded by fields for cultivating various staple or cash crops. The crops depend on the particular region. The agricultural occupations and animal husbandry are significantly supplemented by such other activities as gathering, hunting, fishing, etc. (*ibid.*:186).

### **The Values System in Indigenous Pre-Colonial African Society In its Relation to Transformative Harmony**

Africans of this period believed in God, the Living Dead, the Spirits, and the Elders. Social stratification then proceeded to the men, the women, then to the boy children, and finally, the girl children. How can we understand this? Let us see the hierarchy of these values in details. The pursuit of permanent identity and influence was through procreation and ancestral continuity. Communal unity and harmony were expressed in idealised concepts of human revelations; and principles of individual and collective dignity and integrity (*ibid.*).

### **The Life Pyramid and Its Implication in Transformative Harmony**

For African society, life is built in pyramidal form with God on top, after whom comes the Living-Dead (Mbiti, as quoted by Shenk 1997), the Spirits (gods), the Elders, the men, followed by the women and Children (boys considered before girls).

## Religious Belief

God and His three roles form indigenous Africans. God is the life-giver, the land-giver, God of justice, peace and reconciliation.

### *God is the Life-Giver*

As the life-giver God also sustains life, the earth and the rain are his gifts to nourish life. That which contributes to life is sacred because it is a gift from God. The earth is especially sacred for it is through the earth that all forms of life become possible. All aspects of human existence which sustain and nourish life are sacred gifts from God, the life-giver.

### *God is the Land-Giver*

He provides the community with the land. He gives to each people their inheritance of land. The land of a people is the people's inheritance from God for the sustenance of life. To seize the land of another is to steal the source of life which God has given. Land stealing is a crime against God, against life, against humanity (genocide). This precious, life-sustaining gift from God could not be sold among many societies. Land could never be sold commercially to an outsider.

For example, in Kenya the Gikuyu tribes often asked the missionaries whether God had not given their peoples (the whites tribes) land, or cattle in the country from which they had come (Shenk 1997:5-10).

In Southern Africa there are stories explaining how the settlers stole the land. The elders say that when the settlers came, they invited us to pray. While we closed our eyes, they took our ancestor's land and gave us their Bible. Today, they have land and we have the Bible. They are rich and we are poor in our own land.

### *God is the God of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation*

God's justice is revealed in the human community. God is a just one. The Swahili people are expressing this by the phrase *Mungu Yuko*. The implication is, be patient and persistent. The African people knew that injustice will never ultimately triumph. Complete confidence in God's justice gives African people astonishing resiliency.

### *God of Peace*

The God of Justice is also pre-eminently the God of Peace. People could only approach God in a condition of peace. Peace was a need before the people and they were free to come before God with their petition.

### *Understanding Evil*

Although God is the source of all power, most African societies do not blame God for evil. This is because all forms of dehumanisation are alien to God. Evil flows from bitterness, envy, malice and hatred. Evil is attitudinal in origin. Evil is a rejection of peace, an affirmation of disharmony, an anti-person or anti-community spirit. Therefore God, who is the source of life, justice and peace, cannot be blamed for evil.

### *Community Harmony Through Sanctity of Life*

For indigenous Africans harmony between individuals and their community only exists when there is a respect to life. Life is sacred. The well-being of the person is the criterion for the harmony. In indigenous Africans belief and practice the person is sacred and significant. Personhood is affirmed by handshaking. Life is inviolable. It is God who gives life. To take life is a serious crime against life. Life is pre-eminently sacred. People in the community are expected to work harmoniously towards the enhancement of life. Murder is the opposite of life enhancement. Murder and any other harmful behaviour create disharmony in the community.

Life is sacred, and its preservation is sacred trust. In essence only God has the right to take life. All kinds of evil which can lead someone to murder like envy, anger, malice, selfishness, pride and arrogance are all attitudes which are dehumanising and life-destroying. In the extreme cases, the originator of malevolence is regarded as a witch. It is imperative that evil be snuffed out before it becomes a flame. It is for this reason that confession and restitution are built into the African experience of community (Shenk 1997).

For example, when blood is shed, the Nandi says explicitly, the ground is polluted. They sacrifice ritually for the purification of the polluted land. The sacrifice is concluded by eating together. This is a sign that through the slaying of the sacrificial animal, harmony has been restored and the community can now eat together again.

Among the Nuer of Sudan, (as in many African societies), God is very much concerned about reconciliation and peace among people. The violation of personhood is profoundly offensive to God. Community disharmony is a violation of the will of God. The Nuer religion is therefore most preoccupied with the establishment of harmony among people. Reconciliation and peace constitute good religion and are kin to godliness (Evans-Pritchard as quoted by Magesa 1997).

Similar themes emerge among in a multitude of other African societies. The Swahili people express the sense of communal harmony by the word Umoja. The Siswati and Zulu are calling it Simunye, and Xhosa Ubuntu, etc. The way to express

this is by eating together, joking, shaking hand, etc. This a sacrament of the person in community.

## Economic Activities

Between the nomads (and semi-nomads) and the agriculturalist peoples, there existed a system of trade and barter.

The semi-nomadic or nomadic groups are bound up with a cattle and cow economy. They accurately underscore the crucial role of cattle in their lives, which goes far beyond the religious or spiritual aspect implied in considering the cow a God.

Economic activity has a collective dimension because families of a clan collect their cattle and send them with young men and women in seasonal search of good pastures and sources of water. They will establish a cattle camp, a large temporary settlement in an area that is on a river or reliable source of water and has plentiful grazing land. In cultural terms, cattle camping for the Nilotic, even more than settlement in the villages, is the main source of pride, dignity, and distinctive identity. This pride, which is so closely associated with their cattle complex, provides the ground for their notorious conservatism and resistance to change (Deng 1995).

Not only this, it also became the root cause of conflict where the two groups, Agriculturists and Herdsmen coexists – like in Rwanda and Burundi, Kenya, Chad, etc.

Barter also existed between the agriculturists groups and herdsmen, or between the agriculturists themselves. For example: milk for vegetable oil (Eastern Congo), Backcloth (from Baganda in Uganda).

In the trading patterns which had existed before the arrival of the Arabs, the Banyoro (Uganda) had been the senior partners in the trade because salt, the commodity around which trade was built, was to be found in their territory (Karugire 1980:29-31).

By the midst of 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, European travellers were describing market scenes in Bunyoro in which the Banyoro Banyankore, Baganda, Langi and others (Uganda) were gathered to exchange their wares. By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, moreover, backcloth, at the making of which the Baganda excelled, had found their way south of Ankole and far North of Alur highlands. This trade involved a great many societies... helped many intermarriages with the communities among whom they traded... (*ibid.*).

## Political Organisation of the Pre-Colonial African Society

The political organisation of the pre-colonial African society were divided into the following three categories:

1. The political organisation based on kinship
2. The political organisation based on lineage and clan
3. The political organisation based on administrative authority

The political organisation based on kinship were characterised by the headman who didn't have special authority or power ascribed to him and was more the leader than the headman *per se* (leads but does not rule).

The political organisation based on lineage and clan were characterised by societies organised by lineage, political structures, authority and power. Also, members of a clan considered themselves to be one blood and the rules of local custom forbidding war and those relating to exogamy and levirate custom applied. Seniority of generation within the lineage or, where this was not possible to determine, seniority based on age were used to determine seniority which then determined who will be the head. The head of lineage claims only moral and ritual authority over the lineage. Any coercive power he might have was very limited. The moral authority of the head of the clan focused on the unity and identity of the lineage. He affected political power through moral or ritual prestige, respect and honour as observed among the Talensi (Ghana), The Nuer (Sudan). Magesa (1997) noted: "There was no specific political structure that was distinct from the social and religious structures of the society; the same persons usually occupied both religious and political posts; some communities were organised politically according to kinship."

Brief, in traditional indigenous Africa, there is generally no specific apolitical structure that is distinct from the social and religious structures of the society. The same persons usually occupy both positions as Magesa (*ibid.*) argues. Victor Turner also tells us: "If a person occupies political and religious positions of some importance, his political power is reinforced at those points in the seasonal cycle or group's developmental cycle where his ritual office gives him enhanced authority." This same view is echoed by Laurenti Magesa who wrote: "On a much higher level, are Kings Chiefs and other types of authority figures whose power extends beyond the family or the small community" (*ibid.*).

However, the study of the political organisation of African societies has identified at least three major systems:

The political organisation based on administrative authority. Monarchy were characterised by the fact that the all political authority stemmed from the King—



advised by his formal and informal counsellors. The King is at the pinnacle of the power and all authority flows from him. What the king expects of the chiefs, the chief expects of the sub-chief, and so on, down to the lowest and house elder. The king's major roles were to appoint his territorial chiefs to office, and their authority, down to the lowest level as exemplified by the Nyoro (Uganda), Siswati (Swaziland), Zulu (S.A), Kuba (DRC), etc... (Magesa 1997). But for the harmony to be sustained kings or the chiefs were accountable to the people; their role was to take care of and protect the people; they ruled by consent and the leaders were the providers for their people (food, water, health...); They had no coercive or administrative power, but only the authority of persuasion. The king functioned as an arbiter in quarrels, as focal point in discussion of plans, a comfort to the bereaved and a strength for those in doubt. He is a moral authority that establishes the unity of the group symbolically (headman), and maintains order by force of persuasion and exemplary goodness (leader).

The head is determined by being brave while hunting or wisdom as seen in Kung people of the Kalahari Desert, basin of Botswana.

The leadership is based on a system of values—religious and social or community centred. With regard to the government, the leader has rights and obligations. In most African societies, accountability was expressed through a certain abjuration to the King. Magesa described it in this terms: “Look with kindness upon all your people, from the highest to the lowest; be mindful of your land (obligation), deal justice among your people...Absolute was his power, he (the leader) was expected to respect established rights, to uphold justice, and to behave with kindness or generosity in rewarding the deserving.”

This reciprocal relationship was explicitly affirmed before the active obligations of chiefs and people, in abeyance since the death of the late king, were assumed (Mair as quoted by Magesa 1997). In African chiefships and Kingdoms, for instance, one primary functions of the chief or king is to entertain his nobles, converse with them, and thus learn wisdom and justice by consulting them on matters of state. If there are persistent calamities in the country, such as lack of food because of drought, floods, locusts, and so on, the leader may make way for someone stronger (ibid.).

## **Power Sharing as Element for Harmony Sustainability**

The structure of an African state implies that kings and chiefs rule by consent. A ruler's subjects are as fully aware of the duties he owes to them (life-force, Justice, etc...) as they are of the duties they owe to him (tax, tribute and labour service etc...), and are able to exert pressure to make him discharge these duties (Fortes

and Evans-Pritchard as quoted by Magesa 1997). But they were also the abuse of power which was perceived as factor of disharmony.

Hilda Kuper discusses the institutions that guard against abuse of authority among the Swazi (Swaziland Kingdom). The first check on the abuse of power and privilege by rulers is contained in the dual monarchy itself. The King owes his position to a woman whose rank – more than his own personal qualities – determined his selection for kingship, and between the rulers there is a delicate balance of power. He presides over the highest court, and formerly, he alone could sanction the death-sentence meted out for witchcraft and treason, but she is in charge of the second highest court and the shrine hut in her homestead (is a sanctuary for people appealing for protection)... he has power to distribute land... but together they work the rain magic that fructifies it. Sacred national objects are in her charge, but are not effective without his cooperation... He is entitled to use cattle from the royal herds, but she may rebuke him publicly if he wastes national wealth. In short, they are expected to assist and advise each other in all activities and to complement each other (Kuper as quoted by Magesa 1997).

### **The Military and War Making**

Most African societies had a standing army of sorts. Pastoralists tended, because of their need to protect their cattle, to be more inclined to have a stronger military component to their societies. War was waged usually for acquisitive or retributive purposes. The chiefs and elders were peacemakers, not warriors. The army did not have the same purpose and composition. The army in Pre-colonial Africa did not have the same role and importance among the cattle-based societies and the crop production group (i.e., the Bantu peoples).

For the herdsmen, the importance is attached to cattle and various characteristics that different animals reflect. In all cattle-based societies these characteristics are used, in vivid imagery to define and describe different stages in the development of a man (Boon 1997).

Pastoral households could not constitute a formidable force alone, this had to be obtained from communal relations, whereas the agro-production relations were mainly satisfied within an extended family, the protection, grazing, watering, and rustling of cattle demanded a wider framework, thus a lineage. This means, therefore, that pastoral-oriented societies had comparatively stronger political and fighting institutions (army, warriors) than agriculturalists whom they dominated as a result (i.e., Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi) (Kamukama 1997). Most armies in Africa were composed of young men, called by different names such as: Intore (Rwanda, Burundi), Bhungu or adolescent warrior (Zulu and Siswati) or Insizwe (*ibid.*).

## **Ethics of the Army**

The important feature of the warrior ethic and developmental structure is how it interprets into everyday life. The young warrior no longer goes to war or raids cattle. He becomes a migrant worker and earns money. It is not only the fight itself that is important. It is the symbolic capital gained by successfully adhering to the warrior ethic of stubborn determination and complete preparedness, and the inner discipline that comes with courage which then dictates the war and its conduct.

For many reasons African societies waged war. Carlston divides the causes of war into two categories: Acquisitive and Retributive. Acquisitive wars were wars in which the use of force was employed upon another group for the purpose of acquiring land, booty, or slaves. The second was Retributive action visited by one group upon another for offences committed upon its members, such as murder, rape, abduction, seduction and theft (Carlston as quoted by Magesa 1997).

For the sake of harmony the chiefs themselves were peacemakers and not warriors. The role of chiefs and elders as peacemakers were invoked to negotiate reconciliation (Deng 1995:196).

## **Transformative Harmony: Lessons Learned and Best Practices**

Islam's entry in Africa was affected, ironically, in the immediate context of the Ethiopian church. Several of the persecuted followers of Prophet Mohammed found protection under the Christian King of Ethiopia. To this day, both Islam and Ethiopian Orthodox Church acknowledge a special relationship because of this early encounter, a fact which has not mitigated the subsequent stormy relationships between the two religious communities (Miller 1998).

These Arab and Swahili traders came to mainland of East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) seeking ivory and slaves in exchange for their firearms, cotton cloths and a few other trinkets of doubtful decorative value.

More than their wares of trade, the Arabs also brought their religion, Islam. But because their main concern was trade rather than the conversion of the Africans to their faith, this latter remained a secondary issue so that no special effort was made to convert Baganda to Islam...it looked as if Buganda might become an Islamic state of sorts because Mutesa (King) permitted the adoption of the Islamic calendar...even observed the Ramadan... But Mutesa was never fully converted to Islam and the arrival of the Christian missionaries soon made this possibility academic (Karugire 1980:60).

After the Arabs (in the North, Egypt, Sudan) came the Portuguese, whose direct influence was confined to the Kongo (DRC) kingdom, the Kwanza and

Zambezi valleys, and to a few offshore islands, including Luanda (Angola), Mozambique, Kilwa and Mombasa. In Kongo some thousands of people including the royal family, became Christians.” Oliver and Atmore (1977:26) said: “They were expecting the return of their ancestors, who presumably because of their long absence, had become white.” Miller (1998) points out that the Portuguese, in turn, were inspired by their search for the legendary ‘Prester John of Indies’, a powerful Christian king, located in Africa.

### **The Resulting Conflict and Disharmony**

Having studied the basic tenants of Christianity and Islam and their expansion on the African continent, we need to look now at the resulting disharmony their presence brought. Rather than seeing the disharmony as a problem of doctrine, most times it were the result of the ways in which these religions were presented and spread. In many countries the Protestants missionaries were perceived as collaborators of the colonisers. This perceptions even no factual were sustained among the indigenous Africans by the fact that thieves, for example, were arrested after confessing to the pastor what they did and where. Many divisions were seen in education structure and among church denominations. Most Catholics schools were taught in French and Protestant schools in English. Islamic schools taught their believers in Arabic. This division among religion lines became political and social in the case of post-Independence countries such Uganda, Chad, Sudan, etc.

### **Conclusion**

Sudan was the first country to receive its independence from Britain in 1956. From 1960 until Namibia’s independence in the later years of this century, Africa slowly regained her “freedom”. What the leaders of politics in Africa inherited at Independence were a political system known as democracy, a free market economic system, a social system and a security force. Although these legacies will all sound great the price tag rather will be a luxury the post-colonial society would be unable to pay and among many price tags disharmony of the society will be one of them. Indigenous African nations at independence were often fragmented and divided into “minority” and “majority” ethnic groups—a legacy of the “Divide and Rule” mentality of colonisers. Intra-state conflicts, Inter-state border conflicts and last but not least the lack of indigenous skilled leaders to sustain the above-mentioned colonial legacies.

Lacking good role models and having had their traditions for leadership and conflict resolution denigrated by the colonising process, Africa’s first Independence leaders often engaged in poor leadership. Once in power, post-colonial leaders

often copied the bad model of leadership they observed most closely – that of the colonisers. Therefore, we can say that these leaders were, in effect, Neo-Colonialists. They “colonised” their brothers and sisters in ways reminiscent of the colonising powers. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that independence for Africa was sometimes in political name only. Economically most African countries remained tied (bound), to their former masters. These former colonies remained spheres of influence for their former colonisers and were subject to frequent interference and influencing as exemplified by French colonies currency known as community of French in Africa or CFA or African Financial Community, CFA tied to the French Franc. The price for Africa’s raw materials continued to be fixed in the European capitals.

More than three decades after African countries gained their independence, there is a growing recognition among Africans themselves that the continent must look beyond its colonial past for the causes of current disharmony. Today more than ever, Africa must look at itself. The nature of the political power in many African states, together with the real and perceived consequences of capturing and maintaining power, is a key source of conflict across the continent.

It is frequently the case that political victory assumes a “Winner-Take-All” form with respect to wealth and resources, patronage and prestige, and prerogatives of office. A communal sense of advantage or disadvantage is often closely linked to this phenomenon, which is heightened in many cases by reliance on centralised and highly personalised forms of governance (Annan 1998). Where there is insufficient accountability of leaders, lack of transparency in regimes, inadequate checks and balances, non-adherence to the rule of law, absence of peaceful means to change or replace leadership, or lack of respect for human rights, political control becomes excessively important, and the stakes become dangerously high. This situation is exacerbated when, as often the case in Africa, the state is the major provider of employment and political parties are largely based on either region or ethnicity. In such circumstances, the multi-ethnic character of most African states makes conflict even more likely, leading to an often violent politicisation of ethnicity. In extreme cases, rival communities may perceive that their security, perhaps their very survival, can be ensured only through control of state power. Conflict in such cases becomes virtually inevitable” (ibid.).

During the cold war, external efforts to bolster or undermine African Governments were a familiar feature of superpower competition. With the end of the cold war, external intervention has diminished but has not disappeared. In competition for oil and other precious resources in Africa, interests external to Africa, continue to play a large and sometimes decisive role both in suppressing conflict and in sustaining it. Foreign interventions are not limited, however, to

sources beyond Africa. Neighbouring States, may also have other significant interests, not all of them necessarily benign.

While African peacemaking and mediation efforts have become more prominent in recent years, the role the African Governments play in supporting, sometimes even instigating, conflicts in neighbouring countries must be candidly acknowledged.

## References

- Annan, K. 1998. "Secretary-General Reflects On 'Intervention' in Thirty-Fifth Annual Ditchley Foundation Lecture". Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/press/en/1998/19980626.sgsm6613.html>
- Augsburger, David W. 1992. *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Buyoya, Pierre. 1998. *Mission Possible: Building Peace in Burundi*. Cahiers Presence African. Pouvoirs et Paix civile en Afrique.
- Davidson, Basil. 1995. *Modern Africa: A Social and Political History*. New York: Longman.
- Deng, Francis M. 1995. *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in Sudan*. Washington DC: The Brookings Institute.
- Friedman, I.M. 1990. *Helping Resolve Conflict*. Scottdale: Herald Press.
- Guba, E. and Y.S. Lincoln. 1994. *Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research*, pp.105-117. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hirschheim, R., Klein, H. and Lyytinen, K. 1995. *Information Systems Development and Data Modeling, Conceptual and Philosophical Foundations*, p 20. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kamukama, Dixon. 1997. *Rwanda Conflict: Its Roots and Regional Implications*. Uganda: Fountain Publishers.
- Karugire, S.R. 1980. *A Political History of Uganda*. US: Heinemann.
- Magesa, L. 1997. *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, p 243. Maryknoll: Orbis books.
- Malan, Jannie. 1997. *Conflict Resolution: Wisdom from Africa*. Durban: Accord.
- Marysse, S. and F. Reyntjens. 1996-1997. *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs*. Bruxelles: L'Harmattan.
- Miller, H. 1998. "An African Liberation Century: Ecumenical Engagement." Paper presented at the Mennonite Retreat: Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). United States.
- Oliver, R. and A. Atmore. 2005. *Africa Since 1800*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 31-32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rupesinghe, K., P. Sciarone and L. Goor (eds). 1997. *Between Development and Destruction: An Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial States*, pp 4-5. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Shenk, David W. 1997. *Justice, Reconciliation and Peace*. Nairobi: Uzima Press.
- Summer, Michel et Romero and Juan Jose. 1995. *Entree en Conflits: Enjeux Theologiques et Perspectives Pratiquepour l'Eglise Locale*. Bruxelles: Le Phare
- Wand, Y. and R. Weber. 1993. "On the Ontological Expressiveness of Information Systems Analysis and Design Grammars." *Journal of Information Systems*, 3(4):217-237.
- Wingert, Norman. 1974. *No Place to Stop Killing*. USA: Moody Press.





PART FOUR

POLITICS, POETICS AND SPIRITUALITY OF  
TRANSFORMATIVE HARMONY



## CHAPTER 34

# The Politics of Transformative Harmony

*Elaine Desmond*

Life is a quest for truth, which in turn is a quest for harmony.

– Parel 2006:205

### The Search for Harmony as a Concern of the Political

The search for harmony as an intra-subjective project, where the Self is engaged in a search for liberation (*moksha*) and truth (*satya*), is a prominent theme of Indian philosophy. The idea that the quest for harmony has also an inter-subjective dimension, however, was recognised by Gandhi who claimed that harmony could not be achieved ‘without a conducive socio-political environment’ (Chakrabarty 2007:344). This chapter proposes that the quest for harmony is both determined by, and determines, ethical positions which are formed as a result of the interaction between (intra-subjective) reflexivity and (inter-subjective) social interaction.

The complex interplay between ethics, politics and the search for truth as a precursor to harmonious living is one which is well illustrated in the epic Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita. It is recognised that there is debate as to whether the battle at Kurukshetra, which is central to the work, was actually an allegory for a cosmic struggle between good and evil and so represented a spiritual, as opposed to

a material, conflict (Easwaran 2007:75). However, this dispute itself is enlightening given the suggestion here that struggles of the Self manifest as social concerns. In other words, social conflict mirrors the internal ethical struggles of individuals.

The ongoing attempts to differentiate right from wrong, truth from untruth, good from evil, in which the Self is engaged, are informed by the social context and, in turn, have social implications. Truth and harmony result from congruence between the ethical, spiritual Self and the social context in which that Self is embedded. Absolute congruence between these aspects can only ever be partially realised, however, given the changing nature of ethics and society and the complexity of the human condition. Hence, struggle is unavoidable. However, this chapter suggests that the terms by which that struggle is undertaken represent an ethical choice and, as such, have political repercussions.

An important point here is the recognition that a social context is only partially created by a political system. Instead, social actors themselves create the conditions of the society in which they are embedded. This, in turn, determines the type of political system which will be deemed legitimate within it. The ethical positioning of actors and the decisions they take as to the means by which their particular quest for harmony will be conducted have a direct impact upon the boundaries of legitimacy of the political system. As Gandhi (as cited in Brown 2008:17) observed, '[t]he political form is but a concrete expression of ... soul-force. ... I believe that after all a people has the government which it deserves'.

This idea of the significance of ethics in setting boundaries on political legitimacy is also highlighted by Norval (2007:182). She argues that, 'at some time, my sense of society's distance from the reign of perfect justice and my implication in its distance may become intolerable.' Similarly, she (ibid.:172) claims that the social actor is 'not only responsible to [the government], but for it.' This, then, highlights the inter-dependence between the quest for harmony of the Self as an ethical spiritual enterprise, and the social and political sphere. This chapter now turns to an exploration of the rights and duties of the Self as the locus of a search for harmony within a disharmonious social context.

## **The Self in Chaos**

As Ananta Kumar Giri notes in the current volume, the Self as a seeker of harmony must struggle with a reality of conflict, domination, risk and chaos. In contemporary society, the complexity of the social interactions resulting from a highly inter-connected globalised world, and the resulting expansion of ethical concerns, have rendered the quest for harmony both as an inter and intra-subjective concern increasingly fraught. Fears for ontological security given growing inequality,

resource shortage and awareness of existential risk have been exacerbated by a pervasive climate of contingency as the very foundations of epistemic certainty themselves have become increasingly undermined (Giri and van Ufford 2004:17-18; Beck 2009). This has created an atmosphere of fear and hostility, and a social context in which the possibility of grasping a sense of the truth or of harmony seems to become ever more elusive.

Such a context has profound implications for the project of the cultivation of the Self. The search for truth as a precursor to forming an ethical position which can serve as a guide to defining a harmonious way of life becomes relativised and indistinct, and the actor becomes subject to varying degrees of ideological manipulation. Green (1999:xiv) highlights the 'existential nihilism and ontological rootlessness' of contemporary society. This loss of direction of the Self is increasingly leading to an ethical vacuum. This is a view supported by Kothari (2005:169) who argues that large sections of people in contemporary society are coming to be regarded as 'dispensable.' He (*ibid.*) claims, 'sometimes there may be pangs of conscience or embarrassment... but the pangs quieten down soon.' Habermas (2008:239), too, notes a 'dwindling sensitivity to social pathologies.' The question, then, becomes what can ideas of transformative harmony offer in such a context?

## Rights, *Dharma* and Violence

As Giri notes in the current volume, transformative harmony involves both compassion and confrontation. As a political concern, the idea of social action which is informed by values involves recognition of the complex interaction between ethics, duty (*dharma*) and rights. The impact of the ethical positioning of actors on the social and political spheres has previously been discussed. Given this, the idea of the cultivation of the Self as an instrument of transformative harmony as a political concern becomes increasingly important.

Because the actor is embedded in a social world, it is suggested that inner harmony is possible only when actions taken in the world are congruent with the ethical position of the social actor. Similarly, the actor has an ethical duty to take whatever action is possible where the rights of others are being adversely impacted. As well as representing a central aspect of Gandhi's philosophy (Parel 2000:19), the idea that rights and duties cannot be separated but, together, form the basis of ethics is also the central tenet of the Kantian ethics of duty.<sup>1</sup>

The significance of this inter-connection implies that, as well as having a duty to take any action possible to address aspects of the social which are ethically incongruent; actions taken in defence of rights must themselves be irreproachable from an ethical standpoint. This can be seen as a duty to the Self. In such a way, the

struggle itself becomes an 'exemplar' (Norval 2007:193) of an ethical position and 'facilitates the glimpsing of... another way of doing things' (*ibid.*). It also ensures that there is no basis for incongruence between the ethical position and actions taken in the social context. In this way, the inter-subjective struggle for harmony is guided by the intra-subjective ethical position which one wishes to see reflected in the social context.

The question of whether the assertion of an ethical position should involve the use of violence as a moral duty has been a central concern throughout human existence. Indeed, the historical use of violence as a means of establishing the social conditions for transformative harmony is noted by Kumar Giri in this volume. Norval (2007:162), too, notes how 'antagonism [as opposed to agonism] is one possible response to the dislocation of the subject.'

This chapter takes the view, however, that the use of violence as a means of promoting harmony is problematic. This is given in the previous argument that society reflects the ethical positions of those actors who form it. The performance of *dharma* (or duty) can be seen as an outer manifestation of an ethical position. Parel (2000:9) similarly suggests that *dharma* 'is the means by which we can know ourselves.' Therefore, to be in harmony, actions taken should not be in conflict with the ethical position which one is seeking to promote as the basis for harmonious living.

In other words, the use of violence to promote peace, for instance, is a contradiction given that the action taken to promote peace is not in harmony with the ethical position which regards peace as desirable. This means that the actors who are charged with undertaking the violence are involved in a contradiction.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, given that action is a manifestation of an ethical position, the use of violence implies that the actor ethically condones a violent society. Quite apart from the implications of this for the rights of others, a society in which violence is deemed permissible as a means of resolving social conflict is not one which represents the best opportunity for the type of learning which is beneficial to the long-term development of society or the Self. It also implies a loss of equilibrium given that the social context is incongruent with ethical positions which regard the use of violence as abhorrent.

This chapter proposes, therefore, that rather than the end justifying the means, the end should itself define the means. This is due to the recognition that the agonistic struggle for harmony, both as a project of the Self and of society, is ongoing. This idea of the significance of the means of the struggle and the opportunities which this presents for learning on the part of the individual and of society, is a central aspect of democratic theory, and it is to an exploration of democracy which this chapter now turns.

## Democracy at a Turning Point

The recognition that the political process must retain an openness which allows for social disharmony is a central theme of radical democracy theorists (Mouffe 2000; Norval 2007). Such agonistic struggle results from attempts by actors to establish their own ethical truths, even as they are simultaneously informed by, and may seek to challenge, the values manifesting in society. This struggle is seen as vital to the development of the Self and society given that it creates conditions for learning and non-violent social and personal change.

Such struggle is also seen as vitally significant to the development of democracy itself. This is in view of ongoing attempts to realise the principles under-pinning the democratic ideal—namely, liberty, equality and fraternity<sup>3</sup>—in praxis. Because democratic principles are seen to represent values which serve as a basis for ethical positions, democracy can be seen as both a means and an end. This is given the view that, as an aesthetic and an ideal, democracy seeks, as its purpose or ‘end’, to establish harmony between the ethical positions of actors and their wider social context. This is undertaken through means which themselves uphold the values which are the goal of the struggle.

In this regard, deliberation and political will formation as the basis of decision-making and social justice (Habermas 1996) are generally viewed as central. This recognises the need for social harmonisation with ethical positions, even as it accepts that those ethical positions are themselves conflicting and subject to change. This is the very essence of non-violent, democratic self-rule and allows social (and personal) change to occur as a result of debates concerning the ethical positions of social actors.

It is also recognised, however, that the potential for democratic praxis, as an institutionalised political process aimed at bringing the social context into an approximation of a harmonious relation with ethical positions, is coming increasingly into question in contemporary society (Schmitt 1985; Rajwade 2002; Kothari 2005). This *Legitimation Crisis* (Habermas [1973], 1976) of contemporary democracies is signified by a recognised gap between democracy as a normative ideal and as an empirical praxis. This gap appears to widen as the complexity of societies increases (Habermas 2006:411).<sup>4</sup> The dissolution of certainty associated with modern society (Beck 2009:115-128), as well as the recognised heterogeneity and diversity of conceptions of the common good (Mouffe 2000:18) have served to undermine the epistemic basis of democratic decision-making as a collective response to global risks. Here, the connection between the ethical and the social looks confusing, and the ability of the political sphere to facilitate a consensus on ethical issues becomes increasingly difficult.

This situation has been further exacerbated by the view of radical democracy theorists that consensus represents a 'provisional hegemony' (*ibid.*:104) and that any 'stabilisation of power entails exclusion' (*ibid.*). The contemporary realisation of the tenuousness of social facts, and the resulting reluctance to take decisions, has seen an increasing role for ideological manipulation as opposed to reasoned debate (Aronowitz 1988). Similarly, growing inequality has become problematic, not simply due to concerns for social justice, but also due to disparity in the capabilities of social actors to exercise effective influence in the deliberative process and so establish the social conditions in which they can have their ethical positions represented (Bohman and Rehg 1997:331).

It is suggested, therefore, that contemporary society is caught between the desire for a democratic praxis which is capable of establishing some degree of epistemic certainty, and the simultaneous concern that decisions will be ideologically swayed and serve simply to reinforce hegemonic power interests, rather than truly representing a consensus of the ethical positions in a given society. Given this situation, the potential for democratic deliberation to promote the conditions for a harmonisation of ethical positions with the social context has been severely curtailed. This chapter argues that this potential for a legitimisation crisis in contemporary society can be managed only through a re-emphasis on the Self and the fostering of a heightened state of consciousness. This is a concern of political praxis itself and will now be explored.

## Consciousness and Democracy

The states of consciousness described by the *gunas*<sup>5</sup> and discussed in the *Bhagavad Gita* have particular relevance in contemporary society. The over-riding sense of uncertainty and risk which has been described previously has, this paper argues, seen humanity alternating between the uncontrolled *raja guna* of 'desiring, worrying, resenting, scheming, competing' and the *tamas guna* of ignorant unawareness (Easwaran 2007:45). Such lower levels of consciousness are recognised as deleterious to democracy. This is given the obstacles they present to the type of deliberation required to make a clear, unbiased assessment of available knowledge through which decisions, though recognised as contingent, can be taken in the absence of ideological manipulation or special interests.

The impact of the state of consciousness of actors within a given society upon the political system has previously been highlighted. In many ways, deliberation requires humanity to have already attained the higher *sattva* state of consciousness which is associated with a natural harmony and 'unity of purpose, character and desire' (Easwaran 2007:45). This is also recognised by Beck (1995:103) who



observes the need for a 'revolution of consciousness.' The question then arises how can such a revolution of consciousness be attained through a democratic political process which presupposes its attainment in order to properly function?

The answer to this lies, it is suggested, in the project of the cultivation of the Self as a site of altered consciousness and, hence, social change. Thus, while radical democracy theorists such as Mouffe (2000) argue that disharmony is an essential aspect of democratic society,<sup>6</sup> it is proposed here that this disharmony must involve openness to learning as an ethical concern, as well as a recognition of the need to engage in reasonable decision-making with others as a means to securing harmony of the Self. Such collective efforts at understanding will, it is argued, permit the development of an altered state of consciousness which identifies similarity as much as difference and, as such, permits trust, epistemic and ethical agreement, and legitimate decision-making to emerge.

Mouffe (2000:76) observes that democracy is 'not a quest for certainty but for responsibility.' However, this chapter proposes that responsibility is strongly dependent upon the establishment of a truthful assessment of a social situation as the basis for making ethical judgements on the way in which responsibility should be allocated. As we have seen, however, the epistemic basis for democratic praxis as a means of agreeing upon ethical and social truths is currently under threat. This difficulty in establishing truth as a basis for collective decision-making leads to the potential for a general denial of responsibility and for the social actor to resort to the lower states of consciousness associated with the *tamas* and *raja gunas*. This is particularly evident in areas associated with risks to humanity, such as climate change.

This chapter proposes that this is where Gandhi's idea of *swaraj*, as self-rule, and the concept of transformative harmony, has much to offer. Gandhi recognised that self-rule must always be a personal as well as a political project. Here, the social actor must cultivate herself/himself to take responsibility for the formation of the social context in which she/he is immersed, and to establish the best epistemic truth which is possible in a given situation through whatever means are available. Hence, for Gandhi, *swaraj* became a movement for 'self-purification' (Brown 2008:13), as well as a quest for independence from British rule.

The idea of the cultivation of the state of consciousness of the Self as a means of bringing about political change is also gaining prominence in Western democratic theory. This has seen an increased emphasis on the ideal of democracy as a set of values, rather than an institutionalised political process. As Norval (2007:149) observes, '[i]f we dissociate democracy from the name of a regime, we can then give this name 'democracy' to any kind of experience in which there is equality, justice, ... and respect for the singularity of the other at work.' This has led to calls for a

democratic ethos which recognises the relevance of democracy to value formation as an ethical concern of the Self, as a precursor to the democratic function of legitimate decision-making (Mouffe 2000:23-76).

The focus on the Self as a means of rejuvenating the democratic project has been fully developed in the tenet of 'deep democracy' (Green 1999:50). Here, democracy is seen as incorporating the development of a 'cultivated pluralism' (*ibid.*:15) and a 'diversity-respecting unity in habits of the heart that are shaped and corrected by reflective inquiry' (*ibid.*:ix). Green takes a broadly Habermasian approach to emphasise democracy as a lived practice which, in turn, has political implications. This centres on 'transformative communication' (*ibid.*:14-53) and prioritises respectful encounters with others. Here, the idea of *Dharma* is translated into the duties associated with discourse ethics and the Habermasian validity claims of a speech act as being true, right or sincere (Habermas 2006:413).<sup>7</sup> The project of the Self is thus defined in terms of seeking to speak truthfully, responsibly and sincerely in interactions with others, and of attempting to uncover ideology in the perhaps unwitting rhetoric of oneself and others. This can be considered as an epistemic responsibility which recognises the need to establish the best available truth through engaging in social interaction which is informed by the ethical concern to cultivate a higher state of (self and social) consciousness.

## The Restoration of Democracy as a Decision-Making Mechanism

Through emphasising validity claims and discourse ethics, words, deeds and thoughts are brought into harmonious interaction as a political project. This allows deliberation to again present opportunities for providing solutions to the most pressing risks of our time. Deliberation undertaken with such intentions would mean that ideology could not help but expose itself as a discourse (Norval 2007:40). This would therefore provide opportunities for the Self to gain in awareness and lead to a greater ethical and epistemic basis for society as a whole.

The general emphasis on cultivating a *sattva* consciousness would enhance the ability of democracy to promote reasonable solutions through the restoration of its 'truth-tracking potential' (Habermas 2006:411). While such solutions would be recognised as temporary given the contingency of knowledge and the need for openness to changing ethical positions and epistemic discoveries, the means by which solutions were arrived at would enhance their legitimacy, as well as the individual and social learning made possible through the deliberation which preceded them. The enhanced legitimacy of such a consensus would arise from the elevation of truth as a means (through validity claims) as well as an end (as an ethical judgement which allows responsibilities to become clarified) as a basis

for enabling a higher state of consciousness of the Self. This would recognise that the cultivation of the Self, both as a speaker of truth and as a searcher for it, is a political, as much as an ethical, project.

Finally, given the increasing inter-connectivity of contemporary society, it is clear that this conception of democracy as a project which relies upon, and seeks to facilitate, a heightened state of consciousness among social actors will need to be a global project. The idiom, 'unity in diversity' (Green 1999:ix), used by deep democracy theorists, is a phrase which is also strongly associated with Hinduism (Inden 1990:86). Such a blending of discourses between East and West suggests the beginning of a globally informed change of consciousness in which cosmopolitanism itself becomes an ethical as well as political project.

While Inden (1990:127) observes that India 'may provide western man [sic] with that part of himself which he has lost', it is here suggested that the attainment of a true *sattva* consciousness lies in cross-cultural exchanges based upon principles of transformative harmony and communication. This can lead to mutual enlightenment where insights are blended in order to form new ways of connecting which have as their basis the desire for a cultivation of the Self as a means of global social transformation. This connection would be based upon democratic principles which eschew the domination or exploitation of others. Thus, it is suggested that transformative harmony has the potential to form the basis of a future imaginary shaped by a global shift in consciousness and ethical understanding. This focus on the cultivation of the Self as the instrument of transformative harmony promotes nurturing of the ethical dimension as the source of stability within a highly complex and confused social context. This has, it is suggested, significant political as well as personal ramifications.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored the way in which transformative harmony, as a project of the Self, has significant implications for democratic praxis. While radical democracy theorists increasingly argue that disharmony is an essential feature of democratic society, deep democracy theorists also highlight the need for a shift in consciousness as a project of the Self in terms of defining the way in which the social actor engages with such disharmony and social uncertainty. This increasingly emphasises that democratic principles and discourse ethics be cultivated as 'habits of the heart' (Green 1999:ix) in everyday practice.

It is here suggested that a transformative harmony which emphasises the significance of discourse ethics and harmony in thought, word and deed has the potential to restore an epistemic dimension to democracy, permitting discussions

which involve ethical learning on areas which currently represent social risk and uncertainty. Decisions could then be taken which are not seen as a means of blocking agonistic struggle but, instead, are viewed as necessary ethical steps to defining responsibilities in order to protect global society from risk. This includes an ethical responsibility of the Self to cultivate a higher state of consciousness in which the Self is seen as a speaker (the means of a democratic process as demonstrated by an emphasis on Habermasian validity claims and discourse ethics) and seeker of the truth (through the goal of democratically informed deliberation), in which truth is seen as an amalgamation of the best available perspectives which fellow seekers and speakers of truth can offer.

The need for a *sattva* consciousness as a basis for an ethical relation to social interaction is also highlighted by Norval (2007:209) who argues: 'given that society is ours, we are always already implicated and compromised by the actions perpetrated in our names.' This paper proposes, however, that the actions which we take in response to this realisation are of vital significance. As a project of the Self which emphasises the attainment of a heightened state of consciousness, it is here suggested that transformative harmony should be viewed as a political as well as an ethical project.

## Endnotes

1. Kant's ([1797], 1996:22) argument that there are 'external duties in ethics, as well as in rights' is a central tenet of *The Metaphysics of Morals*.
2. It is presumed that unless the actor is pathologically committed to an ethics of violence as an end in itself, violence is generally undertaken in light of the need to assert a certain ethical position as an end goal. The ethical position which is the end of such violence often paradoxically precludes the use of violence. Such a contradiction is a prominent feature of religious wars, for instance. Similarly, however, ongoing violence, conducted by the United States in the name of freedom and rights, involves the illegal detainment of individuals and the curtailment of rights, as in Guantanamo. Such contradictions between means and ends cannot but be ethically questionable and, as a result, have subsequent negative social and political ramifications, adding to the uncertainty and confusion associated with the ethical struggle of the Self in contemporary society. The significance of means which were congruent with the desired end was a principal assertion of Gandhi's philosophy of passive resistance or *Satyagraha* (Pantham 1987:299-306).
3. And, increasingly, tolerance, inclusion and justice (Benhabib 1996; Young 2000; Sen 2009).
4. There is also the potential for ethical positions to be formulated in which the principles of the democratic ideal are no longer deemed valid. This would suggest the emergence of a society in which equality, liberty and fraternity are no longer

judged as relevant in the search for truth and harmony. Growing calls for democratic governance worldwide, however, suggest that the ethos of democracy continues to retain significant resonance.

5. The Bhagavad Gita suggests that there are three *gunas* – *Tamas*, the lowest level is a vast unconscious, and repository of past experiences and evolutionary heritage. At its deepest level, *Tamas* is universal. Secondly, the *Rajas*, are described as ‘power released, but uncontrolled and egocentric’ (Easwaran 2007:45). Finally, *sattva* consciousness is described as the higher mind – ‘self-controlled [and] unruffled’ (*ibid.*)
6. Lacan, too, observes the need for an ‘ethics of disharmony’ in democracy (Stavrakakis 2002:-139).
7. Pantham (1987:292-310) provides an interesting analysis of the parallels between Habermasian validity claims and Gandhi’s *Satyagraha*. This (*ibid.*:295) highlights the concern of both of these thinkers with the attempt to establish ‘truth’ and the avoidance of ideological self-deception.

## References

- Aronowitz, S. 1988. *Science as Power: Discourse and Ideology in Modern Society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Beck, U. 1995. *Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- . 2009. *World at Risk*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Benhabib, S. 1996. *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*. London: Sage.
- Bohman, J. and W. Rehg (eds). 1997. *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Brown, J.M. 2008. *Mahatma Gandhi: The Essential Writings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chakrabarty, B. 2007. “The Idea of *Swaraj* in Indian Political Thought from Lajpat Rai to Subhas Chandra Bose”, in S. Bhattacharya (ed.), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilisation*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Easwaran, E. 2007. *The Bhagavad Gita*. Canada: Nilgiri Press.
- Green, J.M. 1999. *Deep Democracy: Community, Diversity and Transformation*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Habermas, J. [1973] 1976. *Legitimation Crisis*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- . 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 1987. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 1996. *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- . 2006. "Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research." *Communication Theory*, 16: 411-426.
- . 2008. *Between Naturalism and Religion*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Inden, R. 1990. *Imagining India*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Kant, I. [1797] 1996. *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kothari, R. 2005. *Rethinking Democracy*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.
- Giri, Ananta K. and P. Qarles Van Ufford. 2004. "A Moral Critique of Development: Ethics, Aesthetics and Responsibility." *Review of Development and Change*, IX(1): 1-40.
- Mouffe, C. 2000. *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.
- Norval, A.J. 2007. *Aversive Democracy: Inheritance and Originality in the Democratic Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pantham, T. 1987. "Habermas' Practical Discourse and Gandhi's *Satyagraha*", in B. Parekh and T. Pantham (eds), *Political Discourse: Explorations in Indian and Western Political Thought*, pp. 292-310. London: Sage.
- Parel, A.J. (ed.) 2000. *Gandhi, Freedom and Self-Rule*. New Delhi: Vistaar Publications.
- . 2006. *Gandhi's Philosophy and The Quest For Harmony*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rajwade, A.V. 2002. "Fifty Five Years of a Feudal Democracy." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37(33):3398-3401.
- Schmitt, C. 1985. *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Sen, A. 2009. *The Idea of Justice*, London: Allen Lane.
- Stavrakakis, Y. 2002. *Lacan and the Political*. London: Routledge.
- Young, I. M. 2000. *Inclusion and Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## CHAPTER 35

# Harmonious Conflict

*Tom H. Hastings*

Transforming destructive conflict to constructive conflict is the mission of my field of Conflict Resolution. From the interpersonal conflicts that mar relationships to transnational conflicts that can degenerate to warfare, there is arguably no more important shift for humankind than to learn and practice the methods of constructive conflict management.

Managing this transformation would alter life on Earth in many ways, including but not limited to:

- Ending the bitter breakup of interpersonal relationships that cause so much unhappiness and even interpersonal violence.
- Using restorative justice would make law enforcement a far more gentle and inclusive process, focusing on the needs of the victim rather than brute punishment of the perpetrator.
- Mediation can transform positional contests to collaborative problem solving, resulting in more gains for all parties once the losses of destructive conflict are eliminated.
- Ending war and the threat of war would save lives, treasure, and the environment.

The tough news is that conflict is forever. The hopeful news is that research and applied knowledge have shown lines of sight towards achievement of all the above-mentioned objectives.



While the philosophical roots of transformative conflict management have come down to us for millennia from the great religious and philosophical masters, it took Mohandas Gandhi to work out the practical beginnings of these newer applications. He did this in at least two important ways, apparently unrelated but in fact tied together convincingly.

First, Gandhi is the acknowledged progenitor of mediation, and quite specifically a principled negotiation path to what is now termed Alternative Dispute Resolution (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011). This came about, paradoxically, from his frequent failure to become an effective British barrister – the very profession for which he was trained in London. He was often tongue-tied and professionally paralysed as he sought to ply his trade in courtrooms. Then, in a bid to achieve some measure of success for his family (the extended family had invested heavily in his legal education) he took cases in South Africa, moving there in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a creative – and possibly somewhat desperate – moment he took the then-rare step of bringing the contending parties together in his Johannesburg office to discuss potential solutions. The parties, under his facilitation, created a satisfactory agreement, avoiding court and achieving a principled negotiation mutually beneficial outcome. About this, Gandhi wrote, “At last, I had learnt the true profession of the law.” While Gandhi did not proceed to create an elaborate corpus of theory around this insight, others certainly have and, indeed, it was in the US that law schools began creating the entire field of legal mediation and negotiation known as Alternative Dispute Resolution, including the influential Harvard Negotiation Project, which has in turn influenced patterns of negotiation from the realms of international diplomacy, business relationships, and much more. The ongoing development and significance of this strand of conflict management is hard to overestimate, giving rise to the theory of dual concern and related theoretical aspects such as the fundamental negative attribution error – all refining Gandhi’s original invention of a new non-adversarial approach to what had been pure zero-sum thinking.

But Gandhi’s transformative discovery of a new method of social conflict is truly momentous in its implications. On September 11, 1906, speaking to an aroused crowd of disaffected Indian immigrant workers in the Imperial Theater in Johannesburg, South Africa, Gandhi announced a new method of group-to-group contention that has evolved into what is also known as strategic non-violence, civil resistance, or civil society struggle. His grand insight is the basis of many societal struggles for justice, liberation, and freedom ever since, though it seemed quixotic to many for a long time (Ackerman and DuVall 2000; Sharp 1973a,b,c, 1979).

Gandhi’s liberatory method was not unprecedented – researcher Gene Sharp found such campaigns from the previous 2,500 years onward – but his analysis and



prodigious writings on the process set down markers for humankind to develop what amounts to a radically reduced cost and significantly more successful method of waging insurgency. He noted that his analysis was crude and experimental, brilliantly comparing it to Edison's early efforts to create a light bulb, and because of the counterintuitive nature of it – revolution without guns or gallows? – it took decades for it to become widespread, but it is firmly with us now as a far more intelligent option than an armed revolutionary vanguard-led insurrection.

Indeed, empirical studies have now shown that statistically, non-violent insurgency succeeds more than half the time it is seriously attempted and that it succeeds more than twice as frequently as does violent insurgency. Further, it is faster and clearly involves far fewer casualties, much less financial cost, and dramatically less impact to the natural environment in terms of both pollution and resource extraction. It is the single greatest step humankind could take toward sustainability and prosperity.

The quantitative studies of non-violence have focused on maximal goal struggles – essentially one form or another of overthrowing a government. Researchers Karatnycky and Ackerman (2005) as well as Chenoweth and Stephan (2008, 2011) examined regime change insurgencies, both violent and non-violent, and found that metrics of civil rights, human rights, and democracy were all stronger when assessed five years after the regime change if non-violence was the method of liberation. Karatnycky and Ackerman looked only at 67 successful cases in recent decades; Chenoweth and Stephan considered 323 cases of violent and non-violent insurgency from 1900-2006, all cases found in which the insurgents announced their goal as replacing the government. This research has changed the field of Security Studies. How long will it take to transform how nations manage conflict?

When we consider the opportunity costs to alleviating poverty, providing medical care to humankind, and protecting our biosphere, nothing is more crucial. The greatest polluter is the military; the largest single consumer of fossil fuel on earth is the US military. Global climate chaos is driven in large part by the profligate energy budgets of the world's militaries (Hastings 2000, 2013).

What Gandhi gave us needs to be improved and proliferated across the planet. It is peace and justice by peaceable means and it the new realism, the realpolitik of a species finally deserving of its self-anointed title, *homo sapiens*, the wise ones.

## References

- Ackerman, P. and J. DuVall. 2000. *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Chenoweth, Erica and Maria J. Stephan. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Hastings, T.H. 2000. *Ecology of War and Peace: Counting Costs of Conflict*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- . 2013. "Climate Chaos and Conflict Management." *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, 25(4):495-501, DOI:10.1080/10402659.2013.846147.
- . 2014. *A New Era of Nonviolence: The Power of Civil Society Over War*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Karatnycky, Adrian and Peter Ackerman. 2005. *How Freedom is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy*. New York, NY: Freedom House.
- Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall. 2011. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 3<sup>rd</sup>ed. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Sharp, Gene. 1973a. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: Part One: Power and Struggle*. Boston: Porter Sargent.
- . 1973b. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: Part Two. The Methods of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargent.
- . 1973c. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: Part Three. The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargent.
- . 1979. *Gandhi as a Political Strategist*. Boston, MA: Porter Sargent.
- Stephan, M.J. and E. Chenoweth. 2008. "Why Civil Resistance Works." *International Security*, 33(1):7-44.

## CHAPTER 36

# Conflict, Harmony and Transformation

*Mike Doogan*

One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.

—Jung 1961

### What is Conflict?

Conflict is a term and experience perceived by many with concern, fear and distaste. It has been defined and examined thoroughly within the scientific community for years. As a result, many categories of conflict-related issues, from its conditions to variations of its expression have emerged in the literature and grown into what is now considered a legitimate and substantial area of specialisation, conflict theory. Although conflict theory has a great deal to offer with respect to this topic, for the purposes of this essay it will be used to help establish a basic definition and sense of how this phenomenological experience relates to the concept of harmonious transformation.

To integrate the many thematic elements involved in defining and understanding conflict, Thomas (1992:265) settled on a definition of conflict as the “process which begins when one party perceives that another had frustrated,

or is about to frustrate, some concern of his.” This definition implies that conflict is essentially the experience of dissonance which occurs when an introduced antecedent causes a response that is upsetting. In other words, conflict happens when we get frustrated. Essentially, this means that conflict is an often occurring and integral human experience. It is fundamental and we all experience it, no matter who we are. Moreover, the notion of conflict occurs both collectively among groups of people and individually, in our own relationship with ourselves. We can be internally or externally conflicted and our reaction can be pointed inwardly or towards others. Also, conflict in this schema is an experience that happens along an entire spectrum of intensity and result, and is completely individualised to the situation and context. One can experience a huge reaction to a conflict with minimal visible response or react significantly to something minimal. How each person responds to conflict is completely unique, and changes from moment to moment.

Culture plays a significant role in our perception and response to conflict as well. As a filter through which we experience reality, culture helps shape human experience both collectively and individually. That said, though conflict is certainly more socialised and prevalent in some cultures than others, it could certainly be argued that conflict as a fundamental experience is a universal human phenomenon that is intrinsic to our genetic makeup. Further, while scholarly and scientific knowledge about conflict has “increased considerably, so has the technology and scope of violence” (Bartos and Wehr 2002:1) worldwide. In other words, we know more about conflict overall, but conflict is on the rise. With increased dependence on the internet as a means of social and cultural influence, this trend towards worldwide conflict is more easily distributed and expressed as well.

## **What is Harmony?**

Harmony is a term less examined in scholarly literature, particularly in the West. Like conflict, it appears to exist along a spectrum of experiential conceptualisation and manifestation. For the purposes of this paper, harmony will be used initially to describe an experience dichotomous to conflict. In other words, the experience of harmony is considered one that is absent frustration and resultant response, whether experienced in an intrinsic or extrinsic manner. Someone who is in harmony with their surroundings is responding to each moment free from conflict. It implies the existence of a balanced, symbiotic state of ideal flow and connection, suggesting a peaceful, centred and responsive interaction with self, others and the world. Like conflict, harmonious existence reflects context, situation and cultural situations. Some groups or cultures are more harmonious in daily exchange than others. Essentially, harmony seen this way is synonymous with peace. Peaceful

relationships with the self and others are in harmony along a spectrum or range holistically, on many levels and in many different respects.

Harmonious existence, in contrast to conflict purports an experience that many people hope to experience and sustain in life. In other words, most people would seek to exist in harmony than conflict, making it an ideal. This ideal human state, experienced in its fundamental sense would mean that there is an absence of frustration internally or externally experienced and expressed. Rather than reacting to a given antecedent in a dissonant or confrontational manner, a person who is in harmony might respond in a non-confrontational and kind manner. Some can even muster a harmonious response to an elevated level of conflict on occasion. The practice of mindfulness offers tools for such cultivation of what could be called harmonious response. Sustaining such a state, however is far more easily envisioned than embodied and embraced in daily experience for most people. To complicate matters further, harmonious or mindful responses do not necessarily result in the same responses from the world. Some may become even more conflictive in response to someone in harmony, as evidenced throughout history between aggressors and victims. Thus, harmonious experiences are a personal choice which must be cultivated and practiced. It takes time to develop harmony in the world.

Unfortunately, in addition to the lack of literature and understanding of this experience, harmony seems to be experienced far less than conflict in the world today. Seen dichotomously, along a spectrum of phenomenology and response, the scale leans very heavily overall in the direction of conflict. In other words, most people are much more conflicted than harmonious and that trend seems to be on the rise. This seems true in all respects, whether internal or external, alone or in groups of people. However, assuming it is realised and accepted that harmony is desired over conflict and one would rather exist in a harmonious than conflicted state of existence, the question remains; How can we best embrace and catalyse harmonious rather than conflicted experiences?

## **What is Transformation?**

Transformation offers the kind of change needed to cultivate harmony. Applied to human experience, transformation describes a holistic shift which changes a person on the fundamental and complete level. Transformation is change in its most complete and impactful sense. It transcends who we are while including a self which is new. Transcendence is a sense of reality that is qualitatively different from before. One moves beyond the limitations of their previous self. Therefore, to transform, one must experience a sense of transcendence. Yet to take this step beyond, one must become aware that this other reality exists. They must have some

form of experience which shifts consciousness and inspires a desire to cultivate and embrace potential that is uncovered. Because of this shift, the process of personal transformation is often accompanied by an existential crisis or sense of deep loss. This loss comes from the realisation that one must release patterns of identity that are limited. Though limited, these patterns were useful and are truly a part of who we are. In many respects, this new way of being is a death and rebirth of the self. An outdated version of the self must be released so that newer, more complete person may emerge. Yet we cling to the self that we once were.

Examples abound in the Wisdom traditions of the necessity of experiencing this “dark night” of the soul, during which one is tested during a “period of unknowing, loss and despair that must be traversed by spiritual seekers to empty and humble themselves enough to receive divine inspiration (Kornfield 1993:148).” It is important and useful to this discussion to acknowledge this process of engaging in conflict with oneself individually when considering collective development or evolutionary change.

This universal process involved in transformative experience is also akin to the physical death and rebirth process which we all experience coming into and leaving the world. We struggle necessarily so that we might evolve and take a new, more complete form. In this respect, the death and rebirth process is universally experienced. Conflict is an integral part of seeking a new and somewhat more harmonious state of being. While many are very aware and focused on the joyful results of the arrival following the birthing, the conflictual aspects which preclude this arrival are not so often honoured or even fully remembered. We seem to tend to release remembrance of the conflictual process needed to evolve. Just as the pain of actual childbirth precludes the joy of the arrival, so too much pain precludes death and dying. Examples abound on many levels with respect to this universal pattern of human experience. Thus, conflict is a necessary and crucial step in this process, despite its distasteful characteristics.

This emphasis is important to the present discussion because conflict, as a universal experience on the rise worldwide, is far too often understood as a problem to be eradicated and replaced rather than a necessary step in our evolution. While it cannot be argued that harmony is a preferred means of existence and by no means should one seek out conflict in some effort to grow, perhaps envisioning conflict in a different manner. Conflict as a possible doorway to transformative experience that leads to harmony offers an ontologically new way of embracing the current atrocities which plague our world. Conflict and harmony experienced as two sides of the same process offers a less fearful perspective by which we may experience and embrace change. Further, given that both conflict and harmony appear to be universal human experiences, perhaps it is the integration of these

dichotomous occurrences rather than the replacement of one for the other that offers the most potential for growth and healing collectively worldwide. In other words, perhaps less focus should be placed on replacing conflict with harmony and instead conflicting in a harmonious and peaceful manner. Redefining our response to conflict may in this way lead to increased transformative experience worldwide. Of course, this process begins for each of us individually when we begin to cultivate a new relationship to our own inner conflict and expression of conflict in every interaction and exchange that we have. While such notions are far from new, perhaps now in history we are wise to remember and embrace peaceful conflict as we seek a more harmonious existence and world. This may be the most valuable step that we take.

## References

- Bartos, O. and P. Wehr. 2002. *Using Conflict Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jung, C.G. 1961. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Kornfield, J. 1993. *A Path with Heart*. New York, NY: Bantam.
- Thomas, K. 1992. "Conflict and Conflict Management: Reflections and Update." *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13(3):265–274.





## CHAPTER 37

# Dialogue, Sacrifice and Reconciliation

A Study of Kandhamal Violence, Odisha

*Arun K. Patnaik and Rajesh Bag*

*Bure din hamare uttam shikshak hain*  
(Bad days are our excellent teachers)

### Section I

#### Introduction

Dialogue studies are a rare genre in the debates on Indian secularism. Secular intellectuals cannot be blamed for what is missed by the secular state formation. However, it is very distressing to note that the dialogue imperatives are very strangely articulated or conveniently discarded by secular intellectuals even when they are worried about reconciliation. A few dialogue theorists like Akeel Bilgrami and Gyan Pandey talk about dialogue to reform religious faiths or resolve conflict situations (Bilgrami 1998:410; Pandey 2007:175–77). But both are very hesitant to recognise that dialogue with contending organisations is necessary due to the fear of legitimising activities of contending parties. If democracy is afraid of contentions or contending parties, it ceases to be a practising democracy. As Ranabir Samaddar rightly argues democratic dialogue must inhere and absorb conflictive positions (Samaddar 2011:790). Yet, a few secular intellectuals who insist on dialogue with

contentious politics such as Maoism or the Kashmiri separatism do not plead for political dialogue to settle the major issues affecting India's secularism.<sup>1</sup> They do not feel disturbed that there could be paradoxes in their dialogic thinking. A democratic process following two separate standards for a select number of contentious issues is indeed the sign of contradictory democracy. Sikand (2001:1716) argues that under certain contexts, 'dialogue' may be pursued by a religious group to carry out 'conversion' in a benign form. Now a question arises: what does happen to dialogue that respects rather than assimilates differences? Similarly, reconciliation may have happened without dialogue as argued by Meena Menon (2012:231). After riots in Mumbai 1992, victims may have reconciled with their life situations with a sense of defeatism. So the relation between dialogue and reconciliation is very tenuous. Is it however possible to bring about genuine reconciliation without democratic dialogue?

There are a few studies on reconciliation after Gujarat violence (2002). But dialogue as a method of settlement of disputes is not even mentioned in these studies. Dialogue as a method is omitted in several narratives of reconciliation by T.K. Oommen, Dipankar Gupta, Harsh Mander, Rajeev Bhargava and many others, though all these writers are extremely concerned with justice before or after reconciliation. Both Gupta and Mander tend to argue that victims are interested in justice through law rather than reconciliation. Even Gupta argues (2011:113) that a model of reconciliation, put to a voice vote, would be vigorously rejected by victims interested to fight for legal justice. Mander's argument (2009:171,179) however is subtle as he distinguishes two kinds of victims. There are victims who fight for legal justice through 'Nayagraha' as opposed to those victims who would like to compromise and move on. The latter remain critical of the former for creating difficulties for compromise (*ibid.*:169). The fight for justice through law, even if justice eludes them, is better than reconciliation as it enhances self-esteem, ensures dignity and security of victims by seeing culprits pulled by police to a court of law. Many of the working class victims themselves are Nayagrahi activists mobilising and assisting other subaltern members. Like Menon, Mander also argues correctly that for the path of reconciliation to open up, 'truth must be exchanged' (*ibid.*:179-180). However, the path of reconciliation is not opened up in Gujarat, as culprits are not prepared to confess truth in public and victims are divided in seeking justice.

Just as secular intellectuals miss dialogue as a method because the secular state never articulated democratic dialogue on a sustained basis, so also common victims notice the inaction of a state government in pursuing law and demand legal action for justice. In both cases, the stimulus supplied by the state is matched by communities/intellectuals accordingly. If intellectuals and civil society activists cannot transcend legal mindset of the secular state and cannot even imagine dialogue

in search for settlement of major disputes to rebuild secularism, it would be futile to expect common victims/culprits to imagine that truth must be exchanged to bring about reconciliation. However, it must be admitted that common victims pursuing legal path for justice are still willing for reconciliation in public. But culprits are not sure if they should confess truth in public. The life stories of Walibhai and Abdul Bhai of Gujarat villages indicate preferences for reconciliation, failing which they pursued 'justice before reconciliation' (ibid.:171,179). Similarly, the state government unwilling to follow a legal path or even dialogic path might induce victims to follow a binary path: fight for legal justice for dignity and self-respect or reconcile with 'fate' by a simple act of forgiving.

But, where the state follows 'ad hoc dialogues', forms dialogue committees driven by the district administration and also sets up 'fast track courts' seriously, communities – both culprits and victims – may respond differently at different times of their life situations. Depending on the nature of the state's stimuli and its timings, responses of communities may alter from 'justice before reconciliation' to 'justice through reconciliation', even though both secular intellectuals and civil society organisations still display a legal mindset as indicated by our case study.

Before we return to our case study, let us examine how a methodology of reconciliation is proposed by Oommen (2008) and Bhargava (2010). Though dialogue as a method is missing in their studies, both explore steps of reconciliation which could be seen as elements of a dialogue process. Oommen (2008:16-17) uses terms from financial transactions in reconciliation. First, communities must identify and endorse assets and liabilities in their cultural traditions. Second, they must 'reduce' liabilities and 'expand' assets. Third, they need to understand the realities of everyday life which may have triggered conflicts. These could be the styles of religious worship, varieties of food consumed or dress worn based on taboos or prescriptions. He argues correctly that unlike relief and rehabilitation, in the case of reconciliation both culprits and victims become 'carriers' or 'agents' (Oommen 2009:xi,17). Reconciliation may also need 'catalysts' that are not necessarily 'carriers'.

Bhargava (2010:132-138), on the other hand, argues that the Gandhian model of peace building has a two-fold stage:1. Barbarism followed by expression of grievances, acceptance of collective responsibility and forgiveness; 2. Reconciliation. Being a charismatic leader who forced culprits and victims for reconciliation through hunger strikes, Gandhi misses the 'machinery of arbitration' seeking reconciliation on the foundation of procedural justice. This notion of justice entails (i) recognition of 'untidy problems', (ii) sense of good life for 'self', and (iii) 'compromises' with good life of 'other'. Bhargava proposes a model of reconciliation enriching Gandhi's conception at three analytical stages:1. Barbarism – sharing

grievances, collective responsibility and restoration of justice by a machinery of arbitration; 2. Forgiveness; and 3. Reconciliation. What Bhargava does not notice is that forgiveness follows sacrifice before reconciliation happens.<sup>2</sup> For, sacrifice is self-related act, whereas forgiveness is other-related activity. One does not forgive one-self but expects others to forgive one's misdeeds. Moreover, for forgiveness to materialise, one has to reduce 'own liabilities' as suggested by Oommen. As the story of Abdula Bhai and Walibhai reveal, expecting the other to forgive one's misdeeds is futile, if it is not preceded by one's sacrifice of 'ego' complexes or 'evil' practices in public mediation (Mander 2009). However, there are non-negotiable elements in each other's faith. People must realise what can or cannot be sacrificed in any religious dispute. A strategy of sacrifice must exhibit a deep sense of respect for values in each other's religion. Only when we recognise dialogue as a method of conflict resolution, it is possible to bring in a strategy of sacrifice which is at the root of forgiveness. Thus, Bhargava's model of reconciliation needs considerable enrichment. Theorising reconciliation without addressing a method of dialogue is like talking about effect or process without its causation.

## Section II

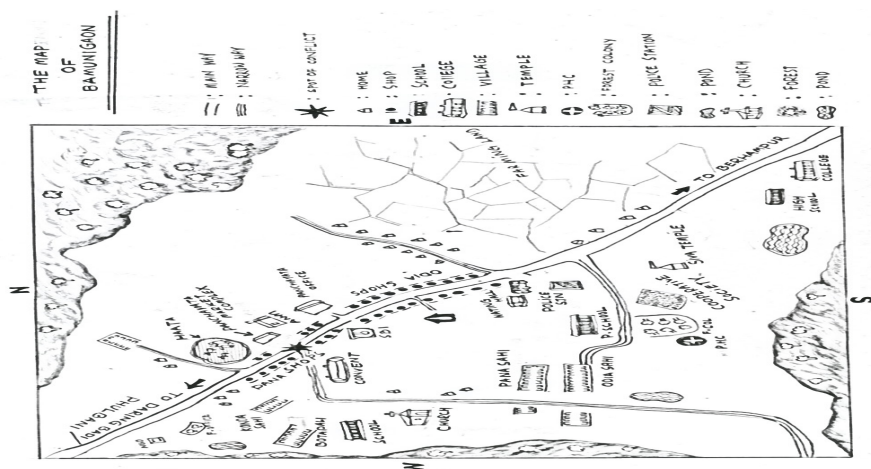
### The Bamunigaon Violence

The events in Bamunigaon propelled a series of anti-Christian riots across Kandhamal district in Odisha in 2007. Swamy Lakshmananda Saraswati (henceforth Swamiji) of the VHP was widely perceived to have provoked communal riots in the district in 2007. Eight months later in August 2008, the Maoist squad took revenge on Swamiji for his alleged role in 2007 by killing him and four other associates at his Jalspeta ashram. The Maoists were widely seen by the Hindutva family to have acted on behalf of Christians in this attack. So his killing in turn led to a major series of attack on Tribal and Dalit Christians across the district and elsewhere in the state. Though communal 'massacres' bypassed Bamunigaon in 2008, it affected people of the village. It made their life very difficult. The Bamunigaon events are thus at the root of the spiralling conflicts in Kandhamal witnessed during 2007 and 2008. Here, we present a sub-text of Kandhamal violence and a narrative of settlement of disputes as manifested in Bamunigaon. The main text of Kandhamal violence, however has many more causative factors than what we see in this village, even though the village was an epicentre of violence in the district during 2007.<sup>3</sup>

Bamunigaon is the official headquarters of the Bamunigaon Panchayat in the district of Kandhamal, Odisha. It has 7 villages and 4 hamlets. It has also a police station with an Inspector-in-Charge with the jurisdiction over eight

Gram Panchayats. On its west, north and south side, thick forest hills surround the village and provide shelter to Dalit Christian and Hindu (henceforth 'Odia'<sup>4</sup>) communities respectively during the riots of 2007 (see village map in Figure 1). It has become a market hub due to a weekly Hata (market) since 1981.

Villagers from nearly eight Gram Panchayats of Daringibadi Block and two Gram Panchayats from Gajapati and Ganjam districts solely depend upon for buying and selling of livestock, forest, agricultural products and other household items. The upper and middle caste businessmen basically sell household items, dress and other consumer goods but purchase forest and agricultural goods. The livestock business is done by the Christian Panas. Few of them sell dry fish and vegetables. For all social groups, the Hata not only provides opportunity to buy and sell but it also gives space for social interaction with friends and relatives.



**Figure 1. The Village Map**

The social profile of the village is as follows. The village with its old and new streets has a population of around 3,008 men and women with a total of 609 families.<sup>5</sup> Basically, the old Bamunigaon consists of three Sahis (streets). They are known as Odia Sahi, Pana Sahi and Kandha Sahi. In the Odia Sahi, it is found that most families are from the OBC background in a total of 151 families. The Paika (peasant warrior caste), Telli (oil-pressure caste) and Sundhi (toddy tapper) families are numerically dominant. A handful of families are from the upper caste. They are all from Hindu religion. The Pana (broom and rope weaving or drummer) Sahi is adjacent to the Odia Sahi and has about 53 families. They are all Dalit Christians. And the Kandha Sahi is located at 150 meters away from the two main Sahis and has 15 tribal families. The other 390 families from different castes and

religions are settled along with the main road and in various new segments of the village.

## **Secularisation of Social Imaginary: Social Discrimination from High to Moderate**

If we look at the social relations between the Pana Christians and the Odia Sahi's Hindu middle castes, we may find them historically evolving from high to low discrimination after 1985. Their social imaginary has evolved over time for better or worse.<sup>6</sup> After 1985, periodic solidarities between religious communities developed while pursuing festive activities and visible forms of social discrimination began to decline. Panas are mostly agricultural workers and the Odia Sahi people mostly small and medium farmers.

Before the 1990s, Panas were looked down upon as low caste people. They would not come nearer Veranda (porch) of the Odia Sahi houses. They would collect dead cows from Odia Sahi families for food. The Pana women were ridiculed as 'Pana Brahminiani' (Pana Brahmin woman) near the village ponds. Even, Panas were disliked to ride on bicycles by the Paika youth. They used to encourage Kandhas more than Panas in social proximity. From the early 1990s, the visible forms of discrimination began to decline gradually due to several reasons. After the introduction of social Nataka (play) during festival times, the Pana and Odia Sahi youth began showing social solidarity. The Pana youth participated in social drama in the village festivals actively and contributed to their success. As a result, they became talking points of the village. Panas were not asked to wash their tea glasses in the tiffin centre. Their ridicule and public humiliation began to decline. When the self-help group schemes were introduced for women's empowerment in the village, it exposed both Odia Sahi and Pana women to the Banking sector. They used to go together to the government offices, banks and stood in the queues before the bank counters. This enabled them to interact with each other more. Mocking references at the village pond by Paika women became less visible now. A Pana cycling his way was no more ridiculed. Panas began to get invitation to attend marriage feasts in Odia Sahi as per rules and norms. Though they used to eat at the end, waste food was no more thrown at them. Now they were welcome to sit on the Verandas of the Odia Sahi families for discussions.

## **Secularisation Halted: Clash of Intolerance**

In 2003, the conflict between the Pana Sahi and the Odia Sahi came to the fore because a few Odia youths provoked by Swami's repeated hate speeches against

'cow slaughter' poured kerosene on beef meat while Panas were cleaning it for sale. Before doing this, the Sakha members took photos of people involved and later filed police cases against Pana Christians. Thereafter, the police harassment began. Panas blamed the VHP-sponsored Sakha for the spread of hatred against their food culture. Kanungo (2008:19) argues that the Orissa Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act 1960 and the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act 1967 have helped leaders of the Sangh Parivar to fan out its anti-Christian agenda. While it is broadly true, in the present case we however think that the opposition to beef-eating is simultaneously a show of intolerance against Christians, Dalits and their food culture.<sup>7</sup>

After the above conflict, Panas realised that they were dependent on the Odia business community for the purchase of food items and groceries. Immediately, Panas set up a tea stall and tiffin centre. Two years later in 2005, Panas decided to set up their own business under the banner of Dr Ambedkar Vanik Sangh. Once a new rival emerged on the scene, the old business communities under the Vighnaraja Vanik Sangh could not make huge profits as they did in the past. Though market competition became intense, their activities provided livelihood options for both groups. But anger and hatred were not healed.

Buoyed by their new financial strength, Panas wanted to celebrate the Bada Din (Christmas) on a grand scale in 2007. On December 23, 2007, the Odia Sahi people instigated by the VHP opposed the grand arrangements made by Panas.<sup>8</sup> They objected that the main road would be blocked if Panas went ahead with a series of arch lights spread across the main road (see village map for conflict site). Christians felt that they were only emulating the Hindu celebration of festivals and wondered why Hindus should object. Moreover, official permission was also obtained for the present arrangement. They felt that the objection by Odias was more due to caste jealousy instigated by the VHP and was meant to humiliate Christian Panas in celebration of their festival. Police tried to mediate between two groups and failed to prevail on Odias.

On 24<sup>th</sup> morning when the business community and villagers arrived in the market, rumours were spread that the weekly market was going to be closed. Dalit Christians believed that these rumours were floated by Swami's foot soldiers in order to spoil their festival shopping. This rumour led to mayhem. Outside business people fled in their trucks and trolleys. During three hours from 8 am to 11 am, two gangs of Christian and Hindu youth confronted each other and later clashed in the bazaar. Few Odia youths got injured severely and were hospitalised. Panas alleged that their podium, music system and arch lights were destroyed in the process. Around 6 pm of the same day, a Christian youth burned an Odia shop and this led to a tense situation once again, alleged the Odia Sahi people.



In the evening of same day, a massive rumour was spread through the ETV Odia that Swamiji on his way to visit Bamunigaon was assaulted by the Christian youths in Daringbadi and was admitted in the Daringbadi government hospital. This led to a series of retaliatory attacks on Christian communities across the district. On 25<sup>th</sup> morning, miscreants phoned local people in the village. In retaliation, an Odia mob in collusion with the followers of the VHP from nearby villages burnt down 30 Dalit households, vandalised 25 shops and burnt down the 43 years old Church in Bamunigaon. When the Dalits came to know the impending attack, they left for hiding in the nearby hilly forests. Few returned in the evening after the SP and the CRPF companies landed in the village. On 27<sup>th</sup> morning, about five thousand Dalit and tribal Christians allegedly in collusion with the Maoists surged ahead to retaliate the destruction of Church and property. They were armed with axes, spears and fire arms and burnt down nearly 118 houses of the Odia Sahi and were marching towards the market to burn down shops.<sup>9</sup> When police tried to break their strength by shooting in the air, two Panas and one unidentified youth were shot dead. A young boy's leg got badly injured. When more rounds were fired, the mob fled to the forests at the western side of their street. Dalit women said that they too fled to the jungle due to the ferocity of violent attack. Even, Odia communities also escaped to a different jungle at the South side of their street.

When police arranged relief camps, women returned first. Both men and women had to hide in the jungles for three to four days without food and water. Three FIRs were filed by each community against a total of 80 people from all sides with regard to the destruction of houses, shops and the Church property. The story of conflict in Bamunigaon began on 24<sup>th</sup> December and ended on December 27, 2007. Over these four days, fragile relations between Odias and Panas collapsed. And it could not be revived until the end of 2010.

### **Section III**

#### **Dialogue in Passive Mode**

The disputes in Bamunigaon would have easily travelled into a lawyer's paradise, if the communities had not taken up 'direct action' to settle their own disputes under the Anchalik Shanti Committee (regional peace committee) in 2009. Before this happened, peace meetings were conducted by the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC), a senior IAS officer, in the first week of January 2008. About five meetings were held under the district administration. The RDC chaired the first meeting and asked the two disputant parties to nominate 5 members each in the peace committee. These meetings happened near the porch of the police



station. The RDC spoke how development and peace were affected by riots of 2007. He also spoke of 'Bhaichara' in the village. But his speech did not cut much ice in the meeting where disputant parties aggressively threw accusations against each other. It led to more acrimony. Communities did not confess mistakes committed by each which led to riots in 2007. It was like a continuation of war in dialogue rather than dialogue to resolve a war.

## Dialogue and Direct Action

A new strategy was conceived by the two organic intellectuals of religious communities.<sup>10</sup> As per their plan, on December 29, 2010, separate Sahi (ward) Sabhas were held and they chose 10 members each to represent in the Regional Peace Committee. In both the Sabhas, communities decided to follow decisions taken by their nominees. On December 30, 2010, villagers from neighbouring Panchayats met in the college ground (see the map). In this meeting, Karmapat Majhi was nominated as the President and Narendra Mohanty as the Secretary. Being neutral to this dispute, Karmapat Majhi, a tribal leader from the Saramuli Gram Panchayat, was chosen as their new moderator. Narendra Mohanty is the state convener of INSAF and the founder of the Vanavasi Suraksha Parishad, Kandhamal.

There was no help from the government and the NGOs for this dialogue to happen. Villagers themselves arranged funds for the meeting from their own contributions. However, the NGO 'Solidarity for Developing Communities' (SFDC) with its head office in Brahmapur or Berhampur helped in providing transport for participants from neighbouring villages. Local NGOs also claimed to have given small contributions. But members were told to reveal their heart-felt feelings: *Hrudaya Kholi Alochana Kariba* (Let us open up our hearts in discussion). Majhi asked few basic questions to ponder while narrating their *Ashanti* (unrest). Why did not caste discrimination lead to violent forms before? How did it promote violence now? The Hindus replied that they did not anticipate the magnitude of violence. They thought that they should keep *Jati* and *Dharma* on the top. It led to showing off their superiority complex and domination over Christians. Their Ego led them to be losers in life. Panas responded by saying that though they did not believe in discrimination, they resented 'Odia' domination and became revengeful which is why violence happened. Their mistake lies in taking revenge and retribution. Then Majhi asked them: what do you want now? Both Hindus and Christians stood up and collectively vouched for peace. 'Why peace now?' asked Majhi. Both representatives stood up and stated that due to misunderstanding between groups, they lost property, social prestige, gained more suffering and harassment in the court cases. So they wanted peace. Majhi moderated *Tarka*

*Bitarka* between communities. Both groups decided to drop branding each other as pro-RSS or pro-Maoist. They painfully recalled a local saying: *Jiya ku Golia Pani Suabae* (earthworm thrives in muddy water).<sup>11</sup> Both Maoists and the RSS are like 'earthworms' worth avoiding.

This meeting chaired by Majhi decided to set up two separate committees at the regional and local levels. Altogether 32 members from local and neighbouring Panchayats were selected to form the Regional Peace Committee. This committee would look into disputes and maintain peace in the 'region' under the Bamunigaon police station. Another ten members from the village were chosen from both Sahis in the local peace committee which would settle disputes locally. Chitra Sen Patra from the Odia Sahi and Kailash Nayak from the Pana Sahi were chosen the President and the Secretary respectively of both committees. These two are organic intellectuals of the Sahi Sabhas.

In December 2010, the local peace committee decided that they would celebrate each festival within the premises of temple or Church or village streets. They would not hold these functions on the main road. The celebration of festivals on the main road was responsible for the riots in 2007. The Dalit Christians also decided that beef cutting and sale should not be displayed in an open space. They would transact cutting animal meat and sale from inside a house in the Pana Sahi only. The Odias recount a local saying, *Nija Ichha Re Khaiba, Para Ichha Re Pindhiba* (Eat according to one's wish, dress according to other's wish).<sup>12</sup> This local saying was brought into force while reconciling with food habits of each other. They regret that they were provoked by the external elements. Both communities compromised with their exhibitionist stances. It is interesting to note that Dalit Christians also regretted for being revengeful and gave up 'open' spaces for festival celebration, beef-cutting and sale.

Immediately thereafter, the local peace committee met the lawyers from the RSS and Church to withdraw respective cases. To their surprise, lawyers told them that cases could not be settled out-of-court but advised them to do the following. During the subsequent witness depositions, they should say that they did not see how violence happened. On January 19, 2011, the committee met in the cooperative society's ground and decided that each community would spend money separately or jointly on the transport, food and lodging while visiting Daringbadi JMFC or the District court in Phulbani.<sup>13</sup> The NGO SFDC also provided some financial assistance for transportation during their court visits. A new kind of solidarity emerged due to the witness deposition process. They used to cook and eat food together during each visit and depose contrary evidence in the courts. Such intimate interactions were unheard before in the region. On March 26, 2012, all cases were closed due to the lack of evidence.

## Section IV

### **Anomaly Between Secular State and Secularisation**

As ‘the ant takes on the elephant’, so also a small story in Kandhamal confronts the big picture of Indian Constitution. A social imaginary of the ordinary people may challenge high reason of intellectuals. There are anomalies between the constitutional secularism and the process of secularisation emerging from a case study of communities. Also, the legal path followed by the secular state and a dialogue path followed by communities are at variance with each other. It must be admitted that communities in this case study moved towards dialogue due to two kinds of pressure. A ‘reasonable’ enforcement of law, notwithstanding the slippery nature of legal outcomes, put pressure on the communities from above. So also the loss of market, livelihood and social life put pressure on the communities from below. Gandhi used to claim that adversity is the mother of progress. Faced with adversities, villagers of Bamunigaon look for ‘peace and development’.

### **Towards Political Society**

Second, dialogue helps subaltern communities to form political society. If political society is the hope for subaltern communities, it comes into existence at the point of intersections with civil society. It works against civil society’s legal mindset and yet works for ‘negotiation’ through dialogue with aids from civil society. Recently, Partha Chatterjee argues that political society is formed by communities trying to better their lives through a strategy of negotiation while civil society celebrates a legal mind-set (Chatterjee 2004:27–78). Chatterjee’s argument is shared by Ashish Nandy and Gyan Pandey.<sup>14</sup> Civil society organisations seek ‘state alone’ and demand a legal path to settle religious conflicts. Conversely, ‘anti-state’/ ‘anti-civil society’ theorists try to argue that ‘communities alone’ may settle disputes and bring about reconciliation. While the former action may bring some dignity/ justice to victims, it has failed to bring about lasting peace. It has not prevented religious disputes growing in India. Similarly, the latter action may settle religious disputes and bring about lasting peace in a locality but it cannot even bring about reconciliation in a district. We thus need to explore a middle ground theory which may include a variety of agencies under a new political society or the state (state + civil society + community) to settle growing religious disputes.

True, this dialogue is about ‘negotiation’ initiated by communities including subalterns for peace and development. The story of the successful dialogue in Bamunigaon is initiated by religious communities existing outside the pale of civil society which celebrates law as a measure of reconciliation. Almost all NGOs,

Church and Hindutva organisations still pursue justice through law. However, communities in Bamunigaon decided to break free from this legal mindset and evolved strategy of negotiation with each other for peace. Their initiative to form peace committees and look for a strategy of negotiation sans law could be seen as the making of political society *à la* Chatterjee. However, the aid from the SFDC, a foreign funded NGO, was no less significant in arrangement of funds and transport. Thus, civil society organisations may also act as ‘catalyst’ in reconciliation (Oommen 2008:16-17). ‘Acting without state’ or ‘anti-civil society’ positions make significant sense but are not very accurate in the actual field of a successful dialogue.

## The Revival of Good Sense

Third, dialogue helps communities to reactivate their social imaginary from which they get alienated by following a legal strategy for justice induced by the secular state. So communities give up the time-consuming process of remedial justice pursued by the state. In the remedial justice usually sought through a court of law, one seeks among others justice through the punishment of criminals. As communities are involved in committing crimes, the process of delivery of remedial justice is laborious, time-consuming and costly. As a result, both the groups seek restorative justice by using their respective social imaginary. In restorative justice, communities may seek justice through a restoration of pre-existing non-violent life.<sup>15</sup> But when the restoration takes place, life is restored in a higher form. Their ‘good sense’ in the pre-existing social imaginary gets triggered up and helps in the restoration of life in a new form.<sup>16</sup> There are at least four forms of good sense emerging from this dialogue.

First, they stopped their opposition to beef-eating by invoking elements in their social imaginary. As per a pre-existing belief, food must be eaten according to one’s own wish. Second, dialogue can revive good senses of social imaginary that contributed to secularisation before. Hindus recall that they gave up certain superiority complexes and welcomed Dalits to their marriage functions and allowed them to sit on the porches of their houses, before the VHP vitiated their ‘Bhaichara’. Third, they jointly and painfully recall their shared social imaginary that Maoists and the RSS are like ‘crabs who muddy their relations’ and decide to dodge these organisations. Finally, faced with many adversities, their common ‘search for peace and development’ begins.

## Dialogue As Yajna

Fourth, politics of self-purification is another feature of dialogue. Dialogue can

induce communities to meditate on self-criticism. Without dialogue, they would be only critical of each other. That is how dialogue can contribute to a new friendship. Any patronising attitude in friendship is harmful to its growth, whereas a self-critical attitude can take friendship to a newer height. Secularisation process may be seen as a self-critical perspective of friendship, whereas appeasements can ruin a friend/community's future progress. Communities may dialogue by scrutinising each other closely. They criticise themselves while accusing the other. They subject themselves what B.R. Ambedkar would call 'Yajna' (not to be confused with Hindutva Yajna in Kandhamal).<sup>17</sup> Ambedkar's self-purification actually means 'self-criticism'.

In the present story, the Odia communities criticised themselves for showing off caste superiority, religious superiority and cultural superiority in food and other things. They criticised their own exhibitionism. They could recall friendship and fellow-feeling with lower caste Panas from the days of social plays and self-help group that reduced caste-based untouchability. This helped them ease their *Ashanti* that inflicted them during 2003-2010. Political secularism must introspect much like our communities here. An introspective politics would do a world of wonders to secular polity. It must begin its journey in Ambedkar's Yajna.

## The Emergence of Intersectionality of Disputes

Fifth, when dialogue takes place at the intersection of both inter and intra-religious disputes, it is capable of producing reconciliation. The secular society/state/political society must adopt a similar strategy.<sup>18</sup> Two or more paths of criticism of domination must intersect for the progress of secularism. Today, Hindu fundamentalism tries to disconnect political secularism from social imaginary of the popular by simply highlighting inter-religious disputes such as *Suddhi*/conversion. Secular thinking tries hard to reverse this argument by highlighting intra-religious domination within Hindus only. The current debate on 'Ghar Wapsi' in secular thinking seems to have fallen for a trap laid by Hindu fundamentalism. True, conversion-*Suddhi* debate may confuse and divert society's attention from reforming caste and gender discrimination sanctioned by religion. But it is also necessary to recognise domination of one religion over another in the present debate. However, these intra and inter-religious disputes intersect in real life. At the site of their 'Sangam' (confluence), dialogue may take place.

The present dialogue addresses intersection between caste and religion but leaves out intersection between caste, gender and religion. There is no woman member in the peace committee and therefore women practising discriminations in Bamunigaon are not part of this dialogue process. Despite its limitations,

dialogue has helped in secularisation process in the village. However, under the state pursuing a dialogical strategy, all these limitations could possibly be tackled better.

## **From a Simple to Complex Differential Sacrifice**

Sixth, agency-based dialogue must involve a strategy of complex differential sacrifice as it needs to negotiate intersections of inter and intra-domination in India. Following Charles Taylor, it could be said that the Constitution of India follows a 'reform master narrative' to promote secularism (Taylor 2007:773-776). The Constitution of India proposes to reform religious communities to build political secularism further.

At the time of adoption on January 26, 1950, only majority religion was expected to reform caste domination in public spaces (vide. Articles 15.4, 16.4, 17, 25, 25.2.B) and safeguard minority rights to culture (vide Art. 30.A). This reform narrative is based on a strategy of simple differential sacrifice.<sup>19</sup> Only Hindu community was expected to sacrifice forms of domination over its own members and over 'other' communities.<sup>20</sup> This model is akin to a family norm where the parents are expected to make sacrifices for the sake of securing a better future for children and for their own well-being. Its flaws were soon realised and rectified in the Constitutional Order (CO) issued by the President in August 1950. Sikhism was included in its reform narrative. In 1990, it was further rectified by adding Buddhism. But the CO still excludes Muslims and Christians from its reforms. It assumes that so called non-Indic religions are homogenous and egalitarians and are thus beyond its 'reform master narrative'. If it were so, why should subaltern castes from Muslims and Christians still demand differential treatment by the secular state?<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, as Gandhi forewarns, the secular state should not patronise 'missionary activities' as during the colonial period so that 'other' religious communities would not feel alienated from secularism (Gandhi 1999:238-239). Ivan Illich, a Catholic priest, too makes a similar argument against 'corrupted Christianity' that treat neighbouring religions as 'enemies' and hence try to 'civilise' them (Taylor 2007:742). As India is a multi-religious society, reformation of 'corrupted religions' (including corrupted Hinduism) is a very important task.<sup>22</sup> But, this critical reform is absent in India's constitutional law.

A genuine reconciliation brought about by agency-based dialogue may differ with a politically correct secular thinking such as above. An agential dialogue may thus negotiate intersectionality of power relations effectively and offer many varieties of reforms/sacrifices. We suggest that a story of complex differential



sacrifice is emerging in our case study. This new strategy assumes that all religious communities must mutually sacrifice for political secularism but Hindus being the majority may have to sacrifice more than Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and other minorities. The present model of dialogue from Kandhamal rejects that Hindus alone will have to sacrifice for secularisation. For political secularism to survive in India, it needs to anchor all religions in non-utilitarian roots. If it becomes a maximalist doctrine for all religions, then its project of secularisation of conservative social practices within and outside each religion is doomed (Patnaik 2011).

In our story, all religious communities made some sacrifices. Dalit Christians made a few important sacrifices. So also Hindu Savarna castes that probably made more number of sacrifices. Reconciliation develops when all communities mutually sacrifice certain things they usually possess or are engaged with.<sup>23</sup> Only then it does not matter if the majority religion makes more sacrifices than minorities.

## Conclusion

As Ambedkar forewarns, if democracy follows a policy of appeasement rather than a policy of settlement of the popular grievances, it would produce 'Hitlers' within the religious elites.<sup>24</sup> Then, political secularism would face a major political crisis. Dialogue must thus ask communities to offer mutual sacrifices and reform their relations within or outside in order to help secularism grow and agency-based dialogue must curb the emergence of Hitlers. The secularisation process in Kandhamal is thus envisaged on a model of sacrifice which goes beyond the underlying principles of constitutional secularism in India. Can political secularism renew a pledge to social imaginary of people and reform its 'reform master narrative'? Can it learn lessons from Kandhamal's secularisation and Ambedkar's Yajna? Can the secular state pursue a twin strategy of dialogue/law to deliver justice so that what is witnessed in a locality can be universalised? Without the secular state's proactive role in a sustained dialogue, communities may still bring about reconciliation in a local setting. But it would be unfair to expect 'communities alone' to settle their *Ashanti* affecting about 600 villages across the district of Kandhamal during 2007-08. If the secular state courageously engages 'contending communities' in dialogue/law, the Indian nation may witness a new form of reconciliation and justice.

## Acknowledgement

The present chapter is a short but revised version of the paper, 'Crony Secularism, Dialogue and Sacrifice: A Story of Kandhamal violence, Odisha' presented in the Conference on "Secularism under Siege: Revisiting Indian Secular State", organised by Centre for

Promotion of Democracy and Secularism and Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Contemporary Studies, University of Mumbai, 18-20 December, 2014. We thank Zaheer Ali, the seminar coordinator, for everything and Ranabir Samaddar, V. Janardhan for reading the draft. We are solely responsible for views expressed in the chapter.

## Endnotes

1. See positions of Romila Thapar, Amit Bhaduri, Arundhati Roy, Swami Agnivesh and Medha Patkar. The National Alliance for People's Movements (NAPM) has asked for dialogue with Maoists, Kashmiri separatists and others. See its dialogue appeal, "NAPM for Political Dialogue with Maoists" (2011). See also the "Appeal for a Multilateral Dialogue by the State with Maoists and Tribes" by Amit Bhaduri and Romila Thapar (n.d.). Swami Agnivesh calls for interfaith dialogue rather than political dialogue: see Agnivesh (2005).
2. Implicit in his defence of India's constitutional secularism is a strategy of simple differential sacrifice derived from caste inequalities or what Bhargava calls 'intra-religious domination' in Hinduism (2010). We return to it in the last section of our paper.
3. For the details of Kandhamal violence, see Chatterji (2009), Kanungo (2008, 2014), Mohapatra and Bhattacharya (1996), Patnaik and Bag (2012), Reports of National NCM Visit to Orissa (2008). Also, for an account of pre-existing solidarity between Kandha and Pana and how Kandhamal violence broke this solidarity, see Padel (2011:1-34 and 325-333).
4. Though all caste people are Odias, caste Hindus are known as 'Odia' as they are all settled in the Odia Sahi (street) in Bamunigaon.
5. *Primary Census Abstract - Odisha*, Census of India, 2011.
6. For the concept of social imaginary as a background understanding, see Taylor (2007:171-176). For an application of social imaginary via Gramsci's lenses, see Patnaik (2011).
7. Elsewhere, the VHP may not follow an oppositional stance. Faced with beef-eating tribals who are not Christians, the VHP has adopted 'assimilation' strategy by distributing sacred threads and by converting them into vegetarianism.
8. Kanungo (2008:19) also states that the VHP's Brahminical Hinduism excludes festivals of Dalits and Christians.
9. Kanungo (2008:18) states that Christians retaliated for the first time but the subsequent violence of 2008 sidelined everything. However, a few Odia Sahi people told us that Maoists helped Panas in retaliation.
10. Initially the need for dialogue was felt and articulated by Chitra Sen Patra from the Odia Sahi and R.K. Baliarsingh from the Pana Sahi. Both are civil contractors. Patra is also a farmer but Baliarsingh worked for a NGO.
11. In Odia there is a saying: *Kankada-ku Golia Pani Subae* (crab thrives in muddy water).



12. Personal interview with S.R. Sahu, Secretary of the Vignaraj Banika Sangha, businessman and 51 years old.
13. The Resolution of Anchalika Shanti Committee Baithaka, dated 19.01.2011.
14. For a skeptical view of 'anti-state stance' of Nandy and Pandey, see Kaviraj (2011:194).
15. For a distinction between remedial/retributive and restorative justice, see Clark (2008:331-350).
16. Following Gramsci, positive aspects of common sense could be called 'good sense' which has potential to become a new philosophy under certain historical conditions. Gramsci argues that good sense refers to a new philosophy. However, Gramsci also believes that a beginning of new politics/philosophy may be initiated by the popular through their 'good sense' (Coben n.d.).
17. In the course of his Presidential Address outlining the philosophy of the Mahad *Satyagraha* in a Conference held in Amravati (November 1927), Ambedkar makes a distinction between 'Satyagraha' and 'Yajna'. While *Satyagraha* is like a war (*Yuddha*) for human rights denied to Untouchables, 'Yajna' is meant to purify their 'own vices/complexes' which pin them down as Untouchables. By implication, *Satyagraha* alone is not enough (Yadav 2014:89).
18. This aspect is adopted from Rajeev Bhargava's theory of Indian secularism which essentially aims to curb inter- and intra-religious domination while respecting multiple faiths in India. The paper too believes in Bhargava's idea of 'respectful transformation of religions' by the state (2010:91, 2013).
19. In a personal conversation, M.S.S. Pandian drew our attention (Patnaik 2014:22-24) to a notion of differential sacrifice which means groups bear the differential costs of higher law-making so that its pay-offs in lower law-making track offsets the loss suffered under higher law-making track. See Ackerman (1988:184-185). This paper is indebted to his terrific proposal but uses his strategy quite differently.
20. Bhargava justifies the constitutional strategy of reforming Hinduism 'much more' than other religions on the grounds of 'differential treatment of religions' (Bhargava 2010:89-90). He also argues that the state may 'reform caste ridden Hinduism much more' (ibid.:89). Moreover, the Hindu right ironically defends existing constitutional positions in order to offer welfare facilities as 'allurement' for its 'Ghar Wapsi programme'. Time has come to rethink.
21. See especially the petition of Muslim Khatik community (scavenger) for 'scrapping' of the Constitutional Order 1950 and also the demand of Dalit Christians for 'amendment' of the same order in Bosco, Mohammed and others (2010:18-25 and 113-118). This confused reaction is possibly an effect of alienation from political secularism enshrined in the Indian constitution.
22. The periodic rise of 'confessional religion' in each religious community showing off supremacist tendencies has corrupted each religion. It is necessary that the secular state builds safeguards against the rise of 'confessional religion'. Today, the Pentecostal Churches and the VHP represent confessional religion as they, for example, assume that tribal religion is animistic, inferior and is to be 'civilised'.

Both must be restrained by political secularism. See Miri's reflection (2015) on tribal religion in the conversion debate.

23. The Allahabad High Court's judgment on the Ayodhya dispute (2010) also articulates this moral vision of mutual sacrifice. See Patnaik and Mudiam (2014).
24. Ambedkar was deeply worried about Congress party's appeasement of Muslims and argued clearly that it would produce Hitlers among Muslim elites which, through a reflex impulse, would lead to the emergence of Hitlers among Hindu elites. This is a grave danger to secular democracy. See Ambedkar (2014:268-270).

## References

- Ackerman, Bruce A. 1988. "Neo-federalism?", in John Elster *et al.* (eds), *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, pp. 153-189. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Agnivesh, Swami. 2005. "Applied Spirituality: A Spiritual Vision for the Dialogue of Religions." *Current Dialogue* (World Council of Churches), 45. Accessed on 27 January 2015, <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd45-07.html>.
- Ambedkar, B.R. 2014. "Pakistan or the Partition of India" (1946), in *Writings and Speeches, Vol.8*, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation.
- Bhaduri, Amit and Romila Thapar (n.d.): "Will the Mindset from the Past Change?" *INSAF: International South Asia Forum*. Accessed on 27 January 2015, <http://www.insafbulletin.net/archives/661>.
- Bhargava, Rajeev. 2010. *The Promise of India's Secular Democracy*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- . 2013. "Reimagining Secularism: Respect, Domination and Principled Distance." *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVIII(50):79-92.
- Bilgrami, Akeel. 1998. "Secularism, Nationalism and Modernity", in Rajeev Bhargava (ed.), *Secularism and its Critics*, pp. 380-417. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Bosco, S. J., A. Mohammed and others. 2010. *Constitutional Rights of Dalit Christians and Muslims*. Chennai: LTD Media.
- Chatterji, Angana P. 2009. *Violent God: Hindu Nationalism in India's Present Narratives from Orissa*. New Delhi, Three Essays Collective.
- Clark, Janine N. 2008. "Three Rs: Retributive Justice, Restorative Justice, and Reconciliation." *Contemporary Justice Review*, 11(4): 331-350.
- Coben, Diana (n.d.): "Common Sense or Good Sense: Ethnomathematics and the Prospect for a Gramscian Politics of Adults' Mathematics Education." Accessed on 17 January 2015, <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/csme/meas/papers/coben.html>.
- Gandhi, M.K. 1999. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (e-book), Vol. 96. New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India.

- Gupta, Dipankar. 2011. *Justice before Reconciliation: Negotiating a 'New Normal' in Post-riot Mumbai and Ahmedabad*. New Delhi, Routledge.
- Kanungo, Pralay. 2003. "Hindutva's Entry into a 'Hindu Province': Early Years of RSS in Orissa." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(31): 3293-3303.
- . 2008. "Hindutva's Fury against Christians in Orissa." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43(37):16-19.
- . 2014. "Shift from Syncretism to Communalism." *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIX(14):48-55.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta. 2011. *The Enchantment of Democracy and India*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black.
- Mander, Harsh. 2009. *Fear and Forgiveness the Aftermath of Massacre*. New Delhi: Penguin Book.
- Menon, Meena. 2012. *Riots and After in Mumbai Chronicles of Truth and Reconciliation*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Miri, Mrinal. 2015. "Need to Cultivate Respect for Tribal Religions." *The Hindustan Times*, January 19. Accessed on 05 February 2015, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/need-to-cultivate-respect-for-tribal-religions/article1-1308621.aspx>.
- Mohapatra, Bishnu and Dwaipayan Bhattacharya. 1996. "Tribal-Dalit Conflict: Electoral Politics in Phulbani." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(2/3):160-164.
- NAPM for Political Dialogue with Maoists. 2011. *The Hindu*, February 24. Accessed on 27 January 2015, <http://napm-india.org/node/169>.
- Oommen, T.K. 2008. *Reconciliation in Post-Godhra Gujarat: the Role of Civil Society*. Delhi: Pearson Longman.
- Padel, Felix. 2011. *Sacrificing People: Invasions of a Tribal Landscape*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.
- Pandey, G. 2007. "The Secular State and the Limits of Dialogue", in A.D. Needham and R.S. Rajan (eds), *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, pp. 157-176. Ranikhet: Permanent Black.
- Patnaik, A.K. 2011. "A Critique of India's Political Secularism." *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVI(43):19-22.
- . 2014. "Modernity from Below: MSS Pandian's Life and Mission." *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLIX(48):22-24.
- Patnaik, A.K. and P.R. Mudiam. 2014. "Indian Secularism, Dialogue and the Ayodhya Dispute." *Religion, State and Society*, 42(4):374-388.
- Patnaik, A.K. and Rajesh Bag. 2012. "Choosing between Crony Secularism and Hindu Fundamentalism in Orissa: The Case of Kandhamal." Paper presented in the workshop on "Actually Existing Secularism In India", Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, India, 10-12 April, 2009 and 28-29 February.
- Report of NCM visit to Orissa, January 6-8, 2008. National Commission for Minorities, New Delhi. Accessed on 17 January 2015, <http://ncm.nic.in/pdf/orissa%20report.pdf>.

- Report on the Visit of the Vice Chairperson, NCM to Orissa, April 21-24, 2008, National Commission for Minorities, New Delhi. Accessed on 17 January 2015, <http://ncm.nic.in/pdf/VC%20Tour%20Report%20of%20Orissa.pdf>.
- Report on the visit of the Vice Chairman, NCM to Orissa, September 11-13, 2008. Accessed on 17 January 2015, <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MangaloreanCatholics/conversations/messages/28705>.
- Rick Warren on Religious Freedom: A Conversation, Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, George Town University. Accessed on 02 February 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tbEnuGImI0>.
- Samaddar, R. 2011. "The Dialogic Subject", in Susan Allan Nan, Zachariah Cherian Mampilly and Andrea Bortoli (eds), *Peace Making: From Practice to Theory*, Volume 2, pp. 780-794. Santa Barbara: Praeger.
- Sikand, Y. 2001. "Between Dialogue or Conflict: Deendar Anjuman 1920s-2000." *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXXVI(20):1709-1717.
- Taylor, Charles. 2007. *A Secular Age*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Yadav, N. 2014. *Ambedkar: Awakening India's Social Conscience*. New Delhi: Konark Publishers.

## CHAPTER 38

# Collective Trauma and Narrative Harmony

## Mapping the Legacy of Trauma and Displacement in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

*Jeremy Rinker*

### Introduction

Collective trauma is a multifaceted concept, which despite a recent burgeoning of research in newly-established fields like memory studies and genocide studies, remains little understood and woefully under-attended in social scientific literature. The common conception of trauma conjures up images of individual pain and suffering. Just as mention of trauma *a priori* invokes the field of psychology, talk of collective trauma often assumes reference to systems of transitional justice. This chapter privileges the concept of collective trauma without assuming that justice will be achieved via ‘transitional’ systems or quasi-governmental structures of prosecution and restoration. Instead, collective trauma demands the construction of social resilience – a resilience that must be born of local communities themselves and often operates outside of transitional mechanisms. Such social resilience is the fodder of transformative harmony and it is argued here that such fodder is produced through storytelling and story-listening.

We humans live through story (Riessman 1993; Labov 1972). As listeners, tellers, and actors in stories we tell our past lives, but we also socially construct our present and future aspirations and realities. Stories do not simply articulate what people have experienced, they also work to condition our beliefs and behaviours and “position” (Moghaddam, Harre and Lee 2008) us in a yet to be realised future. Story, as component parts of wider narratives, is, therefore, a critical ingredient for creating social harmony. For Frank, the stories we “hitch a ride on” (2010:25) are often “unchosen choices” (Bourdieu 2000) that call for what Frank terms a “socio-narratology” (2010:22). The stories we tell, build the wider collective narrative and, at the same time, are conditioned by this narrative. The ambiguity and uncertainty of stories hold power for change and transformation, but how we harness this awesome power often remains an untapped mystery. This chapter aims to tell a story about stories – one that is about how we can excavate stories by noticing the future – going possibilities of a story’s life and appreciating its role in narrative’s creative power to build pro-social harmony. More specifically, the work looks at how marginalised and voiceless communities utilise discursive practices (storytelling and community organising) to contest against an unresponsive local and state malfeasance to ensure basic rights and voice for the marginalised. To paraphrase Frank (2010), this work is less concerned about what stories are than about what enables them to produce their transformative social effects. In living through story we give narratives meaning. This chapter assists us in understanding the emotional and social resonance of stories of past violence and trauma, while underscoring the important value of such stories as agents of transformative social change.

The case studies described in this chapter deal with persistent injustice and sustainable systems of structural violence. The survivors of traumas are in a certain sense in a state that is the antithesis of harmony. Therefore, this chapter spends some time defining and coming to grips with the complexity of trauma before describing, analysing, and mapping the case studies aimed at developing narrative harmony for these trauma survivors. The stories that are told about the use of stories to transform will help map some ways forward in developing social resilience and harmony in the face of legacies of violence and conflict. The settings and contexts of these stories are spaces of collective trauma and, as such, are spaces in which social resilience may be more critical than anywhere else. More than a sense of transitional justice, survivors of trauma need a sense of harmony restored. Social resilience and transformative harmony is something that transitional justice mechanisms have had little success in building, and even less inclination to deeply explore. Non-governmental organisations of civil society are best situated to build strong community response that addresses collective trauma, and for this reason, this chapter rejects the framing of collective trauma as a problem for macro-level

transitional justice mechanisms to be expected to address. Rather, collective trauma as a resource for lasting social change is one of many important emotive aspects of transitional justice that traditional justice mechanisms routinely fail to address. Local communities must be involved in this work of collective trauma as a means to creating and maintaining social harmony. Put in more critical terms, in addressing the negative consequences of collective trauma, transitional justice mechanisms are “symptomatic of a declining faith in the possibilities for collective struggle for political change” (Leebaw 2008). For transformative harmony to take hold more than transitional justice must take place. The argument here is that collective trauma represents an important site of local change and transformative harmony, but often transitional justice mechanisms manage such trauma without allowing it to transform and generate new *status quos*. The legacies of collective trauma, though often difficult to observe, require more than either transitional justice or individual psychological interventions, collective traumas require community spaces and structures to process narrative change. Shifting collective views of justice over time by telling individual stories of trauma builds social resistance, resilience, harmony.

## **Dawning a Social Lens: Trauma as Not Just Individual, but Collective**

Despite the over-emphasis in trauma literature on psychological intervention, the need for collective social healing is no less important than the need for individual psychological healing. The strong emphasis here is on understanding and using collective trauma pro-socially as a means to develop transformative harmony. Narratives represent a critical site for constructing positive understanding and uses for collective trauma. Although the word trauma’s etymology comes from the Greek for ‘wound,’ the English word ‘trauma’ signifies a temporal quality of pain that the word ‘wound’ does not fully capture. It is this lasting aspect of trauma that locates trauma as most commonly associated with psychology. The popular axiom ‘even after physical wounds heal, psychological wounds remain’ speaks to the interconnected meaning-space between trauma and individual psychology. But, given the predominance of psychological discourse in the Western academy, traumatic suffering has become difficult to imagine or understand as anything but individual in nature. In privileging trauma as a collective phenomenon, this chapter attempts to distinguish collective social trauma from its psychologised cousin individual trauma, while simultaneously pushing back against the sense that the work of collective trauma occupies either only a transitional or post conflict space. The work of trauma is dynamic and on-going, much in the way that processes of developing harmony are. The fact is, we inductively know that collective historical



trauma looks qualitatively different than individual trauma, but the links between shared historical trauma and individual psychology remain fuzzy.

The concept of collective historical trauma “obtains its rhetorical force by consolidating two preexisting constructs: historical oppression and psychological trauma” (Kirmayer, Gone and Moses 2014:300). Given the growing realization that some trauma may manifest in ways that are not entirely captured in the individual, but rather within a social milieu, it behoves us to research both trauma and resilience as concepts “in the making” (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013:13). Here it is argued that trans-disciplinary fields, like Peace and Conflict Studies, sit in an important position when it comes to bridging the social scientific gaps in knowledge about collective trauma, social resilience, and harmony. Social psychology, anthropology, and political science all have important contributions to make to the field of trauma studies by expanding the individualistic psychological vocabulary and bias of our accepted knowledge about trauma. Shifting our focus to collective trauma, from individual conceptions of trauma allows the disciplinary grip of psychology to loosen.

Despite the fact that the field of psychology is perceived to be the ‘front line’ against trauma, other fields of study have much to offer to develop our understanding of trauma. Peace and Conflict Studies, as a relatively young field, is routinely discounted as not empirical enough to tell us anything about the lasting impacts of trauma. But isn’t trauma first and foremost a social and experiential phenomenon, and thus, in some senses, resistant to rational positivist approaches to its understanding? Addressing trauma primarily at the level of the individual, it is believed (seemingly on faith), will inoculate the wider society from the possible ‘infection’ of more collective manifestations of trauma. But where is the evidence for such a belief? Does individual mental health build resilience in larger communities, or is it the discursive space to share pain and suffering that constructs resilience? When basic human needs are suppressed in a collective, even the best individual mental healthcare cannot stop leaders from tapping into identity, meaning, and sense of relative deprivation to build support for their, often violent, political causes. Fear and relative deprivation motivate people who are lacking human needs. Leaders framing of unmet needs can, despite the most psychologically healthy citizenry, stir a collective’s perception of past trauma and work to mobilise a sense of injustice among them (even if that injustice does not exist). Developing spaces and structures for sharing the stories of individual traumas seems foundational to both an examination of collective trauma and the development of the adaptability needed in collectives to do effective peacebuilding post-conflict. In short, storytelling is critical for transformative harmony. The comparative case studies of two communities in-the-midst of collective historical trauma presented below unmask what we do know about collective trauma by exploring closely the role of



witnessing and revisiting historical memory in constructing and maintaining social harmony. To build resilience post-conflict takes more than simply addressing the psycho-social needs of traumatised individuals. Resilience and harmony require collective processes of narrative testimony and historical listening. It is in narrative storytelling and story-listening that patterns of social change, resilience, and transformative harmony are laid.

Put another way, this chapter argues from a stance that collective trauma can be used as a pro-social asset to build resilience, as opposed to an anti-social violent and retributive response to perceived past wrongs. Of course, such positive use of past collective trauma requires scholar-practitioners to sensitively develop a traumagenic lens, i.e., a lens that sees trauma as a central causal factor in social conflict. I have elsewhere written about this lens and its connection to modern protracted social conflicts (Rinker and Lawyer 2018). Here I want to widen the gaze of social conflict to look beyond the more apparent protracted social conflicts (Azar 1984) to explore trauma's confounding role in so called 'post-conflict' settings. While those squarely focused on 'trauma' can cogently argue whether any conflict can ever be classified as 'post-conflict,' we can still ask how past trauma can be used to ensure systems of conflict do not re-emerge in seemingly peaceful *status-quo* contexts. From there, a further question arises as to how to change the *status-quo* to transformative harmony. What is here called resilience – that characteristic which allows a human collective to bend but not break under the strain of past wrongs, suffering, and injustice – is born of narrative sharing. Collective resilience represents an ability for a collective which has experienced conflict to resist further destructive conflict systems from re-emerging and, thereby, open space for the fermentation of transformative harmony. The tension between persistence and adaptability, which has governed the concept of resilience in social science (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013) opens an opportunity space for post-conflict transformation and harmony.

Like the valve on a rice cooker, a developed space and structure for dialogue and sharing about past collective trauma stabilises and transforms a community. Further, beyond stabilisation, the development of such space and structure allows communities to test their mood, memorialise their past, and build critical community-based techniques and relationships of transformative harmony. Such space counters potential future shocks and disruptions. While systemic resilience in the face of catastrophic disruptions may be virtually impossible (Kuecker and Hall 2011) working at the community level to develop local resilience is critical to the work of post-conflict peacebuilding. Both Bhutanese refugees in the Triad area of North Carolina and human rights activists in Banares, India, provide case study examples that help us better understand local resilience and how it is fostered and developed in 'post-conflict' settings. These community-based projects

provide exemplars of how to build a “platform” (Lederach 2003) or container for peacebuilding and eventual reconciliation. More than transitional justice mechanism, or psycho-social intervention, these brief case studies are exemplars of evolving community-based responses to the disruption and change that collective trauma can, but does not have to, bring.

## The Epidemiology of Trauma

Before we can go much further, it is important to develop some further definition of trauma. It is defined in traditional psychiatry in the DSM-5 (2013) as the experiencing or witnessing a single event that is life threatening or otherwise terrifying, such as a rape, an armed robbery, a near-death experience in warfare, etc. More recently, *complex trauma* is defined as a series of threatening experiences that are repetitive, prolonged and cumulative, usually of an interpersonal nature (Courtois 2004). Whether a refugee fleeing war and crossing borders undocumented, or a victim of custodial torture by the police, the repetitive experience is what marks what psychologists call complex trauma. Complex trauma can affect anyone but is thought to be most damaging if occurring during critical developmental stages, i.e., during childhood and adolescence (Cloitre *et al.* 2009). Although trans- or inter-generational trauma (Bombay, Matheson and Anisman 2009; Volkan 1997) has become a growing subfield of collective trauma, complex trauma has remained a relatively understudied subcategory of trauma. Immigrant children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors were found to be overrepresented of those seeking psychiatric treatment in Canada and, as a result, there has been an explosion of research on the topic trans- and/or inter-generational trauma in the past 20 years (Kellerman 2001). Intergenerational trauma means most simply that individuals who were not themselves directly exposed to trauma or violence nevertheless “catch” some effects of that experience by virtue of being in contact with individuals who have experienced it, or by being in a society that has experienced chronic violent conflict or trauma. While trauma manifests itself differently in different people, it is a universal human experience that does not defy definition.

Trauma, whether experienced directly or “caught” from another, is qualitatively unlike all other experiences (Van der Kolk 2003). It impacts the central nervous system (specifically the sympathetic nervous system) and, while no two people experience trauma in the same way, there are similar impacts and symptoms that appear as its result. The central nervous system, in its role to protect the organism, records the trauma as a veridical (exact) memory and the recollection of the traumatic experience does not erode and distort like memory of all other experiences. Thus, it

remains static and is resistant to disconfirmation, even in the face of contradictory information (Sherin and Nemeroff 2011). Transforming the traumagenic experience (i.e., experiences that are generative of trauma) within human systems is, therefore, extremely complicated. The recursive realities of complex trauma can be invisible to the clinician, as well as, the patient. At a collective level of society (also a human system) a new level of complexity is reached.

In 'post-conflict' settings, the road towards peace invariably leads through physiological memories of past trauma, both directly experienced and vicariously remembered. As trauma within the individual frequently remains entrenched due to self-reinforcing behaviour, trauma at the societal level often becomes entrenched due to collective-reinforcing behaviour and destructive discourse of leaders. Nationalistic and ethnic glorification of the past and 'othering' of perceived enemies in the present make overcoming past traumas extremely difficult and act as an engine for direct violence and war. Volkan (1997) describes this as a critical causal aspect of the 1990s war in the Balkans. To develop platforms for overcoming past trauma, requires controlled re-experiencing of the trauma and a sharing it with others? It is as if the sharing of your trauma with others spreads the stress and strengthens the possibility for non-violent change. Peacebuilding is a process and trauma plays an important role in that process. The failure to address collective trauma in such a setting has lasting impacts on the effectiveness of peaceful societal change.

A key dynamic resulting from both individual and collective trauma is that it is self-fulfilling and self-reinforcing. A self-fulfilling prophecy is one in which ones' expectation about a future event actually produces the event. If there is no space and structure to express and share one's self-reinforcing experiences and perceptions, then they are unlikely to create the conditions for change. Either inhibiting the return to a stable *status quo*, or thwarting the opportunity for change, unspoken individual trauma can fester collective sense of injustice and deprivation. The communities that I discuss below overcome the tendency to fear re-traumatisation and work to develop social spaces to retell past trauma. In order to develop a platform for resilience post-conflict, shared space and a "process-structure" (Lederach 2003) for those traumatised to do reality testing about their past experiences is required. Those still traumatised post-conflict must have the space to question if what they are encountering in the present is really dangerous. If what this person is experiencing is not, indeed, dangerous, then they need shared space in society to realise this and modify action accordingly. In such a way, the collective sharing of individual traumas can be used as a pro-social asset to build resilience, as opposed to an anti-social trigger to engender violent response. Such sharing in safe space is an important coping mechanism for building healthy outlets for collective trauma. Given this basic epidemiology of trauma, we can see

how trauma might be used to the positive social effect of transforming oppression, as opposed to being feared, avoided and, thereby, reifying injustice.

## **Rights-Based Anti-Caste Activism in Banaras, India: A Unique Approach to Collective Trauma and Transformative Harmony**

Banaras is a diverse and stratified place. Though one may assume it is largely Hindu, in fact roughly a quarter of the population of modern Banaras is Muslim (Perry 1994). Many live in metaphorical and real “mini-Pakistans” (Raman 2010:276) or Muslim ghettos within the city. Outside the city the situation remains stratified on caste and class lines. Low-caste labourers till the land of wealthy landlords in the many small villages that surround Banaras. Despite the rapid development of the Indian subcontinent, which is coming, ever so slowly, to Banaras city, these ghetto and suburban areas remain pockets of underdevelopment. Many of these low-caste villages join the workforce as bonded labourers in the many brick kilns that dot the rural landscape outside the city. Within these marginalised areas of the city and its suburbs structural violence is the norm. This place, a milieu of ancient lifestyles, poor villagers and rapidly modernising growth of economically ‘liberalised’ India provides the setting for extreme abuses of power and privilege. Torture and excessive police force coupled with the marginalised peoples’ fear of violent retaliation for any sign of resistance leads to indifference to change. Extreme hierarchical inequality has been the norm for centuries in the Banares region; and torture and organised violence (TOV) have become a critical means of elite control and maintenance of this *status quo*.

Challenging elite control and violent use of force in Banaras can be a dangerous activity. As authorities have been unwilling to act, community and non-governmental organisations have stepped in to bravely press for change. With the aim of empowering local human rights workers in and around Banaras, the People’s Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (hereafter PVCHR) uses the power of storytelling to challenge the elite discourse about caste, class, and oppression in Indian society. PVCHR’s work aims to reconstruct the grammar and self-esteem of the marginalised so as to awaken an awareness of privilege in the powerful. PVCHR’s indigenous process of testimonial therapy not only develops marginalised resistance to dominant hegemony, but also develops a legal and emotional testimony of the experiences of TOV survivors. Whether perpetrated by state agents or corporate landlords, organised violence has a dampening effect on decent, or even political organising. Here local justice and organising for change cannot be separated. PVCHR, a member-based human right movement, began in 1996 in Banaras, Uttar Pradesh works with women, children, dalits (former

untouchables), adavasi (tribal communities), and Muslims to ensure human rights and build grassroots advocacy for change. In the city and suburbs of Banaras, this change comes slowly. Transformative harmony, born of stories, takes time. Currently working on the grassroots level in over 120 villages in Uttar Pradesh, the PVCHR has a developed network of activists across India that are working to create what they call “people-friendly villages”<sup>1</sup> aimed at opening space for the marginalised to work for (and talk of) positive social change. Such space is critical to exploring and expanding our knowledge of collective trauma. It is such a space that provides a platform for community resilience and social change.

Since 2009 PVCHR has been partnering with a Danish organisation to devise a unique approach to “the widespread use of torture in police custody” (Raghuvanshi, Khan and Agger 2008:6) which they call testimonial therapy. This procedure of creating the “self-suffering story” (*ibid.*:9) works to produce both legal testimony and subjective, emotional, and cathartic release of suffering, which culminates with a ceremony of public sharing. It is this public ‘honour ceremony’ that is so critical to processes of developing resilience from collective trauma. The narrative process not only empowers rural human rights activists, giving them voice and agency in a system that allows them little, but it also unmasks the collective suffering in the lives of marginal ‘anti-national others’ in Indian society. Testimonial therapy brings collective trauma into the public discourse and opens an important space for grievance to be heard and collectively acted upon – this is a critical seedbed for transformative harmony.

PVCHR’s testimonial therapy is aimed at building “critical consciousness” (Freire 1970:183) among the oppressed, but it has the added benefit of educating the privileged to also take action for equality. By creating the public space to hear the stories of past TOV the first step to transforming collective social trauma is taken. In building personal self-esteem of past victims, testimonial therapy also builds collective self-esteem of traditionally marginalised community members. And, just as Keck and Sakdapolrak have argued “social resilience is not only a dynamic and relational concept, but also a deeply political one” (2013:14), testimonial therapy is at once a dynamic, relational, and political process. The broad psychological effects of these testimonies develop the roots of future collective reconciliation by constructing a space for the development of social resilience and transformative harmony. Just as collective punishment acts to silence marginal communities, collective retelling works to unbuckle the dominant discourse of past atrocity and unfetter a long-marginalised and overlooked voices within a community. While such accounting is a critical tool for modern day human rights advocacy, the accounting of past trauma remains a too little tapped instrument in attempts at creating lasting social transformation of past injustices.

The testimonial therapy process, first developed in India by Lenin Raghuvanshi and Shabana Khan from the PVCHR,<sup>2</sup> in collaboration with Inger Agger of The Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Victims of Torture (RCT-Demark),<sup>3</sup> is performed over four sessions, which include various stages of sharing and processing suffering on the part of the torture victim. The culmination of the process is the delivery of the testimony in the form of a public ceremony, called an honour ceremony, in the village (Raghuvanshi, Khan and Agger 2008). This public culmination where the testimonial narrative is read into a public space is both emotional and cathartic. While a 2013 Fulbright-Nehru Fellow in Banaras I was privileged to be invited to one of these long evening honour ceremonies. The ceremony process is a village event, in which everyone from the village comes out in support. Performances of skits, music, and dance are interspersed with awareness raising about rights and rights abuse. A community meal is served at the end of the main event – the testimonial reading. This reading, often done by the torture survivor, but sometimes read by a close friend or family member, is offered in a caring and supportive atmosphere. The cultural and community building aspects of these ceremonies are as central to PVCHR's work as the testimony itself. Experience and trust in this process work towards PVCHR's ultimate vision of building 'people friendly' villages in which there is "no violation of civil rights granted to a citizen by the state."<sup>4</sup> As the culmination of a months long process of narrative therapy, writing, re-writing, and finalising the torture survivor's story the public testimony becomes a central organising event for the community. As such, the honour ceremony represents a narrative climax in the suffering of individual survivor and the community.

Below is a brief narrative recreation of the honour ceremony I was privileged to observe in 2013. In sharing it, the purpose is to illustrate the process of transformative harmony in the making and to foreground the power of narrative in processes of change. Narrative, as "a representation that arrests ambiguity and controls the proliferation of meaning by imposing a standard and standpoint of interpretation that is taken to be fixed and independent of the time it represents" (Ashley 1989:263), has the power to control both present storytelling and future discourse about a subject. Ram's telling of his story is simultaneously educating about injustice and empowering resistance for change.

### **Not the Story of Ram Your Grandfather Told**

Ram is a survivor of bonded labour. Having worked for over a decade in a tiny brick kiln a few kilometers from Sarai village, Ram shares how he was forced to pack and stack mud bricks for ten to twelve hours a day, seven days a week. Never making enough money to feed his wife and children, Ram struggled, but was always able to scrape by with the help of his extended family. Then his family faced the need



to arrange for his sister to be married. The burden marriage places on such an impoverished Indian family has a real cost – from dowry to wedding such costs put major strains on the economic well-being of rural families.<sup>5</sup> Though these costs can be given specific monetary figures, the figures hardly convey the stress, suffering, and collective trauma they cause to a family and community in impoverished rural India. In order to cover these costs Ram, as the oldest brother in his family, needed to find money quickly. Not surprisingly, Ram, having no access to capital, had few options but to go to the only person he knew with money – the owner of the brick kiln in which he worked. Ram, in asking his boss for a loan, was certainly aware of the risks, but given his responsibilities and duties to his family he felt he had little choice in the matter. The unspoken social pressures in collectivist rural, and relatively insular, communities often open more opportunities for risk than true social advantage. With a 10,000 Rupee (roughly \$250) loan from his boss, Ram was able to help his family cover the costs of his sister's marriage. But, with no means to repay the loan and a less than 10 rupee-a-day salary, Ram was now locked in what human rights experts in India call bonded labour. With the 10<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, human rights activists estimate that there are nearly 10 million people working as bonded labourers in India (Hawksley 2014). But, numbers themselves only depersonalise the painful experiences of such people. Like many in Ram's predicament, once 'bonded,' getting out of this arrangement is next to impossible and a sense of hopelessness becomes all-consuming. Extreme poverty, coupled with complex social pressures and hierarchies effectively silence any potential for dissent. In South Asia, this leaves victims, and survivors like Ram, in little control of their own voice. But in retelling their story such victims can recast their agency by communicating the confidence and self-esteem of survivors and human rights activists, rather than victims. Retelling their story can challenge the real and perceived power distance between the marginalised and elites, recasting political opportunities for change and planting the seeds of transformative harmony.

A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of PVCHR's testimonial therapy by Jørgensen *et al.* found that the process "potentially promote(s) community empowerment" (2015:22). The symbolic interactionism, that public sharing of stories creates, helps to model community resilience, codify interpretations of justice, and builds confidence to pursue change. In Ram's case, when he began to complain, his boss responded with violence. Ram was beaten regularly and his 10-12 hour days became 15-hour days of forced brick production. Denied food, water, and/or breaks, Ram was forced to work until he paid off his debt – a numerical impossibility given compounding interest on that debt. After two horrible years of fearing for his life and feeling helpless, Ram escaped this situation with the help of another loan secured by worried family members. Still, for years afterwards he felt like he constantly had to look over his shoulder, afraid that his boss and tormentor

would return. Still, despite the lingering legacy of his traumatic experience long after the financial burden had been lifted, his relation with the socially powerful had changed – his sense of power distance was reduced and his voice of resistance was empowered.

Beyond the obvious individual psychological legacies of this trauma on Ram, the collective traumas of these events stretch deep into his community. Violence and injustice, even if unspoken about, communicate much to marginalised communities. Ram, who is clearly seen in light of the power of his religiously significant name, now exemplifies resistance in his community, but the fear and trauma of his, and many other histories of oppression, regularly act to leave such communities bereft of any fight, indeed, devoid of voice and resilience. Bereft of any ability to communicate their rights, such communities lack the leadership, or will, to press those in power for change. The weight of structural violence unchecked makes transformative harmony impossible. But after sharing his story, like Rama in the *Ramayana*, Ram seems invested with a sense of duty (*dharma*) towards his community. It is as if the telling and response to his telling infused Ram with a duty to make sure no one else goes through the type of experience he did. Where this sense of *dharma* arises from is not entirely clear, but certainly this newfound sense of duty to community finds communicative voice in the psychological affects he can publicly exhibit through the retelling of his story. Without the experience of retelling, these affects would find no collective home, they would become internalised and act to negatively construct Ram's memory and condition his opportunities for transformative change. Instead, the retelling opens the opportunity for personal healing and connection to the community which develops a sense of personal agency, self-esteem, and the possibility of future harmony. His story of suffering is part and parcel of a therapeutic process that resists finality, as well as, a call for others to publicly tell their own suffering as a first step in standing up to marginalisation. Ram, the just leader – the conveyor of *dharma*, has reclaimed his life work as one of exposing this type of abuse. His personal change is profound and his story is not an end – it is a beginning. As Ram completes telling his story, Lenin Ravuganshi, the founder and president of PVCHR leans over to me and says "you should have seen this guy before working with us on his testimonial therapy!"<sup>6</sup> That is the key success in PVCHR's human rights work – success is not in the numbers of leaders you can mobilise, but in each person (and village) you can move from meekness to empowered advocate for human rights; from victim to survivor. This is the "meticulous analysis of the individual case" (Voice of the Voiceless 2010:6) of which the PVCHR speaks and which transformative harmony demands. Ram, is a success story for the PVCHR movement. He is an active and expressive human rights defender, where previously he was silent and unassuming victim. Ram's story and persona become the model



for others; the archetype for collective change one village at a time. Such stories form the backbone of PVCHR's approach to building anti-torture villages across Uttar Pradesh. Stories like Ram's act as both witness and means to name and frame injustice for the oppressed and model change for the marginalised.

Stories are collective and we must reclaim them as such if we hope to build peace and harmony amidst historical marginalisation and asymmetric power. PVCHR's work of testimonial therapy with torture victims is exemplary of the important community-based action research that is needed on the complex legacies of collective trauma and both their stabilising and destabilising powers post-conflict. Stories of trauma and injustice help the powerful to become aware of their privilege, empower the identities of the voiceless, and develop important allies among the powerful. Trauma is coalition building as much as it is disruptive. The role of local testimonial therapy in empowering conflict prevention and transformative harmony cannot be understated. Beyond stories as a forms of witnessing and testimony, stories themselves act, and focusing on their agency as a resource can have transformative social outcomes. Humans talk in stories and stories generate the narratives that talk for collectives. If we listen to trauma, as a collective phenomenon, we can develop local spaces for empowerment and change to overcome oppression and develop resilience in the face of adversity. PVCHR's testimonial therapy represents a unique form of local social justice intervention that blends activism creative adaptability, and transformation.

## **The Bhutanese in North Carolina's Triad Region: A Story of Participatory Action Research Aimed at Resilience**

Bhutanese are the largest South Asian refugee group settled in the U.S. (~80,000), consisting mostly of adults (60%) aged 15-44 years old (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2015, 2016). Prior to resettlement in the U.S., Bhutanese refugees spent years in displaced persons camps, living in tents or makeshift houses, with communal water and poor sanitation facilities (Kiptiness and Dharod 2011). Due to varying levels of education and cultural understanding, these newly-arrived refugees require differing degrees of assistance once they arrive in the United States. The Bhutanese, displaced refugees twice over—first from Bhutan and then from Nepal, represent an especially traumatised population living in the United States. Despite a high degree of adaptability, most Bhutanese refugees have to rely almost completely on family, and/or past refugee camp compatriots, to survive once they arrive. Most of the refugee that are senior citizens will be culturally shocked because the country is nothing like they imagined or have experienced in their long lives. Despite the collectivist culture of the Bhutanese, the considerable

strains of individualistic America take a little understood toll on most newly-arrived refugees, as well as, Bhutanese immigrants that have been in the U.S for a longer period of time. That a one-size-fits-all programme of assistance from the U.S. government's Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Refugee Resettlement (HHS/ORR) would have the ability to adequately handle such strains is preposterous to even consider. Regardless, such is the case with the HHS/ORR Refugee Assistance programme that we live with—a programme that systematically disregards the mental health of these newly-arriving refugees and does little to assist the community to come to grips with the collective traumas of displacement. Such a program, when it comes to collective trauma, is archaic at best, and irresponsible at worst.

Since 1975, the U.S. has resettled over 3 million refugees, with annual admissions figures ranging from a high of 207,000 in 1980 to a low of 27,110 in 2002.<sup>7</sup> While estimates of survivors of TOV among these refugee masses vary widely,<sup>8</sup> it is clear that many of these refugees have extensive experience with past trauma, and though many have experiences that we legally classify as political violence, the incidence and legacy of trauma from the experience of displacement and forced migration among these populations is, likely, far greater than what we realise and legally classify as such. While the physical and psychological impacts of trauma on marginal bodies have been well documented worldwide, our understanding of the social impacts of TOV and the legacy of displacement on refugee and diaspora communities, is rudimentary at best. An ideal place to explore the phenomenon of collective trauma, the Greensboro Triad is a major site of refugee relocation,<sup>9</sup> with no local trauma centers and limited support services for refugees. The Triad region of North Carolina presents a petri-dish for the action-oriented study of collective trauma's impacts, legacy, and outstanding unmet shared needs. As a community with a rich history and understanding of trauma and collective reconciliation,<sup>10</sup> Greensboro provides untapped opportunities to explore collective trauma with a community-based emphasis on healing, transformative harmony, and resilience.

Among the Bhutanese, one important indicator of collective trauma can be seen in the 16 confirmed suicides within the Bhutanese community across the United States between February 2009 and February 2012 (CDC 2012). Despite the few cases among the Bhutanese refugees that received treatment for their psychological trauma in the first two years in the United States, the fact is that most Bhutanese remain outside any psychological treatment protocols. Both cultural taboos and lack of an adequate assistance programme can be blamed for the inability to prevent these several cases of suicide among the Bhutanese refugee community in the United States. In arguing that healthy lifestyle and wellness are socially constructed and cannot be transformed without a social and anthropological engagement of past experiences, the refugees experience must be placed front

and centre in working for transformative harmony among this community. Past experience of forced migration and displacement are a critical vector upon which to build a theory of change. In working with the Bhutanese community to open spaces and structures for them to share their past experiences and build resiliency for their past collective trauma or displacement, a community-based participatory action research (PAR) project has, entitled, 'The Bhutanese Health and Wellness Project', been developed. Aimed at developing resiliency out of displacement and past collective trauma, this PAR project has taken an "elicitive" (Lederach 1995) approach to developing action for community change.

Despite critical reviews of psychological interventions like Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as producing inconclusive therapeutic benefits to individual trauma victims (Patel, Kazeli and Williams 2014), the collective social benefits of narrative sharing for survivors of torture and organised violence (TOV) are increasingly becoming clear (Berliner and Mikkelsen 2006). Individual trauma is often displaced in protracted ethnic conflicts and collective expressions of past "chosen traumas" (Volkan 1997) often act as a means to mobilise violent response. The innovative PAR project developed in collaboration with colleagues at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG) aims to take best practices from programme like the testimonial therapy project of PVCHR, discussed above, and develop a series of focus group interactions and photovoice activities to both educate and empower Bhutanese refugees to narrate their past traumatic history and build a collective resilience to any potential negative uses of this history. While this project is in the early stages of development, our research team is already seeing transformative benefits among the Bhutanese with whom we work. In organising workshops and interviews we have seen increased community collaboration and inter-generational sharing among Bhutanese community members.

One hope for 'The Bhutanese Health and Wellness Project' is to develop stronger ties between host national and recent Bhutanese arrivals. In short to develop a more welcoming and safe community. The project, which as designed is outlined briefly below, takes refugee displacement and trauma as an asset, not a deficit in developing social harmony. By assisting refugees to experience a smoother transition when they are resettled, the knowledge and sharing created through this project will immediately assist in easing the rhetorical discord between the newly-arrived and the communities which they now call home, but it will also develop the persistent transformation that is evident in resilient social communities. 'The Bhutanese Health and Wellness Project' is currently being conducted in three phases – family interviews, focus group meetings, and a photovoice project and exhibit. These three methodological phases, outlined below, are aimed at progressively building trust and expanding the circle of those involved in the community. As we

have only, as yet engaged in phase one and two of the project, the full impacts of this project are unclear. Still, after briefly outlining the project, one story of family success will be shared.

In Phase One (Family Interviews), the PAR team is using on-going contacts with Bhutanese community members to refine and deploy an interview protocol that addresses community members' experiences as refugees in both Nepal and the North Carolina Triad. Questions are asked about their experiences of displacement and to assess health beliefs and knowledge related to the chronic health indicators of heart disease and diabetes. Interviews, conducted in families' homes, are voluntary, but framed as a chance to develop historical understanding of refugee's plight from Bhutan to the United States. The benefits of these interviews are not simply the collection of data, but also to have younger family members hearing their elder family members explain the traumatic history of their displacement. Much of the stress of displacement and forced migration play out in the health indicators of the Bhutanese community. As resilient communities are healthy communities, the project has the dual purpose of education and behaviour change around healthy eating and stress relief measures. After 5-6 families have been interviewed, the research team will engage in content analysis to form a basis for developing a focus group interview guide and widen the circle of those involved in the project.

During Phase Two (Focus Groups), invited participants (some interviewees from phase 1 and others from the Bhutanese community) will return to history to explore how it impacts their current life and livelihood in the United States. In total, four focus groups of eight to ten people will be conducted with Bhutanese men and women separately to overcome gender silencing. The focus groups will be conducted in the community, where Bhutanese community members meet for monthly meetings of the Bhutanese Society of High Point and/or in the Adams farm community where a number of families live in close proximity. The focus groups will be conducted in Nepalese and will be moderated by Dr. Narayan Khadka (a Nepali immigrant himself). Open-ended questions will be focused on discussing past histories related to uprooting, oppression, and trauma effects among participants. Immediately following each focus group, the moderator and note-takers will meet to discuss the main focus group themes, summarize key points, and engage in reflective practice in preparation for the next focus group. Focus group transcripts will be translated, coded, and transcribed and content analysis will be done to identify emerging themes and again act to re-focus the next phase of the project.

Phase Three (Photovoice Activities and Assessment) of the project is intended to open the project to the entire community. The research team will recruit 15 Bhutanese men and women in approximate equal numbers to conduct a week-long

photovoice documentation project. The participants will conduct photovoice on daily routine habits including meal patterns, food choices and times of vigorous activities and sedentary routine of watching TV or sitting. In addition, they will be asked to photograph representations of their difficulties in assimilating to the U.S. and representations of what they see as their community's capacity for resilience. Participants will be given a digital camera and asked to take pictures for one-week following guided written prompts which have been developed from the previous interviews and focus groups. The results of these photovoice pictures (along with their brief descriptions of their pictures) will then be used to provide a thematic representations of the hardships of assimilation and resilience. A final photovoice exhibit will be developed for the Bhutanese community and its friends – via the Triad Nepalese Community Center (TNCC) – and will be used to and explore issues of cultural assimilation and collective conceptions of trauma, resilience, and transformative harmony.

As this research project remains in its beginning stages, only preliminary finding can be discussed here. Bhutanese refugees in the Triad began arriving in late-2008. While, the transition to American life has been difficult over the last almost nine years, as one might expect, as more Bhutanese have arrived this transition has become easier. While visiting Bhutanese homes our research team often hears of new families that have arrived that were known to respondents in the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) run camps in Nepal. When Bhutanese family members were asked to describe their experiences of coming to America, in early community dialogues they cited both language and transportation as very difficult barriers upon arrival. As they settled into American life, many of these same people articulated that it was a challenge to forget many of the negative experiences of the past without forgetting what it was like to be back in Bhutan. In dealing with displacement and longing for home, many of the Bhutanese refugees that our research team engaged with struggled to find outlet for their difficulties. Without the same collectivist cultural spaces to share their experiences with, many Bhutanese in the community expressed that this made living in America more difficult. Thinking that nobody had a similar experience, or an understanding of them, many were surprised that others in their community felt the same way about what was important to work to remember about life in Bhutan. Retelling injustice stories, far from being a negative experience, cultivates critical resources for refugee communities. The following story provides one example of the power of telling and hearing these stories.

### **Rebuilding After a State of Statelessness and Displacement**

Shanti and his wife Pobitra are in their mid-thirties and arrived as refugees to High Point, North Carolina in September 2009, having followed Shanti's parents,

who had come about six months earlier.<sup>11</sup> Even though they have spent most of their lives in Nepal, they still see their primary identity as Bhutanese in both origin and cultural heritage. Though they are now officially American citizens with jobs and a family of their own, they still fondly remember Bhutan, despite having seen southern Bhutan for the last time when they were nine (Shanti) and seven (Pobitra). In 1992, both their families were forced from their homes and transported across Bhutan's southern border with India. Once in India, their families were told they could not return to Bhutan or, for that matter, stay in India. They were forced to continue to Nepal, where their ancestors had originated from in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but where they had no familial connections. Shanti and Probitra are Lhotshampas, people of Nepali origin, who until the 1980s were living peacefully in southern Bhutan.<sup>12</sup> The government-supported land grab, in the agricultural rich south of Bhutan made them stateless citizens and twice displaced – first from Bhutan and then later from Nepal, which refused to grant citizenship.

Despite being granted citizenship in 1958, the Lhotshampas (Southern Nepali speaking Bhutanese), by the 1980s were being harassed and asked to leave by the Ngalongs (Western and Central Bhutanese speaking) and Sharchhops (Eastern Bhutanese speaking) elites. Increasingly draconian anti-national ordinances were passed in the 1980s that attacked the cultural traditions and language of the Lhotshampas. Almost all of the refugees from Bhutan following the 1992 expulsions were from the Lhotshampas community.<sup>13</sup> Both Hindu and Buddhist, these people were stripped of their citizenship, despite the fact that most had never lived or travelled outside of Bhutan. Though the Indian government's role in supporting the uprising of Northern elites is unclear, it is clear that India had advanced warning of their forced removal from Bhutan. These refugees were not allowed to stay in India, but instead immediately transited to eastern Nepal. The speed at which these changes happened caught many of Lhotshampas families by surprise. The shock of being citizens to being displaced stateless peoples has left an indelible mark on these refugees and hardened their sense of identity as Bhutanese.

Much like testimonial therapy acts to unlock the pain and suffering of TOV in Indian villagers like Ram, narrative interviews provide a therapeutic validation for the pain and suffering of refugees like Shanti and Probitra. Given that most refugees have limited outlets for the pain and suffering caused by displacement, the opportunity to interview and tell their story provides one such opportunity to share the lasting impacts of their family's history. Not only are these impacts individual, but they are collective. As a collectivist community, the impacts of traumatic displacement on the Bhutanese has been trans-generational and building social resilience to trans-generational trauma's (Volkan 1997:43) effects requires speaking publicly and sharing openly about these painful experiences. As Montville (2001) argues: "the challenge in dealing with victimhood psychology



is that of reviving the mourning process, which has been suspended as a result of traumatic experience and helping it move toward completion” (ibid.:133). This reviving requires the children of the displaced to be listeners and witnesses to the trauma of their parents. While Shanti and Probitra’s children are too young to hear these traumas, Shanti and Probitra as active listeners to Shanti’s parents own recounting of their displacements experience both memorialise the past and empower a sense of “identity justice” (Booth 2001:788) in their community. The space for this retelling opens social resilience and a reflective comparative analysis is engaged through processes of witnessing and hearing others tell their story. By having such a space and structure to both tell and listen, many interview respondents expressed a gratitude for the opportunity to share. The collective witnessing of the retelling of each individual family members’ pain and suffering has a cathartic effect on marginalised collectives, not just individuals. The individual gets lost in the collective experience of humiliation and marginalisation that is so familiar to others in the community and is mobilised to feel they have agency in processes of change – this is the building block of community resilience. Though our PAR project, unlike the work of PVCHR, has not yet developed this sense of social agency in the community, we certainly see the roots of this forming in our initial interactions. The collective understanding and social resilience that grow out of witnessing provide a powerful springboard for potential action, even if that action is not as clearly marked as in the PVCHR case described above.

## **Conclusion: Qualitatively Mapping Collective Trauma as Crucial to Social Harmony and Resilience**

So assuming that collective trauma can be a resource and not a constraint in post conflict or conflict transitional justice contexts, how do communities claim both therapeutic and justice-oriented outcomes for those most affected by past trauma? “In short, that which aims towards the therapeutic cannot necessarily achieve justice, and that which achieves justice may not be therapeutic” (Furedi 2004). It has been argued here that social resilience, and thus harmony, in local communities is an ability, in the face of collective trauma, to achieve both justice and some sense of therapy in the present. But what are the “leverage points” (Meadows 1999) in this complex system? The patterns evident in these two very distinct South Asian contexts underscores the need to have public space and structure for narrating past traumatic experience and emotions. Far from re-traumatising, such outlet for past trauma works to stop the onward march of collective trauma and works to establish an ideal of transformative harmony. “The ‘wound’ of trauma is less the wound of the past and much more, to paraphrase Derrida, a wound which remains open in our terror of the danger that we imagine lies ahead” (Neocleous 2012:195). With

this future-oriented conception of trauma in mind, the idea of social resilience seems less reactive than adaptive, and while this may seem antithetical to social transformation, it is this progressive sense of change that trauma can propel into the future. In other words, social resilience with an understanding of collective trauma that is always looking towards the future, can be progressive from both a therapeutic and justice perspective. Others in this book have called this a process of transformative harmony.

Far from instilling perpetual anxiety and radical uncertainty (Neocleous 2012), social resilience builds a container or platform for collective trauma. While true that collective trauma, by definition is always to some degree an ‘open wound’ pointing conflict parties towards the horizon of the future, it is also true that the opportunity of healing of this open wound is as strong as the potential for re-injury. How we engage the leverage points of this complex wound as a system is important. Leverage points, defined as “places within a complex system (a corporation, an economy, a living body, a city, an ecosystem) where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything” (Meadows 1999) are often engaged through feedback loops in systems thinking. The reflective awareness of both the PVCHR caseworkers helping reformulate community activists’ TOV stories and the Bhutanese community members rethinking the collective usefulness of their displaced traumas opens space to use collective trauma pro-socially as opposed to fear it. These discursive leverage points are often discounted as amorphous and unsystematic, yet they have real impacts on real lives. While as a researcher, I cannot profess to know what specific communities will do with this space to use collective trauma, I can still argue for the usefulness of a collective dialogue about shared trauma. As Montville (2001), quoted above, argues we must revive mourning as we move to complete individual’s and collective’s traumatic experience. In realising a transformative harmony in any society, the collective legacies of trauma, though not forgotten, must be processed. While such an approach seems, on first blanch, counter-intuitive, it is just such paradigmatic shift in thinking that is required in dealing with the negative social impacts collective trauma. While scholar-practitioners must always be vigilant about the possibility of re-traumatising individuals and collectives, the opportunities inherent in what Montville calls “reviving the mourning process” (*ibid.*:133) are too great not to take this risk. While reviving trauma may seem counter-intuitive, it is just such historical experience that, if not acknowledged, becomes displaced as future violence. Mapping and telling of past trauma are the leverages to collective healing and a state of harmony.

Carl Jung was reported to have said: “Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate” (Secondat 2011). The attempt in this chapter has been to raise consciousness about the unconscious influences of trauma



at the societal level and draw connections between it and both social resilience and transformative harmony. Such an understanding and collective consciousness about trauma and its impacts on individuals and society could be a vital piece of any peacebuilding puzzle. “Catastrophes may be perceived as opportunities for doing new things, for innovation and development (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013:9).” Collective consciousness, or awareness of both individual and collective trauma leads towards social resilience, but also challenges any conception of ‘post-conflict’ or ‘transitional’ conflict settings. In some sense all conflict, as driven to a large extent by past trauma, is never posted or stabilised and always in a process of transition. Awareness of trauma as collective (as well as individual) is the first step in realising its potential for building resilience and achieving social harmony. Through trauma awareness we can begin to immunise collectives to short circuit the cycle of violence brought on by being positioned as either victims and aggressors in a never-ending feedback loop of retaliation.

While not everyone experiencing simple or complex trauma suffers from post traumatic emotional problems, we all live in socially constructed milieu that is infested with as many collective traumas as there are collective identities. Developing the proficiency to read behaviour as related to past trauma builds a form of future-oriented resiliency—a form of transformative harmony. Research has identified many protective factors including innate resiliency, age, gender, and social support as mediating the effects of individual trauma. Age, prior exposure, gender, coping resources and other factors can all mediate a person’s individual response to trauma (Bombay, Mathesen and Anisman 2009; Denham 2008). But what can mediate the collective historical trauma we see playing out in the trans-local spaces of our modern world? This question of how to use the research on individual trauma to better understand collective trauma represents a pressing challenge to all scholar-practitioners engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding and transitional justice, as well as, those studying transformative harmony in human systems. Social resilience in the words of Keck and Sakdopolnak (2013:13) is “a concept in the making”. While preliminary research suggests that narrative and storytelling are keys to developing resiliency to the historical legacies of collective trauma (Rinker 2016, 2017) there remains much work to be done in this emerging field of collective trauma – a field quite distinct from transitional justice or post-conflict peacebuilding, but intricately interrelated to the concept or transformative harmony.

Despite some baby steps in our understanding of collective trauma and social resilience, much remains to be done. In recent decades, conflict intervention has been underpinned by interdisciplinary fields like Peace and Conflict Studies that draw in theory from social and political psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, and religious studies, among other traditional social science

disciplines. To develop applied practice about the links between collective trauma and transformative harmony further qualitative research that articulates complex patterns of change in collectives must be done. The initial forays into American Bhutanese and marginalised Banaras communities represent only a scratching of the surface of understanding the complex systems of collective trauma as they relate to processes of social resilience and social harmony. With few exceptions, (e.g. Volkan 1997) the theories and practices that deal with healing individuals and small groups stay in the consulting rooms, while the theories and practices of large groups stay in the interdisciplinary worlds of Peace and Conflict Studies, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding. The need for collaboration and interdisciplinary sharing between clinical psychologists and those in the growing field of conflict transformation is an evident area for future knowledge building. This comparative case study represents an initial attempt to illustrate both gaps and opportunities in our knowledge structures. Practice spaces for trauma awareness and collective sharing hold important potential for transforming identity-based conflicts, if we are willing to allow for the emotional content they bring with them. Such potentials are the domain of a developing future social science inquiry – studies in trauma-based transformative harmony. Until this new and emerging field grows and develops, an essential fulcrum has been identified in this chapter. That traumagenic experience plays a myriad of dynamic roles in any conflict setting, opens leverage points from which to transform. Realising that “social resilience is not only a dynamic and relational concept, but also a political one” (Keck and Sakdapolrak 2013:14), scholar-practitioners of transformative harmony still have much important work to do.

## Endnotes

1. PVCHR's vision of social change is based on the Hindi concept of *Jan Mitra* (literally people friendly). This humanist vision underlies all PVCHR's work for democratic society. For more on this democratic human rights vision and how it informs the organisation's mission see <http://pvchr.asia/vision.php>, accessed on August 27, 2015.
2. See <http://pvchr.asia/> for more information on the inter-institutional approach of PVCHR.
3. In 2012, RCT Denmark became Dignity: Danish Institute Against Torture. For more information on their work see <https://www.dignityinstitute.org/>.
4. See <http://pvchr.asia/vision.php>, accessed on August 27, 2015.
5. Personal communication with Banares Hindu University historian Binda Pranjape, Spring 2014.
6. Personal conversation with Lenin Raghuvanshi, July 13, 2013.

7. See website of the Refugee Council, USA, <http://www.rcusa.org/history/>, accessed on March 24, 2017.
8. The Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis estimates there are as many as 500,000 survivors of torture in the United States (Center for Victims of Torture, 2012, accessed on 9/28/15, [http://www.cvt.org/sites/cvt.org/files/u11/Healing\\_the\\_Hurt\\_Intro.pdf](http://www.cvt.org/sites/cvt.org/files/u11/Healing_the_Hurt_Intro.pdf)). This is corroborated by the estimates of other advocacy groups, such as the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs, which estimates between 10 and 30 per cent of the 3 million refugees coming to the U.S. since 1975 have been tortured (<http://www.ncttp.org/index.html>, accessed on 9/29/15). Even such conservative estimates, expose the deep social impacts of refugees' trauma in the United States.
9. Raleigh Bailey, previous director of The Center for New North Carolinians, has noted: "In the early 1990s, North Carolina began to witness a dramatic influx of immigrants. The foreign-born population increased by 273.6 per cent between 1990 and 2000, growing from 115,077 to 430,000 residents" (Bailey 2005:57).
10. See Greensboro's TRC, <http://www.greensborotrc.org/>.
11. This story is recreated from personal interview conducted with Shanti Ram Mishra and Pobitra Devi Mishra on March 19, 2017.
12. See <http://bhutanese-refugees.com/history>, accessed on March 23, 2017.
13. See <http://bhutanese-refugees.com/history>, accessed on March 23, 2017.

## References

- Ashley, Bob. 1989. *The Study of Popular Fiction: A Source Book*. London: Pinter Publishers.
- Azar, Edward. 1984. "The Theory of Protracted Social Conflict and the Challenge of Transforming Conflict Situations", in D.A. Zinnes (ed.), *Conflict Processes and the Breakdown of International Systems*. Denver, CO: Graduate School of International Systems, University of Denver.
- Bailey, Raleigh. 2005. "New Immigrant Communities in the North Carolina Piedmont Triad: Integration Issues and Challenges", in Elzbieta M. Gozdziaik and Susan F. Martin (eds), *Beyond the Gateway: Immigrants in a Changing America*, pp. 57-86. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Berliner, Peter and Elisabeth Mikkelsen. 2006. "Psycho-Education with Asylum Seekers and Survivors of Torture." *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 28(3):289-301.
- Bombay, A., K. Matheson and H. Anisman. 2009. "Intergenerational Trauma." *Journal de La Santé Autochtone*. Retrieved from [http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amy\\_Bombay/publication/242778748\\_Intergenerational\\_Trauma/links/0c9605276e0d7a67e8000000.pdf](http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amy_Bombay/publication/242778748_Intergenerational_Trauma/links/0c9605276e0d7a67e8000000.pdf).
- Booth, James. 2001. "The Unforgotten: Memories of Justice." *The American Political Science Review*, 95(4):777-791.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2000. *Pascalian Meditations*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2012. *An Investigation into Suicides among Bhutanese Refugees in the US 2009–2012: Stakeholders Report*. October 18, 2012.
- Cloitre, M., B.C. Stolbach, J.L. Herman, B. van der Kolk, R. Pynoos, J. Wang, E. Petkova. 2009. "A Developmental Approach to Complex PTSD: Childhood and Adult Cumulative Trauma as Predictors of Symptom Complexity." *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 22(5):399-408.
- Courtois, C.A. 2004. "Complex Trauma, Complex Reactions: Assessment and Treatment." *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 41(4):412-425.
- DSM-5. 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. American Psychiatric Association.
- Denham, A.R. 2008. "Rethinking Historical Trauma: Narratives of Resilience." *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 45(3):391-414.
- Frank, Arthur. 2010. *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Furedi, F. 2004. *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age*. London: Routledge.
- Hawksley, Humphrey. 2014. "Punished by Ax: Bonded Labour in India's Brick Kilns." *BBC News Magazine*, July 11, 2014. Accessed on September 21, 2015 <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27486450>.
- Jørgensen, M.M., J. Modvig, I. Agger, L. Raghuvansh, S. Shabana Khan and P. Polatin. 2015. "Testimonial Therapy: Impact on Social Participation and Emotional Well-being among India Survivors of Torture and Organized Violence." *Torture*, 25(2):22-33.
- Keck, Mark and P. Sakdapolrak. 2013. "What is Social Resilience? Lessons Learned and Ways Forward." *Erdkunde*, 67(1):5-19.
- Kellermann, N.P. 2001. "Transmission of Holocaust Trauma-An Integrated View." *Psychiatry*, 64(3).
- Kiptiness, C. and J. Dharod. 2011. "Bhutanese Refugees in the US: Their Dietary Habits and Food Shopping Practices Upon Resettlement." *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, 6:1:1-11.
- Kirmayer, L., J. Gone and J. Moses. 2014. "Rethinking Historical Trauma." *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 51(3):299-319.
- Kuecker, Glen and T. Hall. 2011. "Resilience and Community in the Age of World-System Collapse." *Nature and Culture*, 6(1):18-40.
- Labov, William. 1972. *Language of the Inner City: Studies in Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lederach, John Paul. 1995. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

- . 2003. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, Inc.
- Leebaw, Bronwyn Anne. 2008. "The Irreconcilable Goals of Transitional Justice." *Human Rights Quarterly*, 30(1):95-118.
- Meadows, Donella. 1999. *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System*. Hartland, VT: The Sustainability Institute.
- Moghaddam, Fathali M., R. Harre and N. Lee. 2008. "Positioning and Conflict: An Introduction", in F.M. Moghaddam, R. Harre and N. Lee (eds), *Global Conflict Resolution Through Positioning Analysis*, pp. 3-20. New York: Springer.
- Montville, Joseph. 2001. "Justice and the Burdens of History", in M. Abu Nimer (ed.), *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Neocleous, Mark. 2012. "'Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared': Trauma-Anxiety-Resilience." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 37(3):188-198.
- Office of Refugee Resettlement: History. 2016. Retrieved from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed on June 14, 2018, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/about/history>.
- Office of Refugee Resettlement: Refugee Arrival Data. 2015. Retrieved from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed on June 14, 2018, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/refugee-arrival-data>.
- Patel, N., B. Kellezi and A.C. Williams. 2014. "Psychological, Social and Welfare Interventions for Psychological Health and Well-being of Torture Survivors (Review)." *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.*, 11(11).
- Perry, Jonathan. 1994. *Death in Banaras*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Raghuvanshi, Lenin, S. Khan and I. Agger. 2008. *Giving Voice: Using Testimonial Therapy Intervention in Psychosocial Community Work for Survivors of Torture and Organized Violence - A Manual for Community Workers and Human Rights Defenders*. Uttar Pradesh, India: PVCHR.
- Raman, Vasanthi. 2010. *The Warp and the Weft: Community and Gender Identity among Banaras Weavers*. New Delhi: Routledge.
- Riessman, Catherine. 1993. *Narrative Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Rinker, Jeremy. 2016. "Buckle in the Hindu Belt: Contemporary Hindu-Muslim Violence and the Legacy of Partition in Banaras, Uttar Pradesh", in Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer and Rahul K. Gairola (eds), *Revisiting India's Partition*, pp. 283-304. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- . 2017. "Engaging Narrative as Rights-Based Peace Praxis: Framing, Naming, and Witnessing in Overcoming Structural Violence and Marginalization", in T. Matyok and P. Kellet (eds), *Communication and Conflict Transformation through Local, Regional, and Global Engagement*, pp. 355-376. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Rinker, Jeremy and Jerry Lawler. 2018. "Trauma as a Collective Disease and Root Cause of Protracted Social Conflict." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 24 (forthcoming).

- Secondat. 2011. "Of those who do not toil in darkness." Retrieved from <http://secondat.blogspot.com/2011/05/of-those-who-do-not-toil-in-blindness.html>
- Sherin J.E. and C.B. Nemeroff. 2011. "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: The Neurobiological Impact of Psychological Trauma." *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, 13(3):263–278.
- Van der Kolk, B.A. 2003. *Psychological Trauma*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association Publishing Inc.
- Voice of the Voiceless*. 2010. Banaras: People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights, 1(1):45..
- Volkan, Vamik. 1997. *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

## CHAPTER 39

# Transformative Harmony and Inharmony in Nepal's Lost Transition

*Bishnu Pathak*

### Introduction

Along with the secession of the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the Cold War (communist ideology) ended, after which the international power unilaterally shifted towards the USA. The capitalist bloc and traditional regimes started to encounter identity-based religious, regional, caste-ethnic, linguistic, resource and geopolitical sectorial-politics. Poor and developing countries became more vulnerable to violent conflicts, due to inequality in the distribution of their resources and capabilities, poor service and delivery systems, injustice regarding individuals and beliefs, inefficient administration, inefficient socio-political transformation and intolerant leadership (Pathak 2005:1).

Conflicts have been part and parcel of social and political sphere of Nepal. Roughly, in each decade structural conflicts, based on identity, need or class (INCB) as well as politico-ideological principles, occurred in Nepal. To mention a few: The Makai Parva in 1920; the Prachanda Gorkha episode in 1932; the Praja Parisad Movement in 1940, the Anti-Rana Movement in 1950; the banning of the multiparty system in 1961; the Jhapa Uprising in 1971; the anti-Panchayat turmoil (referendum for democracy or monocracy) in 1980; the People's Movement I in



1990; the People’s War in 2000, and the Tarai-Madhes ethnic conflict in 2009-11 (Pathak 2012:3). Conflicts develop out of grievances and sooner or later may escalate into violence (Wallensteen 2007:272).

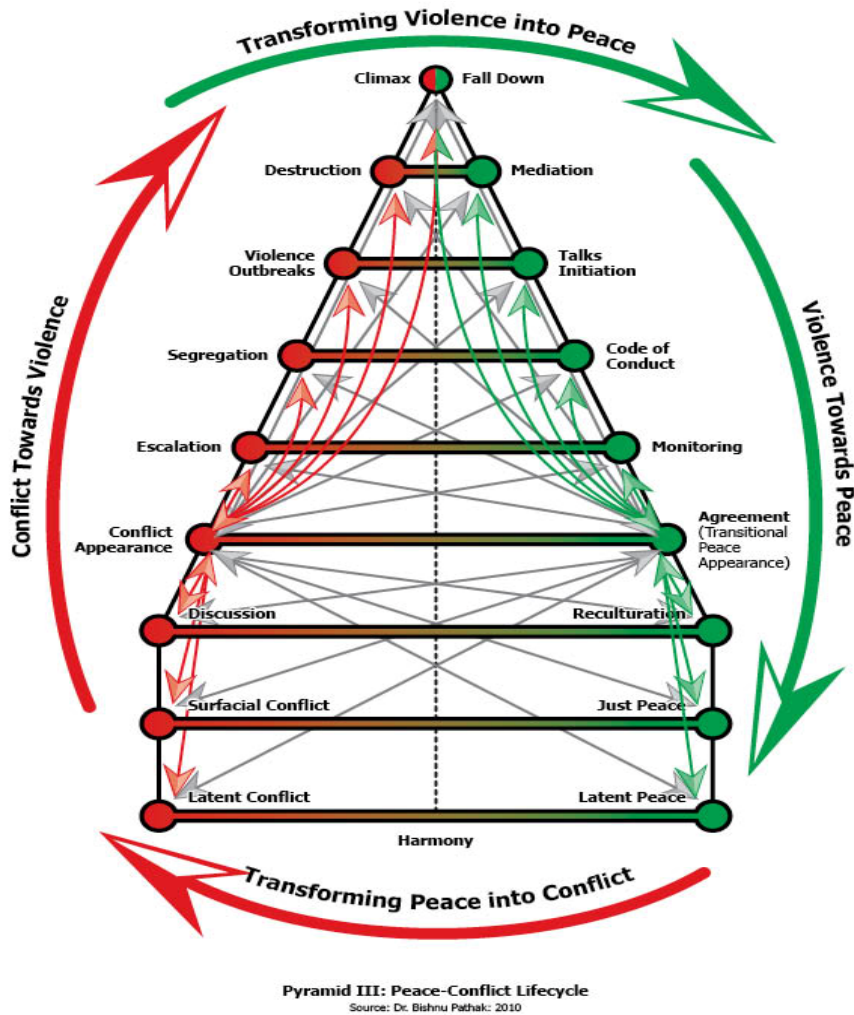


Figure 1 Peace Conflict Life Cycle  
Source Pathak 2010

Conflicts originate in the emotional mind and reach a violent climax after passing through several stages: discussion, appearance of conflict, escalation, segregation, outbreak of violence and destruction (Figure 1). Violent conflicts step



down towards peace as soon as one individual, group or party triumphs over the other, if a stalemate or balance between the conflicting parties is reached or if extreme pressure from local civic or international levels arises. Conflicts can also naturally fall apart, like life cycles of ecosystems can end without any external or internal force or pressure.

The phases of de-escalation include: direct and indirect mediation (including facilitation); formal or informal dialogue (initiation of talks) or negotiation, the establishment of a code of conduct regarding bargaining for 'do' or 'does' and 'do not' or 'does not', monitoring mechanisms for signed understandings, as designed by participants or non-participants, agreements and accords, as well as reculturation<sup>1</sup>.

In each phase of the process from conflict to peace, crosscutting developments may occur that directly lead to the goal or oppose it. For instance, the phase in which the conflict has become explicit, may transform either into peace through meditation, talks, code of conduct, monitoring, agreement or renewed participation in cultural life, or could also transform into an inverse development, away from peace. Inverse and random developments can be found between the areas of cause and effect in the Pyramid. This life cycle is part of all structural, perpetual, manifest and latent developments. It goes on uninterrupted from hour to day, day to week, week to month and month to year. It is intra and inter-personal, intra and inter-social, intra and inter-regional and intra and inter-national. The peace-to-conflict movement comes to a rest at the central axis of the pyramid, called harmony.

Harmony is the joining of heart and spirit (Sharma in this volume). Harmony is a part of life that exists in self, society, nature and the Divine (Giri in this volume). It focuses on the individual in society and believes that individual harmony can only be part of social harmony. Without the acknowledgement of social harmony, individual harmony cannot be understood (Semashko 2012:22). The value of harmony depends upon the human mindset, human rights, mutual respect and trust, cooperation, co-existence and open mindedness (Gandhi Vidhya Mandir 2012). Harmony develops along with the social justice, fundamental human rights and freedom, co-existence and fraternity. It rests upon the individual and societal mindset regarding love without hierarchy. It is the outcome of what we observe, what we read, what we analyse and say, what we do for world peace, justice, happiness and humanity. In post-conflict situation, harmony proliferates when Nepal signed 12-point understanding in New Delhi on November 21, 2005.

The prime objective of this essay is to find out the differences amongst the Comprehensive Peace Accord, agreements and understandings signed at several occasions between the Government of Nepal and the Maoist party, constitutional parties and the Maoist party and the secretariat of Special Committee for Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation of the Maoist Army. Therefore, this

essay analyses and interprets the harmonious and inharmonious contexts, in order to determine the necessary required time for (re)integration of the Maoist Army (MA), either into society and/or Nepali security forces – mainly the Nepal Army (NA) – or voluntary retirement.

In this study, the term ‘harmonious’ corresponds to ‘pleasant feeling’ in a theoretical scientific sense. The harmonious concept means putting people first and aiming at their comprehensive, coordinated, sustainable and progressive development. Putting people first means to take care of people’s interests as a starting point and grip on all kinds of activity, including continuous efforts to meet their basic needs and freedom, while taking care of their overall development. The term ‘inharmonious’ does not refer to failing or incomplete harmony, but to a total lack of harmony. Thus harmony and inharmony are the two sides of the same coin.

## Harmonious Reculturation

In general, the MA adopted the strategy and tactics of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) in post-conflict Nepal, but the party stated theoretically as a Security Sector Reform (SSR). As there was no any initiative to build a policy of democratisation to the Nepal Army and professionalisation to the MA, the DDR had been a great debate in government and non-governmental institutions, the international arena and civil society in post-conflict, during the reculturation of countries like Nepal (Pathak 2011). The protracted violence or armed struggles destroyed the different areas of multi-culture “unity in diversity” like socio-economic culture, political culture, etc. Therefore, reculturation, in a broad sense, is the prime urgency of Nepal.

The reculturation process went through different stages: transformation from transitional peace towards just peace through (re)integration of the MA, either into society or into the security forces, the Nepal Army (NA). The reculturation stages need to be: Disarmament (D), Demobilisation (D), Reinsertion (R), Repatriation (R), Resettlement (R), Rehabilitation (R), Reconciliation (R) and Reintegration (R) or in short: 2D6R. The 2D6R, as described below, has been taken from author’s precious paper on *Transformative Harmony and Inharmony in Nepal’s Peace Process*, published in Gandhi Marg (April-June, 2013).

- **D for Disarmament** Disarmament includes the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants, often also from the civilian population (DDR 2009). It is a development of the arms management programme, namely weapons survey, collection, storage, destruction and redistribution. It also includes identification of mines and traps, and marking them

for further action. Due to voluntary disarmament in Lebanon, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Haiti, progress was/is very slow.

- **D for Demobilisation** Demobilisation is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants of armed forces or groups and keeping individual combatants in temporary cantonments by assembling them into areas or centres (DDR 2009). Furthermore, it is a process of counselling, vocational training, economic assistance, etc. Such fundamental steps lead to planning, encampment, registration, pre-discharge orientation and the final discharge of former combatants. It usually includes the maintenance of records. These records verify the status of former combatants and provide non-transferable IDs to each of them. They also provide the service of pre-discharge orientation to the combatants for their transition to civilian life. Health screening, HIV/AIDS counselling, testing and management of special needs of female combatants, girls and minors are other initiatives included in demobilisation.
- **R for Reinsertion** Reinsertion is a short-term stabilisation process to draw (former) combatants away from armed conflict, civil war or criminal roles, until peace or political mission is deployed. It provides transitional income by generating opportunities to all (former) combatants and their dependents to support their immediate needs. It ensures transitional assistance to the combatants' dependents, by providing them their fundamental requirements, such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, education, etc.
- **R for Repatriation** Repatriation enables individuals or groups to return to their country of birth or origin, after being freed from the hands of their enemy or from a foreign country. Prisoners of war shall be released to return to their native country, in accordance with the 1949 Geneva Convention regarding the Treatment of Prisoners of War.
- **R for Resettlement** Resettlement is an act of human compassion to find shelter in another place or foreign country. In general, because of an internal conflict, displaced persons, such as immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, are temporarily being housed in new locations. It provides shelter to children, girls, women, senior citizens, and others who are suffering from conflict induced circumstances.
- **R for Rehabilitation** Rehabilitation includes several steps. A first one, social rehabilitation, is an act or process to rehabilitate IDP (Internally Displaced People) or former combatants in their native place, free from fear and discrimination. A second one, psycho-social rehabilitation ensures a wide range of social, educational, vocational and other forms of assistance and support. The third, psychiatric rehabilitation, restores community

functioning through the well-being of those individuals who suffered from psychiatric disabilities, like mental illness or disorder, etc. A fourth one, cognitive rehabilitation is a therapy to reconnect with memories that cause failure of personal relationships, anxiety, trauma, etc., as a result of the post-armed conflict or civil war. So, rehabilitation includes many steps, of which the first one is social and the last one is cognitive rehabilitation.

- **R for Reconciliation** Johan Galtung wrote: “Reconciliation is a process that is aimed at putting an end to a conflict between two parties” (2005). Galtung introduced 12 approaches including recovery and restitution, apology and forgiveness, judicial procedures and punishment, *karma*, truth commission and joint sorrow. Reconciliation is a complex term (Bloomfield 2003:12). It can only get expression at a later stage in post-conflict transition. Reconciliation assists to include an end to hostile acts and provides healing and rehabilitation processes between victims and perpetrators. It creates conducive environment for peace and harmony in the society promoting mutual feelings, respect and tolerance (CIEDP-TRC Act:2014). It usually requires intervention by a third party.
- **R for (Re) Integration** Reintegration is a process by which former combatants acquire military or civilian status, by joining state security forces or gaining sustainable employment and income and society. Reintegration is a long-term initiative or long-term process, which needs to be applied in local, regional and national, levels simultaneously. Mark Knight says that civilian reintegration and military (re)integration are sustainable (August 2009). It is a transition from armed military forces into state military positions or similar to the transition from armed or unarmed-military forces into the acquirement of civilian status.

The DDR is a complex and multi-faceted political process, where economic, socio-cultural, psychological and reconciliatory issues come to the forefront. The process of DDR has been initiated in three ways: negotiated settlement between conflicting parties like in Zimbabwe in 1979, in Namibia in 1988 and in South Africa in the 1990s; (b) one party defeated the other militarily like for instance in Uganda in 1986, in Rwanda 1994, in Ethiopia in 1991 and in Angola in 2003; and (c) external intervention for the purpose of their own security, such as in Angola in 1988, in Mozambique in 1990, in Sierra Leone in 1999 and in Cote d'Ivoire in 2002 (*UN Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, Overview: DDR Processes in Africa*, June 13, 2007:7).

The reculturation process is a process by which a number of combatants – belonging to the official armed forces, security forces or armed opposition groups in a country – individually or collectively, disarm, demilitarise, reinsert and

reintegrate into civilian life. In Nepal, repatriation was focused on six former MAs that were joined during the people's war and voluntarily retired.

## **Harmonious Security**

Mainstream political parties unfolded their theoretical concepts on security in the election manifesto of 2008. The Commitment Paper of the CPN-Maoists, intended for the Constituent Assembly Election of April 2008, expressed their priority for a new ideology and leadership for a new Nepal (Brown *et al.* 2012). The paper accepted Nepal had two armies: the NA and the MA and put forwarded policies to democratise the NA and professionalise the MA. It advocated to mobilise both armies in creative development and construction works for the sake of pro-people centre. The total restructuring of the security sector develops a permanent harmony with the republic federal provinces. The central government should manage and control the national army, whereas the autonomous states should build para-military forces and militia. Border disputes and security breaches thereof, should be settled as soon as possible, "based on facts" (Nepal Communist Party-Maoist 2008).

The Nepali Congress manifesto stated for the formation of a National Security Policy (NSP) that protects the national border, geographical or territorial integrity and natural resources and promote social harmony, lives, liberties and properties. Similar to the Maoist Party, Congress emphasised to make democratic, inclusive and professionalise the armies. It should fall directly under the parliament, while the executive should do its management and auditing (Nepali Congress 2008).

The CPN-UML (Communist Party of Nepal – United Marxist-Leninist) stated the formation of the NSP to secure national borders, the protection of geographical integrity and natural resources, social harmony and protection of life. The NA should mobilise for construction works, but integration and management of the Maoist Army should be carried out on the basis of consensus (UML 2008).

Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum asks, "Is there any significance for a professional army in the context of Nepal's geographical reality? What should be its size, if it were deemed necessary? How relevant is the existing army structure and its size, for the management of the country's internal security? How relevant would it be to link up the army for harnessing national security in a democracy? How important is it to establish accountability for monitoring, management and mobilisation of the army? It must be small in size and accountable to the elected parliament and the executive" (Wagle 2010).

On the other, the Nepal Army proposed certain mandates for CMR (Civil-Military Relations) to improve its relations with people (Wagle: August 30, 2010). The CMR relations to be developed based on security environment, globalisation, economic inter-dependence, disclosure of liberal democratic systems, widespread interests for human rights and growing asymmetric warfare.

## **Harmonious Consensus**

During a tenure of 10 years, several understandings, agreements and accords, including the Interim Constitution of 2007 and Constitution of Nepal (2015) have been adopted which put the NA and the MA under democratic civilian control.

Article 3 of the Twelve-point Understanding, signed on November 22, 2005<sup>2</sup> stated that the MA and the then Royal NA should be kept under the United Nations during the CA in order to accomplish a free, fair and impartial elections. That CA should end autocratic monarchy (Art. 3).

The Interim Constitution 2007 states that the Council of Ministers shall control, mobilise, manage and democratise the NA through political consent of the parties (Art. 144.3). The inclusivity and national character of the NA shall be imparted pursuing the norms and values of democracy and human rights (Art. 144.4). However, the constitutional provision could not be implemented.

The Council of Ministers was instructed to form a special committee to supervise, integrate and rehabilitate the combatants of the MA (Art. 146). Management and monitoring of arms and the army were shaped in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) concluded between the Government of Nepal and the Nepali Communist Party (Maoist) on November 21, 2006 and the Agreement on Monitoring of Arms and Army Management, reached on December 8, 2006 (Art. 147).

The House of Representatives assembled on May 18, 2006, provided a space to the Maoists to join the Parliament as a legitimate party. The meeting changed the name of the Royal Nepal Army to Nepal Army (Art. 3.1). Repealing the existing provision of the king, the NA came under the National Security Council headed by the Prime Minister (Art. 3.2). The NA chief shall be appointed by the Council of Ministers (Art. 3.3).

The Eight-point SPA<sup>3</sup>-Maoists Agreement, as signed on June 16, 2006, requested the United Nations to assist in the management of armies and arms of both parties and monitor them for a free and fair election of the Constituent Assembly (Art. 3)<sup>4</sup>. The Letter to the UN General Secretary—written by the Prime Minister and Prachanda on August 9, 2006—sought for UN assistance in



the "management of arms and armies of both sides", deploying qualified civilian officials to monitor and verify the confinement of the MA and their weapons within designated cantonment areas (Art. 3).

The CPA stated that the MA should be verified and monitored by the United Nations; by keeping them in seven main (Kailali, Surkhet, Rolpa, Nawalparasi, Chitwan, Sindhuli and Ilam) and 21 satellite cantonments. Three sub-cantonments were to be located each around a main cantonment (Art. 4).

The NA could store its arms in equal numbers as stored by the Maoists and seal the container with a single lock. A device would be used, along with a siren and camera, for the monitoring by the United Nations (Art. 4.6). The concerned parties should keep the keys of a single lock; the United Nations should monitor the NA and the MA in the presence of the concerned parties. Security provisions for the Maoist leaders should be made through appointments with the Government (Art. 4.5).

Prior to the peace accord, the Agreement on Monitoring the Management of Arms and Armies (AMMAA) (December 8, 2006) outlined several provisions of the Nepal Army on barracking, weapons storage and control. In the cantonment sites, a solid fence should surround the specified area, including a gate with a lock with clear identifications of the restricted area. The iron weapons storage containers should be painted white and furnished with shelves for safe weapons storage and easy control, with a complete inventory (weapon type, calibre and serial number). The security system should be activated as soon as the container door was opened without a "safe button" that was switched off in connection with regular inspections. A 24-hour surveillance camera, provided by the UN Mission, should cover the storage site and be monitored by the UN office in the cantonment site (Art. 4.1.2).

In the AMMAA, both sides should assist each other to mark landmines and booby-traps, used during the time of armed conflict, by providing necessary information within 30 days and to defuse and remove or lift and destroy them within 60 days. The agreed date for defuses and removal or destruction was severely delayed due to non-implementation of the agreements.

The Code of Conduct (CoC), signed on May 25, 2006 between the Government and the Maoists, agreed not to mobilise, demonstrate or use their armed forces in a manner that might spread fear amongst the people in general (Art. 2); not to attack or commit disruptive acts in each other's military or security units; not to carry out actions like laying down landmines or setting up ambushes; not to recruit new people in their respective armies and not to spy (Art. 3). Similarly, both armies would not participate in public meetings, conferences or any other political activities in combat dress or in the possession of arms (Art. 6).

The four-point Government-Maoist Party Agreement on September 13, 2010, included several provisions on the Maoist Army. It agreed to give final shape to all documents prepared by the Special Committee, to carry the peace process forward by reaching agreements as soon as possible, and to implement them. The Agreement, to bring the MA under the Special Committee without delay and share all details about the MA with the Committee, directed the concerned parties to undertake the remaining tasks of the peace process from September 17<sup>th</sup> as well as complete them basically by January 14, 2011, and proposed to extend the term of UNMIN a last time for a period of four months, under the same mandate (Chapagain 2010:1).

Democratic control of armed forces can be interpreted in different ways, since there is no shared definition with regard to the notion of 'armed forces' (Lambert 2006). The UCPN (Maoist) agreed in principle to dissociate its army from the party and put it under the Special Committee for Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation (SIR) on September 16, 2010. A Special Committee, with a 12-member secretariat to control the MA, replaced the former Technical Committee of SIR. The committee endorsed a Code of Conduct (CoC) to supervise, command and control the Maoist armed forces. It also agreed to add four additional members, one from the NA, the Nepali Police, the Armed Police Force and the Maoist Army. The CoC required that the MA must delink all its ties from the party and be prohibited from carrying out political activities by using pictures of communist leaders, singing communist songs and painting communist slogans in their cantonments (Chapagain 2010; Dahal 2010).

In the Agreement and the AMMAA, several prohibition decrees to both armies were also agreed: not to search or confiscate weapons belonging to other side; not to murder and arrange violent activities; not to kidnap, arrest, apprehend or cause disappearance; not to damage public, private, government or military property; not to effectuate aerial attacks or bombardment, land mining and sabotage; not to spy on military activities of each other. Others are: not to recruit additional military forces, not to use illegal trafficking of materials like arms and weapons, not to travel with illegal arms, ammunitions and explosives, de-mining and decommissioning of military hazards, stop immediately addressing any armed person of the other side as 'enemy' and return public and private properties. It restricted the harming or intimidation of humanitarian, development workers and other non-combatants, any seizure of their equipment or of military, public and UN properties, impede or delay the provision of humanitarian assistance, UN mission and ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), including gender-based violence and promoted free movement of people and goods. The use of children under 18 in the armed forces was restricted.



Under compliance of human rights, the peace accord agreed to publish the status of persons that were taken into custody and release them within fifteen days; to publish within 60 days the information about the real name, surname and address of disappeared persons; to carry out relief work for the conflict victims, constituting High-level Truth and Reconciliation Commissions; to withdraw accusations, claims and complaint cases; to allow all persons to voluntarily return to their homes; to create a conducive environment to travel freely to any part of the country and operate donors-launched programmes in a decent and respectable manner (Art. 5.2). It reconfirmed both army's commitment to respect and protect human rights, to respect and implement international humanitarian law including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights to respect the right to live, to individual dignity, freedom and movement, the rights of women and children and the right to personal liberty (Art. 7).

These agreements or understandings can be revised any time with the consent of both parties. If any of the parties wishes to make a change or amendment, it must provide the other party with written information in advance. Such amendments can only be made in agreement with the consent of both parties. What is amended in such provision shall not be less than the minimum accepted international standards of human rights and international humanitarian laws.

For six years (2006-2012) Nepal followed a unique model of democracy, in spite of two opposed characteristics of its armies: Nepal Army and Maoist Army. In January 2007, the UNMIN kept the MA in the main and satellite cantonments and the NA into the barracks and that process continued till the end of 2012. The choice of the Maoist Army to be integrated into the Nepal Army by the Selection Board, headed by Acting Head of the Public Service Commission, was carried out in 31 days, starting from September 6 to October 7, 2012. On September 24, all 28 main and satellite cantonments were vacated, including 13 satellite cantonments, those were decided to close down on March 13, 2012. The Nepal Army took over the command of the cantonments, including the weapons of the MA on April 10, 2012.

## **Inharmonious (Re)Integration**

According to many terminologies, integration is the opposite of individuation. Several writers, such as Michael O'Neill (1996), Ben Rosamond (2000) and Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez (2005), have written theories of European Integration and politics, but none of them focuses on army integration in a post-conflict situation. Morris J. MacGregor, Jr. wrote a book *Integration of the Armed*

Forces (1940-1965), but it mostly addresses world wars, rather than individual or community conflicts and armed conflicts within nations.

There are several kinds of integration, such as social integration, racial integration, vertical and horizontal integration, data integration, numerical integration, post-merger integration, economic integration, educational integration, etc., but in this context we use the term 'integration' to unite two security forces, the NA and the MA or the integration of the MA into society.

Amidst continuing intra- and inter-party conflicts, the establishment faction of the Maoist party delivered the keys of the weapons containers to the monitors of the Army Integration Special Committee (AISC) of all 28 main and satellite cantonments on September 1, 2011. The Vice-Chair of the Maoists, Mohan Baidya criticised the decision and said that the unilateral decision would be suicidal for the party and as such was against the Central and Standing Committee conclusion. Similarly, the Deputy Commander of the Sixth Division cantonment in Surkhet protested against the decision of the party. The senior Vice President of the Maoist Mohan Baidya said, "This is a decision to dissolve the PLA by first disarming it" (Kathmandu Post 2011).

The intra-party tussle within the Maoist party, further widened the gap between the establishment and the dissident factions of the Maoist party, while the Seven-Point Deal (SPD) was being signed by the four mainstream parties, namely Unified CPN (Maoist), CPN (UML), Nepali Congress, and United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF),<sup>5</sup> on November 1, 2011. It was a landmark of Maoist Army integration and power sharing amongst the agreed parties (Dahal *et al.* 2011:1). The seven point agreement paved away a path of split with 45 of 149 Central Committee members that formed a new party, Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist under the leadership of the senior Vice Chair Mohan Baidya of the UCPN (Maoist) in June 2012.

The summary of the SPD is as follows:

- Existing records of the Maoist Army will be updated;
- A maximum of 6,500 members of the MA will be integrated into the NA<sup>6</sup>;
- The MA should follow the standard norms and rank harmonisation of the NA. However, the existing recruitment on age, educational requirements and marital status will be made flexible;
- All weapons stored in cantonments will automatically come under the Nepal Army once the process moves ahead;
- The costs of the package, for those members of the MA who choose voluntary retirement, will vary from Rs 6,00,000 to Rs 9,00,000 (US \$ 6,000-9,000);

- The paramilitary structure of the YCL will be dismantled.

**Table 1** Voluntary Retirement, Integration and Rehabilitation Phase I (November 19-30, 2011)

Name and No. of Division	Integration into NA	Voluntary Retirement	Rehabilitation	Total	Absent	No. of MA
Chalachuli - I	796	705	0	1,501	421	1,930
Dudhauri - II	805	489	3	1,297	368	1,659
Shaktikhor - III	2,214	1,105	0	3,319	660	3,979
Jhyaltung Danda - IV	1,282	1,333	0	2,615	423	3,038
Dahavan - V	1,287	940	0	2,227	302	2,428
Dasarathpu - VI	1,559	1,375	0	2,934	413	3,106
Masuria - VII	1,762	1,358	3	3,123	198	3,321
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,705</b>	<b>7,311</b>	<b>6 (0%)</b>	<b>17,076 (87%)</b>	<b>2,526 (13%)</b>	<b>19,602 (100%)</b>

Source DDR-SSR in the World: Relevance to Nepal: April 2012

During the course of updating the records of the Maoist Army in the main and satellite cantonments, commanders, deputy commanders and others initiated a lot of disturbance. The survey of all cantonments was initiated on November 19, 2011, but the surveyors of the teams faced a lot of hurdles in many cantonments, including Surkhet and Kailali, raised by members of the MA who were convinced that the seven-point deal was made to deceive and humiliate them. Out of 19,602 members of the Maoist army that were verified by the UNMIN, a total of almost 13 per cent (2,526) did not attend the second verification (the regrouping phase) that was done by the secretariat of the Special Committee (for more see Table 1).

Initially, Prachanda assured that the number of integrated Maoists into the NA would be increased through consensus, but NC, UML, and Madhesi leaders strongly condemned his proposal of unilateral assurance. Finally, both Prachanda and PM Bhattarai agreed to again initiate a regrouping process in order to reduce the number of MA. The Special Committee agreed to provide opportunity to 9,705 MAs opting for integration in the regrouping process or to choose the voluntary retirement or rehabilitation option again. A small number of the 3,123 (32%) (see Table 2) Maoist Army agreed to integrate into the Nepal Army, but most of the

prominent commanders and others, chose for the option of voluntary retirement because of severe humiliation. Even India previously put forward 12,000 personnel General Directorate for deployment to special tasks like border, industrial or forest security and for rescue work in case of natural disasters (Chandrasekharan 2011).

**Table 2** Voluntary Retirement, Integration and Rehabilitation: Phase II (April 12-19, 2012)

District	Name and No. of Division	Integration into NA (Phase I)	No. of Voluntary Retirement	Integration into NA (Phase II)
1. Ilam	Chalachuli -I	796	548	248
2. Sindhuli	Dudhauli - II	805	446	357
3. Chitwan	Shakti Khor - III	2,214	1,587	626
4. Nawalparasi	Jhyaltung Dand - IV	1,282	796	484
5. Rolpa	Dahavan - V	1,287	764	523
6. Surkhet	Dasarathpur - VI	1,559	987	571
7. Kailali	Masuria - VII	1,762	1,448	314
		9,705 (100%)	6,576 (68%)	3,123 (32%)

**Source** DDR-SSR in the World: Relevance to Nepal: April 2012

The Prime Minister of the Maoist Party, who led the Special Committee for SIR of the Maoist Army, gave order to the Nepal Army and Armed Police Force (APF) to control all of the Maoist Army Cantonments, their security-related responsibilities, arms and containers and the MA itself, along with physical properties of the cantonments on April 10, 2012. After the decision to take control of the cantonments by the NA and APF, a large 68 per cent (6,576) of MAs, in a dramatic gesture, chose the voluntary retirement option, which weakened the establishment of the Maoist party, but strengthened the dissident Baidya faction at first, but Chand faction at the end. Mohan Baidya, the chair of CPN-Maoist, strongly criticised the Prachanda-led Maoist Party (Pathak 2013).

As a result of the Government's dramatic decision, Prachanda faction-led division commander and two deputies at the Chalachuli cantonments in Ilam, fled the cantonment, fearing for their lives (Republica 2012). The situation also became explosive at the Ilam, Sindhuli, Shaktikhor, Nawalparasi, Surkhet and Kailai cantonments from the very day that the survey teams from the secretariat arrived at the cantonments to initiate the phase II voluntary retirement process. The irate MAs burnt vehicles and vandalised the quarters of their commanders. In

some places, the commanders, Sindhuli and Shaktikhor, were kept hostages for a couple of days.

Within a few hours after the decision of the Special Committee, a company (roughly 150 NA's), led by an NA Major, arrived at the spot to establish security in each main cantonment, while a platoon (50 NA's), under a captain, deployed at each satellite cantonment. In some cases, the APF was also deputed to take charge of the satellite cantonment. However, the NA personnel was deployed already 24-hours before the decision of the special committee, because the NA headquarters ordered them to deploy with three-day rations and other necessary supplies. All the NA personnel were accommodated at just one or two hours distance of each cantonment before the formal decision taken place. It means the NA army was already alerted.

The decision for the immediate mobilisation of the MA, came as a result of the deteriorating security situation in the cantonments and the command structure of the MA that became dysfunctional. Ram Saran Mahat said, "Growing insecurity was one of the major reasons to push the Maoist party for the sake of this decision. Even officials, deployed by the Special Committee Secretariat, were unsafe because of infighting inside the camps" (Dahal 2012).

Four days after the cantonments were handled over to the NA and the APF, the Special Committee unanimously endorsed a seven-point agreement again to kick-start the integration of former MAs into the NA on April 14, 2012. The deal resolved disputes among major parties on technical issues, such as formation of the general directorate, harmonisation of ranks, period of training and other mechanisms to select MAs to serve in the Nepal Army. That was decided by the PM-led Special Committee, in the presence of top leaders of three (Maoist, NC and UML) parties.

The agreement included:

- Set up a General Directorate to integrate the MA. The General Directorate will have four Directorates: (1) Infrastructure development (30%), (2) Industrial security (20%), (3) Forest and environment security (30%), and (4) Disaster management (20%).
- Appoint a Lieutenant General to lead the General Directorate and appoint a Brigadier General to head each of the directorates.
- Confirm a 'gentleman's agreement' on the issue of ranks. For example, a colonel and two lieutenant colonels will report to the MA and will form the Directorate General.
- Nine-month basic training to those selected in officer ranks and a seven-month basic training to those in junior ranks<sup>7</sup>.

- Complete a three months specific bridging course for both ranks of the MA.
- Select MAs for officer ranks being headed by the Public Service Commission's (PSC) chairperson or a member designated by him/her. Members of that rank will include a special class officer of the NA, a first class officer of the Ministry of Defence, three experts appointed by the NA chief and a first class officer of the NA, as the member-secretary. The lower rank will be headed by a second-class officer of the NA, including two experts from the NA, a PSC representative and a second-class officer of the NA as the member-secretary.
- Provide concession to minor injuries of the MA during the selection process, but those who seriously violated human rights will not be integrated into the NA.

On April 15, 2012, the Special Committee enforced a 12-point Code of Conduct (CoC) for former MA in particular and NA in general, in order to apply a similar military discipline to both. It ordered to MA for not to have membership of the party and not to involve in any political activities such as orientations, debates or gatherings. This decision came after the Committee transferred the chain of command of the MA to the NA. The CoC urges the ranks and files of both the armies to consider the sensitiveness of peace and conflict and respect each other by refraining from prejudices out of resentment about the past and abstaining from provocative statements and activities.

The CoC further instructed both MA and NA to resolve their differences or listen to their grievances mutually. The physical infrastructures what had been using by the cantonments brought under control of the government. It urged the MA not to carry out any activity that adversely affected local communities and directed them to follow the Interim Constitution of 2006, CPA and other agreements that were signed among the concerned parties. The CoC provided responsibility to the NA for the security of the entire cantonments and the cantonments shall remain as Army barracks until the completion of the integration process. It instructed that arms and ammunition, belonging to the Army, should be stored in the cantonments. The Secretariat coordinator clearly said that MA should give up the insignia, given to them by the Maoist Party, once the voluntary retirement process was completed. It means that Nepal formally ended the situation with two legal armies and two distinct uniforms.

The internal party rift in the Maoist Party that already was brewing after the Dhobighat meeting in June 2012, became explicit when the Prachanda faction unilaterally decided to hand over the keys of the arms containers of all seven divisions of the MA to the Army Integration Special Committee on September

1-2, 2012. On August 31, the Prachanda faction had agreed to hand over the keys with which the MA commanders controlled the containers that stored 3,475 Maoist weapons, registered by UNMIN in 2007 (<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/nepal/index.html>).

The intra-party gap of the Maoist Party further widened when Prachanda formally agreed to regroup the MA in the cantonment. Moreover, the decision to give control of all cantonments to the NA was severely criticised within the party. The decision was taken by the establishment, without the consent of the dissident faction in the party. Most of the MAs that were favouring Prachanda and the PM, agreed to integrate into the NA, but a large majority of the dissident faction chose for voluntary retirement. The dissident faction of the MA established a former-PLA (People's Liberation Army) Voluntary Retirement Coordination Committee (PVRCC) and a Discharged PLA Combatants Nepal (DPCN). Dhan Bahadur, former battalion commander of the sixth division and Sagar Limbu, the former Company commander of the MA, headed the PVRCC and DPCN respectively.

In addition to this, the dissident Baidya faction formed a 17-member People's Revolutionary Bureau (PRB) under the leadership of its standing committee member Netra Bikram Chand. Its long-term objective was to develop this Bureau into a People's Liberation Army (PLA). The first-ever national gathering and meeting held a decision to this effect on April 24, 2012. Former MA division vice commanders, among others Ram Lal Roka Magar, Nep Bahadur Kunwar Magar, Uday Bahadur Chalaune, Dev Kumar Limbu and YCL leaders Sabitri Dura, Muldhan Roka Magar, Padam K.C., Sanjeev Kumar and Yuba Raj Achary, became members of it. The Bureau further stated that it would take action against smugglers, fraudsters and corrupt persons (Bohora: May 9, 2012). The dissident Maoist in Dang district also formed People's Volunteer Bureau headed by Tilak Pun. Pun urged youths and the ex-combatants to join the PVB to fight against Dahal and his supporters, accusing them of surrendering the PLA in the name of peace process (Bohora 2012).

The three-days long, first general convention of the National People's Volunteers (NPV) of the CPN-Maoist, led by the Baidya faction, was initiated between October 10 to 12, 2012, in Kathmandu. The Convention who integrated former PLA and YCL (Young Communist League) elected a Central Committee consisting of 95 members, led by the former Maoist commander Uday Bahadur Chalaune. The conference elected Yubaraj Acharya and Sabitri Dura as Vice-chairmen, Nep Bahadur Chaudhary as General Secretary, Prakash Khanal as Secretary and Surendra Jagebu Limbu as Treasurer. The General Secretary of the Maoist Party, Ram Bahadur Thapa and Secretary Netra Bikram Chand were chosen to give training to volunteers. The former PLB (People's Liberation



Bureau) turned to the NPV, in which almost all former Maoist army commanders were associated with the volunteers. It was now known as a paramilitary force (Frontlines of Revolutionary Struggle: October 13, 2012).

On April 27, 2012, the Prachanda faction, the other side of the centre, formed the Ex-PLA Association, headed by former PLA Chief Nanda Kishor Pun. On June 16<sup>th</sup>, the Baidya faction set up a national gathering, whereas Prachanda held a plenum on June 29<sup>th</sup>. The split on June 18, 2012, became a tug-of-war between the UCPN (Maoist) and the CPN (Maoist) that weakened morale, politics and ideology of the communist movement, supporters and well-wishers. This painful, unfortunate and inefficient split of the party had a long history with six catalysing causes (eKantipur.com, April 27, 2012).

The United National People's Movement Committee (UNPMC), an alliance of 12 political parties including the Baidya faction, launched several protest programmes to exert pressure on the Maoist-led government. The Baidya faction burnt effigies of Prachanda and Prime Minister Bhattarai in a torch rally, staging a one-hour long chhakajam (transport strike) across the country from 10.00 to 11.00 am on April 11, 2012. The police broke up the torch rally through baton charges (nepalnews.com, April 11, 2012).

The intra-Maoist party tussle (inharmonious relation) initiated while Prachanda-Baburam deviated from political-ideological root, but Baidya faction continued revolutionary lines and thoughts (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). Because of the outmost national and international, mainly India's pressures, Prachanda adopted shaky centrist-cum-opportunity strategy, but Baidya continued hardliner path. Baidya believed that he was arrested and taken into custody in foreign land while being treated eyes in Siliguri, India at the end of March 2004 (Nepali Times, April 2, 2004) for not to disturb India's indoctrinated path of peace to the Maoist Party. It means, Baidya demanded to declare India as a "principal enemy" of the party (Himalini Update, June 3, 2012). On the other, Prachanda adopted a clear democratic republicanism through elections to CA in line with Chunwang meeting held in September-October 2005 (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2012:51). The peace talks succeeded while Prachanda-Bhattarai promised the Indian Prime Minister, the Foreign Ministers, RAW and the Indian Intelligence Bureau not to act against India (Muni 2012:227-229). The same line of thoughts of the Maoist leadership appeared even in the Maoist army integration that finally split the party into two factions.

## **UNMIN Towards Harmonious And Inharmonious Works**

The UNMIN served in Nepal from January 23, 2007 to January 15, 2011 (see



Table 3). The UNSC Resolution on September 15, 2006, decided, in line with the request of the Government of Nepal for a year initially, but was extended six times on the request of the Government. Finally, it was withdrawn in a humiliating manner in the midst of the peace process. The government, led by Madhav Kumar Nepal (who, during the CA elections of 2008, was defeated in two constituencies) terminated UNMIN on the whispers of India (Pathak 2010).

The 'Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies' formally invited to the UN on the course to guarantee the fundamental human rights taking part in the CA freely and fairly; to ensure sovereignty to the people through a democratically restructured state and social-economic-cultural transformation; to fully observe bilateral agreements and accord; and to seek UN assistance in monitoring the management of arms and armies (December 8, 2006).

**Table 3** United Nations Mission in Nepal (January 23, 2007 – January 15, 2011)

Term	From	To	Tenure
I	January 23, 2007	January 22, 2008	One year
II	January 23, 2008	July 23, 2008	Six months
III	July 24, 2008	January 23, 2009	Six months
IV	January 24, 2009	July 23, 2009	Six months
V	July 24, 2009	May 14, 2010	Nine months and three weeks
VI	May 15, 2010	September 15, 2010	Four months
VII	September 16, 2010	January 15, 2011	Four months
Total			3 years 11 months and 3 weeks

UN civilian personnel confined both the MA and their weapons at their respective cantonments and barracks. Their weapons were not used against each other (Bimali and Pathak: December 16, 2009). The UNMIN initially registered 32,250 MA personnel, but only 19,602 (60.8%) were verified, of which 15,756 (80.4%) were men and 3,846 (19.6%) women. They were stationed in 7 main and 21 satellite cantonments (see Table 4), they were disarmed and demobilised, their weapons kept in iron containers. The verification mission disqualified 8,640 (26.8%) MA personnel when they did not appear in the interview. It is remarkable that most of them (who did not attend the verification procedure) were transformed into the YCL (Young Communist League), a politico-military force of the CPN (Maoist). Besides, 4,008 (12.4%) MA were disqualified of which 2,973 were minors (UNMIN 2007; see Tables 5 and 6) or recruited after May 25, 2006, the day the ceasefire was announced. The UNMIN decided to discharge both minors and late recruitment, from the main and satellite cantonments.

**Table 4** Numbers of Maoists Army, verified by the UNMIN from June 19 to December 23, 2007

Region	District	Main Cantonment	Satellite Cantonment	Number of MA
Eastern	Ilam	Chalachuli Division I	Biplab-Srijana Smriti at Danabari, Ilam Ratna-Shakuntala Smriti at Tandi, Morang Chintang-Sukhani at Yangshila, Morang	1,930
Central	Sindhuli	Dudhauli - Division II	Solu-Salleri jana Kalyan, Sindhuli Bishal-Kumar Smriti at Tribeni, Udaypur Rambriksha Smriti at Kalijore, Sarlahi	1,659
	Chitwan	Shakti Khor - Division VI	Basu-Smriti, Tinchowk, Chitwan Bethan Smriti at Namobuddha, Kavre Pratap Smriti at Kamidanda, Kavre	3,979
Western	Nawalparasi	Jhyaltung Dand - Division IV	Paribartan Smriti at Thulokot, Kaski-Tanahun Basanta Smriti at Tingire, Palpa-Argghakhanchi Krishna Sen Smriti at Jhingamara, Rupandehi	3,038
Mid-Western	Rolpa	Dahavan - Division V	Mangalsen First at Tila, Ropa Jawahar Smriti at Chaupatta, Dang Dirgha Smriti at Kalyan, Surkhet	2,428
	Shurkhet	Dasarathpur - Division VI	Jeet Smriti at Dasarathpur, Surkhet Ghorahi-Satbariya at Lek Pharsa, Surkhet Pili Smriti at Holleri, Rolpa	3,106
Far Western	Kailali	Masuria - Division VII	Lisne Gam at Masuriya, Kailali Bahubir Yoddha at Sahajpur, Kailali Lokesh Smriti at Chisapani, Kailali	3,321
Maoist Party HQ (security to leaders), defected and others				114
<b>Total</b>				<b>19,602</b>

Source UNMIN 2008

**Table 5** UNMIN Disqualified Maoist Army (January 7 to February 8, 2010)

Region	District	Main Cantonment	Children	Late recruit May 2006 (b)	Unqualified (a+b)
Eastern	Ilam	Chalachuli-Division I	617	259	876
Central	Sindhuli	Dudhauli - Division II	277	95	372
	Chitwan	Shakti Khor-Division III	367	219	586
Western	Nawalparasi	Jhyaltung Danda - Division	424	198	622
Mid-Western	Rolpa	Dahavan - Division V	396	56	452
	Surkhet	Dasarathpur-Division VI	525	104	629
Far Western	Kailali	Masuria - Division	364	103	467
Maoist Party HQ			3	1	4
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>2,973</b>	<b>1,035 (26%)</b>	<b>4,008 (100%)</b>

Source *Civil Military Relations: Theories to Practices*, November 2011.

Pre-Discharge led to an agreement on modalities, time frames and code of conduct, before the discharge process was established. Lists of disqualified persons were provided by the UNMIN to the Maoists and verified in 2007. The Maoist party confirmed and provided order to discharge one week in advance. The Maoist party arranged for transportation of discharged persons. The UN logistic teams deployed them to the cantonment sites three days prior to the discharge date.

All disqualified persons were assembled in groups of 50 in each concerned division. The UN team screened and crosschecked them by using their database. A briefing session was jointly organised by the Maoists and the UN. Photographs of the discharged were taken in civilian clothes and kept in the UN database.

Each discharged person was provided Rs.10,000 by the UN and Rs.12,000 by the Maoist Party as a transportation and transition allowance. The local organisation of the Maoists welcomed all discharged persons at their concerned destination. The UNMIN stated that about 500 of them were still under 18 years

**Table 6** Number of the Disqualified Discharged (January 7 to February 8, 2010)

S. No.	Development Region	District	Main Division/Contonment	Attended	%	Absent	%	Total No.
1	Eastern	Ilam	Chalachuli I	471	11.75	402	10.03	885
2	Central	Sindhuli	Dudhauli II	191	4.77	171	4.27	367
		Chitwan	Shakti Khor III	253	6.31	328	8.18	587
3	Western	Nawalparasi	Jhyaltung Danda IV	357	8.91	261	6.51	627
4	Mid-Western	Rolpa	Dahavan V	265	6.61	187	4.67	459
		Surkhet	Dahavan V	527	13.15	70	1.75	610
5	Far Western	Kailali	Kailali VII	330	8.23	134	3.34	472
Total				2,394	60.65	1,553	39.35	4,008

Source UNMIN and Nepal: March 7, 2010

of age. Another 1,035 persons were disqualified because of late recruitment than ceasefire signed. About one-third of the total number of disqualified persons was female (UNMIN 2010). UNICEF Country Representative Gillian Mellsop said, "The release of these young people today is not only symbolic for the country, but a milestone for these young men and women, who spent their formative years inside a military structure, losing out on critical skills, vital for adulthood. All those concerned must now act swiftly to ensure that they reintegrate successfully and help to rebuild the fractured Nepali society after this long conflict" (Crowe *et al.* 2010).

It was remarkable that four-fifth (79%) of the discharged were above 18 years. Discharged minors and disqualified grown-ups were involved in various activities. A first, rather big group took part in the rehabilitation programme because of their interest in a future livelihood. By November 2010, a total of 2,225 discharged, former MA had received counselling under the four available packages. By December 2010, 399 enrolled persons (267 male and 132 female) had completed training and 105 graduates (62 male and 43 female) had already started their own business (Pathak 2011:16).

A second group of discharged persons, continued to work under the chain of (political) command of the Baidya-led Maoist Party, believing that the coalition government and the anti-Maoist elements in society treated them prejudicially. Another third small group had joined other revolutionary forces, because their leaders had made them *gharkona ghatko* (they neither go to home, nor commit suicide). This group continues to increase.

Except a few attempts, a fourth section of group failed to establish their own force in the name of retaliation against those Maoists, NC, and UML leaders who spoiled their normal life in the name of restoring People's Republic of Nepal (Dangal 2012:2). Most of them had a great hope that they would be recruited in the state security forces, once the People's War was settled by peaceful means. A small last group reintegrated into their families. Remaining forces joined their hands with criminal forces.

On February 8, 2010, the concluding day of the ceremony of discharged persons in Dahaban in Rolpa district, many discharged former MA threw their garlands in front of Prachanda, UN representatives, and other diplomats. This made it clear that the discharged members of the Maoist Army were not satisfied with the concerned actors. The CPN (UML)-led government tried hard to retaliate by not providing them any livelihood package programmes. The Maoist Party, on the other hand, tried nothing to provide them, but thinking that once they accepted a good-looking resettlement package, they would initiate a normal life, and the

Maoist Party would lose its cadres. The Maoist Party also feared that good-looking packages might influence them to work with other parties.

The disqualified former members of the Maoist Army conducted several protest programmes against the state authorities. For this, they put forward a 5-point demand to remove the tag of 'disqualified' that labelled them; to arrange employment for them; to provide a lump sum compensation and relief economic package; to search for missing people and disclose the misuse of funds that came from the United Nations (UN) on their names. The team, along with the Sagar Limbu, President of the Discharged PLA Combatants Nepal (DPCN), submitted their demands to the Peace Minister Pampha Bhusal on August 19, 2011. A meeting to fulfil their demands was agreed and held the following day, but did not materialise the demands. The DPCN organised a strike in the far western region, closing down all educational institutions, transport services and business sections, and demanding the implementation of the past agreements in Dhangadi on December 30, 2011.

### **UNMIN's Disqualified Discharged**

Sarjit Budha Magar of Kapra VDC, Salyan district joined with the Maoist People's War at the age of 15 years while he was studying at grade 5 in June 2002. He got attracted to the People's War because of three reasons: to be protected against the frequent harassing of the state-security forces, to escape from the hands of severe poverty, and to liberate the people who were in distress. Initially, he was active at the cultural sections, for example: dance, music and singing songs to provide recreation to the tired Maoist Army. Sometimes he used to work as a messenger and received a hard military training at the Dirgha Smriti, 5<sup>th</sup> Division.

On January 31, 2005, he first got involved in the capture of the Headquarters of the Palpa District. They aimed to liberate their friends from the district jail, to destroy the then Royal Nepal Army barracks and administrative authorities. A total of 250 combatants of the Maoist Army reached Palpa at 6:00 pm in front of the Nepal Army. He was in the front line. While the Nepal Army reacted with bullet armour vehicles, they withdrew. While two more 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> divisions with thousands of Maoist combatants arrived there at night "assembling the whole force for an action", they first opened fire at 10:30 pm. Before dawn, they got the district headquarters under control, but he was injured by several bullets in his both legs and head and became unconscious. When he woke up, he was in the hospital bed at Lakhanau (Lucknow) India. He was treated there for two

years and came back in Nepal while early 2007 the Maoist Army was kept inside the cantonments with the help of UNMIN.

He got terribly upset when he was declared 'disqualified' by the UNMIN who called him a minor. At that moment he was hardly able to walk. He refused to take part in the skill development training, that was provided by the UNDP and he boycotted the material that the UNDP provided for their livelihood. He said, "The NRs. 40,000 that the UNDP provided was only a fraction of the allocated NRs. 400,000 and still was misused". Now he is a secretariat member of the newly-formed Disqualified PLA Association and works closely with Baidya-led Maoist party.

**Source** Interview with Sarjit Budha Magar at Ghorahi, Dang district on May 5, 2012

It is to be remarkable that there is not a single provision of child soldiers in the accord and agreements, but minors alone. For more understanding, please read the above case study given in the box.

On January 5, 2012, the ongoing Central Committee meeting of the ruling Maoist Party on January 5 and 6, was postponed in Kathmandu, owing to a bandh (shutdown), called by the DPCN. The Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction agreed to prepare a draft within a week to provide a financial package in a lump sum basis. But, the financial package could not be materialised.

While the former disqualified MAs demanded to disclose the funds that were collected in the UN Peace Fund in Nepal at their name, the donor communities showed a keen interest into the UNDP over the issue. Disqualified, discharged persons time and again publicly said that they just received material and/or equipment support worth of NRs. 40,000 instead of the allocated NRs. 400,000<sup>8</sup> after the poorly managed skill training by the UNDP. The precise amount of money for each individual, disqualified, discharged MA person, is yet to be published. Misuse of funds by the donors, namely the UN, does not remain restricted to a single case. However, the UN never takes any notice of such public comments.

On February 6, 2012, the YCL (Young Communist League), politico-military forces and disqualified cadres, padlocked the Maoist party offices in nine districts of the far-western region, demanding similar financial assistance packages as provided to the voluntarily retired MA. Next day, the YCL disrupted the implementation of the MA voluntary retirement process, by obstructing the road that connects the division cantonment with Talbandi, Kailali. On March 16, 2012, a meeting between the YCL leaders and Prachanda was held and it was decided to provide



NRs 180 million for the YCL, but by the end of 2016, the decision had not yet been implemented.

On July 18, 2012, about 500 retired MA obstructed the ongoing plenum of the UCPN (Maoist), demanding to form an investigation team and take action to its leadership, against those involved in misappropriating more than Rs.1 billion funds in the cantonments. The corruption charge was propounded from within the cantonments, while 2,526 UNMIN's verified combatants did not attend the regrouping process held from November 19 to 30, 2011 (Kathmandu Post: July 19, 2012). An investigation committee of three persons was formed, headed by party secretary Post Bahadur Bogati with a one-month deadline. The report was submitted on time, but the report has not been published. On September 21, the Youth Association Nepal (YAN) filed a corruption complaint at the Commission for an Investigation into the Abuse of Authority (CIAA), on charges of embezzling around Rs. 4 billion (Pathak 2013) against UCPN Maoist chairman Prachanda and Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai (Kathmandu Post: September 22, 2012). However, the CIAA did not initiate the process of further investigation.

The Maoist army disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration were headed by the UNMIN. At the beginning of UNMIN's establishment, harmonious culture was seen amongst the concerned stakeholders. However, the effective measures of implementation and its neutrality could not be realised by the people in general in Nepal. It resulted to pack-up its work on the middle of peace process. Along with the extension of its times, the UNMIN duties and responsibilities seemed weak as it intended to prologue its job-tenure. Thus, previous harmonious culture turned to hate "inharmonious" culture. The United Nations now retaliates against Nepal's peace process criticising the truth-seeking commissions, the last part of the peace process, rather to support them.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The objectives of the transformative harmony and inharmony need to be understood. The CPN (Maoist) initiated the People's War on February 13, 1996, to sweep away the constitutional monarchy, bureaucratic capitalism, feudalistic character of society (semi-feudalism, semi-imperialism and capitalism) and the historical roots of social inequality in order to establish a patriotic, democratic, progressive, and prosperous People's Republic of Nepal.

Since the inception of the People's War, the Maoist party faced a continuing internal two-line struggle: liberal vs. hardliner. After the 12-point understanding on the mediation of New Delhi, the revolutionary line felt humiliated and marginalised by the ruling elites. They considered vulnerable along with dismantle

of the then People's Government and the People's Kangaroo Court, which were formed during the People's War. The group aggravated further as the inharmonious (re)integration of the Maoist army taken place. Moreover, the (re)integration was no less than dissolution of the Maoist Army. The integration did not follow any succeeded learning from South Africa, Uganda, Angola, Ache, Mozambique, but the advices of Indian rulers alone (Pathak 2010). The success of (re)integration shall pay attention to identity, respect, and (professional) integrity (IRI) of the Maoist Army.

On the other side, the Prachanda-Baburam pursues "haves" being surrounded by opportunist circles, but the Baidya was encircled by the "haves not" cadres and leaders. The differences between the divided leaders and cadres into "A", "B", and "C" classes made a fertile ground to split the Maoist Party (Pathak 2012). The Maoists have become crony capitalists, reaping large profits for themselves and their ostensibly proletarian party (Brown *et al.* 2012). Thus, the lives of the Nepalese leaders are endangered, similar to those of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

Nepal has lost a lot in the name of transition. During transition period, the 240 years old kingdom turned to Republican Nepal. The generation-old trend of Nepal Army working under the monarch started functioning under Council of Ministers. Moreover, the NA started to talk of Civil-Military Relations. The socialist ideology of the Nepali Congress has been limited in the history. The mushrooming of identity-based cultural parties, i.e., Madhesi groups ask for vote to Nepalese people, but works in favour of power, politics and property of foreign forces. The CPN (Maoist Centre) were now like crow in the mist as they lost political ideology, class struggle and proletarian sentiment, but prioritises to identity, region and religion-based issues. The split from the Maoist Party has been assembling the former Maoist dissident leaders, Maoist Army and YCL on the course of preparing for armed conflict.

The victims of the Maoist People's War seek truth, justice, reparation and dignity from the high-level truth seeking Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, but the alleged perpetrators have been exercising their entire efforts to introduce amnesty and reconciliation even serious human rights violations, war crime and crime against humanity. The honest people are confused owing to the prolonged transition (2006). Despite all this, people talk about transforming lost transition, distress, inharmony and unjust societal relations overcoming inequality in distribution of resources, opportunities, inadequate service delivery system, injustice to identities-beliefs, ineffective governance-administration, inefficient socio-political transformation and intolerant leadership by the neat-and-clean and qualified-dynamic leadership.

The fulfilment of demands itself attain peace, tranquillity, harmony and people-centric development which are today's urgency.

## Endnotes

1. Because of globalisation and free market policies, the meaning of culture goes beyond geographical area, race, religion, belief, art, law, customs (Tylor 1871:1) and specific behaviour of the society or community. Culture is a slippery and ubiquitous concept (Birukou *et al.* 2009:2). Culture is not just a complex traditional behaviour and socially transmitted patterns, but it is a notion of civilisation and modernisation. Several countries in the world have been the witnesses of cultural movements or seceded for the need and desire of human beings. Culture is human, culture is creative and culture is the art of making (Pearce 2010:2).
2. Signed by the Chairman of the Maoist Party Prachanda, the PM and Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala, the General Secretary of the UML, the General Secretary of the ML, Janamorchha Nepal, Nepal Peasants' and Workers' Party, Nepal Sadbhawana Party and United Leftist Front.
3. The 'Seven Party Alliance' (SPA) included the parliamentary forces, namely the Nepali Congress, the CPN (UML), the CPN (ML), Janamorchha Nepal, the Nepal Peasants' and Workers' Party, the Nepal Sadbhawana Party, and the United Leftist Front.
4. The 'Eight-Point Agreement', signed by the top eight party leaders on June 16, 2006 at the PM's official residence at Baluwatar, Kathmandu.
5. Five Madhesi groups are associated with the front.
6. A separate directorate shall be formed under the Nepal Army, comprising 65 per cent NA and 35 MA.
7. The NA imparted a 24-month training for officers and a nine-month basic training for juniors.
8. Interview with Bikrant Budha Magar, Sarjit Budha Magar, Madan Lal Chopda and Bodharaj Pun Magar at Ghorahi, Dang district on May 5, 2012. They all were discharged by UNMIN saying they were disqualified members of the Maoist Army.

## References

- Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies.* 2006. Kathmandu: Nepal Government-Maoist Party, December 8.
- Bimali, Pawan and Bishnu Pathak. 2009. *Child Soldiers: Crime against Humanity.* TRANSCEND Media Service.
- Birukou, Aliaksandr, Enrico Blanzieri, Paolo Giorgini and Fausto Giunchiglia. 2009. *A Formal Definition of Culture.* Trento: University of Trento.

- Bloomfield, David. 2006. *On Good Terms: Clarifying Reconciliation*. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. Berghof Report No. 14.
- Bohara, Gajendra. 2012. "Dang-based Ex-combatants Form People's Volunteer Bureau." *My Republica*.
- Brown, Seyom and Vanda Felbab-Brown. 2012. *Nepal, on the Brink of Collapse*. New York: The New York Times.
- Chandrasekharan, S. 2011. *NEPAL: New Proposal of Nepali Army on PLA Integration: Strike while the Iron is hot: Update No. 249*. South Asian Analysis Group.
- Chapagain, Kiran. 2010a. *Government, Maoists sign 4-pt Accord*. Kathmandu: Nepal Republica Media.
- . 2010b. *PLA under Special Committee now*. Kathmandu: Nepal Republica.
- CIEDP-TRC Act*. 2014. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal.
- Code of Conduct for Ceasefire*. 2006. Kathmandu: Government and the Maoists.
- Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist. 2008. *Election Manifesto*. Kathmandu.
- Communist Party of Nepal-UML. 2008. *Election Manifesto*. Kathmandu.
- Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA)*. 2006. Kathmandu: SPAM.
- Crowe, Sarah and Marty David Logan. 2010. *Last Group of Maoist Child Soldiers Discharged in Nepal*. Kathmandu: UNICEF.
- Dahal, Phanindra. 2010. "Special Panel Okays PLA Directive." *Kathmandu Post*.
- . 2012. "Army Takes Charge of PLA Fighters, Weapons." *Kathmandu Post*.
- Dahal, Phanindra and Kamal Dev Bhattarai. 2011. "Parties Join Hands on Peace Process." *Kathmandu Post*.
- Dangal, Dhruba. 2012. "Former Maoist combatant involved in blast: Police." *My Republica*.
- DDR. 2009. *Analysis of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Programs in 2008*. Spain: School for a Culture of Peace.
- Eight-point SPA-Maoists Agreement*. 2006. Kathmandu: SPAM.
- Maoist Establishment Forms Ex-combatant Association*. 2012. eKantipur.com. 2012. Kathmandu: Kantipur Publication.
- Frontlines of Revolutionary Struggle. 2012. *Nepal: Maoists to form youth groups at grass roots*. See: < <https://revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/2012/10/13/nepal-maoists-to-form-youth-groups-at-grass-roots/> > (September 17, 2016)
- Galtung, Johan. 2005. *Theories of Peace: A Synthetic Approach to Peace Thinking*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute
- Gandhi Vidhya Mandir. 2012. *International Seminar on Teacher Education for Peace and Harmony*. Rajasthan.
- Ghimire, Yubaraj. 2012. "The Maoist Split: Prachanda's influence and his party's strength suddenly stand reduced". *New Spotlight*. Volume 06. No. 2.
- Himalini Update. 2012. Maoist will split likely within June 15. See, < <http://www.himalini.com/maoist-will-split-likely-within-june-15.html> > (September 17, 2015).

- Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007*. 2007. Kathmandu.
- Kathmandu Post. 2012. *Ex-combatants raise ruckus, stall plenum*. Kathmandu: Kantipur Publications.
- Kathmandu Post. 2011. *Arms handover: Maoists hand over container keys to panel*. Kathmandu: Kantipur Publications.
- Kathmandu Post. 2012. *Correction charge against Dahal, PM*. Kathmandu: Kantipur Publications.
- Knight, Mark. 2009. *Security Sector Reform: Post-conflict Integration*. University of Birmingham University and Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform.
- Lambert, Alexandre. 2006. *Implementation of Democratic Control of Armed Forces in the OSCE Region: Lessons Learned from the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security*. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). Occasional paper no. 11.
- MacGregor, Morris J. Jr. 1999. *Integration of the Armed Forces (1940–1965)*. Washington: Government Printing Press.
- Madhes Janaadhikari Forum. 2008. *Election Manifesto*. Kathmandu.
- Muni, SD. 2012. *Bringing the Maoists down from the Hills: India's Role*. In Nepal in Transition. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Neill, Michael. 1996. *The Politics of European Integration*. London: Routledge.
- Nepal Communist Party - Maoist. 2008. *Election Manifesto*. Kathmandu.
- Nepali Army Act 2063 (2020 BS)*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal.
- Nepali Congress. 2008. *Election Manifesto*. Kathmandu.
- Nepali Times. 2004. *Mohan Baidya's arrests*. Kathmandu: Himalmedia Pvt. Ltd.
- Nepalnews.com. 2012. *Baidya faction takes out torch rally*. Kathmandu.
- Pathak, Bishnu and Devendra Uprety. 2010–11. *Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform in Nepal: A Preliminary Sociological Observation*. Basel: TRANSCEND Media Service.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2005. *Politics of People's War and Human Rights in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Bimipa Publications.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2012–2. *DDR–SSR in the World: Relevance to Nepal*. Kathmandu: Armed Police Force.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2013. "Transformative Harmony and Inharmony in Nepal's Peace Process". *Gandhi Marg*. Volume 35, No. 1.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2011. "Sena Samayojanko Feharista (The Details of Army Integration)". *Samachar Fortnightly*. Kathmandu: Samachar Publication.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2009. *Global Practices of DDR–SSR: SSR in Nepal*. Basel: Transcend Media Service.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2013. *Transitional Security*. TRANSCEND Media Service.

- Pathak, Bishnu. 2012. "Announcement of federal state is the begging of division and secession of Nepal". *Telegraph*. Kathmandu: Narendra Prasad Upadhyaya.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2010. *Nepal's Peace Process towards Ambiguity*. Basel: TRANSCEND Media Service.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2012. *ABC of Harmony* (Book Review). TRANSCEND Media Service.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2010. "Approaches to Peacebuilding". *Experiment with Peace*. Oslo: North-South.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2013. *Elections to Constituent Assembly II: Voice of the Voiceless People in Nepal*. TRANSCEND Media Service.
- Pathak, Bishnu. 2011. *Women and DDR*. Basel: TRANSCEND Media Service.
- Pearce, Joseph. 2010. *Can Christianity Inspire a Global Culture?* Florida: Ave Maria University.
- Republica. 2012. *Nepali Army Takes Charges of Cantonments*. Kathmandu: Nepal Republica Media.
- Rosamond, Ben. 2000. *Theories of European Integration*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Semashko, Leo. 2012. *The ABC of Harmony*. New Delhi: Global Association of Harmony and Gandhi Bidhya Mandir
- Six-point SPA-Maoists Agreement*. 2006. Kathmandu: SPAM.
- Twelve-Point Understandings*. 2005. New Delhi: SPAM.
- Tylor, E.B. 1871. *Primitive Culture*. London: J. Murray.
- UML. 2008. *Election Manifesto*. Kathmandu.
- UN Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, Overview: DDR Processes in Africa. June 13, 2007. *Second International Conference on DDR and Stability in Africa: Kinshasa, DR Congo*. United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2012. *Nepal Conflict Report*. Geneva.
- UNMIN. 2007. *Arms Monitoring*. Kathmandu.
- UNMIN. 2010. *United Nations Press Release*. Rolpa.
- Wagle, Geja Sharma. 2009. *National Security Policy and Role of National Council in "Changing Security Dynamics in Nepal"*. Kathmandu: Nepal Institute for Policy Studies and Safer World.
- Wallensteen, Peter. 2007. *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, London: Sage Publications.
- Wiener, Antje and Thomas Diez (eds.). 2005. *European Integration Theory*. Oxford University Press.





## CHAPTER 40

### Peace and Harmony

#### A Case Study of Tharu Community of Nepal

*Narayan Khadka*

The Tharu people are an indigenous group inhabiting the Terai of Nepal. They represent 6.6 per cent (1.7 million) of Nepal's total population (Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics 2011). Although they comprise the second largest indigenous community of Nepal (Guneratne 2002; Dahit 2009:2; Statistical Year Book of Nepal 2013), the Tharu have been in the margins for centuries. They are scattered across the southern plain areas of Nepal and on the Indian side in the bordering cities. A *Barghar* (in *Bardiya*) or a *Matwan* (in Dang) a *Mukhiya* (in Bara) are the leaders of the villages of the Tharu communities of the Terai region of Nepal.

According to the Nepal Census of 2011, the main occupation of the people of Bara, Dang, and Bardiya is farming. The Tharu are the most populous group in Dang and Bardiya districts, and the third largest group in Bara (Statistical Year Book of Nepal 2013). The main occupation has been agriculture. Most of the Tharu cultivate or work for landlords. Farming, *Bethbegari*-free labour offered as community service and *Barghar-Mukhiya* tradition and customs are interrelated; they work together to sustain the village governance. Collectively, villagers focus on planning and development utilising local human resources and attracting government support. Due to the low flat malaria epidemic land, the land of Tharu (*Tharubhat*) has been ignored for centuries. However, after the eradication of malaria

the economic potential of the Terai was explored (Guneratne 2002). Now Terai is the most populated and the most fertile region in the country.

Indigenous worldviews and traditional models are also applicable to analyse the Tharu community and their indigenous conflict resolution practices. The formal justice mechanisms in countries like Nepal are out of reach for ordinary people because these are more expensive, inaccessible, and much more bureaucratic. In contrast, tradition-based practices have their own historical context. These are more accessible to the ordinary people because they are less expensive, speedier and mediators and negotiators are more knowledgeable about the parties and issues involved (Dahal and Bhatta 2008).

The goal of my doctoral research on which this essay is based was to understand the roles of the indigenous justice and conflict resolution model in maintaining peace and harmony in the Tharu community (Khadka 2016). Despite the fact that the formal legal systems, even the government of Nepal, do not recognise and give it a legitimate status, this model is competent to resolve most local conflicts in their entirety and take care of all Tharu's local governance in terms of providing village leadership, planning, and development, preserving culture and maintaining peace and stability (Dahit 2009). The model is not a recent phenomenon; it has been successful in maintaining social harmony, local governance, and providing justice to the community for centuries.

## **Barghar-Mukhiya Model of Conflict Resolution**

An exploratory, qualitative case study of the indigenous conflict transformation/peace building processes in a region of Nepal highlighted the Tharu *Barghar-Mukhiya* Indigenous Model. An investigation of their practices highlights the mechanisms for community building, restorative justice and reconciliation processes that support, structure, and maintain these processes. The goal of the research was to get an in-depth experience of *Barghar-Mukhiya* from three districts of Nepal. Thus, sub-groups of Tharu in the remaining parts of the country were also excluded. Furthermore, due to the limitations of time and geography, the researcher made a decision to exclude all other Tharu sub-groups and other non-Tharu from the study. Utilising qualitative case study methodology, this research used the case study method to assess the *Barghar-Mukhiya* model. Primary data sources included individual and focus group interviews, researcher observations, and secondary sources including document collections and archival material. This research explores the indigenous conflict resolution processes practiced by the Tharu community living in Nepal's Bara, Dang, and Bardiya districts; the role of Tharu traditions and customs; and the function of the *Barghar-Mukhiya*.

This case study examines the *Barghar-Mukhiya* model practiced in the Bara, Dang and Bardiya districts of Nepal as a focused and bounded phenomenon embedded in its context. The researcher conducted an exploratory and qualitative study into the Tharu's own practices of reconciliation, healing, restorative justice, and rituals to explore whether the practices are still significant for the community. For this case study there are three components of data collection: (1) semi-structured one-on-one interviews (total 43 participants) and focus groups (total of 30 participants), (2) researcher observations, and (3) a collection of documents and archival material. Focus groups were conducted in Sapahi, Bara District and in Basgadhi, Bardiya District with Tharu community leaders who could not or would not have participated in one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

In order to draw a conclusion, triangulation method was applied to confirm the research data and outcomes by collecting and analysing multiple sources of data, which are from interviews, observations, and analysis of documents and archives.

The *Barghar-Mukhiya* structure of the model deals with restorative practices, harmony and peacebuilding. This model deals with holistic approaches, thus it addresses community issues from conflict resolution, maintaining peace and harmony to development of the Tharu community in Nepal. The *Barghar-Mukhiyas*, in collaboration with other associates and villagers, are responsible for performing administrative, leadership, planning, development, judicial, ritual, unity, and coordination roles. The planning and development duties of *Barghar-Mukhiya* include construction of roads, schools, canals, temples, irrigation management, and other community development projects.

Six themes emerged from the data – Rituals/Festivals, Inclusion/Dialogue, Identity/Security, Structure/*Barghar-Mukhiya*, Process/Reconciliation Processes, and Participation/Acceptance. Where it is practiced, this system continues to help maintain community harmony and peace. The model's core of restorative practices, forgiveness, reconciliation, consensus-based decision-making, and use of dialogue circles is instrumental in transforming conflicts. Findings revealed that the model has been instrumental in peacebuilding efforts in Nepal during and after the 10-year long armed conflict.

According to the model illustrated in Figure 1, the themes Dialogue/Inclusion, Identity/Security, Structure/*Barghar-Mukhiya*, Process/Reconciliation, and Participation/Acceptance have dynamic relationships with the central theme, Rituals and Festivals. The model reflects the traditions and customs (Ritual/Festivals) of the Tharu people. It promotes Tharu identity (Identity) and embodies self-determination (Process) through *Barghar-Mukhiya's* decision-making power (Structure). The model meets most of Tharu community's basic human needs including identity and security because it is based on ingrained values –

community, egalitarianism (Dialogue and Inclusion), oral traditions, cooperation, and respect for elders (Structure), consensus-based (win-win resolution process) and procedures (Process). All these values support and are reinforced by the Tharu rituals and festivals.



**Figure 1** Tharu *Barghar-Mukhiya* Indigenous Model

As stated, Rituals and Festivals are the model’s central theme. Emergent theme 1 Rituals and Festivals described the connections between the model and various rituals, festivals and traditions that facilitate dialogue, cultivate relationships, and sustain peacebuilding. Tharu peacebuilding rituals and transformational festivals demonstrate tolerance, compassion, and indeed, their ultimate goal is to maintain peace and harmony and bring reconciliation. Rituals and Festivals transform the relationships of the parties in conflict theme 5, Reconciliation. Through Rituals and Festivals theme 2, Dialogue and Inclusion, a favourable milieu for conflict resolution and peacebuilding takes place. Emergent theme 2 indicated that Dialogue and Inclusion are vital to the model itself, as a response to traditions, customs, cultural beliefs and local circumstances. Emergent theme 3 confirmed

that the ongoing practice of village gatherings to resolve conflicts are tied to Tharu traditions and customs strongly associated with Tharu identity. Theme 4, Structure of the Model, *Barghar-Mukhiya* receives values and guidance from theme 1, Rituals and Festivals. Rituals guide conflict resolution process and the reconciliation processes take place during the festivals.

Theme 5 summarised the types of conflicts dealt with by the model and the processes for resolving them with community harmony and stability as set goals. The findings focused on the key role of reconciliation in achieving outcomes that restore relationships and strengthen the community. Rituals and festivals embody the process of reconciliation; garner community participation and acceptance through dialogue and inclusion. Theme 6 explores the participation and acceptance of the model by the older adults, youth, women and, non-Tharu, as well as the impact of religion and caste. The findings present and analyse strengths, challenges, and predictions for the future of the model. The strengths are that without outsider influence and pressure, the model or “system” is perceived to “work” for the community. Win-win resolutions, restorative justice, and accessibility are the major strengths. The challenges to the model are that it is under pressure from new forces: the State and Outsiders (non-Tharu,) mistrust of the formal system, class struggle, and low participation of women, youth, and non-Tharu.

## Peace and Harmony Through Rituals and Festivals

The study argues that the model continues to be an important mechanism for maintaining community bonds and group integrity, restoring harmony and unity among members of the community and resolving interpersonal and inter-group conflicts (Dahit 2009:160-182, 112-128). The study explains how the community manages conflicts and maintains indigenous institutions, rituals, ceremonies, and practices. Key institutions include village chiefs-*Barghar*, *Mukhiya* and *Matwan*, festivals, and rituals that have been in practice for many centuries. The model requires that conflicts or problems be handled in their entirety, focusing on restoring relationships and communal harmony.

One of the participants reflected: ‘We are equally careful about healing both parties – perpetrators and victims. Our focus is making sure that both parties are able to live together in the same community. For this, we ask the perpetrators to compensate the victims for the damage that occurred. (We) even ask victims to let it go without compensation if it is first or second-time minor offence’. Maintaining peace, order, and harmony in the community was believed by participants to be supported by rituals that demonstrate tolerance, compassion, and healing. Participants talk about the enhancement of peaceful coexistence through festivals and rituals that bring family and community together, promoting the messages of

solidarity, harmony, fraternity, and brotherhood among all community members. Coordination of rituals and festival celebrations is one of the essential roles of the Tharu indigenous model. For example, *Maghi* used to be a celebration of New Year at the community level, but now it is celebrated at national level. It is one of the government-recognised holidays in Nepal. *Maghi* is celebrated on the first day of Nepali calendar month of *Magh* in Kathmandu as a big ceremony promoting Tharu tradition and culture.

Pig killing ritual brings all villagers into a unique space where a dialogue takes place to rebuild the relationships. To this day, killing and cooking a pig to share with the community is sometimes used as a form of compensation for particular offenses. Pig killing ritual is also used as part of other ceremonies and celebrations, such as a wedding. Serving this food, as well as *rakshi* (*Daru*, *Jad*) or some other alcoholic drink was mentioned frequently in connection with shared gatherings that restore or affirm relationships between villagers. In fact, foods such as chicken, rice or eggs are also offered to appease or stay in a good relationship with the god or goddess. Nowadays, this ceremony and its expense may be imposed as compensation for an offense.

*Dhoghbet* is a ritual during festivals in which people hang out, talk to one another, Meet and Greet. 'Dhog' means greeting (by bowing to someone's feet) which symbolises friendship and relationships. People forget the past conflict or disagreements or differences during the *Dhoghbet* process. Traditional food such as rice and fish with alcohol is shared during the process. In this ritual alcohol represents sharing and community. The ritual space is open held in a special place like the home of the *Matwan*, *Barghar* or *Mukhiya* or sick person who may treat the guests to food or drink. Conflicting parties bring symbolic gifts to the home.

*Dhoghbet* (meet and greet) helps resolve many interpersonal and group conflicts. In addition to selecting the *Barghar*, *Mukhiya* and *Matwan* during the *Maghi* and other festivals, the conflict resolution process also takes place to maintain peace and harmony in the community.

*Dhoghbet* (meet and greet) dialogue also takes place during the major festivals such as *Maghi*, *Dasara* and *Holi*. The purpose of the dialogue during the *Maghi* is to resolve the conflicts by transforming the relationships of the conflicting parties. This is a time set aside for villagers to meet face-to-face at a neutral place such as *Matwan*, *Barghar* or *Mukhiya's* house to affirm and mend the relationships. This ritual creates a sense of community. The ritual of *Dhoghbet* takes place during the *Maghi*, *Dasara*, *Astamki*, and *Holi* festivals to form or transform the people's identity and relationships (Schirch 2005). No literature has previously touched on the dialogue process of *Dhoghbet*; this study has explored the *Dhoghbet* process as technique of conflict transformation.

In many cultures, the circle symbolises unity and protection and for Tharu people, the Circle Dances are peacebuilding rituals. They are thought to bring *Sukkhā* (happiness) and decrease the *Dukkha* (unhappiness from clinging) as Buddhism teaches. Especially during the major festivals, girls dance in a circle and sing a song, *Barka Naach*, which retells the story of *Mahabharata*. Its lyrics are about peace and harmony. Women, especially girls, use songs and poetry to transmit positive social values of peace, love and harmony. Women dominate rituals with songs and dances. Drumming by men enhances the rituals, but in some they also dance. Tharu *Naach* team performed a drama during the *Faguwa* (Holi) about Lord Krishna's life also known as *Krishna Avatar*. Similarly, the message of class conflict that occurs between *Jimindar* (landlord) and poor Tharu is conveyed in the play called *Krishna Avatar*. Dance and music embody the transformation of relationships between conflicting parties and maintain peace and harmony in the community. Circle Dances are also an important ritual through which conflict can be resolved.

Another ritual, which brings peace and harmony, is the ritual friend, which is regarded as a family member; no marriage is allowed between family members of the ritual friend. According to the interviewed participants, the purpose of the ritual friend is to build relationships to transform conflicts or differences. The researcher has a Tharu ritual friend in order to build relationship with Tharu community in Bara. The goal is to bring two families together. The religious leaders *Dhami* (equivalent to *Guruwa*) in Bara and *Guruwa* in Dang and Bardiya perform the ritual. It is all about making friendship and bonding relationship. The significance of this ritual is to make new relations and reconciliation because sometimes if you have conflict with another person or ethnic group, the ritual friend is helpful to resolve the conflict.

The goal is to bring two families together. No research or previous study ever explores Tharu's Ritual friend tradition as a conflict transformation or peacebuilding tool, which transform the relationship and maintain peace and harmony in the community.

The researcher attended the *Gurai* ritual in Bardiya district in order to observe first-hand role of this ritual in conflict resolution. It was observed that two types of *Gurai* worship were in practice, *Durya Gurai* and *Harya Gurai*. *Durya Gurai* worship occurs from April to June, and takes place in their deities' temples. This worship is believed to prevent endemic diseases and maintain peace in the village. *Harya Gurai* is performed during the month of August to maintain the prosperity of farmers and their crops. The flowers, eggs, rice, and water were used in the rituals. Each *Ghardhuriya* (household) contributes cash or in-kind (such as labour, or flowers, etc.) to perform the puja. The statues are decorated in different colours.



With all preparations done, the *Deshbandhya Guruwa* brings statues of the gods and goddesses in a basket and leads the procession while villagers follow him. The *Deshbandhya Guruwa* and the *Chirikiya* take a holy bath, each takes off his hat and chants the mantra aloud saying:

All you deities we have invoked and invited you here to our puja. We worship you to the best of our knowledge. Please be happy and take away our troubles. The *Deshbandhya Guruwa* asks forgiveness from you gods if mistakes were made in the past. Gods, we are performing this puja by digging these four holes and offering you four eggs.

Because so many villagers were observed to join this ceremony and seek forgiveness, it seemed to bring social harmony to the community and increase understanding among villagers.

The large turnout of villagers of all ages witnessed by the researcher demonstrated the continued popularity of *Gurai* worship rituals as an affirmation of shared identity. In Tharu society, ritual symbols are related to protection from endemic disease and other forms of upheaval.

In Tharu society, ritual symbols are related to protection from endemic disease and other forms of upheaval. According to Diwasa and Bhattarai, the Temple is the holy space in which the *Guruwa* performs a ritual using flowers, rice, and water. The study findings on *Gurai* rituals and its processes are supported by Diwasa and Bhattarai (2009). This ritual is believed to protect them from disease (*ibid.*:131). As observed in Dang by the researcher, the *Harya Gurai*, performed by *Guruwa* with villagers during August to ensure a good harvest. *Guruwa* uses flowers, water, wheat and oat (*jau*) and seeds such as sesame (*teel*) as the important parts of the ritual.

Diwasa and Bhattarai (2009) wrote that the Tharu of Dang are said to believe that the *Matwan*, *Bhuiniyarthan*, and *Deshbandha Guruwa* are respected almost as gods in the community and believed to keep children safe in the community through their grace, love, and compassion. Participants' remarks confirmed Diwasa's observations that leaders such as the *Matwan* and *Deshbandhya Guruwa* work with *Ghardhuriyas* (households) to schedule the *Gurai rituals*.

A sense of ownership is further strengthened by the requirement that each *Ghardhuriya* donates money toward the rituals (*pujas*). Though non-Tharu are not required to contribute, some do because they are also affected by the production of crops, and the well-being of the village. The shared ritual of asking protection and forgiveness from the gods can also be interpreted as cultivation of a harmonious relationship among villagers (Diwasa and Bhattarai 2009:132).

Nepalese society, including Tharu, is sociocentric, meaning it stresses cooperation and value of the community. Maghi festival is regarded as one of reconciliation and solidarity, bringing tolerance and mutual understanding among the members of Tharu community.

*Maghi*, the biggest festival of the Tharu, is famous for celebrating Tharu culture and holding conflict resolution dialogues at the same time. Passing the tradition and culture to the next generation is integral. During *Maghi*, people visit elders to receive blessings. It is also a time for decisions that impact the community, such as division of multifamily households.

The New Year for Tharu of eastern and mid-Terai is celebrated during *Faguwa*. (And takes place one day after the full moon in February or early March). The New Year for western Tharu is celebrated during *Maghi*, which takes place about mid-January. *Faguwa* is the most popular festival for the eastern Tharu community and is well known even beyond. It celebrates spring and the victory of good over evil and has religious origins in Hinduism. People celebrate by eating traditional food, drinking liquor and throwing coloured powder are its distinctive characteristics (Westerners associate Festivals of Colour and the throwing coloured powders with *Holi*, the Hindu name for *Faguwa*). Landlords appoint their *Haruwa* (farm labourers) and *Charuwa* (animal herders) during that time. During the *Faguwa* festival in Bara, *Mukhiya*, *Sachiwa* and other village leaders and functionaries of the model such as *Chaukidar* are appointed. This compares well to customs in the western zone when the *Barghar* is appointed (or reappointed) during *Maghi*. *Faguwa* songs were sung and people danced together. Tharu people, especially women, had prepared for weeks to welcome the *Faguwa* into their home. Preparation of foods, liquor, and pig or goat meat were arranged in advance. The Tharu use the festival to build unity and harmony, it has also the significance of bringing people together for reconciliation.

The Tharu use the festival to build unity and harmony, it has also the significance of bringing people together with reconciliation. Several authors such as Dahit (2009), Sharma (2013) and Diwasa and Bhattarai (2009) have discussed the importance of this festival and how it is observed in the community. However, this study explored the role of *Faguwa* (holi) on peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

*Dasara* (in Tharu, *Dashain* in Nepali), the biggest national festival in Nepal, is a celebration of unity, harmony, and reconciliation. This festival brings unity, harmony, and togetherness in family and communities. Dahit (2009) also pointed out the importance of *Dasara* in reconciliation, but participants even further reinforced the importance of *Dasara*, since it is a celebration of the victory of good over evil, reconciliation of families, communities, and nations is believed essential.

The core objective of the festival is to celebrate, recite and at the same time bring reconciliation.

In the tenth day of *Dasara*, villagers receive *Tika* (rice and white colour mixed that put on forehead) from the elders along with their blessings. Elders pass on best wishes for joy, peace and prosperity for the individuals and their family. Tharu celebrate *Dasara* with eating traditional food and performing traditional dances, such as *Sakhya Naach* and *Hurdungwa Naach*.

### Peace and Harmony Through Traditional Healers

Sarwahari (2013) also researched in Dang district on the roles of *Guruwa* and *Gurui* rituals in traditional healings. According to him, some Tharu youths and non-Tharu community members believe that traditional healing techniques are primitive and outdated because these are based on superstitious beliefs. However, research participants in Dang district strongly believed that these healings and rituals (worships) give people satisfaction and positive attitudes towards each other.

The *Deshbandhya Guruwa*, in charge of each *pragana* (region) in Dang, is responsible for protecting the village and villagers from natural calamities and epidemics and is the highest leader among *Guruwas*. He is responsible for conducting certain pujas: Dhuriya, Lawangi, Hareri, Bagar, Barka, and Bhajahar. Others rituals performed by these healers may use herbs, animal sacrifices, and/or water. The *Guruwa* performs local rituals such as *Gurai* and *Patibaithana*. Tharu spiritual healers play critical roles in conflict resolution at individual, family and community levels. Traditional healing practices are the tradition of Tharu but are not influenced by Hindu traditions. *Ghanpat Guruwa* was a historic person who developed the traditional, indigenous ethno-medical system for providing treatment to villagers. His tradition is one of the important parts of the Tharu civilisation (Tharu 2007:31-32 and 35-36). Today, the *Guruwa* system is not only a traditional healing system but has incorporated modern medical treatments including diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy methods.

Tharu (2007), Dahit (2009), and Diwasa and Bhattarai (2009) observed traditional *Guruwa* system as an inevitable tradition of Tharu community and recommended eliminating threats against the *Guruwa* system. The participants further elaborated on the views expressed in the existing literature and reinforced the importance of passing the *Guruwa* tradition to next generation. As the researcher observed, the participants believed that traditional healers play a critical role in remote villages to protect people and maintain peace and harmony. Researcher believes that it is urgent to strike a balance between traditional medicine and modern medical practices in order to better serve the Tharu community.

The healing of individual villagers can be a shared experience and demonstrates the sense of collective involvement in the health of the community. *Achhat Herna* (or *Bira Herne*) ritual process was observed by the researcher in Dang in order to verify the importance of rituals in healing and conflict resolution.

Further evidence of the protective role of the *Guruwa* is his use of an ethno-medical knowledge system. All medical issues come to *Guruwa* first before they go to the medical doctor. In remote villages, it is especially important to have access to a healer who is closeby, as illustrated dramatically by the practice of calling the *Guruwa* to treat frequent snakebite cases, rather than transporting patients to a faraway hospital. In Tharu villages, where hospitals are rare or non-existent, having a trusted healer closeby is important to people's sense of health and security.

### Participation and Acceptance

The model has a high degree of community participation, including elders, adult, youth and women. The villagers consistently attend regular conflict resolution and reconciliation processes during rituals and festivals. Acceptance of the model in the Tharu community is high. However, women and Dalits participation needs to be increased to make sure the Model is fully inclusive in practice as well. Although the majority of the participants expressed their views that *Barghar-Mukhiyas* have a strong and harmonious relation with non-Tharu community, including low caste untouchables and Muslims, in practice there is limited representation of non-Tharu.

Religion, caste system, age, and gender are variable factors in terms of participation in the Tharu Indigenous Model. Non-Tharu influence on the model has increased due to the cultural integration and integrated community building in Nepal's plain region with untouchables remaining a special concern. No untouchable has been selected as *Barghar-Mukhiya*. However, untouchables have some role, since the position of *Chaukidar* (messenger who calls meetings, considered a lower position), is usually held by untouchables.

The caste system is deeply rooted in Nepalese society, and the Tharu community is no exception. Despite the fact that Nepal State has categorised Tharu as caste, some participants argue that Tharu are tribal people. Nonetheless, some members of other castes do live in Tharu communities. Although there was mention of "class struggle", the researcher found no discrimination or biases based on caste involved in the decision-making process itself.

Participants claimed that Tharu easily gets along with *Musahar*, *Chamar* (untouchable of Terai), Muslims, and *Pahadiya* (hill migrants, which also include Buddhists). All participants of individual interviews (43) responded that caste

doesn't play a key role in how conflict is resolved, since the majority of people in the villages are Tharu, and Tharu is a caste itself.

Women's role in rituals is discouraging. There are no single women *Guruwa*. According to the participants, if a woman participates or has knowledge of shamans or mantras, she is considered to be a *Boxi*. Also, during the *Acchayat Harne* or *Pati Baithana* rituals, the *Guruwa* does not address a sick woman by her own name rather uses her husband's name (Sarwahari 2013). He pronounces mantras by saying, 'Tell me God, Ghost or Deities who are you causing sickness of Laxman Tharu's wife.' Participants reflected that women arrange all materials for rituals. The perception is a form of patriarchal mindset where men traditionally control women and keep them in lower status.

Participants' references to elders often conveyed that they consider them to be wise, experienced, and to love tradition and culture. There is no specific age requirement to be a *Barghar* or *Mukhiya*, but maturity and experience count. Eighty-four percent of the participants claimed the elder generation plays a vital role in the model and are always consulted in the case of land boundary and old road mark identification disputes because the younger generation does not have the long experience and institutional memory to discover the truth. Yet, it is hard to find very old people in Tharu villages, because of poverty and lack of decent health care the incidence of mortality is high. Elderly participants expressed dissatisfaction about educated young Tharu being 'brain drain' – not returning to villages to develop their birthplace. However, some elders felt that more education could increase the number of younger adults participating in the model.

Out of 73 interviews and focus group participants, sixty-two were Hindus, five Buddhists, three Nature worshippers (*Prakrit Dharma*), and three were practising *Gurubaba* (a newly evolving religion in Tharu community made up of followers of the ancient Tharu *Gurubaba*, intent upon reclaiming their identity). According to the five participants of Hill origin (*pahadiya*), no decisions in conflict resolution cases are taken based on religion. The study suggests that participation levels of *Mushahar*, *Dusad*, and *Chamar* (members of the Dalit caste) and Muslims are disappointing. There are no Muslims serving in the role of *Barghar-Mukhiya* in Tharu villages.

## Structure/Roles

The interview and focus group participants expressed that people love, trust, and respect their village chiefs and leaders known variously as *Barghar*, *Mukhiya*, *Matwan*, *Chaukidar*, *Agabwa*, and *Guruwa*. Research findings indicate that the model functions like three branches of government: executive, legislative, and

judicial. The *Barghar* in Bardiya – *Mukhiya* in Bara or *Matwan* in Dang serves as heads or executives, ensuring that rules and decisions are carried out. Other positions such as *Chaukidar*, *Sachiwa*, *Guruwa* and *Kulapani Chaudhari* in Dang and Bardiya and *Gumasta* in Bara – all are involved in assisting the village chiefs. Tradition and culture are closely associated with this process, as reflected throughout participants' accounts. The established norm in the Tharu village is that a morally sound, competent person should be chosen for *Barghar-Mukhiya*; and there can be other traditions associated with this process.

The participants of interviews and focus group expressed that overseeing routine transactions and use of shared resources for community members is one of *Barghar-Mukhiya-Matwan's* responsibilities, as these are connected to maintaining peace and harmony. Therefore, his/her role includes managerial, directional, and executive duties. Moreover, *Barghar-Mukhiya's* administrative and leadership duties include the issue of recommendation letters for obtaining citizenship and coordination with community volunteers and government agencies.

The Tharu community has a tradition of working for collective values. People are united in the collectivist value that brings everyone together. Underlying all the official duties of the *Barghar-Mukhiya* is the ongoing responsibility for making sure all villagers are united for a common purpose. Honesty and non-partisanship used to be vital in gaining respect and trust from the villagers to maintain village solidarity. However, they claim the traditional importance of the unity role has begun to deteriorate. According to the interviewed participants, nowadays Tharu people are divided based on political and religious lines in Tharu villages.

*Jutela*, *Gamala*, and *Khyala* are different names for the respective legislative bodies. All *Ghardhuriyas* and members of the community including, to some extent, women and youth have some input during meetings of the local legislative bodies. The legislative body is responsible for designing plans, enacting policies, and establishing rules for the community members. The proposal of the new annual plans, rules, and policies for the village is presented during the New Year *Maghi* in Dang and Bardiya or during *Faguwa* (*Holi*) in Bara.

Bringing people together for making consensus decisions by constructive engagement directly impacts their community. All villagers gather in a certain place, usually the home of the current *Barghar-Mukhiya* (village leader), to decide village issues and cases by consensus. People from outside the Tharu *Jat* (castes) are also encouraged to be a part of the *Khyala*, *Jutela-Gamala* dialogue process. This consensus-based practice is the core approach of Tharu community, which strives to find a common ground for reaching win-win resolutions. From participants' reports of collective decision-making, it can be inferred that the conflict resolution process might be strengthened through this shared experience of reaching



consensus. The consensus-based decision-making practice of Tharu is relevant in this critically divisive, partisan, and competitive modern society.

The judicial role includes: finding common ground and resolving conflicts. The *Barghar-Mukhiya-Matwan* acts as a judge if any of the customary rules are violated. Participants confirm that, as noted by Bellamy (2009), it is the *Barghar-Mukhiya-Matwan* who first hears the complaints. According to the participants, as well as researcher observations and document review, the judicial/conflict resolution job includes hearing complaints, calling trial meetings, setting up a *Samittee* (mediation committee) for the disputing parties and announcing the verdict. Negotiating with conflicting parties towards achieving win-win resolution is an important function of *Barghar, Matwan or Mukhiya*. They frequently negotiate with conflicting parties to reach a mutually agreeable solution. It is obvious that they are doing integrated negotiation (win-win), even though they are not familiar with the western concept. The decision-making process is a collective action of all villagers, but the *Barghar, Matwan or Mukhiya* is the custodian or implementer of the decisions. The main responsibility of *Barghar-Mukhiya-Matwan* is to facilitate an environment for both parties to find common grounds to compromise and reach mutually agreeable solutions (win-win resolution).

## Process

Ninety per cent of interviewed participants said that the principle of peaceful co-existence (*panchshil*) is integrated into their traditional model and includes helping each other, no interfering from outsiders, providing economic relief to the victims, etc. These principles are used in the decision-making process. Ninety-five per cent of interviewed participants responded that communal harmony; interfaith relations and religious tolerance are also maintained in the community. According to two-thirds of the interviewed participants, community dialogues are held to bring people together and maintain peace and harmony in the community.

## Types of Conflicts

Tharu people do not distinguish conflicts as western people do. Moreover, the Indigenous people define the conflicts in their context, which also differs from the mainstream society of Nepal. However, the researcher has divided the Tharu's conflicts into the following levels to ensure better clarity about the conflicts of Tharu community. When asked about the types of conflicts included in the model, 95 per cent of total participants responded that they are mostly dealing with minor offences, i.e., misdemeanours and all civil cases. Major crimes such as murder, rape and robbery must legally be reported to the police department.



### *Ghardhuriya Level (Household-Intrapersonal)*

*Ghardhuriya* (head of the household) primarily resolves conflicts between family members. Roles and power of each family member are assigned by customs and traditions. If anyone violates the customary rules, roles, and duties of the members, conflicts occur. Household property division cases are handled at *Ghardhuriya* level. But if they cannot be resolved at this level, they are taken to the higher *Bargharyia-panchayati* level. Marriage, divorce, and kinship issues are resolved within the family level. But if they cannot be resolved they are taken to the higher *Bargharyia-panchayati* level. For example, sometimes love marriage (not arranged by parents) requires *Barghar-Mukhiya* to negotiate with the parents of the boys and girls to arrange their wedding. When couples get married, they are supposed to give a gift to the *Barghar-Mukhiya*.

### *Panchayati-Barghariya Level (Village level-Inter-Household)*

Tharu of Dang and Bardiya use the term *Barghariya* and Bara's Tharu use *Panchayati* level for their respective systems when dealing with social conflicts. Conflicts between members of the village over matters such as irrigation, land boundaries, issues with role of *Barghar-Mukhiyas* and their relationships with *Barins* (households) are managed and resolved at *Panchayati-Barghariya* level. Conflicts relating with community resources, such as issues with public land, conflicts between *Kisan* (Farmer) and *Jimindar* (landlords) and conflicts between members of different households are considered as *Panchayati-Barghariya* level conflicts.

Land issues, property inheritance (and) interpersonal conflicts can be resolved at the village level. Only civil cases and some minor criminal cases, they take care of. Murder, rape and robbery cases have to be reported to police. Fights, a division of family property, theft, interpersonal conflicts, assaults and wood smuggling are the kinds of things *Barghar-Mukhiya* take care of. Conflicts can arise from various types of inequality. The nature of conflicts varies based on the caste and class stratification. Major cases are land disputes, conflict arising within or between households, social issues and inter-group conflicts. It appeared that all conflicts (cases) except murder, rape and robbery are dealt with by *Barghar-Mukhiya*.

### *Samuhik (Inter-Village, Inter-Group)*

Conflicts between two or more groups or villages are considered as *Samuhik* (inter-village, inter-group) conflicts. Villagers' issues and conflicts against NGOs, VDC and government officials are negotiated by *Barghar-Mukhiya* and handled in this level. Together, the *Barghar-Mukhiya* leaders of the conflicting villages resolve these conflicts. In some cases, due to the wider impact, *Barghar-Mukhiyas* and other *panchbhaladmi* from other villages will be invited to settle those conflicts.

Participants expressed their concern about the migration of Indian and Hill migrants that posed a threat on their sense of identity and security. One of the participants recited the proverb, *Uttarse Aayal topiwala Dacshinse Dhotiwala bichme pargail lagautiwala* meaning, 'The Hill migrants came from the North, Indians came from the South, and the Tharu are trapped in between.'

As participants reflected, conflicts such as Tharu vs. Government, Tharu vs. *Pahadiya*, Tharu vs. Indian migrants, and *Barghars* vs. VDC officials are also dealt with in the same way as other *inter-group* conflicts. Examples of this type of conflicts are threats and discrimination received by Tharu people from Nepal Government, Police, *Pahadiya*, and Indian migrants. Another example of *inter-group* conflict is political violence, such as the conflict that occurred in 2015 in Tikapur Kailali, Nepal, where eight police officers were killed (Chaudhary and Budhair 2015). In the aftermath of that violence, more police and security forces were positioned in the areas of Tharu community in retaliation for the violence. Consequently, *Barghar-Matwans* were able to negotiate with the government and security forces advocating for peace and security for the Tharu people. Torture and assaults of Tharu protesters against the government during the constitutional promulgation period (September 2015) typified this level of conflict.

#### *Inter-cultural Conflict (Western Culture/Christianity vs. Indigenous Culture)*

As participants reflected, conflicts resulting from clashes between two religions, especially threats from Christian missionaries are dealt with outside Tharu tradition and customs. Due to the coercive influence from Christian missionaries, Tharu are converting from their indigenous religion and culture. As focus group participants in Bardiya reflected, due to the vulnerability created by the poverty, Tharu people are motivated to be converted by offers of money. Additionally, corporate culture, modernisation and westernisation have undermined the Tharu's traditional way of life.

### **Conflict Resolution Steps**

If a *Ghardhuriya* or member of the village has any complaint or request, he/she reports it to *Barghar-Mukhiya* or any active leader of the community. If it is about division of family property, *Matwan* or *Agahwa* in Dang asks the party to wait until *Maghi* when all villagers will attend for celebration or selecting new leaders, etc. During the proceedings, the *Badee* (plaintiff) gets a chance to share his/her story or claim and afterward the *Pratibadee* (defendant) has the opportunity to tell his/her story. At this point, if there are witnesses, they testify, followed by other attendees who also share their concerns or suggestions. Next, *Barghar-Mukhiya* forms a *Samittee* (committee) consisting of up to seven *panchbhaladmi* (five elders to be

selected from the community members who must be from that village, experienced and persons knowledgeable about that particular issue). In a separate meeting, the *Samittee* (committee) decides the case then shares the result at the larger meeting.

### ***Implementation of the Decision***

*Barghar-Mukhiya* establishes rules on upholding villagers' moral standards, etc. and villagers who violate the village rules will be fined. It is also the *Barghar-Mukhiya* who is responsible to implement the decision. The outcome may be a fine, compensation or a light warning such as *Kan Samayer Uthbas Garaune* (Pulling ears and up and down), *Dhog Garai Mafhi Magaune* (Bowing low status).

The outcome of the decision might be the imposition of a fine to the perpetrators or warning. If the decision includes a fine, it is from 200-500 Nepalese rupees. Assistance or relief is provided to people with health problems or who have low or no income. Finally, the decision will be implemented as per the conditions laid down by the committee. As one participant noted "the punishment is based upon the offence. The circumstances of the victim, perpetrator, and the village are taken into account.

## **Reconciliation (Melmilap) Processes**

### ***Bringing People Together (Ekikrit Garne)***

What participants expressed as often referred to festivals, rituals, and other conflict resolution processes to create the reunion of family and community. Thus, the focus is always on celebration, sharing and reunion during festivals and rituals. According to two-thirds of the interviewed participants, community dialogues are held to bring people together and maintain peace and harmony.

### ***Recognition (Pahichan) or Acknowledgment (Swikriti)***

The model focuses on recognition (*Pahichan*) or acknowledgement (*Swikriti*) of the offence by the offender who has to tell what happened, why he/she committed that offence and must offer an apology. Accountability means acknowledgement of the guilt by the offender. Warnings such as asking for the apology, *Kansamayer Uthbasgarnalaune* (asking the suspect pulling his/her both ears and sit down and stand up for several times), *Dhog Garnalaune* (Bowed for low status) are part of making the offender realise that he/she should not repeat the offence.

Acknowledgement or Recognition is another way of reconciliation where perpetrators acknowledge that he/she has made mistakes and should not repeat them. Handshake ritual is used nowadays after forgiving the offender. Realisation of wrongdoing from the perpetrator is the first step towards the reconciliation.

### *Forgiveness (Maphi) and Healing (Nikoparne)*

Healing and forgiveness are core aspects of Tharu indigenous justice model. In the family and community forums known as *Gamala*, *Jutela-Khayala*, those accused of wrongdoing have to give an oral testimony before the villagers, which is key to determining what happened. Forgiveness can be personal because it should come from the victim's heart and it may not come easily. It takes the time to process the pain and become ready to forgive and some rituals may be involved.

Ninety-seven per cent of interview participants expressed that forgiveness should not be offered more than two times, based on a case-to-case basis. In order for a perpetrator to receive forgiveness, the victim must be satisfied and willing to offer it. In the past, the rape cases used to be resolved in the village, but nowadays this type of case must be reported to police as required by law. If the police investigate, district court judge decides the case. If the case is mediated at the *Barghar-Mukhiya* level, perpetrators may get forgiveness. If the rape case reaches the district court, the perpetrator gets a punishment.

In the broader context, participants expressed their concerns about how the State had marginalised and discriminated against them in the past. The ruling parties must apologise for past mistakes committed by the State, they believe. Tharu lands have been confiscated, their dignity, identity and security have been undermined, and they have been hurt by the State's discriminatory policies. They said reconciliation is needed to erase those past harms. Only then, they said, should Tharu be able to forgive, if they choose.

Holding offender responsible for their conduct may be necessary for expressing remorse to the victims and their families. Sometimes offender must offer apologies to victims and their families as well as tangible reparation.

### *Compensation (Chhetipurtibharaune) and Reparation (Harjana)*

Compensation as a means towards reconciliation is based upon the seriousness of the wrongdoing or offence and also determined by the economic condition of the offender. But if someone repeats the mistakes, their fine will be doubled. One form of reconciliation is to make the offender pay an economic fine in cash or in kind. This compensation amount should be reasonable, such as Nepalese 200-500 rupees. If someone still cannot afford this, they can kill his/her pig and have a community party, a practice that is still happening in Dang. When money is paid, reparation is possible through providing medicine for treatment of the injury and compensation for whatever loss occurred. Monetary compensation is sometimes granted to assault victims. Depending on the case, compensation collected from the offender often goes to the public fund. As part of the restorative process, donations may also be collected from villagers to cover the funeral expenses of the

victims and show solidarity. This approach serves as a way for the community to help the victims heal physically and/or emotionally and recover from the tragedy or trauma by showing sympathy. When needed, the victims of other emergencies are compensated through the public fund. The practice of sharing responsibility for fellow villagers in need, even those who committed an offence, can be compared with the common ownership principle of Marxism theory. One of the basic needs of the Tharu is security, and the researcher encountered many examples of Tharu people that expressed their sense of security.

### *Restorative Justice (Maphi Magne-Magaune)*

It provides healing for both offenders and victims. The Tharu model focuses more on prevention of conflict and restoration of the relationship between the offender and victims whenever possible. As mentioned earlier, participants claimed that public apology and pardon are common practice in Tharu villages. However, repeated or more serious offences result in a fine imposed as compensation to victims for their damages.

One of the participants reflected 'Our focus is on reforming offenders, not punishing them.' Compensation as a means towards reconciliation is based upon the seriousness of the wrongdoing or offence. It is also determined by the economic condition of the offender, but if someone repeats the mistakes, their fine will be doubled. Reparation is possible, for example, through medicine for treatment of an injury or monetary compensation granted to assault victims. In order to show community solidarity and harmony, in addition to fines paid by the perpetrator, donations may be collected from other villagers to cover the funeral expenses of the victims. The community helps victims heal and recover from the tragedy or trauma by showing sympathy.

If someone commits a crime and police arrests him, it is a community responsibility to take care of his family. His family may be dependent on him entirely, thus, it comes to everyone the responsibility to take care of his family.

The restorative justice may require the perpetrator to compensate the victims and their families with cash or food such as *murga* (chicken) and *rakshi* (local wine), etc. A public apology to the victims' family gives victims and their family an opportunity to forgive the offender and is a common restorative practice in the village. Reconciliation, community harmony, and collectivist approaches are core principles of the Tharu traditional model.

The *Barghar-Mukhiya* model values the establishment of a positive relationship between the victim and wrongdoer. They believe in restorative justice, not retributive and punitive action. All participants claimed that public apology from a wrongdoer is a common practice in Tharu villages and victims will sometimes pardon the

offender. Reforming the perpetrator is the prime goal but repeated or more serious offences result in a fine imposed as compensation to victims for their damages. Money collected from fines and compensation (*Chhetipurtibharaune*) can also be used for running schools, public buildings, and properties, thus compensating the community.

The model rejects retributive punishment because it is harmful to the offender. It restores and heals the harm. It provides healing for both offenders and victims. The Tharu model focuses more on prevention of conflict and restoration of the relationship between the offender and victims whenever possible. As mentioned earlier, participants claimed that public apology and pardon are common practice in Tharu villages. However, repeated or more serious offences result in a fine imposed as compensation to victims for their damages.

Retributive justice's primary goal is to punish the offenders but restorative justice aims at repairing or reforming the offender. Tharu have their own kinds of restorative justice practices. Healing for the offender and recognition of mistakes are the core part of the Tharu indigenous model. If the offender is unable to pay compensation as determined by the *Barghar – Mukhiya*, communities themselves collect donations to support the victims.

The main goal of Tharu indigenous conflict resolution model is to restore the relationships of conflicting parties and repair society for the future generation. So the model seeks to resolve disagreements successfully without destroying the relationships. Additionally, this conflict resolution model could help parties benefit from the past experience to learn conflict resolution skills for their own lives. Thus, the concepts of healing, reconciliation and forgiveness have been playing significant roles in maintaining peace and harmony in the community.

Howard Zehr explained the remedies as restorative justice for the victims and perpetrators. He suggests using the restorative justice approach to reform the criminal justice system (Zehr 2005). Tharu community has radically shifted its position on punishment. Participants indicated that about 40 years ago they used to practice village expulsion for committing major crimes but such harsh punishments do not exist nowadays. They have fully embraced the restorative principles.

## Implications

Peacebuilding Rituals and Conflict Transformational Festivals are the central component of the Tharu *Barghar–Mukhiya* model. Religious rituals and puja are performed to achieve eternal truth and maintain peace and harmony by transcending the interpersonal and intergroup conflicts. In researcher's findings he sees that



together, rituals and festivals seem to build peace and transform conflict in Tharu community. 'Ritual occurs in a unique social space, set aside from normal life, communicates through symbols, senses, and heightened emotions, and marks and assists in the process of change (Schirch 2005).' According to Schirch, ritual is a socialising activity, which can form, build and protect worldviews, and at the same time when the worldviews clash and conflicts arise, it gives new worldviews and avenues for solving conflicts (*ibid.*:99). This seems to exactly characterise how the researcher observed the way ritual takes place during the festivals, and festivals give people an opportunity for respite and recreation (Diwasa and Bhattarai 2009:135). Tharu festivals contain elements of reconciliation, solidarity and unity and in them one finds principles of peace and conflict resolution.

Due to Nepal being a traditionally patriarchal society in which men play dominant roles, there is a pervasive view of women as inferior. For generations, Tharu women were not allowed to participate in the meetings. However, the *Ghardhuriyan*, the female counterpart of *Ghardhuriya* (head of household), can have indirect but vital roles in decision-making. Participants noted that the *Ghardhuriya* always asks his wife before coming to conflict resolution meetings about what should be done regarding a particular conflict. The *Ghardhuriyan* may suggest to her husband "What about if we do this or resolve the issue this way?" Yet, lately women's participation is slowly increasing. Today, women have an ambiguous position in the model because they are confronted with accepting tradition and culture while coping with modernity. For Tharu women, in comparison to *Brahmin* and *Kshatriyas* (higher caste) women in Terai, they are considered inferior. But *Dalit* (untouchables) women have an even lower status among women. But all women are considered to be inferior to men. Therefore, socio-economic and caste factors greatly impact the security and identity of women in Tharu culture.

Maintaining peace and harmony and overall development in the village is the goal of the model. Participants clearly expressed that conflicts are avoided and resolved through sincere and truthful dialogue during the festivals and celebrations. This process takes energy and there may be arguments and counter arguments made, but eventually consensus decision usually prevails. The inclusion of women has been limited but is slowly changing. As reported by some participants, women are now allowed to participate in the *Gamala-Khayala-Jutela* meeting, though traditional roles and expectations still keep many women away from such meetings.

The model is based on Tharu traditions and cultural practices; however, it is inclusive to other subgroups, such as (Dalits) untouchables, Muslims and *Pahadiya* (people of Hill origin) who live in the Tharu villages. Residence in the same village provides someone a membership of the village (Tharu community) and he/she is included in the model's processes. It is not only a festival of reunion and community



togetherness, they hold a conflict resolution dialogue where village chiefs and all villagers engage in a constructive and meaningful dialogue.

Participants identified some strengths and challenges of the model, which were also verified by researcher's observations and review of documents. Win-win resolutions, consensus-driven decision-making, unity and collectivist approach, reconciliation, restorative practices, and constructive and meaningful dialogue are some strengths of the model. The Tharu model seems resilient and able to adapt to changing needs. But the model has encountered problems with outside forces such as wealthy and powerful non-Tharu and the state, which has its own formal system of law. While outsiders seek to dominate and impose their own model, the Tharu seek to defend theirs.

The primary goal of the Tharu indigenous model is to bring reconciliation among community members. The model's uniqueness, effectiveness, and strengths at the local level have resilience in responding to change. The model has a practice similar to the western concept of restorative justice (in Nepali it is called *Melmilap* meaning "reconciliation through forgiveness"), in which community and neighbourhood conflict resolution dialogues take place. The model focuses on restoration of the relationship between the conflicting parties. For example, reconciliation takes place through dialogue, symbols and rituals during *Maghi*, *Dasara*, and *Faguwa*.

## Flexibility

The model is flexible enough to adapt to modern changes. The participants expressed that education is helping to change the society. The belief that *Barghar-Mukhiya* should be educated has increased recently. The interview and focus group participants said education (state's standard) should be a requirement for being *Barghar-Mukhiya*. Inhumane customs, such as persecuting those accused of being *Boxi* (witch) and *Dian* (ghosts) have been declining in the Tharu community.

The rules of punishment have changed. Instead of expulsion from the village for certain offences, fine or compensations are paid. Women's roles are changing gradually. For example, women's groups in the villages now control alcohol consumption because it has been a major cause of domestic violence. Mothers have also started sending their daughters to school along with their sons at an equal rate. Superstitious customs such as *Boxi* (witch) and *Dian* (ghost) are decreasing. Because the Tharu *Barghar-Mukhiya* indigenous model is culture-specific, it creates community-focused outcomes that impact the whole village. Tharu's traditional justice processes represent practical and viable options for bringing genuine peace and reconciliation to the community.

The model is process oriented; the timing and cultural context play crucial roles in determining the success and failure of conflict resolution processes. The model's process reinforces inclusion and participation; all parties to the conflict are responsible for resolution. For example, during the *Maghidewani* festival, all *Ghardhuriya* (households) including women, children, and Dalit households participate in the decision-making process. Each has a right to speak in favour of or against the particular case or proposal. *Matwan* (village chief in Dang), *Barghar* (Bardiya), or *Mukhiya* (Bara) ask all *Ghardhuriyas* what should be done (during or outside the meeting), and women are asked for their opinions about what should be done. The opinions of all participants are valued when making decisions. Over time, traditions and customs are becoming more consistent with human rights principles. Torture in the name of physical punishment has been abolished. Women have more status in the family and community than ever before.

### Conceptual Model

The *Barghar-Mukhiya* indigenous model emerged from the study. The Tharu's practice of dialogue during the *Dhoghbet* and *Maghi* process can be compared with track-III diplomacy in conflict resolution where people-to-people efforts are used to make a change in the context of the conflict. Tharu use this dialogue process not only between Tharu, but also with non-Tharu and neighbouring villagers. This process can be used for resolving conflicts where similar community and neighbourhood context exists. The Tharu model based on collectivist approach, the State promotes individuality. In a collectivist and cohesive society, where the community gets preference over individuals, this model can be useful. People-to-people diplomacy known as III track diplomacy is found in the model. The community-level peacebuilding efforts in the Tharu community are an additional aspect of the field. Community dialogues that take place during the *Maghi*, and during general meetings of *Gamala* and *Khyala* and festivals and rituals have been instrumental in bringing people together for constructive conflict transformation.

Improved understanding of the model is critical because the formal justice mechanism is becoming out of reach for Tharu in terms of money, time and geographical accessibility. The huge backlog of cases and corruption in the formal justice system shows that judicial institutions are inefficient and strained. The model is transparent and open. The proceedings will be open for public with a goal of maintaining transparency and democratic process by engaging all members of the community in the process. All villagers have equal rights to participate in the meeting where the justice and reconciliation process is occurring. The meeting is usually organised outside in open space, such as the yard of the *Matwan*, *Mukhiya*, or *Barghar*, or any other public place. As a result, they are inexpensive and affordable to ordinary Tharu.

## **Applicability to Other Communities**

The study aimed to contribute valuable knowledge in the field of peace and conflict studies with the hope that it will be useful for implementation elsewhere, i.e. in other regional areas of conflict. This study contributes to insight for other countries that are in transition and have a strong presence of indigenous communities. In the context of Nepal, this study will give the Nepalese policymakers an opportunity to incorporate the recommendations suggested by the researcher and implement steps to reduce conflicts from the grassroots level. There are hundreds of dispute-related cases pending in the Nepalese court system, due to lack of enough personnel and rampant corruption in the court system. In addition, the study adds indigenous knowledge to the conflict transformation and restorative justice paradigm.

## **Restorative Practices**

Tharu's focus is on reconciliation, which is also a great asset where restorative practice is prevalent in the local context; warning and compensation are used instead of punishment. Acknowledging the wrong and asking for forgiveness open the opportunity for reconciliation. Tharu's restorative practices, forgiveness and reconciliation model can be useful elsewhere at the community and neighbourhood level. The model is based on Tharu culture, their rituals, and festivals. Yet, this model's use of dialogue and restorative approaches will be beneficial elsewhere to resolve similar conflicts and reconcile groups and communities.

The payment of compensation to the victims is integral to maintaining community harmony. Assuming that the nature of the offence warrants letting the offender stay in the community, rather than go to jail, compensation enhances the healing and reconciliation. Compensation can be in kind such as: food, grains, or occasionally providing social services for the benefit of the community. As mentioned elsewhere, it can also involve killing a pig and cooking it to serve to community members at a party hosted by the perpetrator.

## **Conclusion**

The model is a democratic, consensus-based and inclusive model because all community members can be involved in reaching a win-win resolution. It has a bottom up approach because issues and conflicts are raised from the grassroots level and solved at the community level. The ultimate goal is achieving peace and harmony in the community. Restoration of social harmony is integrated into the model, which offers opportunities to correct social ills. Because the process is open to the public, it offers lessons of inclusiveness, flexibility and a sense of collective

responsibility. The model's ability to maintain community harmony is strengthened through messages found in traditional dance, music, and rituals.

Collective decision-making involves a maximum number of villagers in a committee. This is one of the strongest advantages of the model, which enhances and keeps the communal relationships intact. This model also illustrates the principle of communicative action theory developed by Habermas (Habermas 1984) in which decisions are made by consensus by efforts of the committee members along with *Barghar-Mukhiya*. The *Gamala*, *Jutela*, and *Khyala* meetings bind households to their community and culture. The *Barghar-Mukhiya* is authorised to perform social, economic, religious, and political functions.

The 'Tharu' indigenous conflict resolution model must be recognised by Nepal's federal government as a step toward averting future conflicts. The model is based on collectivist values. Effective collaboration with local conflict resolution is also needed to strengthen the tribes' roles in local self-governance and reinforce the shared values and beliefs of the Tharu community. The researcher feels a tremendous sense of urgency to preserve the restorative, harmonious and peacebuilding aspects of the Tharu's indigenous model for future generations and cultivate understanding among Tharu and non-Tharu communities. The model focuses on dialogue that can transform conflicts between individuals or groups. Community-to-community-level dialogues are instrumental in peacebuilding. The insight gained from this process can apply in other contexts and cultures, such as with neighbourhood disputes.

The model can be applied globally, but also in a local context where indigenous groups confront other groups. The model's core of restorative practices, peace and harmony, forgiveness, reconciliation, and use of dialogue circles are useful approaches in the conflict resolution field. *Barghar-Mukhiya* and the committees help bring peace, harmony and reconciliation among the conflicting parties by reaching prompt, well-accepted decisions. The model's role of planning and development, reconciliation and peace building is significant in the context of the complete peace process after the establishment of multi-parties, democratic, republic of Nepal.

## References

- Chaudhary, G., and Budhair, M. 2015. August 25, 8 Killed in Tikapur clash, *The Kathmandupost*. Retrieved from: <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-08-25/8-killed-in-tikapur-clash.html>.
- Dahal, D.R., and Bhatta C.D. 2008. *The relevance of local conflict resolution mechanisms for systemic conflict transformation in Nepal*, A study prepared for the Berghof Foundation

- for Peace Support, Berlin. Retrieved from [http://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Other\\_Resources/NEP\\_Local\\_Conflict\\_Resolution\\_Mechanisms.pdf](http://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Other_Resources/NEP_Local_Conflict_Resolution_Mechanisms.pdf).
- Dahit, G. 2009. *Introduction of Tharu organisational system: Tharu indigenous knowledge and practices*, Nayagaun, Bardiya: UNYC Nepal.
- Diwasa, T., and Bhattarai, G.R. (Eds.). 2009. *Tharu folklore and folklife: A survey of living cultural heritage of Tharu people*, Kathmandu: Nepali Folklore Society.
- Guneratne, A. 2002. *Many tongues, one people: The making of Tharu identity in Nepal*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Habermas, J. 1984. *The theory of communicative action Volume 1: Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. A. McCarthy, Trans.), Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Khadka, N.B. 2016. *Tharu Barghar-Mukhiya Indigenous Model: A case study of Tharu Community of Nepal*. Retrieved from [http://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss\\_dcar\\_etd/47](http://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss_dcar_etd/47).
- Sarwahari, K. 2013. *Tharu guruwa ra mantrajyan (Tharu guruwa and mantras knowledge)*, Kathmandu: Tharu Journalist Association.
- Schirch, L. 2005. *Ritual and symbol in peacebuilding*, Bloomfield, CT, USA: Kumarian Press: Inc.
- Statistical Year Book of Nepal. 2013. Central Bureau of Statistics, Ramshahpath, Thapathali Kathmandu. Retrieved from [http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Publication/Statistical%20Year%20book%202013\\_SS/Statistical-Year-book-2013\\_SS.pdf](http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Publication/Statistical%20Year%20book%202013_SS/Statistical-Year-book-2013_SS.pdf).
- Tharu, A. 2007. *Tharu loksahitya, itihās, kalā, ra darshan [History, art and philosophy in Tharu folk literature]*. Tulsipur, Dang, Nepal: Change Agent's Forum- Nepal.
- Volker, B. 2011. *Traditional approaches to conflict transformation: Potentials and limit*. Retrieved from <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>.
- Zehr, H. 2005. *Changing lenses: A new focus for crime and justice*, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press.

## CHAPTER 41

### Peace-making Revolution

#### Towards a New Politics of Transformative Harmony in the Israeli-Palestinian Struggle

*Sapir Handelman*

How to transform a desperate situation of intractable conflict, like the Israeli-Palestinian case, into a peaceful social order?

The central argument in this chapter is that a peacemaking revolution is needed to create a transformative change towards peace and stability in difficult social crises. A peacemaking revolution turns opposing parties into a peacemaking community that takes into account that peace has to be made, built and kept. This kind of a multifaceted approach to peace is needed to create the foundations of transformative harmony, a social configuration where tensions, disputes and disagreements are resolved by peaceful means.

#### **Introduction: The Israeli-Palestinian Struggle, Intractable Conflict and Peacemaking Revolution**

The Israeli-Palestinian case is a classic example of intractable conflict where ordinary citizens, and not standing armies, are at the centre of the confrontation. It is a long struggle where generations in turn are born into a reality of ongoing

violent struggle. The conventional wisdom is that everything has been said and tried and that this is a desperate situation.<sup>1</sup>

The central argument in this chapter is that a peacemaking revolution is needed in order to break the chain of destruction and create the socio-political conditions for peace and stability. The chapter presents the concept of a peacemaking revolution from a contractual perspective.<sup>2</sup> From this point of view, a peacemaking revolution turns opposing parties into a peacemaking community which engages the various societal elements of the opposing parties in the struggle for change. A powerful instrument that has the potential to transform opposing parties into a large peacemaking community is a major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress (cf. Handelman 2015).

The congress is a democratic peacemaking institution that invites representatives of the opposing parties to discuss debate and negotiate solutions to the conflict and the necessary mechanisms to build and keep order and stability. It intends to provide a public forum to engage the leaderships and the people in a search for a framework (rules and institutions) that can create the socio-political conditions for a long-lasting change. The congress needs to be a dynamic institution that can be developed, changed and modified according to the different stages of the peace process.

A major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress – which focuses on the construction of socio-political mechanisms to peacemaking, peace-building and peace-keeping – could be a central element in the struggle to build a peaceful social order with a dynamic that is subject to principles of transformative harmony.

## **Elitism, Populism and Contractualism: Who Should Negotiate?**

One of the main controversial questions in Peace and Conflict Studies is: Who should be actively involved in a negotiating interaction that could create the conditions for change?

Elitists and human needs theorists will argue that leaders and political elites should be involved in any peacemaking process in general and lead any negotiating interaction in particular. Political elites have the wisdom, talent and experience to come up with new innovative ideas, formulate a negotiated vision, and conclude effective peace agreements. Moreover, they have the ability to reach a settlement that addresses the basic fears, needs and concerns of the opposing parties that constantly fuel the conflict and make it so intractable.<sup>3</sup> No doubt, populists will object and reject this kind of elitist view.



Populists will point out that leaders and political elites are part of the problem (cf. Ionescu and Gellner 1996). They are constantly occupied in maintaining their prestigious socio-political status and, often enough, they are interested in preserving a conflicting situation which is beneficial for their interests and political power. Moreover, according to populism, political elites cannot reach a solution that addresses the fears and needs of ordinary people who constantly suffer from the ongoing conflict and, often enough, pay the price for it on a daily basis. Political elites are not capable of understanding the main concerns of ordinary people.

Creating an effective change in situations of intractable conflict, according to populists, requires a revolutionary process which brings a drastic change in the values, myths, priorities, and institutions within the opposing parties and replaces the leaderships.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it is critical that any revolutionary peace process will reflect the will of the people. The question is: Who can determine the will of the people and how?

Contractualists, who hold a liberal point of view, will argue that it is an impossible mission for any human being to determine 'the will of the people.' Any society is a composite of different individuals who hold different viewpoints, preferences and priorities. Therefore, any attempt to determine 'the will of the people' is destined to fail and eventually, as Hayek (1944) and other free market economists have showed, will lead to dictatorship – one person imposes his views on others. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the prime candidate of populists to determine and reflect 'the will of the people' is a strong charismatic dictator.

Contractualists will accept the populist criticism of elitism. They will emphasize that in difficult situations of intractable conflict, like the Israeli-Palestinian case, a peace process that depends only on political elites and the incumbent leaderships is destined to fail (cf. Handelman and Pearson 2014:4). As Machiavelli (1979) taught us, about 500 years ago, leaders are unreliable politicians and they are subject to human limitations. In difficult situations of intractable conflict, it would be very difficult for leaders to gain public support to promote the culture of peace and to overcome ongoing violent crises by peaceful means.

One of the symptoms of intractable conflict is that almost any substantial progress toward peace and stability leads to a significant increase in the level of violence.<sup>5</sup> In South Africa, for example, between 1984 and the early 1990s about 15,000 people lost their lives in political violence. More than half of them died during the negotiations on the transition to non-racial democracy at the beginning of the 1990s (Sisk 1994:52).

The phenomenon of ongoing violent episodes during a peace process, caused either by rejectionists (for example, the assassination of the Israeli Prime-Minister

Itzhak Rabin and the Palestinian suicide bombing during the Oslo accords) or by dislocations during transition and transformation (e.g., the emergence of newly empowered social classes and groups with demands), has the potential to crush almost any peacemaking initiative. Therefore, contractualists will accept the populist demand that any effective peacemaking process needs to get the support of the people and reflect their will. However, they will object to and reject the populist view that a new populist charismatic dictator, who speaks in 'the name of the people', indeed, reflects 'the will of the people' and can bring salvation.

Populist leaders tend to increase tensions and conflicts by unifying and polarising. Often enough, they use their charisma to unify a segment of people and turn them against 'the others'. In the name of 'the will of the people', they use manipulative rhetoric of fear and hate to divide society between good and evil. For example: blacks against whites, the Arab world against the west, and the people against the "corrupt" elites.<sup>6</sup>

Contractualists do not trust human leaders, especially the charismatic dictators. According to their view, it is better to trust rules and institutions than human leaders. The contractualist peacemaking challenge is to build socio-political mechanisms that can involve the different societal elements in the struggle for change and channel their actions to work for the construction of a new peaceful social order (cf. Handelman and Pearson 2014:11).

## **Peacemaking Revolution: Leaders, People And Institutions**

Who are the central societal elements that should be involved in the struggle to create a revolutionary peacemaking change in difficult situations of intractable conflict?

Following the endless elitist-populist debate, contractualists identify two major societal elements that should be involved in the peacemaking game: leaders and people.<sup>7</sup> Leaders would be responsible to negotiate solutions to the conflict, to prepare their people for change, and to create the socio-political framework (rules and institutions) for peace and stability. Ordinary people have to be prepared for a new social order, ready to cope with crises during the peacemaking process, and ensure that their leaders work for the public benefit and stick to the process. Leaders and people involved in peacemaking efforts are interdependent.

Leaders cannot initiate an effective peacemaking policy without public support; while people who are involved in the peacemaking process invite visionary peacemaking leaders to the stage of politics and demand that they initiate an effective peacemaking agenda. However, it is extremely difficult to create such a

peacemaking circulating structure that involves leaders and people in the struggle for change.

Leaders, as realists and populists have taught us often enough, are motivated by a strong desire for political power and, often enough, they do not see any personal benefit from leading a difficult struggle for peace. To make sure that leaders are doing their very best to promote peace and stability as the primary interest, the public in the opposing parties needs to be engaged in the peacemaking process (Handelman and Pearson 2014:10-11). However, it is also very difficult to engage 'the people' in the peacemaking struggle.

In general, it is a challenge to involve 'the people' in almost any revolutionary struggle for change. One of the main reasons is 'the free rider problem' – most of the people prefer to take care of their own immediate personal affairs (which include a struggle to fulfil basic needs such as food, shelter and education) than to protest in the streets (Walt 1992). The inability to motivate enough people to actively participate in the struggle for change is one of the main reasons that most revolutionary attempts fail. The very nature of protracted violent conflict makes this problem more difficult.

One of the symptoms of intractable conflict is that the moderate centre is desperate and does not see a way out of the crisis. This situation creates a political vacuum which enables radicals, who have a clear agenda, to dictate conditions to everyone. In order to motivate 'the people' to get involved in the struggle for change, they need to see a viable political alternative to the violent conflict that can give a realistic hope for the construction of a peaceful social order that has the potential to improve their quality of life.

The contractualist peacemaker's challenge, then, is to find a mechanism that can involve leaders and people in the struggle for change and transform the opposing parties into a large peacemaking community. The members in peacemaking community are committed to searching for a contractual framework to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. A peacemaking institution that has the potential to help transform conflicting parties into a large peacemaking community is a major public negotiating congress. The congress is a democratic peacemaking institution that invites representatives of the opposing parties to engage in ongoing joint public discussion, debate and negotiation regarding possibilities for resolving the conflict and building the foundations of a new peaceful social order.<sup>8</sup>

The vision of an ideal public negotiating congress is based on the multiparty talks of the 1990s that helped to create a revolutionary transformation in two difficult situations of intractable conflict: the "troubles" in Northern Ireland and the struggle against the Apartheid regime in South Africa.<sup>9</sup> Theories of socio-political

evolution point out that progress is, often enough, achieved by copying successful institutions and modifying them according to new situations.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the challenge is to build a similar institution in the Israeli-Palestinian situation. It is clear that this new peacemaking institution will be a modified version of the multi-party talks in Northern Ireland and South Africa with different structures and modes of operation.

## **Public Negotiating Congress – A Peacemaking Revolutionary Institution**

A public negotiating congress is a peacemaking institution that is designed to engage leaders and people in the peacemaking struggle. It stems from the idea that leaders require consistent and persistent pressure from below to remain diligent in searching for ways out of what have become semi-comfortable impasses in persistent long-term conflict situations. The people will create such a pressure only if they see hope for a new politics that can, effectively and efficiently, address their basic needs, fears and concerns by peaceful means (Handelman and Pearson 2014:6-7).

A credible public negotiating congress should reflect the diversity of opinions in the opposing societies and demonstrate that there is a peaceful way to achieve controversial goals. The dialogue in the congress is intended to involve the different societal elements in the opposing parties in the struggle to end the conflict through various mechanisms. For example, provoking a public debate within the opposing sides on sensitive and critical issues (such as, Jerusalem and refugees in the Israeli-Palestinian case); preparing the opposing parties for painful compromises (such as territorial concessions); creating public support for a peaceful and stable new social order (new rules and institutions); and motivating the leaders to conclude agreements (the threat that they will be replaced by a new peacemaking political power).

Three methods of choosing delegates can give the congress credibility, introduce a new peacemaking politics, and maintain a direct contact between the negotiators, the leaders and the people – (1) holding special elections within each of the opposing parties, especially for the congress; (2) inviting active political parties to send delegations, or (3) nominating a search committee that will ask various societal sectors (such as clergy, academia and business) to send delegates (Handelman 2011:92).

A firm rule to begin with is commitment of every representative to stop, or at least to suspend the violent struggle and condemn any effort to gain political objectives by aggressive means.<sup>11</sup> This is a necessary condition to transform

the violent struggle, which can be viewed as a destructive competition, into a constructive contest, which means negotiations by peaceful means.<sup>12</sup> A constructive competition invites new ideas to the stage of politics, creates commitment to promote the culture of peace, and gives opportunity for a new peacemaking force to gain momentum.<sup>13</sup> However, this is not enough. The negotiators in the congress need to take into account that peace has to be made, built and kept (cf. Galtung 1976).

## **Peacemaking, Peacebuilding And Peacekeeping**

Public Negotiating Congress (PNC) is a revolutionary institution that brings a new thinking, knowledge, logic and spirit into politics and public discourse. A revolutionary peacemaking approach in this situation has to cope with the observation that the fate of Israelis and Palestinians is intertwined. Even if the end goal is 'two-state solution' – an independent Palestinian state standing side by side to Israel – it seems impossible to create a hermetic separation between the two future independent entities. The contact between Israelis and Palestinians is unavoidable in almost any aspect of the social life, for example: geographically (e.g. Israeli territory separates Gaza and the West Bank), economically (e.g. the interdependence between Palestinian economy and Israeli economy) and, even, emotionally (e.g. Arab Israelis are relatives of Palestinians in the territories). In this complicated situation a revolutionary approach to peace requires applying peacemaking, peace-building and peace-keeping measures simultaneously (cf. Kelman 2010). However, peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping are controversial terms that should have different meanings in different situations. For example, the UN was established after the Second World War as a major peacekeeping institution that would be able to cope, stop and prevent clashes between mass armies (Snow 2010:100-111). The Israeli-Palestinian situation – an intractable conflict where ordinary citizens and not standing armies are at the centre of the struggle – is a different kind of social crisis that requires a different approach to peacekeeping. In general, the lesson is that the three concepts – which could be building blocks for the construction of a revolutionary approach to change – should be devised and developed according to the logic of the situation (cf. Popper 1994). Moreover, since the three terms could have different meaning to different people, their meaning should be negotiated by the representatives of the opposing parties at the beginning of the congress. However, it could be useful to suggest an initial interpretation to the three terms as an opening move that could help design the structure and the operation of the congress.

As an initial position that can help marketing the idea of establishing a major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress and demonstrating its importance,

I suggest the following interpretations: Peacemaking – a negotiation process to reach a settlement that could put an end to the conflict;<sup>14</sup> Peace-building – building peaceful relationships between the opposing parties and creating socio-political mechanisms that could address their needs, interests and concerns (Fisher 1993:249); Peacekeeping – building the foundations for a long-lasting peace by creating socio-political and militaristic mechanisms to keep law, order and stability.<sup>15</sup>

This initial suggestion intends to emphasize that a multidimensional approach is needed in order to build the foundations of a long-lasting positive change in the Israeli-Palestinian situation. However, the description of each of these categories also demonstrates that the three measures of peace – peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping – are intertwined, and it is sometimes difficult and even impossible to draw the exact line between them (cf. Ratner 1996:21, James 1990:9). For example, it is quite clear that peacekeeping and peace-building considerations should influence the negotiations on the solution to the conflict (peacemaking) and vice versa.

The distinction between peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping is more of a theoretical outline to facilitate our understanding of the situation, helps construct a multifaceted strategy to cope with the conflict, and assists in developing new ideas. The negotiators in a major Israeli-Public negotiating congress must keep in mind that the categories – peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping – need to be developed and changed as the negotiations progress.

The idea of establishing a major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress that focuses on different aspects of peace may sound inspiring. However, the situation on the ground does not give us any sign that such a peacemaking institution will be established in the near future. How could we create a momentum for the establishment of a major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress with political power? Is it realistic even to dream about the establishment of such a peacemaking institution? What roles would the congress play in the different stages of an ideal peace process (peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping)?

## **The Minds of Peace Experiment – Transformative Harmony As Peacemaking**

The idea of establishing a major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress is inspired by the multiparty talks that helped in creating a revolutionary transformation in South Africa and Northern Ireland during the 1990s. In both the cases the multiparty talks were established by the leaderships. In the Israeli-Palestinian case the situation is different.

In South Africa, the congresses were created by two visionary leaders – Nelson Mandela, the leader of the African National Congress (ANC) and William F.W. deKlerk, the last president of Apartheid South Africa. Both leaders understood the importance of public support and involvement in the peacemaking process (cf. Zartman 1995:155). It is impossible to identify Israeli and Palestinian visionary leaders, similar to Mandela and deKlerk, who understand the importance of public involvement in the struggle for change.

In Northern Ireland, the multiparty talks were established by communal leaders who were supported and pressured by the governments of Britain, the Irish Republic and the USA (cf. Mitchell 1999). In the Israeli-Palestinian case, in contrast to Northern Ireland and despite almost 30 years of ongoing failures, the international community is still focusing on political-elite diplomacy as the main peacemaking channel while taking almost no measures to involve the people in the struggle to end the conflict. Can a major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress grow from the grassroots level?

To explore possibilities to cope with the challenge, short-term Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congresses – called the Minds of Peace Experiment (MOPE) – have been conducted in major universities around the US and Canada, in the West Bank, and recently in open public places in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The MOPE invites Israeli delegations and Palestinian delegations from all walks of life to negotiate specific future-oriented solutions to their conflict. The dialogue is conducted in front of a public audience, which is invited to participate in the peacemaking process at the end of each session. The result is that the discussions and negotiations are conducted at three levels: between the Israeli and Palestinian delegations, within each delegation (every participant in each side has his or her own individual perspective generally across a wide political spectrum), and between the two delegations and the audience (Handelman 2010:511-28).

The initiative involves two stages. In the preliminary stage, the two delegations are requested to conclude a general agreement on trust-building measures and on the suspension of violence. In the second stage, the assignment of the two delegations is to reach a conclusive peace pact that can put an end to the conflict. In general, the whole process consists of five formal two hour sessions over two or three days.

There are two ground rules for the discussion. The first is not to demean others. The second is not to enter into historical debate upon the origin of the conflict and past evils (cf. Kelman 1996:106). The delegations are instructed to focus upon improving the present situation, to visualise a peaceful future, to draft a language that works for both parties, to think about creative ideas that can progress



the negotiations, and to make demands by peaceful means (cf. Buchanan 1975; 2004:133-144).

The ground rules are designed to create commitment to the peacemaking process, to help control emotions by encouraging the use of cognitive skills, and to make the discussions efficient and constructive. It is clear that each side has its own version of the 'historical truth' which can lead to a frustrated debate. Therefore, the two sides are requested to take a step beyond their mutual historically determined narratives in order to engage in a critical discussion about improving the future.

Following the idea that peacemaking is a process of discovery, a process where the two people should find, mostly by themselves, the road to peacefully end the conflict, the congress is co-chaired by Israeli and Palestinian moderators (Handelman 2010:511-14). The use of Israeli and Palestinian moderators intends to help bypass cultural barriers in a way that a 'neutral' third party (i.e., like officials from the US) cannot do (cf. Hamdan and Pearson 2014). Indeed, the moderators play an important role during the formal negotiations and behind the scenes. Their responsibility includes: motivating the panellists and the audience to follow the rules of the game; encouraging pluralism of opinions by motivating panellists with diverse perspectives to present their ideas; reducing tensions between the two delegations and within each delegation; suggesting ideas that can progress the dialogue, especially in stalemate situations; motivating the delegations to come prepared to each session; and clarifying controversies, especially in difficult moments when the panellists lose concentration (cf. Kriesberg 2001:378).

The experiments, in the general format that have been described, have been conducted 26 times in different locations. The Palestinians and the Israelis in the various rounds were heterogeneous in regard to substantial parameters, such as political views, age, gender, education, and occupation. Among the participants there were ex-generals, Israeli settlers, Palestinians who spent many years in Israeli jails for resisting the occupation, students, business people, educators and people who lost loved ones in the conflict.<sup>16</sup> In general, the Israeli participants, who reflect the diversity of opinion in the Israeli public, included those who believe that peace is impossible and others who think that Palestinians deserve immediate concessions. The Palestinian delegations included participants who advocated different solutions to the conflict (one state, two states or confederation).<sup>17</sup> The audience in each round was also heterogeneous, including supporters of either side, various religions (Muslim, Christians, and Jews), different political views, and different ages.

The negotiations in each MOPE assembly developed differently. Each assembly faced difficulties and sometimes even crises for various reasons, including gaps between participant positions within and between delegations, contrasting

mentality, lack of trust, and spoilers. However, almost all of the congresses did not collapse. Moreover, almost every congress succeeded in coming up with at least with one agreement. It was impressive to observe the determination of the negotiators and the audience to use means of peaceful dialogue to find solutions to the various problems that the conflict encompasses.<sup>18</sup> Surprisingly, in many sessions, it was the hardliners who led their delegations toward compromises that they have constantly rejected in the past. It was fascinating to learn that it is not only professional politicians, like Anwar Sadat and Ariel Sharon, who can shift and alternate their political strategy dramatically.<sup>19</sup> How can we explain this strange phenomenon?

It might sound suspicious to learn that Israelis and Palestinians, from different back grounds, have succeeded in reaching agreements in so many negotiating sessions. What is the “magic formula” of the MOPE that has enabled ordinary citizens to succeed so many times in a place that their leaderships have constantly failed? Perhaps, Giri’s (2017) perception of ‘transformative harmony’ can help in shedding light on the astonishing results of the MOPE. Indeed, the experiments succeeded to demonstrate that Giri’s idea of transformative harmony is not only a theoretical concept but also a practical one.

The MOPE can be classified as a ‘short term solution-focused negotiation.’ History shows that these types of negotiations can be a powerful tool that could help in reaching settlements in situations of entrenched conflicts.<sup>20</sup> The structure and the operation of the MOPE – which included two native moderators, trust building measures, ground rules, and a time frame – enabled the delegations to create commitment to the process.<sup>21</sup> Commitment is a strong motivation that compelled the participants to be engaged in a constructive critical discussion subject to principles of ‘compassion and confrontation’ which are the operating mechanism of Giri’s (2017) version of transformative harmony. Compassion – which means the ability to listen and understand the fears, needs, joy and suffering of others – is very important for engaging opponents in constructive confrontation, which means negotiating solutions to the main concerns of the parties.

Compassion enabled both sides to raise doubts in entrenched conventions, examine critically their viewpoints, and negotiate within themselves different options including possibilities that they would not have considered before. Confrontation, which is subject to general ground rules, obligated the negotiators to search for practical solutions to the main difficult problems. Thus, the structure of the MOPE succeeded in creating critical discussion which led to surprising results.

The power of the MOPE is that it succeeded in demonstrating that ordinary people who hold different political views can agree on solutions to the most

difficult and sensitive problems of the conflict. Moreover, many Israelis and Palestinians who participated in the MOPE committed to continue and develop the initiative, devote their time to work for peace, and to continue meeting if practical. However, human enthusiasm is usually unsustainable and it is extremely difficult to create a long-lasting change in people's mind, behaviour and attitude, especially in situations of long-lasting social crisis (Handelman 2010:520-521). Even the biblical Hebrews, who had experienced the miracles of God in Egypt, at the first major crisis forgot their saviour, reverted to their old entrenched beliefs and were about to return to paganism.

Preserving effective dialogue and promoting the development of contractual commitments to create the conditions for peace and stability is very difficult. Contractualists believe that the only method to preserve and develop these changes – changes that can influence the mind, behaviour and attitude of human beings – is to create rules and institutions in the spirit of the new thinking (Handelman and Pearson 2014:17). To put it differently, it is necessary to create the socio-political framework for peacemaking, peace-building and peace-keeping.

The establishment of a major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress could offer an alternative channel to the violent struggle, a way in which public input is not confined to extremists and rejectionists and create massive pressure for new contractual understandings. As the experiments have demonstrated again and again, a major public negotiating congress has the potential to transform conflicting parties into a peacemaking community. Therefore, there is a need to bring the peacemaking effect of the MOPE to every house in Israel and the Palestinian territories in order to create a massive demand for constructive public engagement.

The MOPE initiative is growing, expanding and beginning to attract more attention. Mass congresses, which include 500 and 1000 Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, have been organised in central public places.<sup>22</sup> However, the initiative is far from creating a momentum for the establishment of a major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress with political power. Moreover, I did not find any historical example where a major public negotiating congress grew out of ordinary people's interaction. Unfortunately, at this stage, it is not clear how to build momentum for peacemaking revolution where Israelis and Palestinians are being transformed into a large peacemaking community.<sup>23</sup>

## **Concluding Remarks**

The very nature of intractable conflict points out that creating an effective change towards peace and stability in the Israeli-Palestinian case requires a peacemaking revolution. From a contractualist perspective, a peacemaking revolution transforms

opposing parties into a peacemaking community that involves the different societal elements of contrasting parties in the struggle for change. A public negotiating congress is a peacemaking institution that could help to create, shape and maintain the revolutionary configuration of a peacemaking community.

The congress is a democratic institution that provides a political alternative to the violent struggle, prepares the public for a new social order, and creates a pressure on the leaderships to conclude agreements. However, transforming conflicting parties into a large peacemaking community that could reach and accept peace agreements is only one important step in the struggle to build a long-lasting change. The reason is that peace has to be made, built and kept (Galtung 1976). These conditions for a long-lasting peaceful social order have to be taken into consideration at the beginning of the peacemaking process.

In difficult situations of intractable conflict, like the Israeli-Palestinian situation, the friction between the opposing societies is inevitable. In this specific conflict, even the consensus solution 'two-state solution', which means political and legal separation between the two sides, cannot create hermetic departure. As previously mentioned, the contact between Israelis and Palestinians is unavoidable in almost any possible dimension of the social life. The two sides will need to create peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping mechanisms which operate on multiple levels in order to create the conditions of a long-lasting peace. While peacemaking involves efforts to bring conflicting parties to reach agreements and settle; peace-building focuses on structuring the foundations for long-lasting peaceful relationships by multidimensional measures, such as economic cooperation, peace education, and reconciliation processes to overcome past bitterness and unresolved grievances; Peacekeeping encompasses the use of security forces to maintain law and order and the establishment of socio-political mechanisms to resolve controversies and tensions as they arise. The distinction, or perhaps the artificial distinction, between the three concepts – peacemaking, peace-building and peace-keeping – intends to demonstrate that a multifaceted approach to change is needed to transform a situation of protracted violent conflict into a peaceful social order.

The evolutionary process of building a long-lasting change in difficult situations of intractable conflict requires the transformation of conflicting parties into a peacemaking community which would be transformed into a peacekeeping community. Peacekeeping community—or in Deutsch's language: security community, and in Giri's terminology: transformative harmonious social order—"is one in which there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way" (Deutsch *et al.* 1957:5)

Any peaceful social order will need to provide mechanisms to deal with unavoidable controversies and strains between its members. Critical discussion is Karl Popper's (1947) instrument for resolving unavoidable tensions and disputes by peaceful means. 'Compassion and confrontation' is Giri's (2017) instruments to peacefully deal with inevitable controversies and conflicts.

Karl Popper emphasizes that critical discussion – which raises doubts in each one's position – is an effective instrument to build consensus among different members of a pluralistic and multicultural social order. According to Popper (1947), consensus is a compromise that needs to be achieved in a critical discussion between different individuals who are destined to live in a neighbourhood and hold different viewpoints, incompatible preferences, and even conflicting interests. Giri (2017) points out that coupling 'compassion and confrontation' is a powerful instrument for building and keeping peace and stability. Compassion – which "means to share in suffering and joy with others" – and confrontation – which "means to challenge and transform parts of self and society which do not help us to blossom and realise our potential" – are key elements in the struggle to build, shape and maintain a peaceful and prosperous social order.

Contractualists will claim that Popper's 'critical discussion' and Giri's 'compassion and confrontation' could be powerful tools for handling tensions and disputes and channelling them to work for the benefit of a pluralistic society only in a framework of adequate rules and institutions (cf. Buchanan 2001, Vanberg 2005:25-26). A major Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating congress, which is originally designed to be a peacemaking institution, could be transformed into a peace-building and peacekeeping institution once a settlement has been achieved. While, in the peacemaking phase the congress intends to provide political alternative to the violent struggle, involve the people in the peacemaking efforts and press the leaderships to conclude agreements; In the peacekeeping stage, the congress can provide platforms to peacefully deal with unavoidable tension and disputes, initiate and coordinate joint activities, and create socio-political instruments for reconciliation processes to overcome past bitterness and grievances. The exact structure, function and authority of the congress in the different phases have to be discussed, negotiated and decided by the parties.

A transformation of the public negotiating congress from a peacemaking institution into a peace-building and peacekeeping institution can be a stepping stone in the creation of the necessary framework for a peaceful social order whether you name it 'peacekeeping community', 'security community' or 'transformative harmonious social order.'

---

## Endnotes

1. For a comprehensive presentation and analysis of the classic characteristics of intractable conflict, see Kriesberg (1993), Bar-tal (1998), Colman (2000), Kelman (2007).
2. For a further discussion on contractualist approach to peace and conflict studies, see Handelman and Pearson (2014) and Handelman (2015).
3. Human needs theorists, such as John Burton and Herbert Kelman, argue that an effective negotiating interaction involves a problem solving facilitator that helps political-elites reaching an agreement that addresses the fears and needs of the opposing parties. See, for example, Kelman (1996:100).
4. For a further discussion on the very nature of a major revolution, see Friedrich (1996) and Huntington (2006).
5. For a further discussion, see Handelman (2015:5-7).
6. For a further discussion, see, for example, Podeh and Winckler (2004).
7. Handelman and Pearson (2014:8-11) have reached the same conclusion while the dealt with this issue from a different perspective.
8. According to Huntington (2006:9-10), three elements are necessary to turn different groups into a community: agreement on rules, common interest and institutions. Handelman (2015) describes the conditions that can turn conflicting parties into a peacemaking community from Huntingtonian perspective.
9. For a comprehensive account of the South African case, see Sparks (1994). For a comprehensive account of the Northern Ireland case, see Mitchell (1999).
10. Compare to Hayek (1960:59): "...in social evolution, the decisive factor is not the selection of the physical and inheritable properties of the individuals but the selection and imitation of successful institutions and habits."
11. Violence is an ambiguous term that has different meanings to different people. It is especially noticeable in difficult situations of intractable conflict where the opposing parties hold competing narratives, are entrenched in opposing conventions, and are struggling to fulfill incompatible needs. For a further discussion upon this problem and different methods to cope with it, see Handelman (2015:6-7).
12. Constitutional economists argue that constructive competition can emerge only in an adequate framework of rules and institutions (Buchanan 2001, Vanberg 2005). Hayek (1978) emphasizes that constructive competition can be a vehicle for innovations, elaborations and discoveries.
13. The congress is a major peacemaking institution that provides diplomatic tracks that can both bypass and impact governments. It has the potential to create the conditions for inviting new powerful political forces that can pose a real threat to the leaders' control (cf. Huntington 2006:8-12). Thus, even the idea of establishing the congress can motivate the incumbent leaderships to conclude agreements. Even Mandela and deKlerk, the main political force behind the establishment of the multi-party



congresses in South Africa, understood the challenge that the new initiative could raise to their leadership (cf. De Klerk 2002).

14. Fisher (1993:249) claims that “Peacemaking is a conflict resolution approach... practiced by a variety of third parties...” In our approach, negotiating processes, especially in the Israeli-Palestinian case, should not necessarily be led by third parties. Representatives of the opposing factions can lead certain negotiating engagements and help bypass major obstacles—such as cultural gaps—in a way that a ‘neutral’ third party—such as officials from the US in the Israeli-Palestinian case—cannot do. For a further discussion, see Handelman (2015:15).
15. Cf. Handelman (2015:9-10). Some scholars associate peace-building with the construction of an adequate framework (rules and institutions) for peace and stability. However, as it is mentioned in a United Nations report: “History has taught us that peacekeepers and peace-builders are inseparable partners in complex operations.” See Lakhdar, Brahimi. “Report of the Panel on United Nations Operations,” United Nations document A/55/305 – S/200/809, 21 (August 2000:5).
16. Selecting the negotiators was made by Israelis and Palestinians independently and was affected by available population samples in the region of the dialogue.
17. There are major differences between Palestinians who live in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Diaspora. For example, as Pearson (2012:74-87) noted, some Palestinians raise the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their previous homes in Israel as one of the central urgent issues. These Palestinians are often those who have lived in the Diaspora for many years and even generations. Others, usually Palestinians who live in the territories, believe that establishing an independent Palestinian state and dismantling everyday impediments to life should take first priority.
18. It was especially noticeable in the first round in Beit Jala in the West Bank (August 2009) which was conducted during Ramadan (the Islamic month of fasting). Most Palestinians, who were religious Muslims, fasted during the whole negotiating process. This physical challenge did not affect their enthusiasm to negotiate peace and the two delegations, despite major gaps in viewpoints, succeeded in reaching two agreements. Here is a short video documenting this round of the MOPE: <https://vimeo.com/41727159>
19. A detailed analysis of the first rounds of the MOPE and their practical implications is beyond the scope of this paper and can be found in Handelman (2014).
20. For example, it is quite acceptable to believe that the organised crime in the US was born in this kind of negotiating venue. The Atlantic City conference in 1929 is considered to be the event that turned the American Mafia into a multi-ethnic organised crime syndicate. Representatives of crime families, which were competing and struggling with each other, came to a three-day conference to negotiate principles for cooperation and solving internal disputes by ‘peaceful’ means. As we can see even today, the implications of the meeting benefited rival criminal gangs by being the first step towards the creation of a proto-confederation of multi-criminal entities. For a further discussion on the Atlantic City Conference, see Sifakis (1999). For a



comparison between the Atlantic City Conference and the MOPE, see Handelman (2015:17).

21. The experiment is based upon creating commitment and a certain group dynamic rather than rational expectations from each participant, cf. Axelrod (1997:127).
22. On July 22, 2016, 500 Israelis and Palestinians negotiated peace in Rothschild Boulevard, Tel-Aviv. Here is a video report: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHsL0eCxS5c&feature=youtu.be>
23. It is a challenge to create the socio-political framework that could involve a major part of the opposing parties in a 'compassion and confrontation' peacemaking dynamic. This difficulty reminds us that Freud's (1965) dream to bring psychoanalysis to the masses remained a fantasy.

## References

- Axelrod, Robert. 1977. *The Complexity of Cooperation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Banks, Michael. 1984. "The evolution of International relations theory", in Michael Banks (ed.), *Conflict in World Society: A New Perspective in International Relations*. Sussex: Wheatsheaf books.
- Bar-Siman-Tov, Yaacov. 2007. "Dialectic between Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution", in Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov (ed.), *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: From Conflict Resolution to Conflict Management*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bar-Tal, Daniel. 1998. "Societal beliefs in times of intractable conflict: The Israeli case." *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 9(1):22-50.
- Bickerton, Ian and Carla L. Klausner. 2007. *A Concise History of the Arab Israeli Conflict*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bronfenbrenner, Urie. 1961. "The Mirror Image in Soviet-American Relations: A Social Psychologist's Report." *Journal of Social Issues*, 17:45-56.
- Buchanan, James. 1975. *The Limits of Liberty: Between Anarchy and Leviathan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2001. *The Collected Works of James M. Buchanan, Vol. 17. Moral Science and Moral Order*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.
- . 2004. "The Status of the Status Quo." *Constitutional Political Economy*, 15(2):133-44.
- Burton, John. 1988. "Conflict Resolution as a Function of Human Needs", In Roger A. Coate and Jerel A. Rosati. Boulder (eds), *The Power of Human Needs in World Society*. Colorado: Lynne Rienner.
- Coleman, Peter. 2000. "Intractable Conflict", in Morton Deutsch and Peter Coleman (eds), *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Courtney, Jung, Ellen Lust-Okar and Ian Shapiro. 2005. "Problems and Prospects for Democratic Settlements: South Africa as a Model for the Middle East and Northern Ireland?" *Politics and Society*, 33(2):277-326.
- De Klerk, Eldred. 2002. "South Africa's Negotiated Transition: Context, Analysis and Evaluation", in Catherine Barnes (ed.), *ACCORD: Owning the process Public Participation in Peacemaking*. London: Conciliation Resources.
- Deutsch, Karl W., Sidney A. Burrell, Robert A. Kann, Maurice Lee, Jr., Martin Lichterman, Raymond E. Lindgren, Francis L. Loewenheim, and Richard W. Van Wagenen. 1957. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Elazar, Daniel. 1991. *Two Peoples One Land*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Fisher, Ronald. 1977. *Interactive Conflict Resolution*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- . 1993. "The Potential for Peacebuilding: Forging a Bridge from Peacekeeping to Peacemaking." *Peace and Change*, 18(3):247-266.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1965. *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd.
- Friedrich, Carl (ed.). 1966. *Revolution*. New York: Atherton Press.
- Galtung, Johan. 1976. *Peace, War and Defense: Essays in Peace Research*. Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen.
- Giri, Ananta Kumar. 2019. "The Calling of Transformative Harmony: An Introduction and an Invitation", in Ananta Kumar Giri (Ed.), *Transformative Harmony*. New Delhi: Studera Press.
- Hamdan, Nahlah and Frederic Pearson. 2014. *Arab Approaches to Conflict Resolution*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Handelman, Sapir. 2010. "The Minds of Peace Experiment: A simulation of a potential Palestinian-Israeli public assembly." *International Negotiation: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, 15:511-528.
- . 2011. *Conflict and Peacemaking in Israel-Palestine: Theory and Application*. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2012a. "Between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the East-West Pakistan struggle: a challenge to the conventional wisdom." *Israel Affairs*, 18(1):25-26.
- . 2012b. "The Minds of Peace Experiment: A laboratory for people-to-people diplomacy." *Israel Affairs*, 18(1):1-11.
- . 2014. *People-to-People Diplomacy in Israel and Palestine*. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2015. "Peacemaking Contractualism: A Peacemaking Approach to Cope with Difficult Situations of Intractable Conflict." *Global Change, Peace and Security*, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14781158.2015.1049592>.
- Handelman, Sapir and Fredric Pearson. 2014. "Peacemaking in Intractable Conflict – A Contractualist Approach." *International Negotiation*, 19:1-34.

- Hayek, Friedrich. 1944. *The Road to Serfdom*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- . 1967. *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- . 1978. "Competition as a Discovery Procedure", in Friedrich Hayek (ed.), *New Studies in Politics, Philosophy, Economics and the History of Ideas*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Huntington, Samuel. 1992. "How Countries Democratise." *Political Science Quarterly*, 106(4):579-616.
- . 2006. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Inbar, Efraim. 2006. "Israel's Palestinian Challenge." *Israel Affairs*, 12(4):823-842.
- Ionescu, Ghița and Ernest Gellner (eds). 1969. *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- James, Alan. 1990. *Peacekeeping in International Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Kelman, Herbert. 1981. "Reflections on the History and Status of Peace Research." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 5(2):95-96.
- . 1996. "Negotiation as Interactive Problem Solving." *International Negotiation: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, 1(1):99-123.
- . 2007. "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict," in William Zartman (ed.), *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. DC: U.S. Institute of Peace.
- . 2010. "Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation: A Social-Psychological Perspective on Ending Violent Conflict Between Identity Groups." *Landscapes of Violence*, 1(1):Article 5. Available at: <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/lov/vol1/iss>.
- Kriesberg, Louis. 1993. "Intractable Conflicts." *Peace Review*, 5(4):417-421.
- . 2001. "Mediation and Transformation of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research*, 38(3):373-392.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. 1979. "The Prince", in P. Bondanella and M. Musa (eds), *The Portable Machiavelli*. USA: Penguin Books.
- Mandela, Nelson. 1994. *Long Walk to Freedom: the Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Mansergh, Martin. 1999. "The early stages of the Irish peace process", in Clem McCartney (ed.), *ACCORD: Striking a balance: The Northern Ireland peace process*. London: Conciliation Resources.
- McKittrick, David and David McVea. 2002. *Making Sense of the Troubles: the Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: New Amsterdam Books.
- Mitchell, George. 1999. *Making Peace*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Pearson, Fredric. 2012. "Locational Factors in Citizen Peace Negotiations." *Israel Affairs*, 18(1):74-87.
- Podeh, Elie and Winckler Onn. 2004. *Rethinking Nasserism: Revolution and Historical Memory in Modern Egypt*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

- Popper, Karl. 1947. *The Open Society and its Enemies*, vol. 2. London: Routledge.
- . 1994. "Models, Instruments and Truth", in Mark Notturmo (ed.), *The Myth of the Framework: In Defense of Science and Rationality*, pp. 154-185. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 1999. *All Life is Problem Solving*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ratner, Steven. 1996. *The New UN Peacekeeping: Building Peace in Lands of Conflicts after the Cold War*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Risse-Kappen, Thomas. 1991. "Public Opinion, Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies." *World Politics*, 43(4):510.
- Sifakis, Carl. 1999. *The Encyclopedia of American Crime*, 2nd ed. New York: Checkmark Books.
- Sisk, Timothy. 1994. "South Africa's National Peace Accord." *Peace and Change*, 19(1):50-70.
- Snow, Donald. 2010. *Cases in International Relation*, Fourth ed. Pearson – Longman.
- Sparks, Allister. 1994. *Tomorrow Is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution*. Sandton. South Africa: Struik Book Distributors.
- Thompson, Leonard. 2001. *A history of South Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Vanberg, Viktor. 2005. "Market and State: The Perspective of Constitutional Political Economy." *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 1(1):23-49.
- Walt, Stephen. 1992. "Revolution and War." *World Politics*, 44(3):321-368.
- Wantchekon, Leonard. 2004. "The Paradox of "Warlord" Democracy: A Theoretical Investigation." *American Political Science Review*, 98(1):17-32.
- Zartman, William. 1995. "Negotiating the South African Conflict", in William Zartman (ed.), *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Internal Wars*. Washington: Brookings.

## CHAPTER 42

### ‘Stop this Nightmare, I Pray..’

#### Armed Forces Special Power Act – the Tablet for ‘Harmony’ and Northeast India

*Babli Mallick*

‘Irom Chanu Sharmila breaks her fast after 16 years’ – the newspapers are filled with this headlines on August 9, 2016. She says to the media by explaining her decision: “The Government has not been listening to our voices and has been suppressing our movement.” She in her past interviews expressed her desire to “able to live like a normal human being... I don’t want to be a goddess. I just want a normal life.” This decision prompts diverse reactions among people. Some accuse her for breaking the trust of people; some welcome her decision to start for a new strategy to fight. However the world’s longest hunger strike comes to end but we cannot forget the Iron Lady’s 16 years of struggle and her determination to carry it on for so long. She took the vow to fast unto death till the Armed Force Special Force Act (AFSPA) is repealed. This ‘iron’ decision was followed by the massacre in Malom. On November 2, 2000, ten innocent civilians who were waiting at a bus stand in Malom, a town in Imphal were shot to death by the Assam Rifles. The victims include a 62 year old women and 12 year old boy who had won National Bravery Award. Even after the 16 years of that incident the families has yet to get justice. This bloody massacre which directly points a finger to the excess power of army and the violation of human rights makes Irom Sharmila to bait her life for getting an explanation from the government for such atrocities. The very simple Sharmila comes forward with an indomitable spirit to fulfil her mission. She took

the Gandhian way for the rebellion with an aim for harmony to extinguish the flame of destructive violence.

May voice of ordinary  
Of a flavourless smile  
Yet wanted to have  
The fuse of a bomb  
To burn out all the dirt  
May some costless tears  
Yet wanted to glitter  
On every single face  
In the light of new epoch  
May the step be of single  
Of no strength  
Yet wanted to make  
The impression of hundreds on  
To transform it into  
Magic spell of courage...

This Armed Forces Special Power Act has a long and cursed legacy. Starting from Manorama's death to the Malom incident the saga of violence is going on even after the 69 years of independence. This violence and sexual exploitation which appear in the newspaper as the number of dead bodies only, appear vividly in the pages of literature where Apenyo in Temsula Ao's *The Last Song*, Bogi bai in Uddipana Goswami's *This is How We Lived* to Arunima in Arupa Kalita's *Arunima's Motherland* or Zorami in Malaswami Jacob's *Zorami*, question our very existence and shakes our faith in human rights. This paper here attempts to highlight the stages of insurgency and counterinsurgency, the level of violence, the present scenario, abuse of AFSPA and the various protests.

Before going into the further detail let us analyse the Act. Armed Forces Special Power Act, an Act of Indian parliament was passed on September 11, 1958. It can be said a little modified version of 'The Armed Forces Special Ordinances', introduced by the British on 1942 to resist the Quit India Movement. It is employed in the states which the Government has marked as 'disturbed areas' like Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. There were many protests at the time of the implementation of this Act, even in the parliament, especially from Manipur, as L. Achaw Singh of Manipur, described the proposal as 'unnecessary... an anti-democratic measure ... a lawless law.' According to this law an army personal can-

- Fire upon or use other kind of force even it causes death against the person who is acting against law.

- To arrest anyone without warrant, who has committed cognizable offences or is reasonably suspected of having done so and may use force if needed for the arrest.
- To enter and search any premise in order to make such arrests.
- To stop and search any vehicle reasonably suspected.

Renu Takhellambam, a resident of Manipur and a mother of a 5 year old boy, lost her husband on April 6, 2007 as the bullet of the army hit him. He was murdered in the open daylight in the market where he went to buy a roll of film for his still camera on the occasion of his son's forthcoming birthday. There are many like Renu, and in Manipur these families who lost their near and dear ones and got no justice yet, founded an association called Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association (EEVFAM) to help each other. It has been seen that every year 300 women turn widows in Manipur only due to the abuse of the law. The most important point to be noted is that the army officers have legal immunity for their actions. There can be no prosecution, suit or any other legal proceedings against anyone acting under that law. Thus it easily shows how it violets the fundamental human rights in the name of security. The story, "A Simple Question" by Temsula Ao, shows the constant fear under which the villagers have to live. Here when Tekba, the gaonburah, was captured by the Indian army under the charge of helping the underground rebels, he was scared and could not defend himself like his other villagers and continued suffering in the chilled weather. It is the dauntless attitude of Imdongla, which makes Tekba free from the imposed allegations by baffling the Captain. The very simple question of the village woman moved the Army Captain's apparent permutations and combinations and forced him to contemplate his very role. It is captured very beautifully in the passionate lines of the author - Imdongla had said, '... How would you feel if your fathers were punished for acting out of fear? Fear of you Indian soldiers and fear of the mongrels of the jungle?' But what affected him most was one single question that Imdongla had repeatedly asked: 'What do you want from us?' For the first time in his tenure in these hills, this apparently simple village woman had made him see the impossible situation faced by the villagers. Again the story 'The Last Song' shows how the beautiful girl with the beautiful voice was so crudely raped by the 'protectors', the soldiers of Indian Army. Ao records the wretched sight in the bold lines:

... the young Captain was raping Apenyo while a few other soldiers were watching the act and seemed to be waiting for their turn. The mother... rushed forward with an animal-like growl as if to haul the man off her daughter's body but a soldier grabbed her...He too began to unzip his trousers... (The Last Song, p.28)



The sexual violence is not new especially in the war zone or conflict-ridden areas. Be it amidst the turmoil in Syria, Iraq, Baluchistan, the women become the easy prey—a target for sexual pleasure and the perverse psyche.

Several committees were built to review this controversial law which makes the people become victim in the hand of their very ‘protectors’. The first such Commission was Jeevan Reddy Commission (2004) which was constituted following the protest of Thangjam Manorama’s rape and murder in the hand of Assam Rifles. The stripping of the Manipuri mothers in front of Kangla fort shouting ‘Indian Army rape us’ shakes the whole country and compels the silent observer, the government to take action. The committee was set under the retired Supreme Court Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy at the initiative of the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. It gives the views for repealing the Act as it is ‘the symbol of oppression, instrument of high-handedness’. Sanjay Hazarika, the noted journalist, activist and writer from Assam, who was a part of this committee, wrote: ‘All who seek peace and development in the region must push for the cancellation of these laws and clauses that put men in uniform above the law and the rest of the people under their heel.’ He also later observed, ‘It is my view that the Army must be deployed in the rarest of rare cases—not as a knee-jerk reaction of governments at the Central and state levels.’

Justice Verma Commission focuses on the pathetic condition of the women in this web of insurgency. The continuous molestation, rape cases, teasing prompt the committee to state that the women victims and the witnesses must be taken care of, and to be more aware regarding the safety of the women in conflict areas. It also voices for accounting the heinous act like any kind of sexual violence by the army personnel must bring under the judicial review and consider it as criminal law. Mitra Phukan’s *The Collectors Wife* very intensely shows the effect of sudden disappearance of one’s husband for innumerable days or the dead body of the beloved if one fails to fulfil the demand of the militants. Easterine Kire in her essay ‘Red is the Colour of Blood’ also talks about this atrocious situation and dreadful experience when one sudden night she got a phone call from a women telling – ‘It’s my husband, they took him last night, please, can you help?’ She here reflects how this kind of cases, the disappearance of family members take place without any news from them day after day. Then one day they get the little headlines from the newspaper ‘unidentified body found’. She adds ‘each man killed by the Indian Army of by members of factions was a brother, a son, a husband or a father. No matter how many have been killed...’ The torture of people under the AFSPA has been very sharply depicted by Temsula in her short story ‘Soaba’. Here she shows how with the help and encouragement of the army, Imlichuba becomes Boss. He has all the power to do anything on the slightest provocation. ‘Often, screams and groans emanating from the depths of this house could be heard above the loud

music', the writer carries on, 'No one knew what eventually happened to these people: if some survived the tortures, they would either surface in the civil hospital or the local jail. Quite a few were never seen again.' The irony is that nobody dares to know what has happened and all of them act as deaf and dumb to such matters to protect their own life. On December 25, 2014, the construction labourers found eight skulls and skeletons along with other item like bangles, human hair, a coin at the Tombisana High School complex in Imphal. This creates an uproar and fear in the minds of those whose friend or family members were 'involuntarily disappeared'. The question is raising more doubts because that place was the former base of Central Paramilitary forces 'during the peak of Insurgency (1980-1990), a period when hundreds of youths either disappeared or were arrested by the forces for their alleged links with militants.' So, the civilians and social organisations demand for an investigation as they fear it to be the extra-judicial killing of those 'disappeared' people by the army. While talking about the cases of extra judicial killings and staged encounter, Kishalay Bhattacharjee in his book *Bood on My Hands : Confessions of Staged Encounters* gives a very detail account of how the extra-judicial killings were done for adding points to meet their own target or sometimes to be awarded with 'Chakra'. There are several examples like a twenty-two-year-old Elangbam Kiranjit was shot dead on April 23, 2009. Chongtham Umakanta of Imphal West, who was twenty years old, was killed after being 'picked up' from a friend's house on May 4, 2009. Major D. Sreeram Kumar who was awarded the Ashok Chakra in 2009 for a 'palpable decrease in insurgency activities' later found out that it was 'not an encounter but an operation by the security forces wherein death of the victims was caused knowingly.'

The act was started as, in words of Shri Govind Ballabh Pant, 'certain misguided sections' of the Nagas were involved in 'arson, murder, loot, dacoity'. The conflict which was there between the ideologies of Rishang and Videssellie in Birendra Bhattacharya's *Love in the Time of Insurgency* (2005) turns out to be clearer in the support of Videssellie in Easterine Kire's novel *Bitter Wormwood*. Here the Nagas are represented to support for a separate nation and expressed its discontentment when Nagaland is not separated from India at the time of Independence. So when the protagonist Mose, the child of the conflict, makes his grandmother, Khrienuo, understand that Nagaland is not allowed to be apart from India, she says in wonder, ".... We have never been a part of India before. Why should we join them now?" Even the anger bursts out when people are tortured for their demand without a proper understanding.

That man Nehru", the man had shouted, "Do you know what Nehru said when he got his copy of the Naga plebiscite? He shook his fist and shouted, 'Whether heaven falls or India goes to pieces and blood runs red in the country, I don't care. Nagas will not be allowed to

become independent.' How can we live under such a man? Can we live under such a government? (p.62)

This attitude of government in Nagaland, Mizoram and in other states led to the birth of the insurgent groups. The power game also led to the factions among the groups and set for violence including targeting police force, extortion of civilians. There are also the severe ethnic clashes, conflict between indigenous people and outsiders, higher classes versus lower one. To add more we can see how this part of country is surrounded by the border of neighbouring countries like Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China who do not leave any chance to take advantage of the inner conflict. While the militant movements are mostly home-grown, some of these have developed links with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and international terrorist organisations like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islam (HuJI). These make the presence of army here more obvious than in other places. Consequently, the army become the most revengeful target of the opposition but they (army) pay the cost of their life for the sake of the security of the country and due to the need of survival. *India Today* reports.

A recent charge-sheet filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) against Anthony Shimray, chief arms procurer of the Isak-Muivah faction of Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM), specifically mentions Norinco, one of China's largest state-owned weapons manufacturers. Bangkok-based NSCN-IM rebels had allegedly paid \$100,000 to Norinco to buy 10,000 assault rifles, pistols, rocket-propelled grenades and ammunition... Norinco's name first surfaced during the 2004 haul at Chittagong where Bangladeshi security agencies intercepted a consignment of 4,930 firearms, including rockets, grenades and assault rifles, meant for the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and NSCN-IM. A Chinese-made AK-56 is easily available in Dimapur for Rs. 2 lakh, a sophisticated Austrian Glock pistol for Rs. 3 lakh.

This situation and the continuous death tolls reinforce the assistance of AFSPA for the army's security. The army becomes the continuous target of the now powerful militants. They are attacked in their camps, ambushed in the road and surrounded by the very delicate line of life and death. They too need security. Gurmeet Kanwal, Distinguished Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi. Comments that the tendency of successive state governments to scale down army operations for political reasons as soon as the situation appears to improve, results in major setbacks for the conduct of sustained counter-insurgency operations. The security forces need time to become effective and establish a counter-insurgency grid, including human intelligence (Humint)

networks to gain actionable intelligence. The paper nowhere negates this aspect. But the abuse of the power should be punished. The problem lays to the exploitation of the power and no investigation for such crimes of the army. Starting from Malom to Manorama massacre not a single person is punished yet. Due to this reason, it can be seen that AFSPA does not help to overcome the situation even after 58 years of its employment. Rather it takes its advantages in killing innocent civilians, raping women, extorting simple villagers and sometimes to kill people to retaliate when they are unsuccessful in catching the targeted militants. Malaswami Jacob's 'Zorami' very well depicted this ugly side of the army as she narrates one incident where the insurgents from MNF (Mizo National Front) ambushed a party of army. Ralkapa and his group were congratulating each other for being able to kill ten army jawans. On the other side, being unsuccessful in catching the militants, the Indian Army retaliated. 'They', as the writer vividly describes, 'rounded up all the men of the village, took them to playground and beat them up... Five men were beaten to death. One of them was a seventy-years old.' They set fire in houses, raped women, not permitting people to cultivate their land and leave them to live in jungle and starve. Thus AFSPA makes the army all powerful and the civilians for whose protection they were appointed surrenders under their whims. Though all the allegations against the army are not true, the people has to play a great cost in the cases where the complaint proves to be true. Uddipana Goswami's short story, 'This is How We Lived' shows the riddle of the 'security and exploitation' by the Army. On one side the people are happy to see that a 'harsha' a soldier from Indian Army marries Mathuram's daughter and gives her all the happiness and respect of a wife. But on the other hand they can neither forget the molestation and rape of their women as the writer painfully reflects: 'They buy us and they sell us, and because we want to live, we do not resist. We give in to their lust because most of the time, our lust for life proves to be more compelling.'

When the AFSPA was introduced in 1958 and from then the issues in many areas have been changed. The states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Tripura are now quite peaceful than the condition when AFSPA was introduced. Though in Tripura the law is enacted only in the bordering police stations, there is no change in the other states. The Santosh Hedge Committee which was constituted on January, 2013 to probe six killings in Manipur finds that none of the victims who are killed has any criminal records. After a detail investigation, the committee recommends that there should be a fixed timeframe of three months for 'the Central Government to decide whether to prosecute security personnel engaged in extra judicial killings or unruly behaviour in insurgency-hit areas.' The commission notes that AFSPA was an impediment to achieve peace in the regions like Jammu Kashmir and the northeast. The commission also says that the law needs to be reviewed every six months to see whether its implication is actually

necessary in the states where it is being enforced.' But the Government pays no heed to such recommendations. However, while welcoming the punishment of the five personnel in Machil fake encounter case, P. Chidambaram says,

AFSPA is an obnoxious law that has no place in a modern, civilised country. It purports to incorporate the principle of immunity against prosecution without previous sanction. In reality, it allows the Armed Forces and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) to act with impunity." He later adds 'I proposed repeal; the Ministry of Defence and the defence forces opposed repeal, and the defence minister was unwilling to overrule them.

The questions arises—Is the government really so helpless in convincing the Defence Ministry? Was it not a political comment rather than a genuine concern? When Anna Hazare or Baba Ramdev in 2011 started hunger strike for anti-corruption movement, the government sends representatives to have a dialogue. But no such effort for dialogue has been seen in the case of Irom Sharmila who had been fasting for 16 years in the demand to repeal AFSPA. Instead, the government charges her for suicide and rule for forced feeding. She finally gave up the hope of getting any kind of assistance from the Government and breaks her fast to contest in states. Now what can be said to this? Why the government shows apathy when it comes to Northeast? Be it in the mainstream media, education system or the mere recognition of the flat nose and slant eyes people as Indian, the Northeast is always sidelined.

Presently at this stage, things have been changed quietly. In Nagaland many insurgent groups, the student associations barring NSCN (K) seeks for peace talk to the government. The level of violence has been reduced to a great level. But AFSPA remains in its own stage. The people seem to be fated to live with AFSPA as a gruesome reality. When the very people want for repealing AFSPA, then the State as well as the Centre must stop the blame game and consider the matter seriously. People are tired of living under the machine gun. Robin S. Ngangom reflects on this curse:

Everywhere I go  
I carry my homeland with me...  
I harbour the wretchedness of those youths  
Who do not wish to return  
But would rather serve in city's sordid restaurants  
Because devils and thieves rule their home.

AFSPA was enforced in Kashmir on July 5, 1990 to cope up the uncontrollable violence in the valley. Later it was extended to Jammu in August 10, 2001. But

when now the rate of violence has been decreased especially in the places like Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal, Samba in Jammu, the army refuses to free this land from clutch of AFSPA. The then chief minister of Kashmir Omar Abdullah who always raises voice against AFSPA comments while talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function in Srinagar:

The talks on AFSPA revocation with New Delhi is still on. Certain people [in New Delhi] were so much in love with the AFSPA that even if the state government makes all the guns fall silent, they will suggest the AFSPA withdrawal is not appropriate. However the use of pellet guns has also been criticised severely by the civilians and also by the present Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti. Several instances of extra-judicial killing, fake encounters are reported.

In the summer of 2010, more than 100 protestors were shot dead by security forces, while 3,500 were arrested and 120 detained under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA). And in 2014, the Jammu and Kashmir state home department, in response to a Right to Information (RTI) application, disclosed that 16,329 people had been detained in administrative detention under the PSA at various times since 1988.

In August 2011, the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) in JandK stated that it had found 2,730 unidentified bodies buried in unmarked graves in three districts of north Kashmir.'

Perna Bakshi, the noted writer and activist in her poem, 'Guns and Graves: A Poem against AFSPA' ponders over how people are deprived of their very rights due to the presence of the draconian law:

Khaki-clad men with guns in hands  
is all one sees,  
state sponsored massacres, witch-hunt,  
deploying 'Armed Forces Special Powers Act'  
don't usually bring 'world peace'.  
Today the world's biggest arms importer  
aspires to become tomorrow's 'superpower',  
not by bloodshed, but apparently,  
all by exporting 'peace'.

To be or not to be with the Armed Forces Special Power Act is the question. There are the two sides of the story. The army want it for their own security in the midst of the violence and constant insurgency. On the other hand, the civilians want the army to protect them but the AFSPA to go. In the midst of such scenario, the



several committees which are set to investigate the complications recommend to make the law more humane to protect the people for whom the army is employed rather than scaring them with their very presence. However, on July 8, Supreme Court delivered an interim judgement on WRIT PETITION (CRIMINAL) NO.129 OF 2012 filed by Extra-Judicial Execution Victim Families Association (EEVFAM) (an association of the families of 1,528 fake encounters in Manipur). The UN also shows strong reaction against AFSPA by telling it a threat to human rights. Christ of Heyns, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, observes: "The AFSPA in effect allows the state to override rights in the disturbed areas in a much [more] intrusive way than would be the case under a state of emergency, since the right to life is in effect suspended, and this is done without the safeguards applicable to states of emergency." Therefore, the question rises where is the harmony? Where is peace? If AFSPA has a doubtful presence for bringing that harmony, then what is the need of its continuation without the necessary change? It is the time for the government as well as the defence ministry to ponder over this 'bloody reality' with the suitable outcomes to overcome this situation and to enable people to live at least with their fundamental rights. Apart from AFSPA the government shows strategic failure in coming to a long lasting Peace Accord due to the void of understanding between its promise and deprivation of the fulfilling of the promises, inter-conflict of the insurgent Groups. Harmony cannot be brought out mechanically. It should not be the machine gun for the forceful peace only to hide its poisonous fangs in the mask of harmony. Its people's freedom, the peaceful co-existence, the co-operative understanding with oneself, among the different ethnic group and with the Government, can bring the harmony. So, I am finishing my paper with an appeal, tuning the lines of the Naga poet, Monalisa Chankija:

'Stop this nightmare, I pray Where my people, victims of Geography, History and  
Politics Have become prized booty To be overpowered and possessed...  
Stop, I beseech this nightmare  
Perpetuated by those who believe power  
Flows from the barrel of the gun.'- *Stop this Nightmare*

## References

- Ao, Temsula. 2007. *These Hills Called Home: Stories From A War Zone*. Zubaan and Penguin Books India.
- . 2009. *Laburnum for My Head*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India.
- Bakshi, Prerna. 2016. "Guns and Graves: A Poem against AFSPA". July 17, 2016. Web. 13 August, 2016. <http://www.indiaresists.com/guns-and/>



- Bhattacharjee, Kishalaya. 2015. *Blood on My Hands: Confessions of Staged Encounters*. Noida: HarperCollins Publishers India.
- Bhattacharyya, Birendra Kumar. 2005. *Love in the Time of Insurgency: A Novel as Large as Life Itself*. Katha India.
- Chidambaram, P. 2015. "Across The Aisle: Even to the causing of death." *The Indian Express*. May 3, 2015. Web. July 21, 2016. <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/across-the-aisle-even-to-the-causing-of-death/>
- Dasgupta, Kumkum. "Dead tell tales: skeletons expose Manipur's dark secrets." *Hindustan Times*. Dec. 29, 2014. Web. 12 August, 2016. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/dead-tell-theses-skeletons-expose-manipur-s-dark-secrets/story-kPKZQx06Ro1MMvqft1f1ZP.html>
- Dhar, Aarti. 2012. "U.N. asks India to repeal AFSPA." March 31, 2012. Web. July 23, 2016. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/un-asks-india-to-repeal-afspa/article3263687.ece>
- Goswami, Uddipana. 2014. *No Ghost in This City*. New Delhi: Zubaan.
- Hazarika, Sanjoy. 2008. *Writing on the Wall: Reflections on the North-East*. Penguin Books India.
- Irom Chanu Sharmila's Poem Page. March 12, 2016. [http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=reviews.poems.Irom\\_Chanu\\_Sharmila.Untitled](http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=reviews.poems.Irom_Chanu_Sharmila.Untitled)
- Jacob, Malsawmi. 2015. *Zorami: A redemption song*. Morph Books.
- Kalita, Arupa Patangia. 2015. *Written in Tears*. New Delhi: Harper Perennial.
- Kanwal, Gurmeet. 2016. "Manipur Ambush: Why Army Saw the Worst Attack in 20 Years." July 6, 2015. Web. 27 August, 2016. <http://www.dailyo.in/politics/manipur-attack-nsn-k-meitei-northeast-india-act-east-myanmar-isi-ulfafspa/story/1/4196.html>
- Kire, Easterine. 2011. *Bitter Wormwood*. Zubaan India.
- . 2013. "Red is the Colour of Blood", in Preeti Gill (ed.), *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's North East*. Zubaan.
- Madhukalya, Amrita. 2016. "25 Years of AFSPA :43,000 Died in 21 Years." July 1, 2015. Web. March 13, 2016. <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-25-years-of-afspa-43000-dead-in-21-years-2100707>
- Misra, Tilottoma. 2013. "Women Writing in Times of Violence", in Preeti Gill (ed.), *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's North East*. Zubaan.
- Ngangom, Robin S. 2011. "Everywhere I Go", in Tillotama Mishra (ed.), *The Oxford Anthology of Writings from North-East India, Poetry and Essays*, p 46. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Roy, Esha. 2016. "Irom Sharmila to end 16-year-old hunger strike on August 9, will get married, fight elections." *The Indian Express*. July 27, 2016. Web. Sep 12, 2016. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/irom-sharmila-fast-manipur-elections-afspa-repeal-2937072/>

Unnithan, Sandeep. 2016. "Gunrunners of North-East." *India Today*. May 28, 2011. Web. July 23, 2016. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/chinese-agents-smuggle-arms-to-spread-militancy-in-north-east/1/139538.html>

## CHAPTER 43

# A Feminine Approach to Conflict Transformations and Harmony

*Sudha Sreenivasa Reddy*

The world today is facing unprecedented increase in political conflicts, social violence and civil unrest resulting in irreparable destruction of humanity and environment and exodus of masses to an uncertain future.

South Asia burdened by its colonial legacy is no exception with its 'war on terror', prolonged ethno-political conflicts; inequitable free market economies that plunder our Earth's resources (affecting all ecological systems); all produce a vicious cycle of conflicts with consequences of violence, death, displacement, distress migration and violation of civil and human rights.

Conflict is a consequence of man's greed to acquire more than what he is entitled to and exhibition of his aggressive power! The need to respect others is replaced by a desire to rule/conquer. Conflict can be in the form of direct violence like civil wars and natural disasters at the macro level or in the form of indirect structural violence that emerge from caste/class oppression and poverty such as marginalisation of those who are already in vulnerable state at the local level. An immediate casualty of such conflicts/violence has been women and children!

The violent destruction of our Mother Earth is another area of concern resulting in ever increasing ecological crisis. Gandhiji said, "To forget how to dig the Earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves". Unbridled resource extraction, unlimited consumption, linear economic progress is violence at a planetary scale.

Shiva (2015) in her recent publication *Terra Viva* aptly reminds us of how conflicts over extracting resources is reduced to ethnic and religious conflicts as a way to divert people from examining the real cause of ecological crisis.

## Source of Violence

J. Krishnamurti responded to the question - “the source of violence is the ‘me’, the ego, the self, which expresses itself in so many ways – in division, in trying to become/be somebody – which divides itself as the ‘me’ and the ‘not me’, as the unconscious and the conscious; the ‘me’ that identifies with the family or not with the family, with the community or not with the community and so on” (Krishnamurti 2012:74). Its root is taken in the heart of society – the individual, the family, and moves on to communities, society, the state and nations. In many instances when fanned by political tensions wars arise!

Here my focus is on the women’s contribution and feminine approach towards justice, conflict transformation and sustained harmonious relations in the midst of patriarchal structures.

## Perception of Women in Today’s World

We all agree that in all cultures and societies, women have, in different ways, been marginalised and silenced. Central to the inner world of every community, the woman is being made to bear the brunt of increasing violence in different forms and shapes deeply rooted in patriarchal traditions and lately in the market liberalism. Women are not just targets for physical abuse and brutality, but they are subjected to economic deprivation too and hence the resultant increase in feminisation of poverty.

It is rarely shown that the women are part of decision-making processes or peace building efforts. Thus, women are generally represented as victims, weak and vulnerable groups in society or used as tools but not a real partner in any of the fields.

Incidentally it is women in today’s world who can play an enormously important role in averting violence, resolving and transforming conflict but that have been largely invisible. They have been integral to several struggles alongside man (including the struggle for freedom), but have remained unrecognised. The challenge is that these forms of action that women take up to address the multitude of problems they face in everyday lives, is a forgotten narrative. It is this that needs to be unfolded and applauded.

The 16<sup>th</sup> UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs set in 2015) emphasises that “peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. The UN Women, the branch of the UN dealing with women’s issues, makes a call for mobilising women as unique carriers of peace. Internationally, the UN has recognised the importance of women’s contribution in bringing peace, and this has to be clearly underlined as a key point in national development processes.

## **Women In Reimagining Conflict Prevention to Transformation Process**

Non-violence and peace efforts for the transformation of conflicts seem to have become a historic necessity. Peace is not only political but it’s also personal. I agree, in the present South Asian conflict scenario, there are many women who have actually joined militant groups for a variety of reasons.

At this juncture, my emphasis is on a large number of women who choose non-violent innovative means and act as bridges in peace-making processes whether at home, community or in the country. Since time immemorial, women have been playing a meaningful role in multi-dimensional aspects of human life.

I would wish to share here about what is beautiful, how ‘fierce compassion’, the feminine character inherent within each of us is unavoidable which helps us realise peace. I would also wish to share how little things, persons in everyday life become source of transforming life despite experiencing violence.

## **Our Efforts in the Prevention of Communal/Caste Conflicts and Reconstruction of Lives at Local Level – Eco Foundation for Sustainable Alternatives (EFSA)**

Until a decade ago some parts of Bangalore city had been rattled through communal conflicts time and again, more often falling prey to rumours. Obviously the poorer sections of the city were the victims of violent attacks. During a few such confrontations we, a small group of women, were able to facilitate in resolving conflict between two religious communities and in the prevention of further occurrences in those areas. The need of the hour was being a mediator between police officials and those angry community leaders for calming down tensions.

This instant risk-taking action of ours had thus lowered the anger and avoided possible full scale riots. As it is, even for peace activists it has been a time of

dilemma too; what is more important, justice or reconciliation? How does one deal with communal prejudices and lack of mutual trust? In such an environment, we had daily interactions among the communities together and initiated dialogues on listening to points of diverse views differing from one's own, with mutual understanding, tolerance and trust.

Engaging people belonging to different faiths and ideologies in persistent dialogues at local level is important towards building an amiable atmosphere where biases and prejudices take a backseat. To sustain peace it is important to encourage greater interactions and exchange of ideas among women of different/conflicting faiths. We facilitated formation of neighbourhood peace committees consisting of equal number of women as platform for expressing and sharing their concerns, for de-communising them, building empathetic cordial relations with local administration and finding the solutions collectively to cure the disease of hatred, distrust and prevent reoccurrence of violence.

Simultaneously, we focused on the affected and displaced poor communities due to communal riots and beatification of the city who were evicted to the outskirts with no rehabilitation measures. Our involvement with these diverse communities enabled them to divert their positive energy to empower themselves in the reconstruction of their lives collectively.

The healing and empowering process was based on common spiritual and humane values such as empathy, non-violence, tolerance, sharing, compassion; appreciating universal essence and diversity of cultures/religions, rights and responsibilities. Our ethos is 'we are all interdependent and interconnected and religion or caste is not our enemy but the sense of despair, poverty is our common enemy. Mutual learning and respecting the deeper meaning of each one's cultural symbols and rituals, traditional practices and celebrating collectively do enhance and sustain harmonious relations (Inter existence)'.

## **Indigenous Wisdom and Compassionate Confrontation**

Similarly, during my work, I was deeply touched by the compassionate spirit of a poor tribal woman, whose story I would share highlighting her struggle against caste violence, peace negotiations with upper caste men and apathetic authorities for justice and peace:

65 years old Dargamma, from 'Kadu Kuruba' tribe took it upon herself to challenge patriarchal structures of the village on behalf of many unheard voices. She could not read or write but she is a repository of traditional wisdom. Dargamma's struggle to live in dignity saw her go

through many unnerving twists as a woman withstanding hardships, discrimination, and harassment in the patriarchal male dominated society. She was left with her four children to carry on with the life journey when her husband died 33 years ago. Having a shelter of her own is still a dream for her. Despite the fact that forty more families belonging to her community live in the same village, no one was courageous enough to approach the government for help for fear of the upper caste families in the village. The lives of these families were controlled by a few upper caste men. Whether it was water for drinking, wages for work or land to build their huts on, they were completely dependent on the whims of the upper castes. The upper castes even tried to grab whatever little land they have.

In one of our interactions with government officials where farmers, both men and women, were invited to discuss conservation of water sources, Dargamma displayed great courage by sitting in on the male-only discussions and raised questions about access to land and water. The men were visibly uneasy about Dargamma sitting along with them as an equal and challenging their authority. The next day she had to face the wrath of men for sitting with them and questioning them. Dargamma did not remain passive to the accusations levelled against her in the village. She became a source of inspiration for other women in all surrounding villages. When there was an acute water shortage she mobilised other women in the village, negotiated with upper caste leaders and the administration, and the lake was revived.

Dargamma's sensibility and concern for the Earth is unsurpassed. Her cosmology is based on a holistic concept; the sacred nature finds its expression in having a reciprocal relationship between humankind, the spiritual world and nature. Mother Earth, sacred mountains, rivers, animals and forest-trees, often considered to be linked with spiritual world and hence be treated with respect.

With her eyes twinkling, in her simple language, Dargamma demystified the profound principles of inter-connectedness and inter-dependence between human and nature. She lamented that we have been dumping poison from the bags of chemical fertilisers, tins of pesticides down the throat of our mother. What do we return in gratitude to our Bhoomi Thai (Mother Earth) except killing her with poison? Our fingers get prickling when we put our hands into the chemical fertiliser sack; imagine how painful it would be for our mother when we pour loads of chemicals on her!

Today she is instrumental in rebuilding self-esteem and dignity among the marginalised women and reconnecting with nature by organising themselves to take on further challenges.



In my experience, it is heartening to see the manner in which marginalised women like Dargamma have bravely stood up to all forms of oppression and violence in the communities and have guided the course of development. Their choices are not only for their own sakes but also for the well-being of humanity and nature.

## **Women's Movements at State/National Level**

It is a known fact that the resistance to persistent social, economic, ecological or political violence at local level has turned to larger people's non-violent movements, being led by responsible ordinary women and men in many regions of India and world.

Numerous women's movements have found ways to turn violence towards constructive purposes and direct it towards positive political change.

There are several examples of large collective social and environmental movements of women who challenged the established order through non-violent solidarity action, such as the Chipko Movement, the Narmada Bachao Andolan, Anti-liquor Movement in Andhra Pradesh, etc.

When we take journey from the local experiences to the larger alternative forms of non-violent confrontation against repressive State violence/armed conflicts, we cannot but evoke the collective responsibility of women in action against all forms of violence in the North-Eastern states of India.

## **Women as Bridges of Peace in Armed Conflicts**

### **Shed No More Blood: Naga Mother's Association, Nagaland**

In 1984, Naga Mother's Association (NMA), a network of local women's group was formed in response to more than three decades of violence, armed conflict and social upheaval in Naga society. It focused initially on addressing social problems in particular alcohol abuse, drug addiction and AIDS. An organisation of mothers, the NMA has consistently underlined its mothering and healing character; when interethnic warfare between factions in Nagaland escalated, the women's groups worked tirelessly to keep the channels of communication open between them, considering 'all of them are our children, we care for them equally, though we do not support their differences'. The protest against, and subsequent intervention by NMA on all violence in the state, is a clear recognition of the fact that violence against women will not stop unless all other forms of violence cease.

When the growing number of unclaimed dead bodies lying in the streets of towns across the state, NMA came forward to honour the Naga tradition of giving every unclaimed body a dignified funeral, draped in the shawl of the tribe to which the deceased belonged through its “Shed No More Blood” campaign in 1994.

The NMA and other women’s organisations have continued to highlight escalation of all kinds of violence in the state; to negotiate between the underground militants (UG) and the armed forces; between warring factions of the militants; between tribes; between the Kuki and Meiteis in Manipur; between women’s groups to keep up sustained dialogue on peace. Their activism rapidly gained social acceptance, commanded respect and become trusted keeper of social conscience in all groups and the armed forces. They moved from protest to active negotiators of peace, claiming that it is their right and their duty to stop the violence and to see that no more blood was shed (Menon 2007).

### **Women Torchbearers, Meira Paibis’: Manipur**

In the hills of Manipur, we see that the women Torchbearers, ‘Meira Paibi’ keep alive their struggles. The all-women’s group, Meira Paibis’ has been active not only in resisting a wide range of social ills but also extended to challenge increasing militarisation of the state in particular opposed to the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). When the state was declared a disturbed area in the 1980s and atrocities including rapes by the Armed Forces became a serious issue, the ‘Meira Paibis’, have steadily brought abuses by the armed forces to public notice through various non-violent means. They have even mediated with army on occasion and organised public meetings with them (Anuradha M. Chenoy). They have also intervened between civil society and underground groups. These are ordinary women from the women’s markets of Manipur where their networks were first formed. It shows that individual women traders are able to transform into a collective non-violent force to challenge such powerful violent authority.

The historic moment of resistance came out through naked protest by a group of mothers in front of the army headquarters in Imphal as a statement of outrage against brutal rape and murder of Manorama Devi by the army soldiers, thus challenging the authorities by drawing attention to the shameful violation of women’s bodies by them.

The 16-year long moral non-violent resistance against AFSPA with deep conviction for justice and peace of an individual woman, Ms. Irom Sharmila is well-acclaimed globally. In this way in much of Northeastern India today peacemaking, particularly inter-community peacemaking is seen as women's role.

## Practical Challenges to Women Peacemakers in Action

Generally, the practical challenges facing several indigenous women peacemakers in the action are not being delved. Let me share some of these challenges that cover a host of issues such as at personal level initial fear of uncertainty and vulnerability; in the family and community – apathy, humiliation, threats of alienation, exclusion, alienation, threats, physical abuse and societal discrimination. Their views tend to be dismissed as irrelevant in male-dominated discussions. All their efforts and achievements are forgotten in the post-conflict times.

### *Feminine Approach in Action – Transformative Capacity*

Nevertheless, in spite of the worst forms of gender discrimination/violence faced, women continue to demonstrate incredible resiliency with their inherent strength and creativity. Many women who have experienced violence know how to restrain conflicts and to heal the wounds. They have developed strategies and knowledge of handling violence without it miserably going out of control. Some women have demonstrated leadership of not allowing conflicts to morph into destructive forces.

Whenever their deeper consciousness is stimulated, women are awakened to an extraordinary transformative vibration, the natural expression to their latent positive strength. In spite of the complexity and harshness of the struggle, their hearts are still filled with love and compassion though their bodies are being worn out.

Women are led to naturally realise that although they are from different ethnic backgrounds, a common thread that binds them all is – ‘Hope’ not despair! Hope to challenge the culture of violence – the violence on body, mind and materials. This common thread does not arise “with a vengeance”, but grows from the awareness that the challenge rests on a deep attitude of justice and practice of non-violence.

Viewed globally, the feminine approach to peace never limits itself merely to the individual. Its concern is all encompassing, motivated by hope and the transformation of the community or society towards better and more equitable horizons. The feminine approach to our life affirming symbiotic relationship with each other—all human beings and with eco-systems—has a transformative capacity in contrast to the dominant masculine patriarchal paradigm; the behavioural patterns of which are the upholding of hierarchical structures, power and coercive authority, refusal of dialogue and subsequent direct or indirect violence. The feminine wisdom, encompassing compassion and responsible confrontation constitute its own indigenous tradition of what takes to make and sustain life.

The need of the hour is to gather all the spiritual forces of compassion and non-violence, of whatever origin and whatever nature, and nurture them, enrich

them and propagate them like luminous seeds of hope. There lies our responsibility as conscious human beings who still believe that life is precious and is a wonderful thing to preserve and revere.

### *Feminine Approach-Healing Wounds*

In the vision of Michel Henry, a Native Indian woman, "The wound that needs to be healed is the wound between women. When that wound healed, then the wound between men and women can be healed. When the wound between men and women is healed, the family is healed. When the family is healed, the community is healed. When the community is healed, the world will be healed."

If the wound is healed between women and men, would mothers still sell their daughters, their children?

Would parents still kill their girl child?

Would the community still kill young couple in the name of honour?

Would communities still fight in the name of caste/ethnic identity, religion or ideologies?

Would we still poison our first mother, Mother Earth?

There is no single answer to the above questions only meaningful choices, and fruitful directions. Healing the wounds creates the enduring bonds, offers them power that transforms life.

How true it is! Isn't it, an ethical, social responsibility of each one of us?

## **References**

- Shiva Vandana. 2015. *Terra Viva: Our Soil, Our Commons, Our Future*.
- Krishnamurti J. 2012. *Beyond Violence*. Chennai: Krishnamurti Foundation of India.
- Reddy, Sudha S. 2009. "Compassionate Confrontation and Responsibility Feminine Approaches." Paper.
- Kannabiran, Kalpana and Ritu Menon. 2007. *From Mathura to Manorama- Resisting Violence against Women in India*. Women Unlimited.



## CHAPTER 44

### Harmony

#### A Pessimist's View

*William Falcetano*

Pessimism today is not merely a philosophical school with an ancient and venerable lineage; it is also a widespread feeling throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> We pessimists share this feeling, this premonition of doom, mainly because of the evidence; pessimism is not primarily a matter of temperament, though of course some people incline to melancholy. In the stock market this sentiment is called “bearish”, and those who invest accordingly are “bears”, as opposed to the “bullish” optimism of the those who believe in a better future, in progress – the “bulls”. Our modern self-image is based on a strongly bullish sentiment; this is a deeply-held belief, a robust faith in progress, not merely in its appearance, but also in its inevitability and its sustainability. This is what we pessimists call into question – not the existence of progress (or goodness, or harmony), but its alleged inevitability and its alleged sustainability. Our dispute with the optimists is over whether wisdom or folly will ultimately triumph in human history – not whether wisdom or goodness or harmony exist.<sup>2</sup>

No one should deny that progress has been made with the emergence of the modern world – a civilisation unlike any previous civilisation in its scale (global), its power (scientific and industrial), and its creativity, but also in its enormous capacity for consumption and its frightening powers of destruction. Modern global civilisation is a powerfully dynamic phenomenon, and one that threatens to careen off the rails of stability without equally powerful governing forces to keep

it steady and on track – mainly in the form of the modern state, its legal structures and regulatory apparatus.<sup>3</sup> We pessimists readily concede that “progress” has occurred, and with it a great rise of goodness, wisdom, and harmony. Pessimists do not need to reject the existence of progress or goodness, wisdom or harmony; we merely question the viability of these phenomena by calling attention to the brevity of progress, the fragility of goodness, and the limits of wisdom. The works of Harmonia always seem to be limited by those of Eris, who tosses the apple of discord into the affairs of men.

Pessimism is essentially a “philosophy of the future”; and when we consider the future we enter the modal space of “possible worlds” and leave behind the realm of the indicative and the actual world as it is in the present or had been in the past.<sup>4</sup> We are dealing instead with the subjunctive mood and are presented with a wide range of scenarios from the best- to the worst-case, and scenarios between these extremes.<sup>5</sup> The ancient Stoics had long ago advised a kind of proactive meditation by which the sage would think ahead to anticipate the worst-case scenario in order to be prepared for it, to face it stoically, i.e., philosophically.<sup>6</sup> They called this practice the “anticipation” or “premeditation of evils” – *premeditatio malorum*.<sup>7</sup> Whether the worst-case will actually happen depends on causes in the present that are difficult to analyse; this analysis is the gist of the dispute between us pessimists and our more sanguine rivals. The Stoics urged this kind of contemplation so that on the chance event the worst-case should occur, the sage can be prepared for it, as the Spartan woman, who, when told her son had been killed in battle, replied that she knew she had given birth to a mortal. Such legendary stoicism is associated with the very idea of philosophy; and the Stoic sage (an invention of the Stoic school) was presented to the reading public as the ideal-type of the Philosopher.

Pessimism today arises from the pursuit of this kind of proactive, anticipatory thinking – *premeditatio malorum*. We are pessimists not simply because we undertake this style of contemplation but because we are persuaded that the worst-case scenario is the most likely scenario.<sup>8</sup> We share this belief because of the evidence, not for reasons of temperament. One’s view of the fate of mankind must not be influenced either by solidarity with, or antipathy to, the human race. Moreover, no other school of philosophy wishes it were wrong; we pessimists alone wish this strange paradox, and we welcome the refutation of our views. It is not from any macabre feelings or morbid sensibility that we draw our conclusions but from sober analysis, empirical precedent, and historically informed reflection.

What then is the worst-case scenario? In the worst-case scenario modern global civilisation – the great achievement of mankind – suffers the fate of its predecessors: decline and fall. Bad as this no doubt is, in the worst-case scenario the collapse of civilisation will trigger the extinction of the human race, a prospect



which invites philosophical consideration of a number of questions that arise from the mere possibility of human-caused human extinction.<sup>9</sup>

The great question of extinction is only now being taken up by philosophers, although it is a commonplace assumption of modern biology.<sup>10</sup> We, pessimists, take extinction for granted as a natural law to which all animals are subject, even *Homo sapiens*. As a consequence, we also hold that the collapse of civilisation is unavoidable, since if extinction is inevitable then collapse must also be.<sup>11</sup> The only real questions concern when and how this great and terrible event will take place; and the answers to these questions imply a great deal for our understanding of humanity.

According to the worst-case scenario extinction will happen sooner rather than later, and as a result of human actions rather than by some celestial or terrestrial catastrophe, such as an asteroid strike or a titanic eruption. Everyone must admit that this is a distinct possibility no matter one's view of its likelihood (there was a time not long ago when one could hardly imagine any way in which the extinction of the human race could be brought about by human actions; but ever since August, 1945, the world has come to know all too clearly exactly how such a terrible thing can happen).<sup>12</sup> And, as a material possibility, we are obliged to consider it in a manner that does justice to the profound philosophical questions that lie at the core of, and are associated with, the great question of human extinction. We are pessimists not because we think this thought (everyone should ponder the possibility of human-caused extinction whether they deem it likely or not) but because we think it is more likely to happen than other scenarios.<sup>13</sup>

We pessimists are not sanguine about the long-term prospects of the human race; we are skeptical of the claim that progress (in the form of modernity or "modernisation"), having been achieved, can be sustained into the long future. We fear that future will resemble more the Dark Age of an earlier, benighted era, than the utopian dreams of our bullish rivals. In the oracular words of the inimitable Jane Jacobs, we see a "Dark Age ahead"; and we regard it as a kind of doom or fate which cannot be avoided, a destiny that derives from a source which is suitably (and bitterly) ironic: for it stems from our very success as a species.<sup>14</sup> We are all too easily lulled into a sense of complacency about the human future precisely because of the extent and magnificence of this success. The modern world is a testament to human glory and we are confident of continuing success because of past successes and the many manifestations of the god-like powers of modern science and technology, yet, it is the very success of the modern world which endangers us. In this lies a deep paradox concerning human nature and what it is to be a human being.

We, pessimists, maintain that our magnificent and glittering modernity, sign of our species-wide success, contains the very seeds of our species-wide ruin, the

decline and fall, not only of the modern world, but also of mankind itself, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, as we have come to call ourselves by a flattering scientific trinomial. We pessimists see this future as a kind of *kismet* or *Schicksal*, something that cannot be avoided; even as we see it approaching we will not escape (even though we can escape by doing the right things), despite our allegedly “free” will and our highly-esteemed rationality. It is a fate which will fall upon the whole human race; and it will result from the individual actions and collective deeds of humanity itself and not from any cause other than human action, such as an asteroid strike or the eruption of a supervolcano with the capacity to wipe out mankind.<sup>15</sup>

We pessimists find ourselves convinced of the *inevitability* of this doom by the fact that so many powerful and magnificent civilisations have suffered the fate of decline or collapse, many having succumbed to a kind of fragmentation or disintegration, in which entire languages, religions, forms of government, and ways of life, were lost, fossilised in the mud of the historical record like so many extinct species of an ancient geological era. Decline and fall seem to be baked into the DNA of civilisation itself, unlike the much longer period, *la longue durée*, during which pre-historic humanity enjoyed a much more stable, more harmonious, and more sustainable relationship with the natural world. Civilisation, though much more dynamic than prehistoric forms of life, is actually much less stable and is decidedly not in harmony with its surroundings but stands out starkly separate from them, as all the great world cities dramatically testify. The sustainability of civilisation, especially modern civilisation, is the bone of contention between us and our bullish opponents who believe that modernisation, growth, and development can continue into the long future.<sup>16</sup> It appears to us that collapse is just the other side of progress, as the degeneration of cells in the human body is coded into the actual DNA of the human genome.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, we must be on guard for any Black Swan phenomena – the fact that regularity or uniformity in the past does not guarantee the same regularity or uniformity in the future.<sup>18</sup> Hume (1777) famously pressed this point in his renowned argument against any claim of definitive knowledge of empirical phenomena, what he called “matters of fact”.<sup>19</sup> The sun rose every day in human memory but this does not entail that it must rise tomorrow, nor even that it will rise tomorrow – nor ever again. Future events do not always resemble previous ones; black swans are seen after only white ones had ever been seen.

Consider what a large and difficult burden this places on our rivals – the partisans of progress and apologists for modernity. These optimists must argue that this time is different, that modern civilisation – because of features unique to it (such as modern science, e.g., or the spread of democracy) – can be sustained long into the future, unlike previous civilisations which crashed and burned. For

the optimist, modern global civilisation is the black swan, the outlier that defies the general trend. The burden of proof is therefore something they must shoulder because their claim of uniqueness – the uniqueness of modern civilisation – flies against all known precedents and available evidence concerning the observed tendency of civilisations to break down and collapse.

This burden was certainly easier to carry in an earlier age when economic and technological progress came so quickly in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. One economist has recently argued that the growth spurt from the Civil War to the 1970s was a one-time phenomenon; no similar technological developments have rivalled that suite of technologies which brought about widespread electrification, large-scale industrial production, and the scientific machinery and power sources of 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity.<sup>20</sup> But shouldering this burden today has become increasingly difficult – despite the amazing advances in technology that account for much of what we call “progress”. In fact, we pessimists feel threatened because of this very technology, not only the nuclear weapons which can destroy civilisation in a day, but we feel endangered also by the endless proliferation of banal technologies that allow so many of us to live our highly mobile, energy-hungry modern lives at such unsustainable levels of consumption and waste.

Causes of alarm and reasons for urgent concern far outweigh the prospects of devising, let alone mounting, effective solutions. The solutions proposed by the techno-optimists seem to us far-fetched at best, or, pure magical thinking, as when it is proposed, e.g., that humanity will colonise the other heavenly bodies and escape the fate of the earth.<sup>21</sup> We pessimists regard those who hold these views as fantasists and we dismiss these ideas as childish fantasies. Such unjustified optimism is deeply in denial about the inconvenient truths which confront us today; not only does it ignore scientific assumptions about extinction, it is also in denial about the astronomical distances and daunting difficulties of space travel.<sup>22</sup>

Other solutions, that would have humanity scale back, slim down, or soften its impact on the world, as suggested, e.g., by Singer (1972; 2009; 2015), seem to us pessimists as either far-fetched, or as medicines worse than the illness they are trying to cure.<sup>23</sup> The kind of sudden, massive, wide-scale draw-down from mass consumption, and the great transfers of wealth that would be required to turn on a dime and pull back from the brink, all but guarantee the collapse of the modern economic system, and this would threaten the stability of states and the viability of governing parties and coalitions trying to effect these changes. Humanity must thread the needle in order to survive the coming scale-back that will be forced on us by nature itself and the hard limits of a finite planet. The necessary changes in moral orientation and reforms in policy and law are possible in theory – and we should regard them as moral imperatives and strive for them in practice; but these

efforts will not prevail against the inevitable triumph of folly, at least not according to the worst-case scenario. The laudable efforts of the “world improvers”, noble and high minded though they are, are tantamount to rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*; for the magnificent works of wisdom will be undone by folly, like Penelope at her loom.<sup>24</sup>

For this admittedly sad conclusion we appeal to the evidence. To start with, we inhabit a planet of over seven billion human beings. This unprecedented number is staggering and the speed with which it was reached is alarming; it forces on us several harsh conclusions.

First, it is a sign of our stupendous success as a species; but this is no grounds for reassurance – quite the contrary. We pessimists are not comforted by the achievements of modern global civilisation, we feel instead that we are put in danger by these very achievements – not only the infernal ones, such as nuclear weapons, but also the innocent ones, such as the automobile, or life-saving technologies such as air-conditioners, or power-hungry “labour-saving” conveniences such as washing machines and refrigerators – the banal icons of modern life. This very success – growth in population and growth in the power to extract, consume, and waste the natural, finite, resources of the earth – contains the seeds of collapse. The sudden growth in population is an overgrowth which is not sustainable. This speedy spike upwards in numbers is more likely to cause a quick spike downward into a population bottleneck than to plateau peacefully at this high level. Our stupendous success is, paradoxically, too successful. Similarly, the growth in power (to extract, consume, waste, and destroy) is so great it can bring about in a day the destruction of world civilisation by nuclear war. This is unprecedented power and bodes ill for mankind; for the longer these odious weapons escape the prudent call for their abolition, the more likely it is they will be used.<sup>25</sup> The Stoics had an old tradition of being on guard, not only against bad fortune, but also against good fortune, in this case we must be on guard against the fate of being an overly successful species.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, resource depletion is so much more accelerated now with a larger population (along with greater prosperity and more wealth to finance “development”) that all thought of avoiding the fatal over-consumption of vital resources – the eating of our seed corn – now seems unjustified. We are now undermining our very future just by consuming what a normal middle-class family in America takes for granted. This rate of consumption, this voracious depletion of natural resources, is not sustainable and a crash is much more likely to occur than a smooth transition to new technologies that can pick up the slack of the immensely powerful, cheap, and convenient, but finite resources of coal, oil, and natural gas.<sup>27</sup> The fossil fuels which have made modern civilisation possible are finite resources; they are a one-time deposit to our collective wealth, an event which will not be

repeated and a resource which will not be replaced by any other feasible source of power or imaginable technology (such as nuclear reactors, e.g.). The burning of these fossilised fuels – this finite deposit left by eons of microbial and vegetative life – is also causing the greenhouse effect and the changes to climate that result from this well-understood phenomenon. This is an irony that invites deep philosophical contemplation.<sup>28</sup> We humans are being undone by our own success – the source of our power and our modern glory is also the cause of our eventual undoing.<sup>29</sup> The seeds of folly lie in the very science which enables us to live the comfortable modern lives so many of us enjoy today.

And this is to say nothing of the crisis of potable water, disappearing aquifers, and encroaching desertification, along with the many known effects these have on farming, food production, and the growth and migration of plant and animal populations and infectious diseases, such as Ebola, the Zika virus, avian flu, *et al.*<sup>30</sup>

Finally, we must also take into account the great challenge of environmental degradation that confronts the modern world. Not only is this a matter of human pollution and the destruction of habitat (and the consequential increase in the rate of the extinction of species), but it also affects the very earth itself through global warming and the many other far-reaching repercussions of global warming, such as the inevitable rise of sea levels and change in weather patterns.<sup>31</sup> Welcome to “the Anthropocene epoch”, so named because of the disproportionate impact one species has had on the entire geology of this small, blue planet.<sup>32</sup>

To name only one effect that is sure to have a devastating impact on modern global civilisation we need only point to rising sea levels and the flooding of coastal cities around the world, as well as many island nations and peoples, whose migration to safety will only add to those teeming migrants escaping the flooding coastal megacities. One need not have a vivid imagination to see how a new *Volkerwanderung* can be unleashed on the earth this way, as large floes of migrants stream out of flooded places and push into other places, testing the capacity of modern states to respond effectively.<sup>33</sup> When Goethe depicted Faust struggling to hold back the sea he went beyond mere metaphor and pronounced a prophecy about what Oswald Spengler aptly named “Faustian civilisation”.

When taken together, this triple threat of overpopulation, resource depletion, and environmental degradation, constitutes the supreme crisis of the modern world. When understood soberly the prospects for humanity look grim. It is the optimist’s burden to make it look otherwise, and to do so by appeal to the evidence. This will almost always take some form of a scenario in which technology saves the day as both god and machine by a *deus ex machina* at the last possible moment – for we are quickly approaching the tipping point.<sup>34</sup> This is why optimists tend to be techno-optimists who think the world can be saved with a last-minute “hack”.

Other kinds of optimists, social optimists, e.g., are rarer these days, as the prospects of democracy have dimmed throughout the world, even in democratic countries, where unaccountable “dark money” has been allowed to enter political life and influence outcomes so that we in America now have “the best government money can buy”, as Mark Twain famously said of the last Gilded Age.<sup>35</sup>

The optimism that followed 1989–1992 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Soviet communism in the USSR and Eastern Europe, was short-lived. After September 11, 2001, the world entered a more dangerous phase and has not shown signs of improvement since then. The world seems to have descended into an “era of contending states” in which the great powers are now the old players – the historic civilisations, allegiance with which seems to have replaced the bipolar configuration of the Cold War. Huntington (1993) was prescient when he argued that the fault lines of tension and violence are now the frontier borderlands separating the great civilisations.<sup>36</sup> Not only is the Muslim world undergoing a destructive civil war and a disruptive reformation that is involving and endangering the rest of the world; but other great centres of power in Russia and China also have veered towards militant nationalism, having decided that conflict with the West, especially the United States, is better than cooperation, to say nothing of imitation, which the ruling elites in Moscow and Beijing have steadfastly repudiated. The chance to follow the West and democratise their states and societies was missed; the push for democracy was thwarted in Tiananmen Square in 1989 and in the rise and election of Vladimir Putin in 2000. Nor is the West without its dangerous nationalisms and its egregious failures, having blundered internationally, especially in its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Of the latter, it could be said that it was worse than a crime; it was a mistake.<sup>37</sup> On domestic policy the Occident has not done any better considering the Great Recession of 2007–09 in America, the European Union debacle over Greek debt, the migrant/refugee crisis, and Brexit. The West has done itself no favours; it was this record of folly that inspired President Obama’s policy of cautious temporising summed-up by the mantra “don’t do stupid shit”.<sup>38</sup>

Our species, appears to be at war, or on a war footing, both with nature and with itself. We have briefly described the clash between human civilisation and the natural world; as we turn now to consider humanity in itself we observe a lamentable tendency to strife within the human family, as some parts clash violently with others – not only the historic civilisations, but tribes and ethnic groups, races, religions, classes, and nations struggle against each other undermining efforts at harmony and cooperation. It would appear that Eris (also known as “Discordia”) is on the rise. Though there are counter-movements which are endeavouring to build and strengthen solidarity between individuals and groups, the harmony required to mount an effective response to the challenges we have unwittingly created for ourselves – by a surplus of success – will be extremely difficult if not impossible



to achieve under the worsening conditions of strife and conflict, suspicion and distrust, that characterise the world situation today.<sup>39</sup>

According to the worst-case scenario, compared to what is coming, this period we now inhabit will appear to have been the calm before the storm, the halcyon era before the baleful effects of overpopulation, resource depletion, and environmental degradation are felt more widely, deeply, and painfully than they are today. We are now on the better side of a coming catastrophe, a crash which has not happened yet, but is certain to happen given current trends as we understand them. Although we may have arrived at or passed the tipping point, we are still on the safer and better side of the epochal event.

To turn to the subject of harmony, we might be tempted to ask whether on hindsight our present moment may just prove to have been the harmony we are capable of as a species. For all its stresses and tensions, for all the bloodshed and violence now unleashed in the world, it may be that this moment is similar to the years 1912-1913 the summit of *la Belle Époque*, just before the outbreak of the Great War. There was bloodshed too in those years, the Balkan Wars were taking their toll, and in a part of the world – a fault line between civilisations – which would spark the conflagration that brought down the *ancien régime*. That war ushered in a new world of industrial destruction and mass killing on a scale that would dwarf all that came before it.<sup>40</sup> For all the evils of our current moment the tensions are still just simmering and have not yet come to a boil, at least not between the Great Powers. We still enjoy abundance, though we are fast approaching “peak everything”, and the tipping point when abundance begins to give way to scarcity.<sup>41</sup>

It is due in part to the effects of our common faith in progress that we do not sufficiently appreciate nor correctly understand our current condition. This is due partly because, under the influence of the Panglossian doctrine of perpetual progress, we too often expect our situation to improve and we anticipate better times with an unjustified bias for good outcomes; we thus regard the present moment with impatient expectation for its improvement rather than taking stock of how far we have come from the recent past. When we pause to consider the strange and unprecedented nature of the present moment it occurs to us that it is something extraordinarily special, bordering on the miraculous, though we take it for granted as something ordinary and commonplace. The tremendous movement made possible by air travel, trains, and automobiles is nearly magical. Add to this the enormous power at our fingertips, the electrical power of our homes, offices, and factories, the near magical power of our cell phones, which instantaneously connect us to the far side of the planet, and the picture borders on the miraculous. And there is much more beyond the technological to take into account concerning this rare moment – there is the growth in scientific learning, our comprehension of



our place on this planet and in the cosmos; this too is a near god-like achievement. And finally, the examples of heroism, integrity, and leadership in the modern world are reassuring, not only in such great figures as Mohandas K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela, but in countless other heroic individuals. Goodness still can exist in a world which has given rise to the Holocaust and Hiroshima. Our current moment is a special moment of rare harmony whether we recognise it or not; certainly, on the worst-case scenario, it will appear that way in light of an event so terrible as the decline and fall of the modern world.<sup>42</sup>

And what are we to make of that? What is the measure of man when this appears to be the pinnacle of human achievement, the calm before the storm, the harmony insofar as it can be achieved by a fractious and quarrelsome species? I would like to venture some provisional conclusions in answer to these questions.

First, I contend that neither the collapse of modern civilisation, nor even the extinction of the species (two ideas linked in the worst-case scenario as cause and effect) is able to nullify the achievements nor besmirch the glory of mankind. The achievements of the human race are not cancelled because the civilisations which made them disappeared. Their reality was always a temporal reality, bounded by limits, and accessible only to a finite number of observers: those who can remember, or those who can appreciate or understand (more likely misunderstand) as direct or indirect observers. If anything, this temporal finitude adds irony and poignancy to the achievements of humanity; but it cannot cancel their reality, their ontological status as “having been”, nor even their long-lasting effects in the landscape – our modern cities will be around a long time after man; and they will testify to human greatness, wisdom, and harmony, as well as to the ultimate folly of the hominid that named itself “wise”. I contend that even extinction cannot obliterate the human achievement, nor can it efface what I call “the human event”. Even if no future observer reconstructs human history from the fossilised remains of our cities, and the deeds of mankind are lost forever, the glory of mankind remains ineffaceable; it having been realised, nothing can change its facticity, its “having been”. This is to say something about the ontological nature of the past: that the past, having come into existence, cannot be de-ontologised by the passage of time and the obscurity of forgetfulness. Its “having been” is not subject to its being perceived; *esse* is not *percipi*; even though perception may be the only way to access or account for existence.

Second, it says something about our species, *Homo sapiens sapiens*. We have named our kind with a flattering scientific trinomial; but that name arises from consideration only of the origin of our species and its glorious though sanguinary history. However, this way of looking at mankind neglects the whole question of extinction, an event that can happen as a result of human actions. Sapience

or wisdom certainly suggests itself as a differentiator separating our big-brained kind of hominid from our ape, monkey, and bonobo cousins. It was our superior intelligence (along with climate change) that enabled *Homo sapiens* to break out of Africa and spread out all around the globe, chasing big game, foraging and scavenging for shell fish, fruit, berries and other edibles.<sup>43</sup> It was our intellect which enabled us to prosper under these changing conditions for many millennia. With the aid of language and symbiotic relations with other species, such as dogs, who aid in hunting, humans thrived in many diverse climates and environments – even eventually reaching the remote islands of the vast Pacific Ocean, the coastline of the frigid arctic sea, and the “New World” of North and South America.

This long, prehistoric period, this longest of *longue durées*, had established a kind of equilibrium between mankind and the natural world in which *H. sapiens* was just another mammal, though an exceptionally successful one. The excessive success which endangers us today required a very long gestation of tens of thousands of years before humanity was able to create civilisations. We may see this long prehistory as a kind of Edenic paradise in which ancient hominids lived many millennia in a nomadic or semi-nomadic life, suspended in a kind of harmonic equilibrium with the natural world. This was the long childhood of mankind and it eventually gave rise, due to the discovery of agriculture, the domestication of animals, metallurgy, and writing, to settled and growing urban populations, marked by a complex division of labour and a hierarchy of casts governed by codes of law. When civilisation finally arrives it transforms the human event into something exceedingly dynamic; by contrast the life of prehistoric humanity appears nearly static. *Homo sapiens* now comes into its own as *Homo sapiens sapiens*, and is deemed doubly wise, by virtue of language and the ability to create a cultural world, a world marked by art, religion, music and dance, a world modern people would recognise as a human world.

Undoubtedly, when considering only these innovations and advances we would be tempted to call such a hominid “wise”, even doubly wise. But this progressivist view of our species does not take extinction into account; it views only the origin of our species and our illustrious but violent history. Once extinction is factored into our picture of humanity, once we take as a given that even *Homo sapiens sapiens*, for all its evident ingeniousness and alleged wisdom, will not escape the natural law of extinction, then the measure of man must change, and the *differentia specifica* which sets mankind apart from the apes may not prove to be wisdom at all, though this depends on how the extinction event will have occurred. If extinction were to take place by means of an external event, such as an asteroid strike or some natural disaster that overwhelms mankind, then that should not affect the current view of our species. That doom would be a homicide. But if the worst-case scenario turns out to be true, and extinction happens as a result of human folly, then the

*differentia specifica* which sets humanity apart can no longer be wisdom; for folly is the negation or failure of wisdom; it is the exact opposite of wisdom – and we are obliged to regard mankind's demise as a kind of collective suicide. And, since we are pessimists because we consider the worst-case scenario to be the most likely scenario, we pessimists need to reconsider our species in light of this fact – though it is a fact which has not yet happened. We regard it, nevertheless, as most likely to happen; and this belief affects our estimate of man. Pessimists have always held a little lower opinion of humanity than is considered socially acceptable. Calvin expounded on “the total depravity of man”; Machiavelli wrote a handbook for dishonesty and power-politics “by any means necessary”; Hobbes depicted the natural state of humanity as “a war of all against all”. But today we are obliged to look at the matter from the point of view of the worst-case scenario – as the ancient Stoics advised their readers to undertake a proactive anticipation of evils, or *premeditatio malorum*, so that if the worst were to occur, the sage would be prepared to face up to it philosophically, with calm, resignation, acceptance, or even scorn when appropriate.<sup>44</sup> Stoical pessimism today invites us to think through the worst-case scenario and consider what it says about the human event on earth, i.e., all of human history from the origin of our species to human extinction, not merely the “world-history” of civilisations.

I have argued that collapse does not negate man's glory; I have contended also that the likelihood of collapse from self-inflicted wounds, from folly on a grand scale, obliges us to reconsider the nature of humanity and to seek to name our species more modestly and more accurately – in view not only of the origin of our species but also of our likely extinction as a result of avoidable actions and foolish policies. What stands out when we take this complete view of human history, and not just the flattering parts, is not man's wisdom, but human cleverness, our ingeniousness. We are perhaps too clever by half; and wisdom, though possibly the possession of rare individuals, is not a feature universal enough to set mankind apart as a whole from other animals. It is our ingeniousness rather that distinguishes us universally, our cleverness and not our wisdom, which in any case only a few humans, if any, have ever truly attained.

I propose therefore that our species be renamed *Homo ingeniosus* or *Homo callidus* – the Ingenious or Clever Hominid, to reflect this fact, a fact that, although it has not happened yet, is likely to happen – the fact of human extinction by human causes.

By examining this line of thought ahead of time, by tracing out the likely scenarios in advance, we brace ourselves against what will prove to be the worst thing that will ever have happened, and we take account of it philosophically, considering what it implies about humanity, and about mankind's moment in the

sun, this glorious moment of harmony and triumph, before the human race sinks into the abyss and is swallowed up by all-conquering time. Since humans will not be able to look back at this extinction event after it happens, we must do so before it happens; this is the only way to take stock of it philosophically. This taking stock, this looking into the abyss, requires a special kind of intellectual fortitude, as well as an imperturbable, philosophical temperament. Even those who do not think the worst-case scenario is the most likely scenario are still summoned, by a duty to philosophy, i.e., a duty to think, to look into this abyss and consider the possibility of collapse and extinction and their significance for the question “What is man?”<sup>45</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Philosophical pessimism can be traced back to Heraclitus, “the weeping philosopher”. Strong notes of pessimism can be found throughout the ancients from Plato to Saint Augustine. Modern philosophy, which is optimistic by contrast, also has had its pessimists, including, most notably the Germans: Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Oswald Spengler. Other notable pessimists include Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Giacomo Leopardi and Miguel Unamuno. Interest in the subject has recently been sparked by Joshua Foa Dienstag (2006).
2. This is the claim of nihilism – that goodness, wisdom, etc., does not exist; and although many pessimists are also nihilists (and some are cynics, some misanthropic), they need be neither nihilistic nor cynical nor misanthropic in order to be philosophical pessimists.
3. There are many other moderating influences and governing forces at work in modern civilisation, including religion, education, even amusements and entertainments (music, drama, novels, film, TV) reinforce or corrode moral sentiments.
4. The phrase was coined by Nietzsche; but it never caught on in Anglophone philosophy, which dismisses “futurology” as a genre of pulp paperbacks, such as Alvin Toffler’s bestselling *Future Shock* (1970). Ever since a distinguished roster of respected writers, as diverse as Jared Diamond and Niall Ferguson, has taken up the subject of collapse, the philosophy of the future has come into vogue in a cultural milieu in which concern for the future has become distressingly acute. Nietzsche’s philosophy of the future – with its revival of the Stoic idea of the eternal recurrence of the same – was part of a larger philosophy of time pointed directly at Saint Augustine and offered as an alternative to Christian eschatology; see Krzysztof Michalski (2011).
5. These middling cases range from just slightly better than the worst-case to just slightly worse than the best-case and everything in between for the full range of what is possible – which differs significantly from what is plausible.
6. This involves not only calm and emotional control, but also rational insight into the necessity of the fate, which makes acceptance of fate – *amor fati* – easier, according to the dictum: “to understand all is to forgive all”.

7. Epictetus taught that problems can be solved by regularly anticipating setbacks either to avoid them or prepare for them when unavoidable; see Epictetus (1925).
8. One can fall short of this extreme view and still fall squarely in the pessimist camp – it is not necessary to believe the worst-case to be a pessimist (there are bad scenarios that are better than the worst-case); but those who do are certainly pessimists.
9. These are questions about the lasting value (and ontological nature) of the human achievement (especially moral, cultural, and aesthetic achievements), the adaptive advantage or disadvantage of intelligence, whether intelligence will evolve again after human extinction, whether intelligence has evolved or will evolve elsewhere besides earth – and if so what conclusions can be drawn? It also raises the great question what it is to be a human being: What is man? This was the fourth question of Kant's Critical Philosophy, and one which he felt he needed to create a philosophical anthropology to answer. This paper is offered as a contribution to the project of a philosophical anthropology and also to a "philosophy of the future".
10. Frederic L. Bender addresses the threat of extinction in *The Culture of Extinction: Toward a Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, Humanity Books, an imprint of Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York. Naturalists themselves didn't embrace the concept of extinction until Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), see Elizebeth Kolbert (2014):23-46.
11. To regard extinction as inevitable is mere naturalism; but by connecting collapse to extinction, as cause is connected to effect, we become pessimists. However, extinction does not follow from collapse as collapse follows from extinction. Collapse can happen without triggering extinction; yet in the worst-case scenario the decline and fall of modern global civilisation will be an event unlike anything that preceded it, as the modern world is unlike any previous civilisation; its collapse therefore will be so much more destructive that it can conceivably be the ultimate cause of human extinction.
12. Johnathan Schell's (1982) *The Fate of the Earth* is the seminal statement of the calamitous effects of a full-scale global thermos-nuclear war.
13. Of course there are important differences between extinction and a radical population bottleneck that would reduce the human race to a small number of survivors. One need not believe that the collapse of modern civilisation will result in the extinction of the human race in order to be a pessimist; but contemplation of the worst-case scenario obliges us to take this possibility seriously and to ponder its large ramifications.
14. Jane Jacobs (2004); see also John Michael Greer (2016).
15. The Yellowstone caldera is a possible source of an eruption with the power to create a nuclear winter effect.
16. By the term "long future" I refer to the future of centuries, as distinguished from the "near future", which is the future of decades.
17. Geraldine Aubert and Peter M. Landsdorp. April, (2008) vol. 88, no. 2, 557-579, at: <http://physrev.physiology.org/content/88/2/557.full>. In his strange masterpiece *The Decline of the West*, Oswald Spengler defended this view (that decline is inevitable) with typical German bias for *a-priori* reasoning; but Arnold Toynbee, whose 12

volume *A Study of History* surveyed the same evidence with characteristic British empiricism, saw these as so many suicides, i.e., as avoidable, not inevitable, events.

18. Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2007, 2010).
19. David Hume (1777) p.111.
20. Robert J. Gordon (2016).
21. By focusing on ingeniousness such leading techno-optimists as Ray Kurzweil or Martin Rees reflect a bias for engineering and science which overlooks the tendency to misuse such powerful technologies and the well-established propensity for folly. On the lamentable tendency to indulge magical thinking see James Howard Kunstler (2012). See also Michael Specter (2009) and Susan Jacoby (2008).
22. Extinction can occur from success as well as failure (dying out) – the former occurs when a species evolves into another species by natural selection – it does not die out so much as it becomes another type or kind. See Paul and Anne Erlich (1981), Douglas H. Erwin (2006), Elizabeth Kolbert (2014), and Anthony D. Barnowsky (2014).
23. Peter Singer (2015, 2009, 1972).
24. The phrase “world improvers” is of course Nietzsche’s. Penelope promised her suitors she would decide between them when she finished her weaving; but each night she undid the day’s work, never getting to the end.
25. For an eloquent call for the abolition of nuclear weapons see Elaine Scarry (2014). See also “Let’s End the Peril of Nuclear Winter” by Alan Robock and Owen Brian Toon, *New York Times* editorial, February 11, 2016.
26. Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) wrote “remedies for both kinds of fortune”, i.e., good and bad; see Petrarch (1991). This paradox raises the interesting corollary question of the adaptive advantages or disadvantages of intelligence.
27. Here I would refer to the reader to James Howard Kunstler (2005) and Alan Weisman (2013) for fact-based diagnoses of what we will soon be up against. See also Richard Heinberg (2011).
28. In effect the many eons of life prior to the origin of our species laid down the materials that have made this modern moment possible; might it be that this connection between early life and intelligent life is not merely accidental?
29. The word “glory” best describes this accomplishment of mankind as something which is beyond good and evil; it is distinct from the concept of the “dignity” of man; for it pertains to a greatness that it beyond moral evaluation.
30. Robert Glennon (2009). See also Vivien Gornitz (2013) and Alan Granger (1990).
31. For an alarming look at the rate of increase in extinction see Edward O. Wilson (2002, 2016) and Kolbert (2014).
32. On the coming decision to consider renaming our geological epoch see *The New York Times* January 16, 2015, “Researches Propose that Earth’s ‘Anthropocene’ age Begins with Fallout and Plastics”, at: <http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/15/researchers-propose-earths-anthropocene-age-of-humans-began-with-fallout->



and-plastics/?hpwandrref=scienceandaction=clickandpgtype=Homepageandmodule=well-regionandregion=bottom-wellandWT.nav=bottom-well#

The original research paper cited is found in the *Quaternary International* available on-line January 12, 2015, “When did the Anthropocene begin? A mid-twentieth century boundary level is stratigraphically optimal”, Jan Zalasiewicz, et.al., at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1040618214009136>. See also: Jan Zalasiewicz (2008); and Gaia Vince (2014).

33. Giles Slade (2013).
34. See Martin Rees (2003). For the “tipping point” see Malcolm Gladwell (2000).
35. Jane Mayer (2016).
36. Samuel P. Huntington (1993) and (1996).
37. The quip (*C’est pire qu’un crime, c’est une faute*), regarding the trial and execution of the Duke of Enghein on Napoleon’s orders, was misattributed to Talleyrand, and has become a commonplace to describe an act that is not only morally repugnant but politically calamitous.
38. For the Obama quote see David Rothkopf (June 4, 2014).
39. It seems to us pessimists that the human capacity for mischief is infinite but the human capacity for good is merely finite. For a portrait of the world-scene as one in “disarray” see Hass (2016).
40. For an account of the decline and fall of the old ruling elites see Arno J. Mayer (1981).
41. The phrase “peak everything” is from Richard Heinberg (2007). See also Christopher O. Clugston (2012).
42. The term “postmodern” refers first and foremost to the period after the collapse of the modern world; whatever other meanings have been recently given to this term must not be allowed to occlude its primary sense and clear reference to the historical period after the decline and fall of modern civilisation.
43. When assessing the alleged “glory” of humanity it is important to bear in mind that spreading across the globe is an achievement unmatched by any other animal species.
44. In *The Myth of Sisyphus* Albert Camus gave voice to the supremely Stoical sentiment that *Il n’est pas de destin qui ne se surmonte par le mépris*.
45. This was of course the fourth question of Kant’s “Critical Philosophy”, see Kant (1867) vol. viii, p.25; in English see Kant (1992), p.538.

## References

- Aubert, Geraldine and Peter M. Landsdorp. 2008. “Telomeres and Aging.” *Physiological Reviews*, <https://doi.org/10.1152/physrev.00026.2007>.
- Barnosky, Anthony D. 2014. *Dodging Extinction: Power, Food, Money, and the Future of Life on Earth*. California: University of California Press.



- Clugston, Christopher O. 2012. *Scarcity: Humanity's Final Chapter? The Realities, Choices, And Likely Outcomes Associated With Ever-Increasing Nonrenewable Resource Scarcity*. Port Charlotte, Florida: Booklocker.com Inc.
- Dienstag, Joshua Foa. 2006. *Pessimism: Philosophy, Ethic, Spirit*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Ehrlich, Paul and Anne. 1981. *Extinction: The Causes and Consequences of the Disappearance of Species*. Random House.
- Epictetus. 1925. *Discourses, Books I-II*, (translated by W.A. Oldfather). Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Erwin, Douglas H. 2006. *Extinction: How Life on Earth Nearly Ended 250 Million Years Ago*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. 2000. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Little Brown.
- Glennon, Robert. 2009. *Unquenchable: America's Water Crisis and What to do About It*. Island Press.
- Gorgon, Robert J. 2016. *The Rise and Fall of American Growth: The U.S. Standard of Living Since the Civil War*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Gornitz, Vivien. 2013. *Rising Seas: Past, Present, Future*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Granger, Alan. 1990. *The Threatening Desert: Controlling Desertification*. London: Earthscan Publications, Ltd.
- Greer, John Michael. 2016. *Dark Age America: Climate Change, Cultural Collapse, and the Hard Future Ahead*. New Society.
- Hass, Richard. 2017. *The World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*. Penguin.
- Heinberg, Richard. 2007. *Peak Everything: Waking up to the Century of Decline in Earth's Resources*. Clairview Books.
- . 2011. *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality*. New Society Publishers.
- Hume, David. 1777. *An Enquiry into Human Understanding*. London: A. Millar.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilisations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer edition.
- . 1996. *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Jacobs, Jane. 2004. *Dark Age Ahead*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1867. *Kant's sämtlich Werke*, (edited by Gustav Hartenstein). Leipzig: L. Voss.
- . 1992. *Lectures on Logic* (translated by J. Michael Young). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Kolbert, Elizabeth. 2014. *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Kuntsler, James Howard. 2005. *The Long Emergency: Surviving the End of Oil, Climate Change, and Other Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Grove Press.
- Matheson, Percy Ewing. 1916. *Epictetus: The Discourses and Manual together with Fragments of his Writings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mayer, Arno J. 1981. *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Mayer, Jane. 2016. *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*. Random House.
- Michalski, Krzysztof. 2011. *The Flame of Eternity: An Interpretation of Nietzsche's Thought*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Petrarch, Francesco and Conrad H. Rawski (eds). 1991. *Petrarch's Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul: A Modern English Translation of De remediis utriusque fortunae, with a Commentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Rees, Martin. 2003. *Our Final Hour. A Scientist's Warning: How Terror, Error, and Environmental Disaster Threaten Humankind's Future in this Century – on Earth and Beyond*. Basic Books.
- Robock, Alan and Owen Brian Toon. 2016. "Let's End the Peril of Nuclear Winter." *The New York Times*, editorial.
- Rothkopf, David. 2014. "Obama's 'Don't Do Stupid Shit' Foreign Policy: From Hope and Change to Rests and Pivots, To Singles and Doubles, To Not Sticking Your Finger in the Electric Socket. How Far we've fallen." *Foreign Policy*.
- Scarry, Elaine. 2014. *Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing Between Democracy and Doom*. W.W. Norton and Co.
- Schell, Johnathan. 1982. *The Fate of the Earth*. Knopf.
- Singer, Peter. 1972. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1(3):229-243.
- . 2009. *The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty*. Random House.
- . 2015. *The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically*. Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- Slade, Giles. 2013. *American Exodus: Climate Change and the Coming Flight for Survival*. New Society.
- Spengler, Oswald. 1926. *The Decline of the West*, 2 vol. Knopf.
- Taleb, Nassim Nicholas. 2007. *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. Random House.
- Toffler, Alvin. 1970. *Future Shock*. Random House.
- Toynbee, Arnold. 1934-1961, *A Study of History*, 12 vol. Oxford University Press.

- 
- Vince, Gaia. 2014. *Adventures in the Anthropocene: A Journey to the Heart of the Planet We Made*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.
- Wilson, Edward O. 2002. *The Future of Life*. Vintage Books.
- . 2016. *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*. Liveright Publishing Corporation.
- Zalasiewicz, Jan. 2008. *The Earth After Us: What Legacy Will Humans Leave in the Rocks?* Oxford University Press.
- Zalasiewicz, Jan, Colin N. Waters, Mark Williams, Anthony D. Barnosky, *et al.* 2015. "When did the Anthropocene begin? A mid-twentieth century boundary level is stratigraphically optimal." *Quaternary International*, 383(5):196-203. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1040618214009136>



## CHAPTER 45

# Finding Harmony to Live In From Noise to Music

*Sara J. Wolcott*

### Introduction

Of course, we seek harmony. The vast majority of the world's population wants peace for their neighbours, their children and themselves.

Simultaneously, the global arms trade is a significant portion of global GDP.

The vast exchange of money for weapons suggests that we still value the capacity to kill one another above the value of living peacefully together. There is clear dissonance.

So what does it mean to seek harmony – and not only that, but transformative harmony? How do we find kind of harmony that is in alignment with the earth – a revolutionary harmony - that will turn the current economic order inside out?

There must be a thousand and one small and large answers to this question. Here, I turn to music. I do so not because it is an inherently logical turn; indeed, when I first started seeing music as a transformative pathway to sustainability, I saw this as illogical, or at least non-linear. I do so because in my experience, it works. Nor do I only use music here as metaphor. I suggest the music itself is a powerful gateway to experiencing transformative harmony and through that experience to build stronger cultures.

First, I explore some of the differences in notions of harmony in music. Then I look at the experience of music itself and the difference between noise and music. I, finally, explore the role of music and musicians in crafting a harmonious society. Before beginning, I must assure the reader that I am not a professional musician. Despite music lessons as a child, I never saw myself as a musician or as particularly musically gifted. Working in a university, I never sought to study music. My experience of music is that it came to me when I desperately needed it, and that when I seek for it, it continually comes to me, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly, but always with rewards. My primary relationship with music is thus intensely personal: as a songwriter, I first sing and write songs for myself. To say that it is personal, does not negate the societal. We are well aware that the individual and society are merely different manifestations of the same thing, which may be neither one. And because my primary concern in my life is not only my personal well being but also society's capacity to survive a changing climate and to live in peace, I have been delighted to discover a myriad of ways that both music itself and musicians can and do shape and transform society every day.

Because I am an American who grew up with American folk music, American folk music is the most easily accessible to me. But as I write this, music is revealing itself to me while I am in India. I am learning music via Indian notation, philosophy and spirituality. I do not pretend expertise in either American folk or Indian music – indeed, at this stage in my development; I hesitate to call myself a ‘musician’. It is, thus, with a mere smattering of Indian notions of music, a few instruments pressed into my fingers and a few American folk songs in my bones that I have the audacity to write this article. If it does not ring true, it might not be. If it does ring true, perhaps it is, for us – at least for today.

## Harmony in Music

Rhythm, melody and harmony: this intertwining trinity make up the essentials of music. Harmony in music is generally considered to be the simultaneous sounding of pitches, tones, notes or chords. It is generally considered the ‘vertical’ dimension of music, in comparison to the melody, which can be seen as the ‘horizontal’ dimension of music. We might think of harmony as what sounds nice to the human ear. Harmony always includes tension. Tension is seen as a ‘dissonant interval’ in relationship to the bass note. Tension is essential to harmony. Ideally, one seeks a balance between ‘tense’ and ‘relaxed’ movements in order to achieve something that sounds good. In Greek, *harmonia* meant joint/agreement, as in, to fit together and to join. In Ancient Greece, ‘harmony’ referred to the entire study of music, while music referred to the arts.

As we consider harmony in society, it is useful to recognise the inherent importance of simultaneous tension and relaxation; indeed, this hints at Giri's notion of challenge and compassion. It is a reminder that harmony works and is as appealing to the ear as it is because it is not always 'nice' – or rather, what the human ear, and perhaps also the human society crave is less some idealistic, romantic configuration, but rather something that integrates a multitude of ontologies.

There is a strong difference between Western and Indian conceptions and use of harmony. Western music has explored harmony in great depth. Indian music has put substantially greater emphasis on melody and rhythm, offering subtleties of each rarely found in Western music.

In Western classical music, centuries of musicians have theorised and experimented with harmony to understand the principles of connection that govern the construction of chords and other aspects of harmony. Almost all instruments that accompany the singer – such as the guitar – provide the singer with harmony. That is to say, they are played in harmony with what the singer is singing – not necessarily the full melody line, but the harmony to the melody line. Harmony is in thirds, sixths, certain fourths and fifths within and between chords.

In comparison, in Indian Classical music, harmony is experienced quite differently. Harmony is always to the 'sa' – the base note. The drone – such as the *taanpura* – in the background helps keep the singer grounded and 'in harmony'. Choral singing or group singing which is such a significant aspect of western classical music and which relies upon harmony within the group is rarely done. Some say harmony is, in comparison to western music, largely unimportant. Melody, rhythm and keeping the notes always with the 'sa' are some of the essential elements. Within a song or within a raga, there is a certain type of harmony: the tension and balance between different notes is part of what holds the raga together. A singer's ability to improvise along certain rules includes learning what sounds good within a raga.

However, I and others would suggest that harmony is critical in Indian music. It is just that the harmony is different. The harmony with the drone offers its own type of harmony. The *taanpura*'s four strings are tuned to the fifth and the first and two octaves lower. Non-stop playing creates a spectrum of harmonising notes by a permutation and combination of the four notes and their overtones. It creates a rich texture in the background: a well-tuned *taanpura* can create 7-8 notes. Although it is different than a chord as expressed in Western music, it is, possibly, part of the looser understanding of harmony as the dynamic tensions that sound good – in this case, over a period of time.



Keeping in mind that different cultures understand harmony within music differently may help us discern transformative harmony. The similarities are of particular importance.

One thing they have in common is the appreciation that harmony is always harmony to something – be it to ‘sa’ or to a set of notes within the composition.

A critical question arises: what are aiming to be in harmony with? If one uses this metaphor for larger societal purposes, as the articles in this special issue are endeavouring to do, one can say that we are, in some ways, in harmony already – but perhaps we are in harmony with the wrong thing. To what do we want to be in harmony with – to the larger culture? Not necessarily, though that is what comes most automatically to most of us, for a variety of reasons. Seeking some kind of harmony – including a certain degree of dissonance – with the dominant culture has allowed human beings to survive for millennium with occasional revolutions – until now, when the larger society is standing on literally shaky ground as sea levels continue to rise.

We find increasing talk about coming into harmony with the earth’s natural rhythms, our own bodies, our soul’s purpose and one another. One might see this as the base ‘sa’ – indeed, it may be possible to interpret Indian classical music as pointing the practitioner and the listener to ways of ‘self-realisation’ in which the self is not only the individual but also the collective. The same *sa* is within every person yet at the same time, it is unique; it is also collective, a sound that resonates with the universe itself. So to harmonise with the ‘sa’ is to harmonise with a vibration – a kind of energy – as ancient as rhythm itself; and that, surely, must be a sustainable and inherently peaceful vibration. To carry the universe for as long as it has, through suns and galaxies and who knows how many cycles of death and birth of matter and energy, that must have a transformative power to it.

In Western music, there is less emphasis on finding this base energy and maintaining it and coming into harmony with it. Indeed, I was unfamiliar with such a concept until I encountered Indian philosophy and music. But nonetheless, there is a sense that ‘good’ harmony is surely that which connects us closer to ourselves – and not just something that sounds nice to the ear, but resonates well with the soul.

We live in a world filled with noise – noise that becomes a kind of pollution. The constant drones of motors, from ceiling fans to refrigerators, are fundamentally different than the drones of Indian music. In urban areas, especially in large emerging markets, noise pollution is exhausting and overwhelming, even for those brought up with it. The question, what we are in harmony with, is not only important but a difficult one to answer. Amidst all the noise, where is the music?

Amidst all the different strands of music, which are the ones we are tuning into? What are we paying attention to and why?

Of course, for music, this is always the difficult – and critical – question. What are you listening to? Is the babble in your head? The songs you are singing? Someone else's music? Your guru? The songs you sang before or the songs you sing today?

Transformative harmony is first and foremost a question of transformative listening.

Personally, as I have been exploring music, learning to listen has, consistently been the hardest task. I thought I was a good listener. It was only after having been scolded several times that slowly showed me that I am not, actually, a good listener. Indeed, it is questionable if I ever learned how to listen to music.

It is easy to say that transformative listening requires us to let go of our preconceived notions and to instead pay attention to what is actually happening before us. This is part of the essence of most spiritual traditions: stop the voices in your head that are distracting you, including the desire for something that is not true, and start paying attention to what is going on right here, right now, around you and within you. Learning to do so is another matter altogether. And this, as I shall return to further down, is one of the greatest gifts that music can offer us.

In both Indian and Western systems, the harmony is to the bass, and the harmony is also with the melody, however the bass and the role of the bass in the melody are different. This resonates – with Bussey's point of the importance of what we might think of the bass in culture: security, continuity and identity. We might add connectivity with one another – the very essence of harmonisation. As has been pointed out, Indian classical music's strong emphasis on harmonisation with the drone is very much about providing security for the singer, continuity and it shapes identity of the music and the culture itself.

If we use the Indian classical music as a metaphor, what is the drone to which we want to harmonise? What is the perfect sa-pa mixture intersection that can allow for the perfect drawing out of all of the other notes, and place our culture in a state of peace?

We may not know the answer to the questions. The tension between compassion and challenge that is held out by Giri is clearly an important one – there is no need for romanticism. Certainly, as the above discussion illustrates, harmony in music relies upon both dissonance and consonance. It may be the search for this is part of the process: harmony is often understood to be a process and happens over the course of the musical piece, although it can also occur in just one moment.

I note these differences to point to the different ways we can flesh out our understanding of harmony in a multi-cultural and inherently musical world. It is not about one being better than another; both are rich.

But what about the music itself – in what way is music itself not only a metaphor and teacher for transformative harmony but can support the process of transforming space?

## **Music in Self and in Society**

Music has the capacity to transform the individual, the group and, perhaps, a society. I say this from my own experience of singing with and for small groups of people across many classes and castes in India. I listen to stories of communities, and then create songs that express the emotions and the narrative of what was shared with me, and singing it to the group of people gathered.

In doing this, I have observed that the ‘container’ of the space shifts and changes. I mean that the socio-cultural space of people who are gathered shifts; people pay attention differently, they relate to me and one another differently. They are, through the music, transported to a different realm of reality. We could say that the exchanges within the container shift and this in turn shifts the container. These shifts can be small or large. In the right conditions, the shifts can be transformational.

Singers, despite the appearance to the contrary, do not (necessarily) sing to individuals. Nor do they sing to their audience. They sing to the space in which individuals and everything else exist and move and weave with one another. Music, especially music which has the intention of re-harmonising people to something different, is particularly apt at doing this; it is one of the reasons that music has had the powerful success that it has had in various types of healing practices, from Tibetan chants to Greek musical attempts to bring both body and spirit into ‘harmony’. The vibrations of the music can and do shift the vibrations in the human body at both a cellular and – critically – at an emotional, spiritual and cultural level. What and how these shifts occur depends, of course, on the music and the space that is created for it to be heard. What happens if I sing to a poor family in their hut at the base of a mountain is different than what happens if I sing on a stage to hundreds of people.

I find that after singing, new conversations can open up. New spaces emerge. New ideas come out that have not come out before. People ask different questions. People experience being heard.

I have a hypothesis as to why this can happen. Often, the stories that people tell have not been heard by the authorities and decision makers who may have some capacity for changing their lives, such as enacting existing legislation, creating better policy, or providing better service. The consistent attempt to narrate a traumatic event, such as being beaten up by the police or their communities due to caste-related prejudice, without it being heard means the event becomes frozen. It becomes something that they hang around their souls and it weighs them down. They are on some level trapped in that event and unable to move out of it. The music helps cut through time. Using different tempos and rhythms literally reconfigures their experience of time into something different. In this, it is the evocation of emotion, as well as particular lyrics that is so effective in cutting into the frozenness of the past and enabling time to flow, releasing into the present moment the energy for new actions and new forms of relationship. If this energy is then harnessed, something new can emerge, and previously 'stuck' problems can become unstuck. New forms of harmonisation become possible.

While this is particularly effective if done by an outsider, it is also a powerful thing to do for oneself and for one's own community.

Music, especially singing, acts as a critical feedback loop in the social system. The lyrics, tunes and the patterns of rhythms tell us who we are and where we have been. They connect us to the past and are one of the key methods through which we envision the future, be that through love songs or philosophical treatises or songs of mourning. If we do not sing songs that are directly related to our lives, we miss the very first element of transformation: being aware of where we are now. Only with full experience of the present can we discern where we want to go. The music can also alter the mood or overarching sentiment in a group to a desired direction, paving the way for transformative action.

Music's capacity to alter the individual and the social system has long been recognised in various ways. Wisdom traditions around the world recognise the healing properties of music, especially sacred music. In Native American traditions, music is also used as a form of healing and as a way for people to become stronger and to discover the wonders of their own being<sup>1</sup>. As one Native American saying goes, 'every musician is a healer.' Music therapy is an increasingly growing field internationally<sup>2</sup>. There is increasing scientific evidence on the value of music for seemingly ever-more ailments and challenges.

Music is being used to support social change processes as well. People designing health programmes are finding that in some situations, such as in villages in West Africa, those health programmes which are using music to spread their messages and to teach people about what is happening are highly successful<sup>3</sup>. Music is also being used in peace-keeping efforts.<sup>4</sup> Health communication programmes, from

UNICEF to Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, are actively using music and other performing arts as ways to communicate health messages and engage communities in behavioural change in what is frequently described as ‘edutainment’.<sup>5</sup>

Music, clearly, has a strong role to play in creating and maintaining social harmony. It may not be any more ‘special’ than any other form of performing art – drama has many of these same elements. Community drama can have high impact at all levels. Perhaps any form of self expression that can also resonate with collective expression can lead to internal and external harmony. This may be because the act of creating art is itself a transformational act: the human being takes in the world around her, reorganises it in her mind, and then externalises it in art. The raw material of daily life – or extra-ordinary occasions – is on some level transformed.

But this leads us to another challenge that echoes where we began. Yes, music is powerful. People can experience transformational experiences when they engage in music. Seemingly magical cures can be found. Meditative practices can be deepened. At collective levels, groups can hear one another and themselves differently; perhaps better, after engaging with and in musical jamming sessions. Creating music, as well as listening to it, can change the way the brain functions; creating music with others shifts internal and external group dynamics. But music is many other things too. Music has done as much to spread consumerist culture as has any other force. It can be as much an escape as spiritual realisation. It can inspire harm as well as goodness. There is so much music produced today, it is impossible to begin to classify it all.

## **Musicians for Harmony**

So what is the link between this and transformative harmony for entire societies? There is no evidence to suggest that the answer to society’s woes is to teach everyone music. I learned music as a child with no sense of its transformational power. Recently, I have spent time with musicians described by others as having a strong spiritual calling through their music and generations of traditions of music as a spiritual pathway; surely these musicians might be the avatars of social harmony?

Instead, I found another group of people who were, simply, people. They argued, drank, smoked, cheated on their wives, ran traffic lights and threw plastic trash into the local lake even as they sang songs of peace harmony and the God-within. Musicians like other artists have always reflected, critiqued and in some cases shaped societal changes, but most musicians I know are not exemplars of sustainability. Singing mystical music is only one aspect of enabling a human being

to practice mysticism – which in our current system includes leaning towards right-relationship with the earth.

One could blame the dominant socio-economy; musicians' livelihoods have been as harmed by a global music industry as have small farmers' livelihoods. The marketised music world that we live in today pulls young people away from their traditional music and pulls them into an individualised, not a collective, musical production process. And while the internet enables more collective sharing and even musical collaboration at a global scale, it undermines livelihoods. Even large musical labels and record companies are struggling to survive; few musicians can depend upon the selling of recordings of their music. While many musicians prefer this ideologically – they would like their music to be a free gift, as the commoditisation of music is inherently problematic – it does not support their livelihoods. In India, there is a long tradition of simple lifestyles for musicians which often included begging and travelling; but this lifestyle has lost both much of its appeal and practicalities in an economic world where begging is no longer a reflection of a spiritual pathway. Musicians have families to feed also. Unquestionably this influences what possible role musicians can play as social guides – as *sadhus* within an Indian context.

But it is also possible that even without the commodification of music, musicians have always been just that – a group of people with a particular artistic talent and skill that serves society and that opens them to all the experiences of humanness, from boredom to ecstasy to lust, that all other humans experience. If this is the case, then the role of musicians might not be any more special than the role of cooks. And since everyone wants excellent food in a harmonious society, cooks have an important role! Perhaps music is also like cooking in that the most important cooking is everyday cooking – the cooking that occurs, for most of the world, at home. Perhaps some of the most important music to create a harmonious culture is the everyday music that we sing and experience at home.

Do musicians have a role to play in creating a harmonious society? Yes. But it might be to help all of us reclaim our own musicality or other artistic expression within our daily lives. It might be less about musicians being 'special' and more about all of us coming back to our own musicality. It might be about guiding us to hear our own 'sa', our own authentic voice, which requires us to look within ourselves as well as to listen to the gifts of instruments. It might be as critical companions, always asking, is that really coming from you, or are you trying to copy some famous singer, regardless of what tradition you come from? In this way, musicians can support the creation of harmonious transformation through using music as a way of learning how to be with one another and to listen to ourselves.

This may be easier within Indian harmonics: the simplicity (though difficulty!) of returning to the inner ‘sa’ is well-established here, and the emphasis on improvisation within an established structure might give us practice in an individual-communal relationship that could prove useful in learning how to enable personal and collective harmonious transformation.

There is much scope for experimentation with music as a guide for learning how to live our lives together in a harmonious way. Like all teachings, this is best done via experimentation, listening and scaffolding. Bringing the power of music into formal institutions – as well as the informal community structures – could help bring in the capacity to listen to one another at a level that encourages both compassion and challenge. Certainly without such experimentation, we risk losing the potential of one of the greatest gifts that we can create together: our own music.

## Endnotes

1. Fields, G.P. 2001. *Religious Therapeutics: Body and Health in Yoga, Ayurveda and Tantra*. State University of New York.
2. Prabhakar, V. and Parambi, T., Della G. and Sreeja C. Nair. 2010. “The Rhythms of Life: Music Therapy of the Body, Mind and Soul.” *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research*, 2(2):237-246.
3. Bingley, K. 2011. “Bambah’s Song: Music, Women and Health in a rural community in post-conflict Sierra Leone.” *Music and Arts in Action*, 3:2.
4. Richards, Paul. 2007. “The Emotions at War: A Musicological Approach to Understanding Atrocity in Sierra Leone”, in P. Perri, S. Radstone, C. Squire, A. Treacher, Amal Treacher Kabesh (eds), *Public Emotions*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
5. See, for example, Johns Hopkins work: <http://www.jhuccp.org/>



## CHAPTER 46

### *Communitas Harmonia in Wordsworth*

#### A Musicosociological Glance

*Nirmal Selvamony*

Our destiny, our nature, and our home,  
Is with infinitude – and only there.

—Wordsworth, “The Prelude”, Book VI

Wordsworth is very often spoken of as a Nature poet. But Nature is not the only thing we find in his poetry. There is much rustic life and a good measure of urban life too.<sup>1</sup> But his preference for the former persuades us to regard him, like his predecessor Burns, as a people’s poet, a man speaking to men. Besides Nature and human society, there is also the supernatural. In fact, without the last, the first two do not acquire their full significance. If Baker confirms this when he tells us that Wordsworth is “one man, among men, speaking quietly to his fellows of what most moves his heart and what is most central to his deeper thoughts on the inter-relations of man, nature, and transcendental or immanent supernature,” (1966:102; cf. 100), Langbaum (1977) echoes much the same idea when he writes “the main purport of Wordsworth’s poetry is to show the spiritual significance of this world...” Walter Jackson Bate traces this worldview of Wordsworth to the deism of the Earl of Shaftesbury who regards “God as revealing Himself through the harmonious beauty of nature, and man’s moral character ” as something that

is “formed and developed by participating in this harmony” (1952:331; Lyons). In other words, Wordsworth is more concerned with the proper relation humans can possibly have with Nature and Supernature than with Nature and Supernature *per se*. Humans, Nature and Supernature are correlates rather than monads. The three already always stand in an interrelationship we may call “community”.<sup>2</sup>

On the one hand, Wordsworth’s poetry privileges the community, and on the other it does the individual self, which makes his poetry, shall we say, anti-communitarian. If poetry of the self is Romantic by virtue of being “expressive” (Abrams 1976:21-26), meaning expression of self, much of Wordsworth’s poetry, especially his autobiographical poem, “The Prelude” will fit that label. Like Hartman, we might want to see the whole of Wordsworth through the window “The Prelude” opens for us. If we grant that Romantic expression is individualistic praxis (Bate 1952:281), we may consider what Keats thought of Wordsworth’s poetry. Baker tells us, “Having taken Shakespeare as his model for the poet’s self-immolation in poetry, Keats was discomfited by the ever-recurrent “I” in Wordsworth; he spoke, not unkindly, of ‘the Wordsworthian, or egotistical sublime,’ and wondered, half-aloud, whether Wordsworth’s grandeur was not in some respects contaminated and rendered obtrusive by the poet’s sonorous ego”<sup>3</sup>(96).

The self-orientation in Wordsworth’s poetry undoubtedly makes it Romantic.<sup>4</sup> But he adopted this orientation for two reasons: firstly, because he had no way of falling back on a commonly shared tradition like mythology (an aspect of the supernatural member of the community the poet wanted to address in his poetry), which was already exploded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Willey 1966:84-86; Hazlitt 1966:131). In his opinion, mythology had only a debilitating effect on a transitional poet like Thomas Gray (Roper 1987:27-29; Owen 1969:162-163). Even Alexander Pope did not rely on it very much. For that matter, Wordsworth did not accept the authority of science also. His rejection of mythology does not mean endorsement of the scientific worldview of the Enlightenment. In fact, the supernatural was an important part of the poet’s worldview. Further, he could not take for granted the so-called universal laws which Pope had understood as “Nature” as evident in the latter’s writings, especially his “Essay on Criticism”:

First follow Nature, and your Judgment frame  
By her just Standard, which is still the same:  
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,  
One clear, unchang'd and Universal Light,  
Life, Force, and Beauty, must to all impart,  
At once the Source, and End, and Test of Art. (68-73)

Wordsworth wanted to put everything to the test of personal experience.<sup>5</sup> When nothing except his own experience seemed authentic and truthful, he chose to privilege his own mind over any other external authority. Consequently, his poetry turned out to be the voice of Romanticism. However, Romantic self-expression, which is conceptually anti-communitarian, is more a method in Wordsworth than the objective itself.

Self-expression is inseparably related to the quest after truth, which is “not individual and local, but general and operative....” (Roper 1987:33). However, the Wordsworthian truth should not be mistaken for scientific law. He sought after universal truths discernible in Nature as the persona tells us in the following lines:

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

— “The Tables Turned”

However, the desire for general truths goes hand in hand, very often, with a lack of interest in history and the local. Jerome McGann has pointed out how the Romantic ideology consists in suppressing history as evident in “Tintern Abbey” wherein the poet “annihilates its history, biographical and socio-historical alike, and replaces these particulars with a record of pure consciousness” (1983:90, cited in Matsunaga, “Why They Half-create”). Marjorie Levinson has pointed out how the poet does not speak of the Abbey at all in his poem, “Tintern Abbey” which then was “a dwelling place of beggars and the wretchedly poor” (Matsunaga, “Why They Half-create”). Similarly, Alan Liu has argued that the Simplon Pass episode in the Sixth Book of “The Prelude” is a denial of Napoleon’s historical crossing of the Alps in 1800 (Miall 1998; Bate 1991:7). In short, we find in Wordsworth only denial of history and the local at the expense of the generic which is not locatable in any community (Selvamony 2015; Hazlitt 1966:136).

Another seemingly anti-communitarian feature of Wordsworth’s poetry is its preference for solitary figures (Williams 1966:113-115; Hartman 2004b:183). Some of the well-known ones are the Leech-Gatherer in “Resolution and Independence”, the soldier at the end of Book IV of “The Prelude”, the beggar in Book VIII, and the girl in Book XII; Margaret in “The Affliction of Margaret”, the beggar in “The Old Cumberland Beggar”, the reaper in “The Solitary Reaper”, “Lucy Gray”, the shepherd at the end of “Michael”, Leonard in “The Brothers”, the Indian Woman in “The Complaint Of A Forsaken Indian Woman” and Ruth in “Ruth”. Some significant non-human solitary figures are the skylark, the daisy, the

Lesser Celandine, the swan in still Saint Mary's lake in "Yarrow Unvisited", and the linnet in "The Green Linnet" (Williams 1966:113-115).

At closer look, the figures mentioned above are not quite solitary after all. In "Michael" Wordsworth tells us quite explicitly that he loved shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, "not verily/for their own sakes, but for the fields and hills/Where was their occupation and abode." In "The old Cumberland beggar" the poet says: "As in the eye of Nature he has lived, / So in the eye of Nature let him die!" Lucy, in her death, "Rolled round in earth's diurnal course, / With rocks, and stones, and trees." These are not individual heroes of Carlyle or the Representative Men of Emerson. They need to be seen in relation to the community to which they belong.

To have an idea of what the English urban community was like in 1802, we may turn to Wordsworth's sonnet, "London, 1802" (Hutchinson 1959:244)<sup>6</sup>:

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:  
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen  
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,  
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
 5 Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;  
 O raise us up, return to us again,  
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power!  
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;  
 10 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:  
  
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

To describe the contemporary social condition of London in 1802, Wordsworth chose to invoke Milton, 128 years after the latter's death (1674) probably because Milton travelled "on life's common way/In cheerful godliness" much like Abdiel who "Among the faithless, faithful only he" (*Paradise Lost* V. 897; Hazlitt 1966:140). Milton's organ-voiced poetry sang this faith much like the sea:/Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free..." About fifty years later, Mathew Arnold would also worry about the receding of the English Sea of Faith in his "Dover Beach" (1851). By 1802, Wordsworth's community had not only become faithless and selfish, it had also lost its inward happiness. In other words, Wordsworth's community had become disharmonic.

Though Wordsworth's contemporary community was a disharmonious one, he idealised a harmonious community, especially in his *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (Roper; Owen). In a rustic community, according to him, human emotions find a better soil to develop to their maturity because they are under less restraint unlike in industrialised urban societies which are corrupt and artificial. Industrialised societies, as Semashko points out, may allow people economic freedom but not harmony ("Six Sociocybernetic Innovations"). But the emotions of the people of the primal societies are better integrated with Nature. In fact, their language has evolved only from Nature (Owen 1969:156).

We may note that Wordsworth is speaking of a particular mode of relation between humans and Nature.<sup>7</sup> To him, Nature is not the raw variety but its idealised form. Consider his phrase, "beautiful and permanent forms of nature." He would rather have pleasant and sensuous Nature than the smelly, creepy and predatory kind. Commenting on this approach to Nature, Aldous Huxley wondered what the poet would do if he were put in the tropics. Again, his Nature does not include its perishable material part but only the eternal Platonic form.<sup>8</sup> The eternal aspect of Nature is often the poet's sublime idea of Nature.

Nature is also presented by Wordsworth as the source of the best part of language. This shows how indebted humanity is to Nature. This idea of Wordsworth's is very similar to the concept of *karu* in the primal community called *tiNai*. *karu* is the embryo, the generative part of the community<sup>9</sup> (Selvamony 2009). Here is an ancient Tamil song that illustrates this aspect of Nature:

*nacaiperi tuTaiyar nalkalum nalkuvar*  
*piTipaci kaLaiyiya perugkai veezam*  
*mencinai yaam poLikkum*  
*anpina toozi avarcen RaaaRee*

— *kuRuntokai* 37

(A confidante comforts the heroine saying that the hero will express his great love for his beloved because he will be moved by the act of love demonstrated by the elephants along his way. In the arid paths he will cross, he will see the male elephant snapping the twigs of a *yaa* tree only to feed its thirsty and hungry mate)

The elephants, in this case, generate the feeling of love in the hero, and therefore, they are regarded as *karu*. An entity that functions as a *karu* generates ideas or feelings or desire in the mind of the human. If we extend this idea further, we may even hold that the people of primal society had thought that Nature was the source of all ideas and feelings in human beings.

If Nature is the source of our ideas and feelings, then it may be possible to say that the human mind is a *tabula rasa* (as Locke maintained) prior to the influence of Nature. But the Lockean view that sensations and reflections are the source of all human ideas may have to be reinterpreted in such a way that these sensations and reflections originate from Nature if we have to accommodate the Wordsworthian theory of *karu*. To say that the best part of our language derives from the best objects is to say that the best Natural objects are the source of our language. This cannot be said more explicitly than how it is put in the opening lines of the thirteenth book of "The Prelude": "From Nature doth emotion come, and moods/of calmness equally are Nature's gift..." (Hutchinson 1959:579).

But what is Nature in Wordsworth? It is, by and large, what you can see in the Lake District, in north-western England. "His excellent travel book, *Guide To The Lakes*, although less well known than his poetry, tells us not only where to look, but how to see" (McCracken 1984:2). It has "directions and information for the tourist," "description of the scenery or the lakes," and "miscellaneous observations" on the proper "time to visit the country," the "order in which the objects should be approached," the "views from the heights," "Alpine scenes compared with Cumbrian," "phenomena" (which etymologically are "appearances"), and "comparative estimate". To these are added three topics: "excursions to the top of Scawfell and on the Banks of Ullswater," and "Ode" and "itinerary".

Not only Nature in the real Lake District, its counterpart in his poetry is also what the poet saw. In his poems he tells us where he saw what he saw and how. Take for example, his well-known poem, "I wandered lonely as a Cloud," written in 1804, inspired by a walk the poet took with his sister Dorothy along the banks of Ullswater (the second largest lake in the Lake District) on 15<sup>th</sup> April in 1802, the year when the poet composed his sonnet, "The world is too much with us." The persona tells us that the flowers he saw were "Beside the lake, beneath the trees... along the margin of a bay" and they were "A host of golden daffodils...Fluttering and dancing in the breeze...Continuous as the stars that shine/And twinkle on the milky way." The poet adds, "...Ten thousand saw I at a glance,/Tossing their heads in sprightly dance./The waves beside them danced; but they/Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:/A poet could not but be gay/In such a jocund company:/I gazed – and gazed – but little thought/What wealth the show to me had brought:" (Grigson 1980:250). The words or phrases, "saw" (used twice), "glance," "gazed" (used twice), "the show" "flash upon" "inward eye" and also a little more indirectly, "golden," "shine," "twinkle," and "sparkling" present the daffodils to us as visual entities. The experience was a "show" to the persona.

Although Nature was what could be seen, it was also a member of a community to Wordsworth. Here and there he expresses a strong desire to have a meaningful

relationship with this member and his poetry may be “seen” as a site of contest where Nature has competing claims upon his personae – as a visual phenomenon and as a community member.

In the sonnet, “The world is too much with us” (1802) also the persona tells us that Nature is what is seen (line 3). The winds, which are seldom spoken of in visual terms, are like sleeping flowers that are gathered up. The sea, the most important representative of Nature in this poem, to the persona, is a woman who bares her bosom to (probably her male lover) the moon. But the persona wants to “have glimpse” of the sea in a pagan way in order to see Proteus in it. The sound of the sea is also mentioned but sight is predominant in the poem.

Although the persona wants to have a particular kind of visual experience of Nature, two strong desires are expressed in the poem – the desire to see Nature differently, and to become a Pagan. These are apparently unrelated but not so. In fact, they stand in a causal relation to each other. The persona tells us that in order to see Nature differently, (s)he needs to become a Pagan but in a subjunctive mode. The possibility or impossibility of the change (of a non-Pagan into a Pagan) is not the point of the poem. What is important is the fact that unless one is a Pagan, one cannot see Nature in a way the persona desires to.

Now, what is the relation between a Pagan and Nature? Can we reduce Pagans to people who stand on pleasant leas and see and hear mythic beings in the sea? Will Nature, to the Pagan, be something to be admired visually as a scene in a picturesque way as it is to Wordsworth?<sup>6</sup> Is Nature a mere picture and a set of mythic creatures to Pagans? If the Pagans with outworn creed are primal people, they regard Nature and humans as members of a family. Proteus and Triton are not mere mythical beings but ancestral spirits of particular communities. Later on when the ancient family ties were broken, a condition necessary for the formation of the state, the ancestral deities did not disappear altogether but reappeared in different forms.<sup>10</sup> By the time the state societies were established in Athens and Sparta, these ancestral spirits became deities commonly worshipped by several people. Several other deities would have simply been forgotten.

Proteus and Triton invoked by the Wordsworthian persona must have been the ancestral spirits of the coastal dwellers in pre-state Greece. A Pagan invokes an ancestral spirit not just to have a glimpse but to enjoy or continue to enjoy a desired relationship. The reader cannot assert that the persona desires, like a Pagan, a familial relationship with the deities through the sea. However, the persona does aver that a harmonious relationship with Nature is inseparable from a similar relationship with the sacred.

It is possible to read the poem as a site of competing claims; the claims are not two modes of perception of the sea, the visual and aural, but two modes of



praxis – the mode of visual perception and a mode of relation. Nature is both an aesthetic phenomenon and a community member in Wordsworth. His poetry and prose express a strong pagan desire to relate to Nature in a communitarian way, but momentary aisthesis and thoughts of the egotistical sublime infinitude often get the better of him.

The community in the poem is a praxic one constituted by the three members, human, Nature and Supernature who are already always engaged in action. They participate in the action playing the roles of the agent, patient and context. Let us see how these roles are played out in the following poem:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;  
     Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
     This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;

The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
 It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be  
     A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

(1802; Hutchinson 1959:206)

The speaker-persona stands on a “pleasant lea” from where (s)he can see the sea that “bares her bosom to the moon” at a time when there is not much wind and utters the lines of the poem. From the use of the first person plural, we may assume that the speaker addresses not one persona but several. But we do not know who these listeners are. It is also quite possible that the poem is a soliloquy in which case there is none in the scene of address except the speaker. Although the listener is not physically present before the speaker, the latter takes the presence of the former for granted. Therefore, even when the listener is not physically present in the scene of action, the speaker presupposes the existence of the patient. But the address itself is impossible without the embodied speaker and the physical context (the lea next to the sea). If the speaker’s address presupposes a listener, the speaker’s act of seeing regards some objects of Nature (the sea and the moon) and mythical beings (Proteus and Triton) as patients.<sup>10</sup>

The name “patient” is problematic because it implies inaction. But in reality, the agent’s action is often a response to the prior action of what we call “patient.” For example, if the agent intends to have a glimpse of the sea, the latter invites the agent by performing such actions as baring the bosom to the moon and making Proteus rise from her and Triton blow his “wreathéd horn.”

Of the patients (listeners), the sea and the moon are present, whereas the mythical beings have to be imagined. The two major actions, uttering the lines and seeing objects of Nature, presuppose the context of a lea near the sea. The context also includes the time – a windless but moon-lit night, when it is possible to see and hear the mythical beings in the sea. People who have no heart for Nature and paganism are also part of the context. Probably most of these people are suckled in a Christian creed. Although the speaker and listener are associated with the “world,” their specific context is not the whole world, but only a small part of it, namely, the lea and the sea beside it. The reader is expected to associate the sea with Nature rather than the world. The reader cannot ignore the fact that the “world” is used oppositionally in relation to “Nature.” Even as a part of the world (not the whole world) forms the context of the actions in this poem, only a part of Nature constitutes context here. Specific parts of Nature – the sea, the moon, the wind, and the pleasant lea – occupy the role of the patient in the poem.

As we pointed out earlier, the patient is not inactive but proactive. Nature, the patient, has enough power to move people’s hearts. The naturo-cultural elements that play the role of the patient are agents in their own right. The sea, a part of Nature, is a patient in this poem that performs the action of baring her bosom to the moon. The wind, another patient, is up-gathered right now. The mythological creatures, Proteus, and Triton, are patients who perform such theatrical acts as rising from the sea and blowing the wreathed horn. The natural phenomena are not passive entities but active evokers of response. Therefore, they are “generators” (*karu*).

So far, we have spoken about the members of the praxic community in the poem. Now, we need to know what kind of relation obtains among these members. The speaker-agent complains that (s)he, like the others, is not able to see the sea in Nature what (s)he ought to see. (S)he is not able to have glimpse of the mythic beings such as Proteus and the conch-blowing Triton in the ocean. The moon-lit sea and the winds do not move him/her anymore. The speaker also gives us the cause of this effect—materialism. Like many others of her/his time, (s)he wastes human powers making and spending money. Turning away from Nature, (s)he and his/her contemporaries have sold their souls to the world. The world, here, is human society which has no place for Nature.

In short, the relation between the agent (the speaker), who stands on a lea beside the sea at night (context), and the patient (the sea, particularly, which is the effective representative of Nature) is disharmonious. Significantly, the speaker uses a musicological phrase, “out of tune”.<sup>11</sup> Now, we may want to dwell on this phrase, “out of tune” a little bit. Wordsworth’s phrase suggests (the loss of) two things: union and desirable prior relation. Though the word disunion could have served the poet’s purpose to some extent, it is not adequate to suggest the idea of difference inherent in the phrase “out of tune.” When a stringed instrument is in tune, its strings do not produce the same pitch as in the case of unison. Even when they are tuned to different pitches, they are expected to be “in tune.” Therefore, we can infer that being in tune implies both identity and difference (Selvamony 2007:xx-xxi). In the case of the fifth relation, we have two pitches which are different and yet achieve a state of tonal identicalness or continuity. The idea of the fifth is possible only if we begin with a first. Put differently, the first is the immediate source of the fifth, even as the agent is the immediate source of action in a praxic community, and the fifth complements or answers the first, like the patient, in a tonal community.

The tonal community consists of the agentive and patient tones and also the tonal context. For example, in the case of a six-stringed acoustic guitar, the six pitches, namely, EADGBE, stand in fourth (E-A; A-D; B-E) and third (G-B) relations. In other words, the pitches E and A stand in a relation to each other, not unlike an agent and a patient. Now, this fourth relation is impossible without reference to the octave, a set of predetermined pitches, which provides the necessary context for the relation of differentiated continuity. The tonal community precedes the tonal relata, namely, the tonic and the fourth.

In the sonnet under discussion, the tonal community is a metaphor for its praxic counterpart. The speaker-persona complains about the disharmonious state of the praxic community constituted by humans, Nature and Supernature. The human agent does not enjoy a harmonious relation with the patient, namely, Nature (the sea). At first blush the reader may recognise only the lea and the moon-lit night time as the context in the text. But there are also the mythic beings, Proteus and Triton, who stand in an ambivalent relation to the sea. There seem to be two ways of regarding the sea, as one without any mythic beings in it and as one with them. Obviously, the speaker longs for the mythicised, sacralised sea. This means that Supernature is also part of the community articulated by the text. But the supernatural beings are not patients; rather, they are part of the context of the action. Since the supernatural beings are also part of the context, the agent has to be in tune not only with the patient but also with the context. Evidently, the agent is not.

The phrase, "out of tune" also connotes an acceptable prior condition, namely, being in tune. The speaker identifies that condition with paganism. True, the speaker's expression is in subjunctive mood (I'd rather be a Pagan...). But the wish conveys the speaker's idea that a Pagan can see Proteus and Triton in the sea, whereas a modern European like the speaker (who is probably a Christian) cannot. Though the speaker does not mention Christianity, we cannot rule out the implication. Like a Pagan or an animist, a Christian shall not see deities in the sea. Having any deity other than the Christian God is sacrilege. Therefore, if a Christian still wants to find deities in the world or the sea, which is a part of it, there is no option but to give up Christian identity however briefly. We do not know whether the speaker desires permanent conversion or momentary apostasy. But change of spiritual identity is inevitable for sacralising Nature and in this case, the speaker hopes to achieve his/her goal by embracing paganism. Now, is paganism reducible to superstition?

Commenting on Wordsworth's paganism, Alan G. Hill writes, "Wordsworth is saying, presumably, that superstition is preferable to worldliness or apathy if it preserves the life of the imagination and our sense of nature as a living presence with purposes akin to our own" (1994:26). To dub all Pagans/animists superstitious is to despise millions of primal (tribal) people of the world.

To equate paganism and animism with superstition is to divert the message of the text. The quest for a rationally acceptable belief system is inseparable from a quest for truth, to be specific, scientific truth. If Hill would like to evaluate belief systems in terms of their approximation to scientific truth, he may not have Wordsworth on his side. It is true that Wordsworth, about his own poetry, says, "Its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion" (Roper 1987:33). Evidently, the poet is talking about emotional not scientific truth. Since neither the speaker nor Wordsworth is interested in finding the scientific truth about the sea, the idea of superstition is irrelevant in this poem.

What the speaker is interested in is the relationship one can have with the sea. The speaker began by saying that (s)he is out of tune with the sea, meaning that (s)he is not able to relate to the sea the way (s)he would want to. Crass materialism has benumbed the soul to such an extent that the latter dismisses anything that is not a commodity, anything that does not have exchange value.<sup>12</sup> Though Wordsworthian personae are interested in the value of beauty, beauty is not the concern of the speaker-persona in this sonnet. It is not just a sensuous experience of the sea that the speaker desires, but a particular kind of relationship with the sea. This is evident only in the last couple of lines when the sea is presented in a pre-modern manner, as the habitat of spirit beings.

To see the sea as a habitat of spirit beings is to resacralise it. It is such because before the emergence of modern science the sea was already sacralised by people. Now the speaker realises the need for resacralising it in order to be in tune with it. Like many other societies, the Tamil people also sacralised the sea. Consider the following lines from an ancient Tamil song:

*aNagkuTaip panittuRai kaitozu teetti/yaayum aayamoo Tayarum...*

—*akanaanuuRu* 240:8-9

(My mother with her female friends celebrated by worshipping the deity of the cold sea)<sup>13</sup>

The sacred sea was desacralised when it was seen as an object that could be understood by mere rational scrutiny alone. Sixty-five years after the composition of the Wordsworthian sonnet, the persona of “Dover Beach” (1867) says how people’s attitude to the sea had changed over the years. The metaphoric sea (which is both sea and faith) was full when people lived by faith. Now, with the rise of modern science people are persuaded to live by reason rather than faith. Consequently, the sea has begun to retreat with a melancholic roar. Here are the lines:

The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth’s shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

The Wordsworthian persona anticipates the retreating of the sea pointed out by the Arnoldian persona, while emphasising the need for humans to be in harmony with the sea as well as the other phenomena of Nature. For example, in the poem, “To The Daisy” (1802) the persona declares “Methinks that there abides in thee/Some concord with humanity, /Given to no other flower I see/The forest thorough!” (Hutchinson 1959:380).

The harmony that Wordsworth envisaged between humans and Nature was very often erotic, not unlike the relation between spouses. Harold Bloom puts it this way:

For Wordsworth the individual Mind and the external World are exquisitely fitted, each to the other, even as man and wife, and with blended might they accomplish a creation the meaning of which is

fully dependent upon the sexual analogy; they give to us a new heaven and a new earth blended into an apocalyptic unity that is simply the matter of common perception and common sexuality raised to the freedom of its natural power (1963:135).

In “Tintern Abbey”, the persona says,

...Therefore am I still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
And mountains; and of all that we behold  
From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
Of eye, and ear... (102-106)

...and that I, so long  
A worshipper of Nature, hither came  
Unwearied in that service: rather say  
With warmer love – oh! with far deeper zeal  
Of holier love... (151-155)

In his *Preface*, Wordsworth said, the poet, “considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature” (Roper 1987:34). A careful scrutiny of this relation shows that the sacred is also part of the *communitas harmonia* as Bloom also points out.

The community which united Nature, which is already always sacralised<sup>13</sup> (*tolkaappiyam* III.1.5), and the humans harmoniously like the spouses was known as *tiNai* in ancient India (*iNai*, spouses; *iNai* > [*t* prothetic consonant + *iNai*, union, spouses, the fifth relation in music] *tiNai*, the union of elements of a community). By virtue of its etymological origin, *tiNai* means a type of community in which the members stand in a relation to each other like spouses or the musical pitches, the tonic and the dominant.

The fifth relation in music is one of the four types of tonal relation in Indian musicology, and the other three are the kin, associative and dissociative (*cilappatikaaram* 8.33-34). Significantly, the primal community known as *tiNai* derives its name from the fifth relational mode. In spousal relation, the tones that stand in fifth relation, when produced together, sound like a single tone. In the case of unison, the pitches are the same that sound at an octave interval. They do not stand in a spousal relation to each other as they lack difference. The pitches that stand in a fourth relation are kin-like because the commonness they share is comparable to that between kinfolk. The tones that stand in a third relation may be called associative, for, they, like friends, are compatible one way or the other. These tones do have something in common between them but lack the intrinsic

commonness of the fourth relation. The relation between the tonic and the other tones (the second, sixth and seventh) in the octave is all dissociative like that between enemies.

With the help of the concepts of tonal relation, we could try to understand the nature of *tiNai*. As a praxic community, *tiNai* is realised through action that involves three personae, agent, patient (the recipient of action), and context. The traditional categories of place-time (*mutal*), naturo-cultural features (*karu*) and action (*uripporuL*) could be subsumed under agent, patient and context. If action (*uripporuL*) involves agent and patient, a definite place and time and select naturo-cultural features form the particular context of an action. It may be shown how the members of *tiNai* (the agent, patient and context) stand in a spousal relation articulating nothing less than a *communitas harmonia* (Selvamony, “Water in Contemporary Tamil Literature”). However, the relation has changed over a period of time yielding two basic types of *tiNai*, the integrative and the non-integrative (Selvamony, “*tiNai* Poetics”). Historically, the integrative mode characterises the primal societies or the societies of the pre-Anthropocene era, whereas the non-integrative mode is typical of post-primal state societies (of the Anthropocene era; Selvamony, “From the Anthropocene”).

Integration (or non-integration) is basically praxis. In fact, it is a biaxial event, horizontal and vertical at the same time. The horizontality of the relational mode is evident in its temporal axis and the verticality in its spatial axis. The being (ontology) and knowing (epistemology) of all organisms including the human have to be understood within a relational universe of particular praxic communities.

The relation among the members of integrative *tiNai* is not additive but continuous. We may try to understand such continuous relation in musicological terms. In Indian musicology tonal relation is graded in the sense that consonance and dissonance are not dualist but graded events. Between the perfect consonance of the spousal fifth relation and the greatest dissonance of the inimical second, lie other possibilities such as the kin-like fourth and friend-like third. These musicological relations characterise the organismic communities too.

The spousal relation is characteristic of the primal or pre-civilisational societies. Typically, in this mode of relation, the members enjoy greatest ontic continuity as between spouses. An ethico-axiological marker of the relation is love culminating in maximal selflessness and sexual intimacy. Although sexual intimacy ensures physical continuity in spousal relationship, the latter is meaningless without love. Among those members who cannot, like spouses, enjoy physical intimacy, ontic continuity expresses in different forms. In kin relation, the relatives enjoy physical continuity through blood relationship; but they are not necessarily bonded by love. In associative relation the continuity is solely mental. As a result, those related



are not tied down to a definite place and time. Lack of physical continuity and rootedness do not rule out love. Even love between friends privileges difference rather than identity.

Unlike the primal society, state society is ontically discontinuous even as the pitches that are absolutely differentiated at the expense of identity. A typical example of such disharmonious pitches is the first three in an octave. If these three pitches (C, D and E) constitute an absolute anarchic set, the pitches C, F and G form a disharmonious set but yet the tonic (C) is distinguishable to the extent of creating a hierarchic relation among the pitches. Indeed, the tonic subordinates the other two pitches. In order to control the disparate entities the most efficient mode of relation is absolute hierarchy, which is an exclusive vertical relation, especially in situations of power. In fact, hierarchic discontinuity is the precondition for the emergence of state society.

Hierarchic discontinuity was displaced by anarchic discontinuity in the industrialised state society. Now the state was more like a set of the first three pitches with no redeeming tinge of concord in the prevailing disharmony. In fact, this is the state of affairs in the sonnet under discussion. In the community we find in "The world is too much," humans and Nature are present but in a discordant relation, whereas Supernature is entirely absent, for the persona is unable to see the latter's sole representatives, Proteus and Triton. Why? This is because the persona is unable to sacralise the sea due to her/his allegiance to a non-Pagan society. Again, it is not enough to sacralise the sea; the persona has to see the sea in a personified manner in order to relate to it better. Further, the sacro-personified being, Proteus or Triton has to be an ancestral member of the persona's *communitas harmonia*. But such resacro-personification calls for not only remythologisation but membership in a real *communitas harmonia*. Unfortunately, the *communitas harmonia* that Wordsworth dreams of in his poems and *Preface* is unattainable to him because he denies what he desires<sup>14</sup> (Hutchings 2009:159). On the one hand he enjoys his Lake District home and on the other, denies it through his persona who avers, "our home/Is with infinitude – and only there" ("The Prelude", Book VI; Selvamony, "Home and Spiritual Praxis").

So far, we have tried to read a poem of Wordsworth's from a musicosociological<sup>15</sup> manner. In other words, an attempt has been made to show how musicology can interpret society. Only a single musicological concept, namely, tonal relation, was used to interpret communitarian relation. Other musicological concepts may also be deployed for sociological purposes. But a demonstration of that possibility does not fall within the scope of this essay. What we have tried to show is that musicology can cross-fertilise sociology. Unlike any other tradition, the Indian sociological model of *tiNai* is innately musicological. Although Wordsworth was not familiar

with this tradition, he had intuitively held musicosociological assumptions and ideas that do find expression in his works.

## Endnotes

1. In 1802, Wordsworth wrote, on the one hand, about the beauty and divinity of the sea in his sonnet, "The world is too much with us" and, on the other, of the beauty of the city of London and the Westminster Bridge in his sonnet, "Upon Westminster Bridge" and in another entitled, "London, 1802." In 1805, in Book XVII of "The Prelude" he has a section on "Residence in London", which is perhaps influenced by panoramic paintings such as *Eidometropolis* (1802) by Thomas Girtin (1775-1802).
2. What we have called "community" is distinguishable from what Arthur O Lovejoy calls, the "Great Chain of Being" (1936:59-60). If the latter is a hierarchical order of the Supernatural, human and non-human beings, the former is an order of kinship, which is egalitarian as well as non-egalitarian (Selvamony 2011).
3. Despite its emphasis on individual self and expression, the Romantic Age did not ignore the need for sympathy and imagination as a faculty that aids the latter (Smith 2008:156-158). Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments fostered the cult of sensibility (2008:156) which led Coleridge to aver that "There is one criterion by which we may always distinguish benevolence from mere sensibility – Benevolence impels to action, and is accompanied by self-denial" (2008:261). Ironically, Wordsworth also emphasised self-denial when he was aggrieved by the growing selfishness among his contemporaries. In his sonnet, "London, 1802," his persona admits: "we are selfish men" and in *The Prelude* where he describes his own historical moment, his persona says, "if in these times of fear/This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,/If 'mid indifference and apathy/And wicked exultation, when good men/ On every side fall off we know not how/To selfishness,...if in this time/Of dereliction and dismay, I yet/Despair not of our nature, but retain/...a faith/That fails not,...the blessing of my life, the gift is yours/Ye mountains, thine O Nature." (II.478-92). Coleridge pointed out that his contemporaries did not protest against slave trade because it provided them such commodities as sugar and rum (one, according to Coleridge, "useless and the other pernicious"). He said, "There is observable among the many a false and bastard sensibility that prompts them to remove those evils and those evils alone, which by hideous spectacle or clamorous outcry are present to their senses, and disturb their selfish enjoyments" (2008:260).
4. To Hartman, the Romantic approach to the self is complex. He writes: "To explore the transition from self-consciousness to imagination and to achieve that transition while exploring it (and so to prove it still possible) is the Romantic purpose I find most crucial" (2004a:185). It may be pertinent to note that scholars have problematised the nature of Romanticism. To give just two examples: Paul Michael Privateer speaks of two romanticisms, of which one is a response consistent with bourgeois power; an ideology that inscribes the individual in terms of an absolute and autonomous self...linear and centrist in its orientation and the other is one that relies on the

imagination and the instability of language and figuration but does so to undermine bourgeois control over what constitutes legitimate forms of the self" (1991:225). Justin Clemens (2003) has argued that Romanticism persists even in contemporary theory. The ambivalence in Romanticism may be traceable to its intrinsic paradoxical nature, what Lovejoy calls, "particularistic uniformitarianism" (1936:313).

5. That personal experience is a criterion of knowledge in the Romantic Age is borne out by the visual arts of the time also. Consider, for example, Turner's depiction of Hannibal's *Crossing of the Alps* (1812). The historical incident is transformed by Turner's "first-hand experience of atmospherics" (1989, 34).
6. We may want to compare William Blake's "London" (Grigson 1980, 161) with Wordsworth's. Even in Blake's time, and in fact, earlier, London had already "Marks of weakness, marks of woe." While Blake was plagued by the blights of London such as the "black'ning Church," bloodied Palace, and the factories, Wordsworth exclaimed, "This City now doth like a garment, wear/The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,/Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie/Open unto the fields, and to the sky; All bright and glittering in the smokeless air." In fact, he found this city "A sight so touching in its majesty" in the same year (1802) when he composed his "London, 1802." True, Wordsworth is only admiring the appearance of the city in the morning, not its reality. He knows that in a matter of hours this apparent smokeless city will get terribly smoky. But this is another instance of the poet's quest after the picturesque in external reality (Nature).
7. Hartman calls this relation "*via naturaliter negativa*," which he explains thus: "The poet's sense of reality in Nature is kept alive by the very fact that Nature itself weans his mind, and especially his poetic mind, from its early dependence on immediate sensuous stimuli. And since this movement of transcendence, or what mystics have often called the negative way, is shown by Wordsworth as inherent in life, and as achieved without violent or ascetic discipline, I have thought to name it a "*via naturaliter negativa*" (1962:214). This natural negative way is not characteristic of the early Wordsworth; only later, does the poet distance himself from the concrete in favour of the abstract. Aldous Huxley put it this way:

The change in Wordsworth's attitude to Nature is symptomatic of his general apostasy. Beginning as, what I may call, a natural aesthete, he transformed himself, in the course of years, into a moralist, a thinker. He used his intellect to distort his exquisitely acute and subtle intuitions of the world, to explain away their own disquieting strangeness, to simplify them into a comfortable metaphysical unreality (1973:583).

8. Aldous Huxley has argued that Wordsworth sought after a pantheistic unity in his poetry in a very unrealistic way in the face of the stark reality of biodiversity (1973).
9. For the first time, the concept of *karu* was explained as the generative naturo-cultural elements of the community in Selvamony's essay, "An Alternative Social Order" (1990). However, the idea of *karu* as a set of naturo-cultural elements is Selvamony's interpretation of the concept in *tolkappiyam*, but for *karu* as the generative elements he is indebted to V.P.K. Sundaram.

10. Proteus, as in Homer (*Odyssey* IV. 401-18), belonged to an island called Pharos, which was originally not a polis but a set of oikoi or kin-based households until Plato's time (Kukoč). Earlier, Proteus must have been worshipped as an ancestral deity by those households to which he belonged.
11. Musicological terms abound in Wordsworth's poems and prose. For the occurrence of the terms "harmony," and "tune" in his poems, see Matsuoka's "The Victorian Literary Studies Archive." The term "harmony" is used in religious literature to mean ecumenical unity. To Manninezath, the Tamil concept of *samarasam* is an equivalent of religious harmony. John Stewart Collis, in his book *The Triumph of the Tree*, has a "historical scheme" consisting of three eras: Era of Mythology, Era of Economics, and Era of Ecology. In the last era "man may live in harmony with the world..." (Berry 1972:10).
12. Materialism was a great threat to harmony with Nature. England, especially, London, was no less materialistic than any other metropolis of today even by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Shopping assumed great cultural importance with increasing variety in clothes, food and household articles. Hairstyling, elite fashion, sofas, books and magazines were among the culture markers of the day. When Wordsworth was writing the sonnet under discussion, slaves were also bought and sold. Only in 1833 was this obnoxious institution abolished in the British territories. Apparently, the growing consumerism in Britain necessitated the expansion of transatlantic slave trade. The demand in Britain for plantation products like raw cotton, sugar, rum and tobacco was met by sustaining the plantations with slaves imported from Africa (White).
13. *tolkappiyam* tells us that in each of the primordial natural regions – the scrub jungle, mountain, arid tract, riverine plain and coast – dwelt its characteristic ancestral spirit.
14. It may be noted that the *communitas harmonia* may take multiple forms according to varying contexts. True, the members of the community themselves will have to nurture the relation among the members in an autonomous way and when they do, the relation is nothing less than ecological. Therefore, Castoriadis's argument that autonomy has to be privileged over ecology is untenable (Curtis 1997:239-252).
15. Musicosociology should not be confused with sociomusicology or music sociology. Even when the latter is called "music sociology" it is a kind of musicology rather than sociology, whereas, musicosociology is a kind of sociology. Evidently, the term sociology is used in a broad sense, not restricting itself to the study of contemporary society.

## References

- Abrams, M.H. 1976. *The Mirror and the Lamp*. OUP.
- akanaanuuRu: maNimiTai pavaLam, nittilakkoovai*. cennai: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Publishing Works, tirunelveli, rpt., 1977.
- Allen, Stuart. *Wordsworth and The Passions of Critical Poetics*. <http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doifinder/view/10.1057/9780230283343>

- Arnold, Mathew. 1986. "Dover Beach", in Miriam Allott and Robert H. Super (eds), *Mathew Arnold*, pp. 135-136. Oxford: OUP.
- Bainbridge, Simon (ed.). 2008. *Romanticism: A Sourcebook*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baker, Carlos. 1966. "Sensation and Vision in Wordsworth", in M.H. Abrams (ed.), *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, pp. 95-109. New York: OUP.
- Bate, Jonathan. 1991. *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bate, Walter Jackson (ed.). 1952. *Criticism: The Major Texts*. New York and Burlingame: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.
- Berry, Wendell. 1972. *A Continuous Harmony: Essays Cultural and Agricultural*. Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard.
- Bloom, Harold. 1963. *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry*. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc.
- Carlyle, Thomas. 1902[1840]. *The Complete Works of Thomas Carlyle, Vol. On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Hero in History*, pp. 235-461. New York: Crowell and Co. Publishers.
- Chandler, James and Kevin Gilmartin (eds). 2011. *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840*. Cambridge UP.
- cilappatikaaram*. Ed. u.vee.caaminaataiyar. cennai: TaakTar. u. vee.caaminaataiyar nuulnilaiyam (Dr.U.V.Saaminaataiyar Library), 1978.
- Clemens, Justin. 2003. *The Romanticism of Contemporary Theory: Institution, Aesthetics, Nihilism*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. 2008. "On the Slave Trade," in Simon Bainbridge (ed.), *Romanticism: A Sourcebook*, pp. 259-261. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Curtis, David Ames (trans. and ed.) 1997. *The Castoriadis Reader*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Daniels, Stephen. 1980. "The Political Iconography of Woodland in Later Georgian England", in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds), *The Iconography of Landscape*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Davy, Humphrey. 2008. "A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry, delivered in the Theatre of the Royal Institution, on the 21<sup>st</sup> January (1802)", in Simon Bainbridge (ed.), *Romanticism: A Sourcebook*, pp. 277-280. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 1882. "Representative Men", in *Emerson's Essays*, pp. 367-541. Calcutta: The British India Publishing Company.
- Grigson, Geoffrey (ed.). 1980. *The Faber Book of Poems and Places*. London and Boston: Faber and Faber.
- Hartman, Geoffrey. 1962. "A Poet's Progress: Wordsworth And The *Via Naturaliter Negativa*." *Modern Philology*, 59(3):214-224.
- . 2004a. "Romanticism and Anti-Self-Consciousness", in Geoffrey Hartman and Daniel T. O'Hara (eds), *The Geoffrey Hartman Reader*, pp. 180-190. Edinburgh UP.
- . 2004b. "Wordsworth's Magic Mountains," in Geoffrey Hartman and Daniel T. O'Hara (eds), *The Geoffrey Hartman Reader*, pp.79-92. Edinburgh UP.

- Hazlitt, William. 1966. "Wordsworth", in *The Spirit of the Age: Or Contemporary Portraits*, pp. 131-144. London: OUP.
- Hill, Alan G. 1994. "Wordsworth, Boccaccio, and the Pagan Gods of Antiquity." *The Review of English Studies*, 45(177):26-41.
- Hutchings, Kevin. 2009. *Romantic Ecologies and Colonial Cultures in the British-Atlantic World, 1770-1850*. McGill-Queen's UP.
- Hutchinson, Thomas (ed.) 1959. *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*. OUP.
- Huxley, Aldous. 1973. "Wordsworth in the Tropics", in Frank Kermode and John Hollander (eds), *Modern British Literature*, pp. 576-582. OUP.
- Kroeber, Karl and Gene W. Ruoff (eds). 1993. *Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism*. Rutgers UP.
- Kukoč, Mislav. "Is Pharos Established By Plato's Ideas?" <[https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?id\\_clanak\\_jezik=122407&show=clanak](https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?id_clanak_jezik=122407&show=clanak)>
- kuRuntokai. Ed. u. vee. caaminaataiyar. aNNaamalai nakar: aNNaamalaippalkalaikkazakam, 1983.
- Labbé, Jacqueline. 1998. *Romantic Visualities*. Basingstoke and New York: Macmillan.
- Langbaum, Robert. 1977. "Wordsworth and Empiricism: Wordsworth's Answer to the Empirical Self", in *The Mysteries of Identity: A Theme in Modern Literature*, pp. 29-33, 36-42, 46-47. New York: OUP.
- Levinson, Marjorie. 1986. *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Liu, Alan. 1989. *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*. Stanford: Stanford UP.
- Locke, John. 1975. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (edited by Peter H. Nidditch, The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke). Oxford: OUP.
- Lovejoy, Arthur. 1936. "Romanticism and the Principle of Plenitude", in *The Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. Harvard UP.
- Lyons, Alexander. 1909. *Shaftesbury's Ethical Principle or Adaptation to Universal Harmony*. Ph.D. dissertation. New York University.
- Manninezath, C.M.I. Thomas. 1993. *Harmony of Religions: Vedanta Siddhanta Samarasam of Taayumaanavar*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.
- Matsuoka, Mitsuharu. 2003. *The Victorian Literary Studies Archive: Hyper-Concordance*. Graduate School of Languages and Culture, Nagoya University, Japan, 28 Dec. 2003-7 Oct. 2015. <http://victorian.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/concordance/wordsworth/>.
- Matsunaga, Bruce. "What They Half-create/And What Perceive." <<http://bruce.personal.asu.edu/tintern/content/why-tintern-abbey>>.
- McCracken. 1984. *Wordsworth and the Lake District: A Guide To The Poems And Their Places*. OUP.
- McGann, Jerome J. 1983. *The Romantic Ideology*. Chicago and London: Chicago UP.
- Miall, David S. 1998. "The Alps Deferred: Wordsworth At The Simplon Pass." *European Romantic Review*, 9:87-102.



- Milton, John. 1989. *Paradise Lost* (edited by Alastair Fowler). London and New York: Longman.
- Owen, W.J.B. (ed.). 1969. *Wordsworth and Coleridge: Lyrical Ballads, 1798*. OUP.
- Pater, Walter. 1973. "Wordsworth", in Jennifer Uglow (ed.), *Essays on Literature and Art*, pp. 103-116. London: Dent and Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Pope, Alexander. 1952. "Essay on Criticism", in Walter Jackson Bate (ed.), *Criticism: The Major Texts*, pp. 174-182. New York and Burlingame: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.
- Privateer, Paul Michael. 1991. *Romantic Voices: Identity and Ideology in British Poetry, 1789-1850*. Athens and London: The U of Georgia P.
- Roper, Derek (ed.). 1987. *Lyrical Ballads 1805*. Northcote House Publishers Ltd., Harper and Row House.
- Selincourt, Ernest De. 1977[1835]. *Wordsworth's Guide To The Lakes*. OUP.
- Selincourt, Ernest De and Helen Darbishire (eds). 1970. *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Selvamony, Nirmal. 2007. "Introduction", in Nirmal Selvamony, Nirmaldasan, Rayson K. Alex (eds), *Essays in Ecocriticism*, pp. xi-xxxi. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons; Chennai: OSLE-India.
- . 2008. "Water in Contemporary Tamil Poetry: An Oikocritical Approach", in Maureen Devine and Christa Grewe-Volpp (eds), *Words on Water*, pp. 89-101. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.
- . 2009. "An Alternative Social Order", in J.T.K. Daniel, and Nirmal Selvamony (eds), *Value Education Today: Explorations in Social Ethics*, pp. 215-236. Chennai: New Century Book House.
- . 2011. "tiNai Poetics and Tamil Poetry", in Suresh Frederick (ed.), *Horizons: Critical Perspectives on Language and Literature*. Thanjavur: Amirthamani Publications.
- . 2014. "Home and Spiritual Praxis: An Ecotheoretical Praxis." Special issue on "Spiritual Pragmatism and Spiritual Pragmatics: New Horizons of Theory and Practice and the Contemporary Challenges of Transformation." *3D IBA Journal of Management and Leadership*, 5(2):136-149.
- . 2015. "An Ecolinguistic Window on Globalisation of English", in Sanjay Goyal and N. Krishnaswamy (eds), *Globalisation and the Teaching of English*, pp. 100-117. Delhi: Vijaya Books.
- . 2015. "From the Anthropocene to the Neo-tiNaicene." *Humanities Circle*, 3(2):115-130.
- Semashko. 2006. "Six Sociocybernetic Innovations for an Information Society." [www.unizar.es/sociocybernetics/congresos/DURBAN/papers/semashko.pdf](http://www.unizar.es/sociocybernetics/congresos/DURBAN/papers/semashko.pdf)
- Simpson, David. 1987. *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination*. New York and London: Methuen.
- Smith, Adam. 2008. "The Theory of Moral Sentiments", in Simon Bainbridge (ed.), *Romanticism: A Sourcebook*, pp. 156-157. Palgrave Macmillan.



- Thomas, Sophie. 2015. "Spectacle, Painting and the Visual", in Andrew Bennett (ed.), *William Wordsworth in Context*. Cambridge UP.
- tolkaappiyam muulam: paaTa veeRupaaTukaL: aaznookkaayvu (textual variations of tolkaappiyam: advanced research). 1996. Ed. kee.em.veegkaTaraamaiyaa, ca.vee. cuppiramaNiyan, and pa.vee.naakaraacan. tiruvananantapuram: International School of Dravidian Linguistics, 1996.
- Turner, J.M.W. 1989. "Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps", in Raymond Lister (ed.), *British Romantic Painting*. Cambridge UP.
- White, Mathew. 2014. "The Rise of Consumerism." <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-rise-of-consumerism>.
- Wiley, Basil. 1966. "Wordsworth and the Locke Tradition", in M.H. Abrams (ed.), *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, pp. 84-94. New York: OUP.
- Williams, Charles. 1966. "Wordsworth", in M.H. Abrams (ed.), *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, pp. 110-122. New York: OUP.
- Wordsworth, William. 1970. *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (edited by E. De Selincourt and Helen Darbishire). OUP.

## CHAPTER 47

# Music, Cosmopolitanism and Transformative Harmony

*Christian Bartolf*

### **Music, Cosmopolitanism And Transformative Harmony: Singing With Yusuf Islam**

Yusuf Islam – Yusuf - Cat Stevens – Steven Georgiou is the same human being, an outstanding artist for peace, searching for harmony, transforming his personality, winner of several peace awards, viz., the 2004 Man of Peace Award of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates for his "dedication to promote peace, the reconciliation of people and to condemn terrorism", and the 2014 "Islamic Economy Award for Arts".

The music of Cat Stevens earned him wide fame. His songs and albums have sold around the world in a great number since the 1960s. He converted to Islam in 1977 and in July 1978 changed his name to Yusuf Islam. He then started giving away to charity the royalties to his songs he considers 'anti-God' and made the decision to devote his life to educational and philanthropic causes.

Over the years he has founded a number of schools for Muslim children and in 2000 he started "Small Kindness", a charity to help needy children and families around the world.

He was also a UNICEF ambassador in the 1970s. Yusuf started making music of an entirely religious nature in the 1990s, showing the way for younger musicians to produce Islamic-themed content.

Although he was out of the secular global music scene for close to three decades, his work had made such an impact on generations of musicians that he was inaugurated into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2014. He returned to live performing in 2014 to sell-out concerts. Yusuf now makes music of a universal appeal based on his explorations and understanding of a deeply Islamic and spiritual nature.

In his autobiography, *Why I still carry a guitar: The Spiritual Journey of Cat Stevens to Yusuf*, Yusuf Islam explains in detail his conversion to Islam, his understanding of Islam as a religion for peace<sup>1</sup>:

Justice and wisdom demand that a person puts first things first. Ironically, at almost every mosque on Friday, the Imam usually ends his sermon by repeating the primary command to be just and good:

Verily! Allah orders justice and kindness and giving to relatives, and forbids lewdness, bad conduct and oppression. Allah instructs you that perhaps you may be reminded (The Qur'an, Surat An Nahl, (The Bee), 16:90).

Yusuf Islam reminds us of the origin, the root of the very word "Islam" in the concept of "Salam" which is contrary to "war, bloodletting and revenge", but only realised by "good character and behaviour", with the knowledge and power of education, social interaction and non-violent communication through the media<sup>2</sup>.

"It's good to remember (and some Muslims seem to forget this point) that the word Islam finds its root in the word, *Salam*, which means peace and security – how far we had drifted."

"Cause on the edge of darkness  
There rides a Peace Train  
O, Peace Train take this country  
Come take me home again."

— Cat Stevens, "Peace Train"

Back in his childhood, Yusuf Islam remembers his Greek Cypriot father always saying 'Allah Karim, Allah Karim' (God Is Most Kind) as a token of gratitude to God for blessing his family with enough food and shelter (Islam 2014:21f). As early as 1978 Cat Stevens released his last record album "Back to Earth" with 'Bismillah' (in the name of Allah) on the cover (Islam 2014:20). His intention was

to use music for positive purposes, good news based on the concept of ‘Istihsan’ (seeking what is good or better).<sup>3</sup>

Commemorating the era of medieval Bagdad and Islamic Spain maintaining a balanced command of law and freedom for its subjects, he stresses the great patron of arts, music and literature like Harun Al Rashid whose Baghdad Library had been the largest in the world and during whose reign *One Thousand and One Nights* was written and compiled, one of the most imaginative and influential novels ever published<sup>4</sup>:

Late in eighth-century Islamic Spain lived an extraordinary Muslim endowed with myriad talents called Ziryab: he was a courtier, a poet, a musician, singer, astronomer, chemist, geographer and strategist. According to records, Ziryab is credited as having introduced and improved the ‘Oud (the lute – the father of guitars) by adding a fifth string and was a great influence on Spanish music and the Andalusian Music traditions of North Africa. So the Blues, and Rock and Roll owe Ziryab some credit.

We can say that Yusuf Islam intends to return to ‘Da’wah’ (Conveying the message of Islam; calling people to God) through Transformative Harmony<sup>5</sup>:

Socrates is reported to have inspired the saying, ‘Ignorance is the root of all evil’. No matter whose saying that is, it’s a wise one. It is an indisputable fact that knowledge is the first key to practicing Islam and to the correct behaviour for a Muslim. Imagine not giving the chance for someone ignorant about Islam to be killed in its name. This is the greatest injustice and must be condemned as a complete aberration of Islam and its enlightened Divine objectives.

Yusuf Islam – according to John Lennon’s hymn of peace “Imagine” – wants the people of knowledge and moderation regain the original vision of making the world a happier place for all<sup>6</sup>:

I dream of an open world, borderless and wide  
Where the people move from place to place,  
And nobody’s taking sides  
Maybe there’s a world that I’m still to find.  
Open up a world and let me in  
Then there’ll be a new life to begin.

— Yusuf, “Maybe There’s A World”

We should not underestimate the full solidarity of Yusuf Islam with the Arab Spring, a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests in the Arab world that began on December 18, 2010, in Tunisia with the Tunisian Revolution, and spread throughout the countries of the Arab League and its surroundings<sup>7</sup>:

How incredible that the new people's revolution was started (in a way) by a poor simple vegetable seller, Mohammed Bouazizi. This young man from Tunisia spent most of his days pushing a cart to sell his vegetables, but when town officials confiscated his cart, and his pleas for justice and mercy were ignored – something broke. A young man's fury against the system is now helping to transform the Middle East – but how will it end?

And Yusuf Islam recorded his song with a simple chorus of two words “My People” in Berlin 100 yards from where the East-West wall fell<sup>8</sup>:

My People  
When you gonna leave my People?  
Give them room to breathe  
My People  
Stop oppressing  
My People  
All they want is bread and clothes  
Space to rest and left alone  
My People  
When you gonna free my People?  
Let them live in peace  
My People.

“Change has to start with looking after the weaker elements of society, that was always the structure and principle in the Prophet's teachings: Next to Prayer (*Salat*) comes Charity (*Zakat*); paying the poor due to those in need. Remember also that the Arab awakening began with a poor vegetable seller!”<sup>9</sup>

“The way to peace and bridging divisions is again, through hard work. And that comes back to ‘Da’wah’ [...]”

By [the passing of] Time/Verily mankind is in loss/Except such as believe and do good works, and enjoin on one another Truth, and enjoin on one another, patience (The Qur'an, Surat Al' Asr, (Time), 103:1-3).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned us also about partisanship, the greatest destructive curse on the world today, and he enjoined us to avoid backbiting, hurting others, especially ‘fitnah’ (trials, conflicts and discord), which

Allah says in the Qur'an is worse than slaughter (The Qur'an. Surat Al Baqarah, (The Cow), 2:191). It is easy to get angry at the state of the world and that's when certain voices get louder and may pressurise us. But we should beware of falling into more evil."<sup>10</sup>

Steven Georgiou began to search for explanations during his young years when a friend of his had given him a copy a Buddhist book called *The Secret Path*. He then studied Hinduism, Taoism, Vegetarianism and Zen. But only when his elder brother David – along with his Jewish wife from Tel Aviv—went to Jerusalem in 1975, he started to take a keen interest in the peaceful aspects of Islam and shared his impressions one year later with his brother when he presented him a translation of the Qur'an.

The songs of Cat Stevens inspire millions of people all over the world, one of them "Peace Train" (1971):

Now I've been happy lately  
Thinking about the good things to come  
And I believe it could be  
Something good has begun  
Oh, I've been smiling lately  
Dreaming about the world as one  
And I believe it could be  
Some day it's going to come.

And this peace train is moving to transform people's hearts to a new harmony:

Now I've been smiling lately  
Thinking about the good things to come  
And I believe it could be  
Something good has begun  
Oh, peace train sounding louder  
Glide on the peace train  
Come on the peace train  
Yes, peace train holy roller  
Everyone jump upon the peace train  
Come on the peace train.

And this peace train brings back people's minds to realise that non-violence is truth:

Get your bags together  
Go bring your good friends too

'Cause it's getting nearer  
It soon will be with you

Now come and join the living  
It's not so far from you  
And it's getting nearer  
Soon it will all be true.

## **Civil Rights Movement's Music, Cosmopolitanism and Transformative Harmony**

The quest for peace and harmony we find in the strivings of Cat Stevens or Yusuf has a longer genealogy in our world. We can trace back to civil rights movements of the 1960s where art and music played an important role in rekindling hopes of peace and harmony and in creating a new cosmopolitan imagination and consciousness. In the beginning, there was the sound of music – anything else followed later ... in such a way best described is the impact and role of music in the civil rights movements of the past century. It is the word becoming matter and it is the slogan becoming force. And it is the inspiration of the aspiring, inspiring and disobedient masses guiding progress to the destination of social reform and revolution. Without the song, there were no more social and progressive movements; without the music there would be an empty void, lost space, missing links and chances without use.

Millions of youngsters as myself (born in the year 1960) could choose their language and music teachers because of the golden era of the worker's songs, of the civil rights' and peace movement for the emancipation of mankind from slavery and war. Never again has music become as meaningful as during the times of emancipatory movement in economic, international and social matters of concern breaking the bondage of slavery.

And the names of those who composed the wise lyrics and fine melodies and tunes for these voices of dissent remain eternal in the minds of their audiences: creators of folk songs of the peoples and pioneers of the universal desire for a sound ecology, peace, and social justice. In many cultures, in many nations – most of all visible have been the modern teachers of the English language as a medium, like the great American and British poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But their words became music transformations, easy to commemorate, easy to quote, easy to recite, easy to sing a cappella or in choirs.

Woody Guthrie, Huddie Ledbetter (Lead Belly), Pete Seeger, Peggy Seeger, Ewan MacColl, Malvina Reynolds, Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Jim Glover, Tom Paxton, Joan Baez, Richard and Mimi Farina, Peter (Peter Yarrow), Paul (Noel



Stookey) and Mary (Mary Travers), Joni Mitchell, Graham Nash, Neil Young and the voices of the U.S. American Civil Rights Movement of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers and all their co-workers and friends: Odetta (Odetta Holmes), Harry Belafonte, The Freedom Singers (Cordell Reagon, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Charles Neblett, and Rutha Mae Harris), and the gospel and spiritual music of Marian Anderson and Mahalia Jackson, bridging the pulpit of the church to the podium of the speaker – just to name some of those unsung heroes of the Anglo-Saxon and African-American political folk music with their ballads, canons, hymns, rhymes and topical songs.

1. Let us take as example: “We Shall Overcome” – the tradition of this song is connected with the history of the Highlander Research and Education Centre, formerly known as the Highlander Folk School, a social justice leadership training school and cultural centre located in New Market, Tennessee, founded in 1932 among others by the social activist Myles Horton (1905-1990).<sup>11</sup>

Horton was influenced by observing rural adult education schools in Denmark started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Danish Lutheran Bishop Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872). During the 1930s and 1940s, the school's main focus was labour education and the training of labour organisers. During the 1950s, it played a critical role in the American Civil Rights Movement, a training centre for civil rights activists like Rosa Parks prior to her historic role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, as well as for many other movement activists including the members of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Septima Clark, Anne Braden, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Bevel, Hollis Watkins, Bernard Lafayette, Ralph Abernathy and John Lewis in the mid- and late-1950s. In 1961, it reorganised and moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, where it reopened, later becoming the Highlander Research and Education Centre.

Zilphia Horton (1910-1956) was an American musician, community organiser, educator, civil rights activist, and folklorist, best known for her work with her husband Myles Horton at the Highlander Folk School where she turned songs as “We Shall Overcome”, “Keep Your Eyes on the Prize”, “We Shall Not Be Moved”, and “This Little Light of Mine” from hymns into songs of the Civil Rights movement. For example: “We Shall Overcome”, which derived from an early gospel song, “I’ll Overcome Someday”, by African-American composer Charles Albert Tindley (1851-1933). The great Civil Rights activist and folk song pioneer, Pete Seeger (1919-2014) from New York State, remembered <sup>12</sup> :

*"I'll Overcome*, more often called *I'll Be All Right*, was a gospel hymn sung in black churches through much of the South. [...] In 1945 several hundred tobacco workers, mostly women, mostly black, were on strike in Charleston, South Carolina. To keep their spirits up they sang on the picket line. One of the workers, Lucille Simmons, loved to sing this hymn in the extremely slow "long meter" style, and the first words became *We will*. A white woman, Zilphia Horton, music director at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, learned it from them. It became her favourite song. In 1946 she taught it to me in New York, and in 1950 I taught it to Guy Carawan and Frank Hamilton in California [...]. In 1958 I even had a chance to sing it at Highlander. Zilphia had died, only forty-five years old. Myles Horton wrote me, "Can you come to Highlander for our 25<sup>th</sup> reunion? Without Zilphia, we need others to lead songs." It was there I met young Dr. King and his colleague Rev. Ralph Abernathy. Anne Braden (one of the courageous southern whites who openly helped the fledgling civil rights movement) was driving them next day to another speaking engagement, and she remembers King in the back seat saying, "We shall overcome. That song really sticks with you, doesn't it?"

But the song really got around in the spring of 1960, when Guy, aged thirty-two at the time, organised and helped run a South-wide workshop at Highlander on songs for the civil rights movement. And three weeks later some of those who had attended the workshop sang the song with Guy at the founding convention of SNCC in Raleigh, North Carolina, for several hundred black and white students. Within a few months it was known as the unofficial theme song of the movement."

The hymn "We Shall Overcome", thus, became rhythm and soul with the first line repeated thrice:

"We shall overcome some day. Oh deep in my heart I do believe:  
We shall overcome some day.

We'll walk hand in hand some day. Oh deep in my heart I do  
believe: We shall overcome some day.

We shall live in peace some day. Oh deep in my heart I do believe:  
We shall overcome some day.

The truth shall make us free. Oh deep in my heart I do believe: We  
shall overcome some day.

We are not afraid today. Oh deep in my heart I do believe: We shall  
overcome some day.

Black and white together now ! Oh deep in my heart I do believe:  
We shall overcome some day.

The whole wide world around some day. Oh deep in my heart I do  
believe: We shall overcome some day.”

2. Let us take as second example how the non-violent tradition influenced the political folk song:

Joan Baez (born 1941) has become one of the worldwide known voices of the civil rights and peace movements of our time. She was highly influenced by the Quaker tradition, and the messages of Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi. Here is a small autobiographical account of hers<sup>13</sup>:

“My parents are Quakers. I like the idea the Quakers have of silent meditation [...] I do believe this. There is a supreme power that makes us do the good we do, that makes our conscience tick. Some supreme power supplies all the everyday miracles that take place. [...] I was finding friends through a more unlikely source, too – the Quakers, or more specifically, their social action wing, the American Friends Service Committee. That year [1956], along with three hundred other students, I attended a three-day conference on world issues held at Asilomar, a beautiful spot on the pine-speckled, foggy beaches of Monterey. [...] I found that I spoke forcefully in groups both large and small, and was regarded as a leader.

There was great excitement about our main speaker, a twenty-seven-year-old black preacher from Alabama named Martin Luther King, Jr. He was a brilliant orator. Everyone in the room was mesmerised. He talked about injustice and suffering, and about fighting with the weapons of love, saying that when someone does avail to us, we can hate the evil deed, but not the doer of the deed, who is to be pitied. He talked specifically about boycotting buses and walking to freedom in the South, and about organising a non-violent revolution. When he finished his speech, I was on my feet, cheering and crying: King was giving a shape and a name to my passionate but ill-articulated beliefs. Perhaps it was the fact of an actual movement taking place, as opposed to the scantily attended demonstrations I had known to date, which gave me the exhilarating sense of “going somewhere” with my pacifism.

It was also through the Quakers that I met Ira Sandperl the following year. [...] I couldn’t know when I first met him that he would end up being my political/spiritual mentor for the next few decades.

Ira read to the teenage First Day School from Tolstoy, the Bhagavad-Gita, Lao-tse, Aldous Huxley, the Bible and other texts we had never discussed in high school. For the first time in my life I looked forward to going to Meeting. Ira was a Mahatma Gandhi scholar, an advocate of radical non-violent change. Like Gandhi, he felt that the most important tool of the twentieth century was organised non-violence. Gandhi had taken the concept of Western pacifism, which is basically personal, and extended it into a political force, insisting that we stand up to conflict and fight against evil, but do so with the weapons of non-violence. I had heard the Quakers argue that the ends did not justify the means. Now I was hearing that the means would determine the ends. It made sense to me, huge and ultimate sense."

"People would accuse us of being naïve and impractical, and I was soon telling them that it was they who were naïve and impractical to think that the human race could continue on forever with a build-up of armies, nation states, and nuclear weapons. My foundations in non-violence were both moral and pragmatic."

In 1958, at age 17, Joan committed her first act of civil disobedience as a conscientious objector by refusing to leave her Palo Alto High School classroom in Palo Alto, California for an air-raid drill.

The early years of Joan Baez's career saw the civil-rights movement in the U.S. become a prominent issue. Her performance of "We Shall Overcome", the civil-rights anthem written by Pete Seeger and Guy Carawan, at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom permanently linked her to the song. Baez again sang "We Shall Overcome" in Sproul Plaza during the mid-1960s Free Speech Movement demonstrations at the University of California in Berkeley, California, and at many other rallies and protests.

Her recording of the song "Birmingham Sunday" (1964), written by her brother-in-law, Richard Fariña, was used in the opening of "Four Little Girls" (1997), Spike Lee's documentary film about the four young victims: Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Denise McNair, killed in the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, on Sunday, September 15, 1963.

Highly visible in civil-rights marches, Baez became more vocal about her disagreement with the Vietnam War. In 1964, she publicly endorsed resisting taxes by withholding sixty per cent of her 1963 income taxes, and she founded the Institute for the Study of Non-violence (along with her mentor Ira Sandperl) and encouraged draft resistance at her concerts.

3. There are several elements which characterise cosmopolitanism and transformative harmony of the popular folk song movement during the civil rights and peace movements during the last century. Let us finally summarise some of them with some significant verses written by Malvina Reynolds (1900-1978):

I. Grass Roots' Dignity and Movements<sup>14</sup>:

God bless the grass that's gentle and low,  
Its roots they are deep and its will is to grow.  
And God bless the truth, the friend of the poor,  
And the wild grass growing at the poor man's door,  
And God bless the grass.

II. Antimilitarism and Pacifism<sup>15</sup>:

From way up here the earth looks very small,  
They shouldn't fight at all  
Down there, upon that little sphere.

III. Civil Disobedience and Civil Rights<sup>16</sup> :

It isn't nice to block the doorway,  
It isn't nice to go to jail,  
There are nicer ways to do it,  
But the nice ways always fail.  
It isn't nice, it isn't nice,  
You told us once, you told us twice,  
But if that is Freedom's price,  
We don't mind.

IV. Nuclear-Free World and Solar Age<sup>17</sup>:

Just a little boy standing in the rain,  
The gentle rain that falls for years.  
And the grass is gone,  
The boy disappears,  
And rain keeps falling like helpless tears,  
And what have they done to the rain?

V. Ecology and Equilibrium<sup>18</sup>:

The world's gone beautiful because it's about to die.  
I never saw such flower faces or so intent a sky ...  
I want to hold this world and never let it go,  
I want the sun to always rise on the kids next door.  
Whether I go or stay, that question still abides,  
Posed by rainbows in the river spray.

What answer do you give  
A world that asks so bitterly to live?

## Endnotes

1. Islam 2014:46
2. Islam 2014:51
3. Islam 2014:52
4. Islam 2014:54
5. Islam 2014:47f.
6. Islam 2014:80
7. Islam 2014:85
8. Islam 2014:86
9. Islam 2014:87
10. Islam 2014:89
11. Myles Horton about Highlander cp. Seeger/Reiser 1989:3-7
12. Pete Seeger about "We Shall Overcome" cp. Seeger/Reiser 1989:8, and cp. Seeger 1993:34f.
13. Baez 1987:39-42
14. Reynolds 1984:29 (God Bless The Grass)
15. Reynolds 1984:34f. (From Way Up Here)
16. Reynolds 1984:40 (It Isn't Nice)
17. Reynolds 1984:90 (What Have They Done To The Rain ?)
18. Reynolds 1984:93 (The World's Gone Beautiful)

## References

- Baez, Joan. 1987. *And A Voice to Sing With. A Memoir*. New York: Nal Penguin.
- Islam, Yusuf. 2014. *Why I Still Carry A Guitar. The Spiritual Journey of Cat Stevens to Yusuf*. Dubai/Abu Dhabi/London: Motivate Publishing.
- Reynolds, Malvina. 1984. *The Malvina Reynolds Songbook*. Berkeley: Schroder Music Company.
- Seeger, Pete. 1993. *Where Have All The Flowers Gone. A Singer's Stories, Songs, Seeds, and Robberies* (edited by Peter Blood). Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA: Sing Out Corporation.
- Seeger, Pete and Bob Reiser. 1989. *Everybody says Freedom. A History of the Civil Rights Movement in Songs and Pictures*. New York/London: W.W.Norton and Company.

## CHAPTER 48

# On the Possibility of a Global Political Community

## The Enigma of ‘Small Local Differences’ within Humanity

*Heikki Patomäki*

### Introduction

Is anything like a global political community – and thereby ideals such as global democracy and justice – achievable? This is a key question not only for political theory but also for contemporary political practices. For instance, a call for global solidarity in the face of rapid global warming (UNDP 2007), which seems ever more urgent in 2017, assumes a shared planetary identity across the currently prevailing differences and divisions. It seems that there can be no solidarity without a common identity at some level of human being. Environmentalists maintain that all humans share an important thing in common, namely planet Earth and its sphere of life, to which we essentially belong.

In contrast, many political realists believe that humans are essentially tribal beings, or at least will remain so in the foreseeable future. This belief may be grounded on anything from speculative philosophical accounts of the human nature to sociobiological theories about selfish genes or memes. For tribal beings a shared political identity is possible only if it implies different outsiders, understood



largely in negative evaluative terms, perhaps antagonistically as enemies. From this point of view, a global identity is possible only to the extent that there are outsiders to the humankind as a whole. Hence, in the 1980s, Ronald Reagan discussed with Mikhail Gorbachev the possibility of encountering extra-terrestrials as a plausible source for a shared global identity. As Reagan (1985) explained, “We’d forget all the little local differences that we have between our countries, and we would find out once and for all that we really are all human beings here on this Earth together”. These discussions and revisions were part of the process that led to the end of the Cold War.

However, no extra-terrestrials have showed up and the condition of particularistic and often parochial identities persists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Skeptics may even claim that a cosmopolitan ethico-political identity is impossible in principle; humanity is destined to stay partitioned. For instance, according to many versions of the Nietzsche and Heidegger inspired hermeneutics of suspicion, hierarchies and violence stem from deep structures of meaning that imply the definition of others as lower beings and/or enemies. Several post-structuralists and related theorists believe that there is no position outside deep structures of meaning in this sense (for a critique of Carl Schmitt inspired post-structuralism, see Abizadeh 2005). Hierarchies and violence at least in some sense are therefore almost inevitable; and a truly cosmopolitan identity is virtually impossible. Although it can assume a wide variety of forms and although not all of those forms are equally parochial, the problematic of inside/outside of a political community and thus boundaries will remain with us for a long time to come, if it can ever be overcome (Walker 1993; 2015).

My aim is not to review and scrutinise every single skeptical argument against the possibility of a global ethico-political identity. The point is merely to tackle the most plausible candidates for anchoring the skepticism in some relatively unchanging realities: either in the nature or genetic constitution of the human species; or in the nature of language making meaningful politics possible. Moreover, I argue that in addition to conceptual and philosophical weaknesses, arguments for the necessity of particular political identities appear increasingly narrow also in view of recent advancements in the sciences and global history. A unified theory of temporal emergence and increasing complexity through different layers of the universe locates human geo-history as an important but small and vulnerable part of a much wider whole. Thus Big History is relevant to our understandings of self-other relations, not least by relativising and reframing them.

Although I argue that humans are not inevitably tribal, and that ultimately there is no language-based logic of identity that would exclude the possibility of a global political community, I concur with the post-structuralist skeptics that

negativity and thus some “othering” is inevitable. Thus it is essential to go beyond demonstrating negatively the possibility of a global identity. We should ask “possible yes, but exactly how?” If some othering is inevitable, what are the possible structures of a global identity-construction? I examine three options. Firstly, as indicated by President Reagan, otherness can be placed outside the human species and planet Earth. From a non-antagonistic perspective, the cosmic context of our evolving beingness can provide an important source for a global identity, but it is not in itself a sufficient solution to the problem of identity.

Secondly, otherness can be located either in our own past or, alternatively, in our contemporary being, when seen from a point of view of a possible future position in world history. As any process of identity-construction is temporal, this constitutes a fruitful perspective but does not address all the key problems or tackle the ontological underpinnings of the standard identity-theories. There is thus, thirdly, a need to rethink the basic onto-logic of identity from a perspective that is compatible with Big History, seeing our cultural evolution as continuation from cosmic and biological evolution. Utilising the concept of a horizon of moral identification, and developing further Tzvetan Todorov’s axis of self-other relations, I conclude by outlining a cosmic, temporal, relational, and ethico-political conception of global identity based on both positive and negative elements.

## Voices of Skepticism

### Political Realism

Since its emergence after the failed liberal revolutions of 1848, political realism (*realpolitik*) has been a conservative reaction to the liberal cosmopolitanism of Enlightenment philosophies, most notably to Immanuel Kant.<sup>2</sup> Its relationship to the Enlightenment tradition has been ambiguous (compare Morgenthau 1947; Niebuhr 1944, to the global-reformist reading of classical political realism by Scheuerman 2011). These ambiguities notwithstanding, the most characteristic move of political realism has been to challenge the cosmopolitan belief in the possibility of hasty progress towards a viable league of nations associated with true collective security, or to a world community or world state proper, however imperative that may be seen in the long run. This is particularly true of neorealists such as Robert Gilpin (1984:290), who tend to universalise and eternalise the idea that the human species must remain divided into separate groups:

*Homo sapiens* is a tribal species, and loyalty to the tribe for most of us ranks above all loyalties other than that of the family. In the modern world, we have given the name “nation state” to these competing tribes and the name “nationalism” to this form of loyalty.<sup>3</sup>

Oftentimes the belief in the tribalist propensity has been based on mere arm-chair philosophy about unfalsifiable “laws” and “natures”. The scientifically oriented neorealists can – and sometimes also do – turn to experimental social psychology and, more strongly, to sociobiology in search for hard scientific evidence for their views. Sociobiology contends that genes play a central role in human behaviour. Human behaviour is seen as an effort to preserve one’s genes in the population. At the fundamental level, in spite of apparent differences, human beings are no different from ants or bees, whose complex division of labour and social behaviour is largely determined by genes.

The most famous socio-biologist is probably E.O. Wilson (the classic articulation being Wilson 1975). His usual strategy for arriving at socio-biological “laws” is to start with the model of social organisation developed in connection with his study of insect societies and to generalise that model into a law of social organisation displayed by all social species. Such analogies and generalisations are likely to be unreliable even in cases where they are based on apparently similar features in an insect and human society. The main problem is that genetic explanations ignore the fact that human societies change and vary much more than would be possible if the relevant information was merely genetic. The relevant pools of genes and biological species change very slowly, taking a large number of generations to take systematic effect. Secondly, they ignore the possibility that similar consequences may be the result of very different causes, including meaningful cultural practices and historically varying social structures (see Harré 1979:11-15; Horan 1986). Recent research indicates that human genetic change has accelerated with population growth and cultural change. Thus it is not only that cultural evolution has its own emergent dynamics, but also that this dynamics has effects on the human genetic constitution too (Hawks *et al.* 2007).

If the only way to rescue the necessity of particular group loyalties and identities was this kind of biological reductionism – i.e. the assumption that ants and humans are no different in their capacity to communicate and learn – then Gilpin’s political realism would rest on weak grounds. Dawkins’ (1976) conception of self-replicating “memes” does not fare much better, as the ontological status of “memes” is indeterminate (physical or cultural) and their scientific status evasive (can they be observed?, can claims about them be falsified?). However, although Gilpin and other neorealists may occasionally allude to the notion that the tribalist propensity is inscribed in the invariant (possibly genetic or memetic) essence of homo sapiens as a species being, many political realists confine tribalism merely to a widespread disposition of preferring allegiance to particular groups and of defining one’s identity in particularistic terms, whatever its fundamental causes.

The point of many classical political realists such as E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr has been to redefine the project of cosmopolitanism in a more cautionary and, at times, skeptical way. They have not been opposed to cosmopolitanism, although they can be harshly critical of many of its actual materialisations. For Carr, for example, a cosmopolitan world community based on the recognition of equality and rule of law would be a typical global utopia. "Political science must be based on a recognition of the interdependence of theory and practice, which can be attained only through a combination of utopia and reality" (Carr 1964:13). Thus Carr developed the idea of open-ended peaceful changes to replace various utopian proposals for liberal harmonious order, which he also argued to be ideological and a key cause of conflicts and wars.

In Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, the "children of light" are democrats and cosmopolitans. It is evident that Niebuhr does not accept the ideas of the children of darkness; ultimately he sides with the children of light. However, he also criticises a number of concrete manifestations of the then prevailing utopian idealism and their unfoundedly optimistic conceptions of human nature. Thus Niebuhr's (1944:168) key argument – in the context of world politics – was that "...the transition from a particular to a universal community is a more difficult step than is usually assumed." Some hope and appreciation of change can well be justified:

Pure idealists underestimate the perennial power of particular and parochial loyalties, operating as a counter force against the achievement of a wider community. But the realists are usually so impressed by the power of these perennial forces that they fail to recognise the novel and unique elements in a revolutionary world situation. (*ibid.*:176)

In a similar fashion, Morgenthau was a critic of parochialism. He maintained that the human moral imagination tends to be limited and thus humans find it difficult to see things from others' different perspective. Group solidarity is formed by setting against the outsiders. Self-criticism is difficult and often censored. Groups are expecting conformity. Sanctions and other mechanisms discipline those who dare to challenge its understandings. By exposing these and related mechanisms, such as the effects of modern rootless uncertainty and how that uncertainty tends to fluctuate with business cycles and economic crises, Morgenthau (1961:111) tries to open a perspective for wise moral and state leaders to see beyond the limited imagination of masses and nations. What Morgenthau (1961:11) especially stresses is that political realism refuses to confuse the particular aspirations and actions of one's own nation with the moral purposes of the universe. Against these kinds of

ideological temptations, diplomacy should be free of all crusading spirit and always look at the political scene from the perspective of other nations (see 1961, ch 29).

Morgenthau joins Carr and Niebuhr in articulating a passionate critique of false universalisms. At the same time, Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* is a normative argument for a world state and a guidebook for diplomacy during the long period of transition. The case for political realism rests on the expectation that it will take a long time to establish a cosmopolitan world community and that this process is beset with difficulties and dangers. This condition stems not only from the effects of human limitations and existing historical realities but also from the contemporary tendency to rely on one-sided and false utopias that generate further conflicts and violence. Moreover, as long as the world community does not exist, everyone will have to continue coping with the contemporary realities, involving particularistic power politics, the best they can. Skeptical political realists in this sense can push the cosmopolitan identity to a far away future. This is particularly true if no clear mechanism can be established via which the currently powerful social-psychological forces could be rapidly overcome. As Morgenthau (1961:539) concluded – originally in 1948 – a major transformation and “the world state is unattainable [...] in the world in our time.” He could easily make the same claim in 2017.

Morgenthau argued that as long as the world state is not actual reality, the classical practices of diplomacy, balance-of-power and so on are the chief tools available for preserving at least some order and, to an extent also peace.<sup>4</sup> To the extent that the reasons for skepticism are only temporal, however, we should ask whether – and to what extent – circumstances either have already become or will become different in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## Post-Structuralism

There is another possible explanation for the exclusive nature of political identities. A meaningful identity can only be defined in and through language. From Saussure (1986/1916) comes the idea that linguistic signs are arbitrary and that within systems of language, there are only differences, that is, elements defined negatively in terms of what they are not. “A language is a system in which all elements fit together, and in which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all others” (*ibid.*:113). “The content of a word is determined in the final analysis not by what it contains but by what exists outside of it”, that is, by other elements of a system (*ibid.*:114). Content and “value” are essentially connected, and values always involve:

1. Something different which can be exchanged for the item whose meaning and value is under consideration, and

2. Similar things which can be compared with the item whose value is under consideration.

By drawing on Nietzsche, Kirkegaard and Heidegger and their “hermeneutics of suspicion” (see Dreyfus 1991), Derrida (1997:30-73) radicalised Saussure’s linguistics into an immanent criticism of a long philosophical tradition as a whole. Derrida treats the principle of difference “as constitutive not only of modes of signification but of existence in general” (Giddens 1987a:82). Our self-conscious existence and thus our identities are possible only because of language and, especially, writing.

Derrida (1988:1-21, 63-77; cf. Searle 1977) does not deny that language is used for everyday communication or that words or sentences can have non-discursive referents, but he claims that (i) many and especially the iterative and metaphorical aspects of language can, and in effect are, abstracted away from subjects, intentions, contexts and referents; (ii) these aspects of the language form a system which makes subjects, intentions, contexts and, in some ambivalent ways, even referents possible; and (iii) intentionality, consciousness, and self-aware identity are largely – although never only – the effects of a system of inscribed codes and negative differences. Language is thus much more than just a medium of expressing already existing ideas and thoughts that have their corresponding parts in the real world. Ideas and thoughts – as well as the speaking or writing subject him or herself – could not exist without a pre-existing system of language (writing). Moreover, references to the external world are always complex and at times irrelevant. There is no language-independent way of postulating the identity of any particular being.

These points have far-reaching implications. They give rise to the suspicion that conventional language and thus also ethico-political identities are tied to metaphysics that is, in effect, hiding the real nature of signs and language by constructing apparently undeniable centres or foundations, or by assuming that such centres exist (see for instance Derrida 1981:20). But what exactly are these metaphysical systems trying to hide? They are hiding that human subjectivity, intentionality, consciousness and identity are relational and historical, stemming from changing and ultimately arbitrary differences in the codes and signs of writing. They may also be hiding the fact that writing in this sense emerged rather late in human history (see Derrida 1988:4-5; 1997:74-93; cf. Jaynes 2000). Reflective consciousness and reflexive subjectivity are not something that we have by virtue of being born and having bodies. They are shifting effects of the emergent layer of culture and its historical development through background capacities and learning.

At least in the Western systems of thinking, but perhaps also more widely, differences between ego and alter are not usually understood as differences in this sense. Consciousness is not seen as a historically changing effect of language,



conceived as a codified and inscribed system of writing largely but always ambiguously shared by speakers/writers and their (often absent) audiences across a range of contexts. Derrida thus assumes that at a deep level of language, at the level of “arch-language”, meanings cannot be much more than mere play of differences effected in and through language and thus, in the last instance, random possibilities of meaning. And yet they are always excluding other possibilities. Thereby, when meaning is determined, a construction of a certain kind of alterity or otherness is effected through the background system of language that no speaking subject can control in any significant way.

Unfounded and most of the time inconspicuously changing historical identities are based on contrasts and oppositions – on the play of negative differences – and always exclude something. Yet it is not possible to step beyond differences and thus, presumably, otherness. What is more, it would also seem that the thus constructed others are often evaluated as lower beings and/or enemies (for a discussion, see Bernstein 1991). Deconstruction is a rhetorical strategy to resist the violence and repression constituted by layers of writing (Derrida 1988:112-53; 1997:111-12).<sup>5</sup> However, the existing systems can be only deconstructed locally and step by step. The process of deconstruction is thus never-ending and can take almost any text as its object, reflexively also Derrida’s own texts.

Can anything remain outside of deconstruction? Derrida (1994) declared that justice cannot be deconstructed. Derrida conceived justice both in terms of a respect for otherness and a possible future (global) democracy, where differences, even if always in the process of becoming, are just let-to-be as recognised differences. Thus Derrida distinguishes between the inevitability of negative difference from the contingent effects of othering (cf. Abizadeh 2005:56-8). However, given Derrida’s generalised hermeneutics of suspicion and metaphysical assumptions, why should his very specific notion of justice (cf. many other models, theories and ideologies discussed in Patomäki 2006) remain immune to the ever skeptical rhetorical operations of deconstruction? Moreover, while the process of deconstruction may lead towards a cosmopolitan direction through deconstructing parochial and exclusionary systems of meanings, the cosmopolitan direction itself cannot be established in any secure way; and the end-state of a global identity can never be reached.

In his essay on cosmopolitanism, Derrida (2001) focuses on Kant’s narrow concept of hospitality as an exemplar of universal cosmopolitanism. Kant’s (1983:118) third definitive article for a perpetual peace is explicitly purported to restrict universally applicable rights: “cosmopolitan right shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality”. It comes nowhere near to proposing global citizenship or worldwide socio-economic or political rights. It means only “the



right of an alien not to be treated as an enemy upon his arrival in another's country" and the "right to visit [other parts of...] the earth's surface" (*ibid.*:118). Kant's point was to oppose European colonialism from a moral perspective that appeared universalisable given the late 18<sup>th</sup> century situation:

Compare [universal hospitality] with the inhospitable conduct of civilized nations in our part of the world, especially commercial ones: the injustice that they displace towards foreign lands and peoples (which is the same as *conquering* them), is terrifying. When discovered, America, the lands occupied by the blacks, the Spice Islands, the Cape, etc., were regarded as lands belonging to no one because their inhabitants were counted for nothing. [...] China and Japan (*Nippon*), which have had experience with such guests, have therefore wisely restricted contact with them. (*ibid.*:119)

At first Derrida questions Kant's naturalistic (universalistic) interpretation of the right to hospitality and then, moving to another direction, the strictly delimited sphere of its application. There is nothing natural about Kant's cosmopolitan right. It is a human creation that comes about in writing. Simultaneously, Derrida (2001:17) argues for extending its application to the reception and inclusion of the others, implying a right to asylum and residence. He also allures us, like in so many of his later writings, to an unspecified new form of law and democracy to come (*ibid.*:23), thus anticipating further unknowable shifts in language, probably towards a more cosmopolitan direction.<sup>6</sup> Derrida steers clear from the path of Kant (1983:118) who wrote unambiguously that eventually human relations across the planet will "become matters of public law, and the human race can gradually be brought closer and closer to a cosmopolitan constitution". A key reason for Derrida's cautiousness lies in his understanding of the role of language as a system of relational differences. Every determination of meaning implies negativity and othering at least in some sense, however, its concrete manifestations and effects are contingent. Hence, any positive claim about cosmopolitanism has always a negative counterpart that is potentially problematic also from an ethico-political point of view, not least because exclusion and opposition always involve violence at least in the metaphorical sense of the term, and often also concretely.

It is true, as Derrida argues, that the largely unconscious and unacknowledged background system of repeatable codes and inscribed signs is a condition of possibility for any successful act of reference, truth-claim or speech act. For instance, demonstrative pointing cannot directly define meanings; rather it is the other way around, meanings organise demonstrative pointings. The meaning of the term must be already known when, by simple demonstration, we have indicated an instance satisfying the recognitive criterion. Hence, at the epistemological level, it

is not possible to distinguish clearly between sense and reference. However, being is not only about negative differences and the possibility of making references to the real world is a condition of our existence. Derrida seems to choose to ignore “that even to mention the identity of a code presumes some component of a reference” (Giddens 1979:37), designating the elements of the code as belonging together, for instance “vocalisations,” “marks,” “inscriptions”, etc.

Although there are good reasons for Derrida’s choice to focus on the structural-historical background of language-use, it does not come without unwelcome consequences. One of them is the implicit denial that beings and thus identities include also positive elements. Positive non-discursive realities are the condition of possibility for language, writing and social structures. Social beings are embodied; our bodies follow the laws of physics; and our existence presupposes complex biological systems. What is needed is an independent and ontological notion of being to which we can refer; and a related concept of referential detachment (see Harré 1970:69-70, 179; Sayer 1984:55). By referential detachment I mean the detachment of the act of reference from that to which it refers (Bhaskar 1994:51-53). Referential detachment is implicit in all language-use and conceptualised practices, such as for instance playing football – or writing about writing. It is impossible to play football if one cannot, practically, make a distinction between the act of reference (saying “take the ball forward”) from that to which it refers (the ball, directions in the football field defined in terms of goals, etc). The same applies to writing about writing.

Moreover, in social practices, by saying something we also do something, for instance evaluate, promise, warn, or threaten. Speech acts include institutionally positioned actors performing actions that constitute beings, processes or commitments (a state-leader declaring threats to national security, implying securitisation, or signing a treaty and thus bringing about collective commitments) or actions that the sentence describes by saying or writing the sentence itself (for instance, a judge declaring a verdict). Speech-acts are often indirect and complex, with the multiple indirect – sometimes ironic or sarcastic – meanings indicated by the context. Also ethico-political identities are constructed through speech-acts. The simple pronoun “we” in numerous sentences presupposes a collective identity that it simultaneously also reproduces or occasionally transforms.

“God bless America” presupposes that the name of the continent refers also to a country called the United States of America; declares and reproduces that particular national identity; and imagines it on a higher onto-ethical plane as something that is directly linked to God. Historical stories about the origins and development and, say, struggles, wars, sufferings and glory of France or Russia or China are also constitutive of the national identity that they may also naturalise

and personalise. The unconscious background system of language and writing is an enabling and constraining component of the causal complexes that bring about social and political effects, but these complexes include many other elements as well. Agency, for instance, is co-constituted by cognitive and social-psychological mechanisms of learning. The production of group conformity and solidarity implies power-relations. The effects of these and other components depend also on fluctuating uncertainties of the world economy (business cycles, crises) and so on.

My critical remarks notwithstanding, I believe that Derrida and his followers are right in arguing that there can be no ethico-political identities that consist only of positive elements. Every identity defined in language involves implicit and explicit negative differences with implications to others, whoever they are and wherever they may be. Being in general presupposes various absences, level-specific voids and other forms of ontological negativity (see Bhaskar 1993:46) and, as Derrida has stressed, negativity plays out also at ethico-political levels of identity. All definitions and constitutions of social beings exclude some other forms of social being. Although beings could not exist without positive elements, and the relationship between ego and alter may be constituted in profoundly different ways, and this constitution depends on concrete historical circumstances, a degree of negative exclusions and othering seems inevitable.

## **A Cosmic Perspective: The Identity of Human Beings Living on Planet Earth**

Thus far I have focused on explanations of differences and divisions that in some contexts can also be taken as their justification. It is time to switch perspective and see also what is common to humanity and other earthlings. As Morgenthau stressed, parochialism stems from the inability to see one's self, understandings and surroundings in a wider context and from others' viewpoint. The world as a whole is a wide context. This "world" exists on the surface of Earth, itself part of a solar system, which in turn is a part of a large galaxy.

It is no coincidence that Kant the cosmopolitan was also a cosmologist, sharing this interest with many of his fellow Enlightenment thinkers. In his early work Kant made important contributions to cosmology. In the *Universal Natural History and Theory of Heaven*, Kant (1755) explains how one can explain the formation of the solar system from an initial state, in which matter is dispersed like a cloud, solely by means of the interaction of attractive and repulsive forces. Kant's view is accepted by today's astronomy. Kant is also well-known for being one of the first to develop the concept of galaxy. Drawing on earlier work by Thomas Wright, he speculated that a galaxy might be a rotating body of a huge number of stars, held

together by gravitational forces akin to the solar system but on a much larger scale. From a scientific point of view, these observations and insights must have raised the question whether Earth and humanity have emerged from cosmic evolution.

Cosmopolitanism is not only tied to the idea of order in nature (which is the original meaning of the Greek word *cosmos*) but also to this kind of a wide cosmic perspective on one's identity and place. Near Kant's tomb in Kaliningrad is the following inscription in German and Russian, taken from the "Conclusion" of his *Critique of Practical Reason*: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me." In the *Critique* itself, Kant explains further that neither of these things is beyond his horizon. On the contrary: "I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence." Similarly, he also talks about "universal and necessary connections" to both (Kant 1952[1788]:360-361).

A sufficiently wide temporal and spatial perspective allows us to see simultaneously the limitations of both political realist socio-biology (biological reductionism, whether literal or metaphorical) and post-structuralism (linguistic reductionism). Ants and bees do not have science or technologies, nor can they learn much. Insects' learning is very limited and insect-societies do not change (in our historical time-scale). But from a scientific point of view, it is also evident that humans share the evolutionary history and most of genes with ants and bees and other complex living organisms. The required capabilities for language and cultural learning have gradually emerged over a very long period of time on the surface of a particular planet in a particular solar system located in a particular galaxy consisting of at least two hundred billion solar systems. Ultimately we have all emerged from stardust, sharing a long causal history from cosmic through biological to cultural evolution.

Together, the cosmic, biological and cultural evolutions provide a rather distinctive perspective on the question of identity. As emphasized by the popular astro-physician, Carl Sagan, it is possible to define our shared identity as humans and earthlings in the context of a cosmic setting. As Sagan did not want to rush answers, he formulated a question:

The nature of life on Earth and the quest for life elsewhere are two sides of the same question. The search for who we are. (1985:13)

Astrobiology – one of the growing areas of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century sciences – has made it increasingly obvious that so far the theory of evolution and biology has been based on the study of one case only (see Jakosky 2006; Barrow *et al.* 2008). Life sciences cannot make universal claims in the same way as physics and

chemistry can because little is known of the conditions of life elsewhere. The laws of physics apply everywhere but many of the biological and ecological mechanisms we know may be particular and specific to the planet Earth. Technical means to study other planets and solar systems have been gradually emerging and evolving in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. In July 2007, Enceladus, a moon of Saturn, was confirmed to have extra-terrestrial liquid water. By early-2017, about 2000 exoplanets have been discovered to orbit around stars in the neighbouring parts of the Milky Way, a few of them rocky planets with water and within the habitable zone. These findings would not have surprised many of those who have suspected for centuries, even millennia, that our world is only one of many. We not only share a long and complex causal history, but we are earthlings – and this has ethical and political consequences.

The vastness of the cosmos and the idea of cosmic pluralism encouraged tolerant cosmopolitanism already in the ancient agrarian empires of Eurasia such as China, Rome, and parts of India, as well as in religions such as Buddhism. The large empires were self-centric, but within their own sphere, they often represented limited cosmopolitanism.<sup>7</sup> Later, a new and more explicit form of cosmic pluralism emerged in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The cosmic perspective enables and encourages distance from one's own identity and from the prevailing ideas and practices of one's own society. The proponents of cosmic pluralism laughed at human differences and smallness.<sup>8</sup> Of course, the cosmopolitanism of early modernity and the European Enlightenment was not based on merely a cosmic viewpoint, but also on the increasing familiarity with the existence and perspective of non-European others. For example, Voltaire was influenced by the image of "noble savages" by baron de Lahontan's *Curious Dialogues Between the Author and a Savage of Good Sense Who Has Travelled from 1703*, on the one hand; and by invocation of China as an ancient and sophisticated civilisation, on the other (see Muthu 2003:24-7).

The cosmic scale that puts the drama of life and human history on our small planet in a very wide perspective. In one sense this is an optical effect: the wider is the imaginable scale of possibilities – also in terms of differences – the smaller the within-the-humanity differences appear. Alienation in this sense makes possible a critical sensibility, the basis of any cosmopolitan identity. In another sense, the cosmic vision insists on the idea of interconnectedness. Humans, as matter and energy and as biological organisms, are dependent not only on each other but also on a variety of cosmic processes, and most importantly, on the long-standing but thin and fragile biosphere of Earth. All humans form part of an interdependent whole; our fates are closely interconnected.

The more we view the Earth from the outside, the more we come to see it as an exquisite, tiny world, everyone dependent on everyone else (Sagan 2006:215).

Mutual dependency and fate has to do with a widening of the sphere within which the basic moral principles apply. Any form of morality has to do with the capacity to generalise normative claims in an acceptable way and, most importantly the ability to see things from the point of view of others. Thus Morgenthau's (1961:561-564) fundamental rules of diplomacy are essentially the principles of cosmopolitan morality, albeit confined to the sphere of diplomacy and international relations. "Diplomacy must look at the political scene from the point of view of other nations." "Nations must be willing to compromise on all issues that are not vital to them." Morgenthau's rules of diplomacy may constitute a rather limited vision, tied to nations and diplomats, but they nonetheless exemplify the fundamental principles of morality, namely the attempt to see things from others' perspective.

Is a cosmic perspective necessary for a cosmopolitan morality? Morgenthau, for instance, was not an explicitly cosmic thinker, although the planetary danger posed by nuclear weapons was of major concern and an argument for the necessity of a world state for him. My point is merely that a cosmic and planetary perspective clearly facilitates and encourages the adoption of such a moral viewpoint. The level of moral consciousness is directly connected to identity-formation. Thus a possible and plausible argument for global morality and thus for planetary identity involves an idea that we should work together as a species to preserve and cultivate the human potential on a cosmic scale.

Cosmic pluralism can also contribute to extending the variety of living beings with which we can identify. Carl Sagan talks about the extension of our "identification horizon", the category of beings to whom we are willing to apply the basic moral principles:

If we survive these perilous times, it is clear that even an identification with all of mankind is not the ultimate desirable identification. [...] It is important that we extend our identification horizons, not just down to the simplest and most humble forms of life on our planet [by-products of the same biological evolution that resulted in us], but also up to the exotic and advanced forms of life that may inhabit, with us, our vast galaxy of stars (Sagan 2000:7-8).

Sagan's point is important and his moral vision astounding in its comprehensiveness, but they also bring us back to political theory. Even with a cosmic-scale distance to human differences, and even with a wide identification horizon, the problems of false universalisms and negative othering within humanity



persist. The skeptical arguments against a global identity continue to carry weight in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore the adoption of a cosmic perspective is not enough. The prevailing dispositions to identify with and favour particular groups are based, in part, also on the human condition. Social beings are necessarily relational and presuppose also negativity and differences.

## **The Temporal Aspect of a Possible Solution: Negative Otherness in One's Own Past**

Although othering may in some sense be inevitable, the most relevant identity-constituting others need not be those contemporary humans on the planet Earth who are in some regards different from us, whoever 'we' are. Otherness can also be located either in our own past or, alternatively, in our contemporary being, when seen from a point of view of a possible future position in world history. In other words, what we are can be defined in terms of critical distance from what we once used to be. And what we may become – and would like to become – can be defined in terms of critical distance from what we are now. Critical distance from one's own past entails the possibility of normative improvement and ethico-political learning and development over time.

Two 20<sup>th</sup> century examples illustrate how one's own past can take part in constituting one's present or future identity: (i) the case of post-1945 Germany and (ii) the case of truth and reconciliation commissions in various late-20<sup>th</sup> century post-conflict situations. First, Germany: in the Nuremberg trials it was concluded that Nazi-Germany had committed crimes against humanity. Attempts to come to terms with one's own past have not only been constitutive of the German identity but have also led to moral development. Marcuse (1999) argues, using Jürgen Habermas' categories<sup>9</sup>, that "the identity of (West) German society has developed from a pre-conventional form in the Nazi and immediate post-war years, to a conventional stage in the 1960s, and is now, in the 1990s, showing many post-conventional traits."

Nazism rose from the muddy and bloody trenches of the First World War. Generally, it can be argued that wars cause unlearning and moral regression. While the Nazi-era meant moral regression towards an egocentrism and overtly physical and behaviourist pre-conventional stage, the deep post-war German guilt was something that the Germans themselves had to tackle. This required critical reflexivity that enabled moral learning. Post-conventional morality attempts to define good and bad according to principles that transcend the groups holding the principles. In the post-conventional stage, systems of norms lose their quasi-natural validity and require justification from a universalising, yet reflexive, point of view.



The developments in Germany, perhaps especially in the 1960s and thereafter, have facilitated the cosmopolitanisation of German citizenry (cf. Beck *et al.* 2003).

The late 20<sup>th</sup> century truth commissions have generally been created following a military dictatorship or a civil war (see Hayner 2001). The purpose of truth commissions is to establish some kind of basis for democracy and justice as well as to enable moral learning and building a basis for a we-feeling across a divided community. Particularly in South Africa, the idea has been to let the truth out into the public sphere by allowing diverse people to tell their stories about past suffering. However, there is no well-defined mechanism to determine what the truth is in the case of contradictory accounts. Although truth commissions have often been established as a substitute for judicial trials, for instance in the 1980s Argentinean truth commission was complemented with the opening of criminal trials against past human rights violators.

The success of truth and reconciliation commissions to achieve reconciliation has been at best only limited, but in some cases they have fostered human rights activism that may be taken as a sign of moral learning (for instance Bakiner 2016; for a somewhat more positive account, see Brahm 2007). In contrast to the case of post-1945 Germany, the aim has been less to come to terms with one's own collective past than to create a public sphere within which past and perhaps also present grievances concerning others can be brought to the attention of everyone concerned. Although this procedure may in principle enable the adoption of a post-conventional moral perspective to the conflict in question, in practice this tends to be difficult, particularly if actors make reciprocal loaded charges against the other. Moreover, if these charges make sense but no formal prosecutions are possible, the work of truth commissions may feed further feelings of bitterness and injustice.

A key to a successful overcoming of violent antagonisms seems to lie in collective learning via collective self-criticism. If one looks deep enough, the history of every group, every class and every country is filled with episodes that not only could but also should have been otherwise. For instance, the Finnish civil war in 1918 led to concentration camps and mass killings; and the so-called "continuation war" in 1941–44 was an alliance with Adolf Hitler, in which the Finns contributed to the Siege of Leningrad. It is always possible to locate layers of negative otherness in one's own collective past, whether national or otherwise – and from a universalising perspective, we know that this applies to everyone.

An even more important possibility is locating otherness in our contemporary being and identity, when seen from a point of view of a possible future position in world history. Wendt (2003) formulates a similar idea in the context of making an argument for "the inevitability of a world state:"

[...A] world state could compensate for the absence of spatial differentiation between its present and its past [...]. The past here is [international] anarchy, with all its unpleasantness. In Hegelian terms we could say that 'history' becomes the Other in terms of which the global self is defined. Of course this Other does not have a subjectivity of its own, and so cannot literally recognise the world state. But a functional equivalent to recognition can be achieved by an act of temporal self-differentiation. (*ibid.*:527)

For Wendt the temporal self-differentiation would occur in the future when the world state is established. However, the idea of temporal self-differentiation and otherness can be made concrete already now by imagining for instance a future historian or sociologist looking back. This device has been successfully utilised in some science fiction writings (e.g. Brunner 1971; Wagar 1999). The act of imagining a future historian generates far-reaching questions about his or her identity, about our identity, and about the truth of his or her historical stories and explanations. Who is she? What kind of a historical story and explanation can be argued to be true and relevant? What is the appropriate spatio-temporal framework for writing world history? How will she view us? The future may be contingent, but attempts to establish visions of a meaningful future can become co-constitutive of our current identities and, in turn, take part in constructing the future (Berenskoetter 2011).

Most versions of classical political realism recognise that the reasons for skepticism about a world community are only temporal. At some point things may be different: there may be no more reason for more than some realist cautiousness anymore. Whenever this kind of world may come to being, our future historian is likely to identify with the planetary political community, looking at the past from a global vantage point. A leap ahead into the future seems thus to suggest a standpoint of global history. This general standpoint does not stop interpretation of history from being ethico-political or contested. As in any political community, history will be periodically re-interpreted and constantly debated also in a future global political community.<sup>10</sup> But in contrast to more limited histories, world history covers the planetary history of humanity in its entirety.

## From a Global System of Communications to Big History

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Jaspers (1953) argued that the world is now a single unit of communications. This, he assumed, gives rise to a growing drive towards political unification, possibly through mutual agreement in a world order based on the rule of law. Instead of following a simple linear logic and leading to the

irreversible emergence of political unification, however, world history can be seen in much more complicated and dialectical terms. Modern society has involved an increasing differentiation of institutionalised contexts of activities and functions, including the emergence of contexts such as international/world law, politics and economy (see Albert 2016). It is not at all evident that a single institutionalised context and its associated spatial scale would become dominant within any system of multi-spatial metagovernance (Jessop 2012). Moreover, developments may be reversed and occur through crises and catastrophes, which have the potential of changing the identity of one or more of those differentiated domains and systems, and thereby also the emergent and historically evolving whole of these parts.

These complexities notwithstanding, we may accord with Jaspers that the globalisation of communications can be seen as the beginning of the world history proper. It is “the spiritual and technical acquisition of the equipment necessary for the journey; we are just setting out” (*ibid.*:24). This setting out can be a long process from the limited perspective of a human life-time. It also entails a new understanding of the essentially shared causal history of humanity. H.G. Wells worked on the idea of a universal history already during and after the First World War. In his two-volume *Outline of History*, Wells (1920:v-vi) argued for the importance of shared historical ideas. “There can be no common peace and prosperity without common historical ideas.” He continued by talking about “a sense of history as the common adventure of all mankind” being necessary for peace.

It is of course no coincidence that Wells framed his world history in cosmic terms, starting the story by outlining the origins of our solar system and explaining to the common reader the huge distances in space. In book I<sup>st</sup> of the first volume, Wells narrates the origins of planet Earth before moving gradually to the history of humankind in book II<sup>nd</sup>. There had been universal histories – presentations of the history of mankind as a whole, as a coherent unit – before Wells, but most of them have told the story in Eurocentric terms, often assuming or suggesting that a particular (Christian or) Western society constitutes the end-point of world history. In contrast, Wells framed the world history in cosmic terms and imagined a future world society, indeed a world state, thus providing an entirely new vantage point. Wells’ angle remained unique for most of the century.

The late 1980s saw a systematic and globalist critique of Eurocentrism rising. The colonizers’ model of the world – Eurocentrism – is based on a simple and yet false assumption: all important concepts, practices, technologies and capacities have emerged from Europe or from Europeanised parts of the world. Originating in Europe, the central concepts, practices, technologies and capacities have subsequently diffused to the rest of the world. Thus, world history is presented as

the history of how the central dynamics of cultural evolution moved gradually from Mesopotamia westwards via Greece and Rome towards North-West Europe and, later, towards the United States of America. The decisive achievements of the great Eurasian civilisations of Arabia, China, India, Japan and Persia have thus been largely neglected and the parallel developments in Africa, Americas, and Pacific mostly ignored (Blaut 1993, 2000).

The critics of Eurocentrism have argued plausibly that this is a biased and one-sided account of the common adventure of all mankind (Amin 1989; Frank 1998; Hobson 2004; Needham 2004; Pomeranz 2000). The Greco-Roman civilisation was not unique – the Han Dynasty of China and parts of India went through similar developments – and after the collapse of the Western part of the Roman Empire the areas north of Mediterranean formed an outlying part of Eurasia for a millennium. Until the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, most important concepts, practices, technologies and capacities actually originated in China, India and Arabia and were slowly diffused to Europe. It is also possible to write counterfactual scenarios about how the Industrial Revolution could have taken place elsewhere on the Eurasian continent, most plausibly in China, with far-reaching world-historical consequences (Tetlock, Lebow and Parker 2006; Patomäki 2007).

The starting point of non-Eurocentric and post-Wellsian Big History is that human societies remain part of nature, “properly at home in the universe despite our extraordinary powers, unique self-consciousness, and inexhaustible capacity for collective learning” (McNeill 2005:xvii). McNeill argues further that as natural sciences have been historicised at many levels, it is now the task of historians – and social scientists – to generalise boldly enough to connect their area of study with the history of the cosmos, solar system and life. In his programmatic statements in the second volume of the new *Journal of World History*, Christian (1991; see also Spier 1996) phrased the task also in terms of scale of space and time:

What is the scale on which history should be studied? The establishment of the *Journal of World History* already implies a radical answer to that question: in geographical terms, the appropriate scale may be the whole of the world. [...] I will defend an equally radical answer to the temporal aspect of the same question: what is the time scale on which history should be studied? [...] the appropriate time scale for the study of history may be the whole of time. In other words, historians should be prepared to explore the past on many different time scales up to that of the universe itself – a scale of between 10 and 20 billion years. This is what I mean by “Big History” (*ibid.*:223).

Christian’s (2005) *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* is a unified story of developments of the whole universe from the Big Bang about 13 thousand

million years ago through the present into its distant future; Brown (2007) is another recent history of all of time and space; McNeill and Neill (2003) starts from *Homo Erectus*; Christian, Brown and Benjamin (2014) is a beautifully illustrated textbook version of the same thing). The story of Big History is about the emergence of new layers of qualitatively distinct beings and development of increasing complexity locally – against the background of the second law of thermodynamics that sees increasing entropy rather than complexity in the cosmos as a whole (see also Kauffman 1995; and Wheeler 2006). Finally, in the course of the development of a particular mammal species, *Homo sapiens*, the stage of collective learning was reached, Humanity acquired the “capacity to share information precisely and rapidly so that information accumulates at the level of the community and species giving rise to long-term historical change” (Christian, Brown and Benjamin 2014:90).

Human cultural evolution has been fast and accelerating. During the most recent Ice Age – lasting for about 90,000 years – new developments started taking place. The “revolution of Upper Paleolithic” some 40,000-50,000 years ago was followed by “the Neolithic agricultural revolution” about 10,000–12,000 years ago, after the end of the last Ice Age (both “revolutions” were slow processes when compared to the pace of changes during the last 200 years). The first state-formations and systems of writing and mathematics emerged roughly 5,000–6,000 years ago. Similar developments were subsequently repeated quite independently in other parts of the world, including in the so-called New World.

Gradually began the history of agrarian states and empires; of division of labour and taxation; of religions and new levels of abstraction; of wars and power struggles; of slavery and violence; and of increasingly rapid cultural evolution. Within Eurasia, a world economy of regular trade networks has existed for about 2,000–3,000 years. Many innovations have spread across different parts of Eurasia, opening up new possibilities to develop on previous innovations and practices, including writing, narratisation and subjective consciousness. Two millennia later all this resulted in the Industrial Revolution.

The so-called modern time has been the most dramatic era in the common adventure of humankind thus far. The Eurocentric waves of globalisation – starting with the imperial reintegration of the American continent with Europe and continuing with the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century waves of neo-imperial expansion – have intensified the new global coming together of humanity, often occurred under violent, oppressive and tragic circumstances. The Industrial Revolution led to a rapid global population growth from one to seven and a half billion people today. This growth continues until the benchmark of nine or ten billion will be reached in 2050 or so. Simultaneously, the Industrial Revolution

and its consequences have also complicated and obscured the connection between available resources and control over land.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was exceptional because for the first time in centuries there were long periods of absence of war in Europe (outside Europe the situation was different, not least because of European expansion and competition elsewhere). A few occasional wars notwithstanding, the European heartland was no longer plagued with recurrent warfare. The contrast to the inter-dynastic era of 1689–1815, characterised by nearly constant warfare both in Europe and European colonies, was evident (see Hamilton and Herwig 2003:2–10). The core of the industrialising world economy seemed to have become relatively peaceful. Moreover, many mid-19<sup>th</sup> century liberals anticipated the end of the colonial and imperial era. Since Napoleon, imperialism had been a bad word.

In industrial capitalism there are mechanisms and processes that tend to generate outcomes reminiscent of classical imperialism, including competition over raw materials and markets, at times assuming the form of explicit imperial projects. The era of new imperialism began in the 1870s (Patomäki 2008). Moreover, industrialisation created also new powers of destruction. The North-American civil war of 1861–65 and the Franco-German War of 1870–71 were the first modern industrial wars (Giddens 1987b:222–232). In 1914, the First World War came as an immense surprise to most Europeans. Even though writers and intellectuals had been anticipating a major war, only very few of them warned that it would be unprecedented in destructiveness and likely to spread to imperial peripheries (see Clarke 1966:68–69). Moreover, at the outbreak of the war, the prevalent expectation was that the war would soon be over. This error and miscalculation made, in part, some of the decisions for beginning or joining the war easier (Stevenson 2004:8).

Thus the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “the age of extremes” (Hobsbawm 1994), began with a largely unanticipated massive catastrophe, which recurred in 1937–1945. Furthermore, the Russian revolution is unlikely to have occurred without the war (and German support for the Bolsheviks). Thus, also the Cold War was a co-product of the First World War and its aftermath. It was at this time that humanity reached the technological capacity to destroy itself and large parts of the ecological systems of the planet; and it was at that time that world history proper emerged for the first time.

Big History is oriented not only towards the past but also towards the future. Big History presupposes the possibility of collective learning. It encourages the anticipation of possibilities such as global security community and favours the development of better systems of governance of global processes and problems (Patomäki 2002:ch 8; Patomäki 2008:ch 7 and 8; Patomäki 2013:ch 8). Christian (2005), like many other advocates of Big History, remains agnostic about the



possibility of a world state. Should there be a world state proper, it will probably be rather different from the current exclusive territorial states and their institutions (Wendt 2003:506; Partington 2003:101-148).

Big History frames world history in cosmic terms and imagines a future world community that may eventually take the form of a world state in some sense, thus providing a new vantage point for writing history and viewing ourselves. From that perspective, what we are now, constitutes a form of (possibly negative) otherness. And yet, this is far from being the end of the story of those 'small local differences' that beset humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **The Problem of 'Small Local Differences' Restated: A Possible Solution**

Big History can provide an overall framework for thinking about who we are, but it does not mean abolishing cultural and historical differences. Moreover, the background system of language depends on a system of differences and similarities. Language is constitutive of social relations and thereby co-produces social and political effects, even if only through actions in social contexts that involve unacknowledged conditions, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Also, actions tend to have unintended consequences that can form a part of a systemic whole. Social structures and systems can have emergent properties and powers that are not reducible to their parts. While the open-systemic historical processes of causal determination are thus in no way reducible to language, various causal processes can accentuate language-constituted differences into intensely and perhaps violently negative self-other relations. There is thus a need to rethink the fundamentals of identity-constitution from a perspective that is compatible with the critics of false universalisms.

What is more, progressivist readings of Big History and related processes of temporal othering involve horizontal self-other relations here and now. Even if every individual of the currently existing humanity would eventually adopt a future-oriented globalist identity, their learning and development would be non-synchronous. Some would be "lagging behind" in the progressivist temporal axis, which they may also try to challenge and change. They would represent negative otherness for those who have learnt more rapidly (whose learning must remain subject to criticism, as pluralism and controversies are essential for learning; Rescher 1977; 1993). They might in turn develop negative modes of responsiveness and forms of counter-othering. Even when everyone is fully aware of the vastness of the long-term global matrix of Big History, these apparently small-scale differences are significant to our lives. We can also see that even at the



level of syntagmatic competencies – making speech and action possible – there are often wide differences in the grids, measures, matrixes and relations of exclusion that constitute self/other-relations. It would be a dangerous illusion to ignore the importance of these kinds of differences.

One consideration is that many aspects of global togetherness may be possible only to the best educated and wealthiest part of humanity. The wealthy and powerful may celebrate a form of cosmopolitanism – say market globalism (Steger 2005) – that becomes a source of resentment for a multitude of actors, especially if they experience increasingly uncertain living conditions and existential insecurity. Furthermore, closer interactions and experiences of interdependency not only create new points of contact but may equally engender new points of conflict. Encounters with otherness are enmeshed with practical concerns and anxieties of everyday life and mundane things such as competition over jobs under the conditions of un- or underemployment. Various labels, ways of legitimisation and myths are sedimented into the deep structures of language, from where they can be drawn also for strategic purposes. The concerns and anxieties of everyday life can thereby be mobilised for support for antagonistic platforms and political activism.

Todorov's (1984) three axes of ego/alter-relations help to analyse the problem of 'small local differences' further. The first is the epistemological axis. What do we really know about the other? Ego can either know or be ignorant of alter's history, identity and values. Knowledge or ignorance of the other can have deep roots. From many philosophical standpoints, differences are difficult to see. Answers to the questions "what is there in the social world?" and "how can and should we acquire knowledge," enable and constrain visions and knowledge of the others. There is no absolute knowledge about the self and other but an endless gradation of the lower or higher states of knowledge.

The axiological axis, the basis for value judgments, is at least partly independent of knowledge. The other can be seen as good/bad or superior/inferior (or something else, perhaps something more nuanced). Coming to know the other better can help to understand and evaluate it more positively, but more knowledge can also make the value judgement more negative. How and on what basis this judgment is made varies significantly. The "desire to grasp the unknown by means of the known" (*ibid.*:128) often means that improved knowledge about differences makes the evaluation of the other worse, perhaps just by increasing sensitivity to these differences. Distinctions play an important role in social differentiation in the most familiar everyday contexts (Bourdieu 2010) and these distinctions are instinctively used in evaluating also the more different or distant others. A lot depends of course on what is known – on ego's experiences and familiarity with frames, metaphors and myths – and on the cognitive level of ethical and political reasoning.

Todorov's third axis, the praxiological axis, has to do with rapprochement with or distancing from other's real or imagined identity and values in practical terms. If the existence of alterity, of a truly other human substance, is denied, the others can be only either identical (implying assimilation) or inferior (justifying submission). That is, inability to perceive alterity on the epistemological axis precludes any position on the praxeological axis. If real alterity can be perceived, one possibility is neutrality or indifference based on the capacity to take distance, which is one of the potential functions of Big History.

The different others can also be recognised as equal in terms of legal and other entitlements or rights, such as Kant's universal right to hospitality or universal human rights. The right to equal participation or representation implies global democracy. A problem is that the more precisely and comprehensively these entitlements and rights and the possibly corresponding duties are defined, the more this recognition makes others identical, implying assimilation. Todorov writes (*ibid.*:249) that "we want equality without its compelling us to accept identity; but also difference without its degenerating into superiority/inferiority." Todorov's problematic is closely connected to the struggles over recognition, especially typical of the last half-a-century. Particular forms of recognition are bound up with specific possibilities with regard to identity. When a new claim or constitutive possibility emerges, it regularly results in a struggle for the social recognition of a new form of identity (Honneth 1996).

What we are witnessing in the late 2010s is a dialectic between three logics of identity. First, from the philosophical standpoint of market globalism, differences are hard to see. The economic logic of this form of globalism precludes any position on the praxeological axis. Everyone must be identical and submit to market globalism and its characteristic modes of subjectivity (e.g. Chandler and Reid 2016). Second, the concerns and anxieties of everyday life are being mobilised for antagonistic politics against both globalism and associated forms of otherness such as immigrants. This mobilisation occurs in terms of frames, categories, metaphors and myths that have been sedimented into the deep structures of national or religious imaginary (cf. Patomäki and Steger 2010), from where they are again being drawn also for strategic purposes. These categories and myths may include also claims about our tribal nature, perhaps anchored in our genes or memes.

The third logic of identity concerns the struggle for recognition. These struggles will continue to diversify claims and open up new possibilities. To the extent that these claims and possibilities can be confined to the private sphere, they may be compatible with the liberalism of market globalism (in spite of its techno-logic; see Amadae 2016). They can, however, politicise market globalism, in particular in terms of problematising the privileges and inequalities characteristic

of market globalisation. There are other ways organising democracy and relations of production and exchange. The third logic is reflexive and has to do with the general relationship between socio-economic equality and identity.

## **Conclusion**

The skeptics do have a point. As the increasingly apparent failure of market globalism indicates, the process of building a cosmopolitical community is beset with difficulties and dangers. Many forms of universalisms are false. Political realists are right in criticising (liberal and other) utopias of harmony and seeing various mechanisms that generate and reinforce group-thinking on a large scale. Post-structuralists, in turn, are right in maintaining that negativity and some othering are inevitable. While not all negative contrasts and exclusions are illegitimate (i.e. legitimate norms can be violated), there is a constant quest for hermeneutics of suspicion and deconstructionist analysis.

Attempts of reducing human beingness to genes, memes, nature, structures of language, or something else that is not changing, are implausible and geo-historically false. We humans, our language, and our capacity to learn have gradually emerged over a long period of biological evolution on the surface of a particular planet in a particular solar system located in Milky Way. These developments have made cultural learning and the emergence of reflective consciousness and increasingly reflexive ego-identity possible. Language too is changing and evolving. On the basis of these and related reflections, I have contended that the most relevant identity-constituting others need not be those contemporary humans who are in some regards different from us. The cosmic perspective and the possibility of cosmic pluralism encourage the adoption of a broad moral perspective, facilitating the widening of moral identification horizon also to all forms of life and (possibly) to other sentient beings.

I have further argued in this paper that otherness can be located in our own past. As the past is often present in contemporary beings, this has implications to contemporary self-other relations as well. Or, alternatively, it can be located in our contemporary being, when seen from a point of view of a possible future moment and position in world history. What we may become – and would like to become – can be defined in terms of critical distance from what we are today. Critical distance from one's own past entails the possibility of normative improvement and ethico-political learning and development.

The global grid and matrix of Big History corresponds to the emergent forms of time and space evident in many social practices and ethico-political concerns, such as global warming. Big History means understanding the human history in

cosmic scales of time and space. In a Wellsian manner, I have argued that Big History is necessarily oriented also towards the future, anticipating the possibility of cosmopolitical unification through collective learning. Although world history is non-linear and the emerging social forms and wholes are complex, we can rationally anticipate that these kinds of developments will pave the way for a global ethical and political community in some meaningful sense.

However, although Big History may provide an overall framework for thinking about who we are and where we are heading, it does not abolish cultural and historical differences. A global political community would not put an end to negative differences, conflicts or tragedies of social action. Rather the cosmopolitical perspective I have developed in this paper is compatible with what Connolly (1995:xv) calls the “ethos of critical responsiveness.” This means that the self-confidence and congealed judgements of dominant identities and understandings of the political community and constituency should be recurrently challenged. It also means that the basic onto-logic of identity needs to be repeatedly and reflexively rethought from a perspective that is compatible with both the criticism of false universalisms and with the basic tenets of Big History.

A key point I have made in this essay is that although the open-systemic historical processes of causal determination are not reducible to language, various causal processes can accentuate language-constituted differences into intensely and perhaps violently negative self-other relations. From this perspective, I have discussed Todorov’s three axes of self-other relations: epistemic, axiological and praxiological. “Knowledge does not imply love, nor the converse; and neither of the two implies, nor is implied by, identification with the other” (Todorov 1984:186). By distinguishing the three axis and by avoiding reductionism, we can make more nuanced and plausible claims about their interconnections in different world-historical contexts. I have suggested that what we are witnessing in the late 2010s is a dialectic between three logics of identity. Market globalism cannot acknowledge differences or privileges, which is one of the reasons why the concerns and anxieties of everyday life are currently being mobilised for antagonistic politics based on re-imagining the nation. Meanwhile, the struggle for recognition continues to diversify claims and possibilities, reflective of the ambiguities of equality and difference.

It is obvious that my conceptualisation of the problematic is not indifferent with regard to different options within the wider whole of Big History. It entails contrasts and differences and an evaluative stand. I clearly prefer the third logic of differences and collective identity. At the meta-level, however, my argument is that we can let many differences just be and evolve in terms of their own dynamics. Also, we can see the ongoing dialogues and debates in terms of a co-constitutive

and mutually transformative temporal relationship between self and other within the expanding set of relevant ethico-political possibilities.

Humans can and do learn through practical experiences, encounters and dialogues. Due to learning they can also revise their values, goals and identity. It is entirely consistent to believe in the superiority of one's position and see how the others are rationally entitled in their circumstances – given the path of their particular historical experiences – to hold a position at variance with ours. Pluralism is the best guarantee for further collective learning in our planetary and cosmic setting – that may also have cosmic-scale significance.

## Endnotes

1. This chapter has been in progress for a decade. I first wrote it in 2007 and presented it in a few conferences, workshops and the like, including the Calcutta Research Group Winter School in December 2007. That presentation led eventually to a limited-circulation publication "Is a Global Identity Possible? The Relevance of Big History to Self-Other Relations", *Refugee Watch*, (13):36, 2010, pp.53-77. A couple of years later I used the last two sections of this chapter in a revised form in "The Problems of Legitimation and Potential Conflicts in a World Political Community", *Cooperation and Conflict*, (47):2, 2012:239-59. This is a thoroughly rewritten and updated version of the paper, best seen as the first fully finalised edition of it, first published in *Protosociology. An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* (33), 'Borders of Global Theory – Reflections from Within and Without', ed. by B.Axford, 2017, pp.93-127.
2. Kant (1784) constituted the international problematic by arguing, in "Perpetual Peace" and other essays, that all human development and progress, indeed human survival, is dependent upon cosmopolitan solutions to the problem of peace and war. By applying Hobbes's notion of state of nature to the sphere of relations between nations and states, he proposed an international social contract: the problem of war could be overcome by an arrangement of rule of law, republicanism, free trade and "league of nations". After 1848, the German reactions to Kant's "idealism" (starting already from Hegel's Kant-critique) were labelled as *realpolitik*. The *realpolitik* reactions were subsequently re-innovated in Britain and the US, in part as an import from Germany. Smith (1986:15) argues that "to understand the characteristic approach of contemporary realists the best place to begin is with Max Weber". Weber, of course, synthesised a lot of German late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century thinking, combining elements of liberalism and *realpolitik*, of positivism and hermeneutics. Weber adhered to a Hobbesian (or Hegelian-Nietzschean) picture of international politics while being committed to the ideology of nationalism (the good of a particular nation is the highest or only possible collective value in the modern world). For a genealogy of the international problematic, see Patomäki 2002a:ch 1.

3. Gilpin downplays the vast differences between tribes (and especially small bands of hunter-gatherers) and modern nation-states in order to stress the idea of perennial laws and conditions of politics (for a systematic critique of claims about neorealism's "perennial laws", see Vasquez 1996). Nation-states are bigger and more abstract, impersonal, complex and bureaucratic forms of collectivity than bands or tribes. Arguably, as political communities nation-states are closer to a world state than to bands or tribes. For the complexities and socio-historical conditions of nationalist social imaginaries, see Patomäki and Steger 2010:1056-1059.
4. Of course there is the counter-final possibility that political-realist practices such as power-balancing prove to be an obstacle to the development of a cosmopolitan community. Power-balancing may well contribute to reinforcing parochial realities by depicting others as threats and through processes of securitisation.
5. Derrida is also using the metaphors of battle and war to denounce the effects of othering, without explicating the reasons for this metaphor or the normative basis of his criticism. The somewhat overcharged anxiety about potential violence, including in extended metaphorical senses of the term, seems to connect Derrida to pacifist and Buddhist ethical traditions. It also makes it difficult to take a positive stand on any substantive ethico-political issue and, perhaps inadvertently, aligns Derrida with the spirit of the no-harm principle of liberalism, while being evidently incompatible with many other ethico-political principles.
6. For an interesting attempt to integrate Habermasian and Derridean insights into the conditions of the new post-national democracy to come, see Morris 2006. Morris argues that while Habermas provides an account of postnational public spheres and political spaces, Derrida provides important qualifications in two ways. First, he emphasises the constructed and open character of identities; and, second, he points to the difficulties of creating political spaces free from asymmetrical or biased relations of power. Morris thus takes Derrida's metatheory of writing as a qualifier of more substantial normative theories of democracy and justice, i.e. as a constant reminder of their metaphysical tendencies and potential for (justifying) violence (and repression).
7. The belief in extra-terrestrial life may have been present in ancient Assyria, Egypt, Arabia, China, Babylon, India and Sumer, although in these societies, the notion of alien life is difficult to distinguish from that of their particular gods, demons, and such. Following Thales and Anaximander, the Greek atomists took up the idea, arguing that an infinite universe ought to have an infinite amount of populated worlds. The Roman poet Lucretius (99-55 BC) spread these ideas – importantly, he also talked about "illimitable space in every direction – across the Roman Empire (See Dick 1998:7-8). It seems that Chinese astronomy, perhaps until the time of the late Ming Dynasty or so, cultivated similar ideas (for a summary, see Needham 2004:24-30). Arguably, Chinese astronomy was more modern in its conception of space and distances than the geocentric system of Ptolemy, while at least as accurate in its predictions of the movements of celestial bodies.
8. The best known early-modern proponent of cosmic pluralism was Giordano Bruno, who argued in the 16<sup>th</sup> century for an infinite universe in which every star is surrounded by its own solar system. In 1600, he was burnt at the stake as a heretic by the Roman



Inquisition. The attitude towards science was nearly reversed already in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century Holland. Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695) crowned his celebrated career as a modern astronomer, mathematician and physicist by writing *Cosmotheoros: The celestial worlds discover'd: or, conjectures concerning the inhabitants, plants and productions of the worlds in the planets*. In this book, which was published posthumously in Latin and translated to several European languages soon after Huygens' death, Huygens imagined a universe brimming with life both within our solar system as well as elsewhere. This work among a few others paved the way for Kant's mid-18<sup>th</sup> century astronomical speculations and for the Enlightenment cosmopolitanism. A good example is Voltaire's *Micromégas* (1752), a story of a 36,000-metre tall alien Micromégas who travels through the Milky Way and almost by coincidence realises that there is life on our insignificant planet. Through the perspective of Micromégas, Voltaire laughs at us silly humans who are killing each other in wars over religion. Voltaire's sci-fi satire thus takes moral distance from the Earthly disputes and wars.

9. Habermas (1979), following Lawrence Kohlberg and others, outlines three basic stages of moral learning, pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. In the *pre-conventional stage*, people understand and follow behavioural expectations and perceive concrete actions and actors. This is the stage of punishment and obedience, fitting also for the child. In the *conventional stage* people understand and follow reflexive behavioural expectations (norms) and distinguish between actions and norms, individual subjects and role bearers. Although actors can adopt the other's perspectives and also take the perspective of an observer, the standard is that people conform to a given social role. Finally, a stage is reached, where moral decisions are generated from rights, values or principles which are (or could be) agreeable to all individuals composing or creating a society designed to have fair and beneficial practices. In the *post-conventional stage*, systems of norms lose their quasi-natural validity and require public justification from universalising points of view. People understand and apply reflexive norms (principles) and distinguish between heteronomy and autonomy. In Habermas' scheme, in the highest stage the ability to universalise concerns need interpretations – which become the object of practical discourse for the first time – and include, at least potentially, all human beings as citizens of an imagined cosmopolitan world society.
10. To an extent I agree with Latour (2004) who criticises objectivist cosmopolitanism and argues for explicit *cosmopolitics*. For Latour, cosmopolitics recognises the radical pluralism of understandings and the fact “that the parliament in which a common world could be assembled has got to be constructed from the scratch” (*ibid.*:462). However, at least Latour's claim about “construction from the scratch” goes too far. In addition to the mostly shared causal history of humanity, the industrial civilisation and its systems of governance connect every part of the world and is more comprehensive than anything that has occurred before (Braudel 1995:8–14).



## References

- Abizadeh, Arash. 2005. "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other? On the Alleged Incoherence of Global Solidarity." *American Political Science Review*, (99)1:45-60.
- Albert, Mathias. 2016. *A Theory of World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Amadae, S.M. 2016. *The Prisoners of Reason. Game Theory and Neoliberal Political Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Amin, Samir. 1989. *Eurocentrism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Bakiner, Onur. 2016. *Truth Commissions. Memory, Power, and Legitimacy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Barrow, John D., Simon Conway Morris, Stephen J. Freeland and Charles L Harper Jr. 2008. *Fitness of the Cosmos for Life. Biochemistry and Fine Tuning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beck, Ulrich, W. Bonss and C. Lau. 2003. "The Theory of Reflexive Modernisation. Problematic, Hypotheses and Research Programme." *Theory, Culture and Society*, (20)2:1-33.
- Berenskoetter, Felix. 2011. "Reclaiming the Vision Thing: Constructivists as Students of the Future". *International Studies Quarterly*, 55(3):647-668.
- Bernstein, Richard. 1991. *The New Constellation*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bhaskar, Roy. 1993. *Dialectic. The Pulse of Freedom*. London: Verso.
- . 1994. *Plato Etc. The Problems of Philosophy and Their Resolution*. London: Verso.
- Blaut, J.M. 1993. *The Colonizer's Model of the World. Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*. New York and London: The Guilford Press.
- . 2000. *Eight Eurocentric Historians*. New York and London: The Guilford Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2010. *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (translated by R. Nice with new introduction by T. Bennett). London and New York: Routledge (Classic).
- Brahm, Eric. 2007. "Uncovering the Truth: Examining Truth Commission Success and Impact." *International Studies Perspectives*, (8)1:16-35.
- Braudel, Fernand. 1995. *A History of Civilisations*. London: Penguin Books.
- Brown, Cynthia Stokes. 2007. *Big History. From the Big Bang to the Present*. New York: The New Press.
- Brunner, John. 1971. *Stand on Zanzibar*. London: Arrow Books.
- Carr, Edward H. 1964[1946]. *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939. An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 2nd edition. New York: Harper Row.
- Chandler, David and Julian Reid. 2016. *The Neoliberal Subject: Resilience, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. London: Rowman and Littlefield International.
- Christian, David. 1991. "The Case for 'Big History.'" *Journal of World History*, (2)2:223-238.

- Christian, David. 2005. *Maps of Time. An Introduction to Big History*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Christian, David, Cynthia Stokes Brown and Craig Benjamin. 2014. *Big History. Between Nothing and Everything*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Clarke, Ignatius F. 1966. *Voices Prophesying War 1763–1984*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Connolly, William E. 1995. *The Ethos of Pluralization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dawkins, Richard. 1976. *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1981. *Positions* (translated and annotated by Alan Bass). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- . 1988. *Limited Inc* (translated by S. Weber, J. Mehlman and S. Weber). Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- . 1994. “The Deconstruction of Actuality. An Interview with Jacques Derrida”. *Radical Philosophy*, no. 68.
- . 1997. *Of Grammatology* (translated by G. Spivak). Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . 2001. *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (translated by M. Dooley and M. Hughes). London and New York: Routledge.
- Dick, Steven J. 1998. *Life on Other Worlds. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Extraterrestrial Life Debates*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dreyfus, Hubert. 1991. *Being-in-the-World. A Commentary on the ‘Being and Time’*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Frank, Andre Gunder. 1998. *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1979. *Central Problems in Social Theory. Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. London: MacMillan.
- . 1987a. “Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and the Production of Culture”, in A. Giddens (ed.), *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.
- . 1987b. *The Nation-State and Violence. Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Gilpin, Robert. 1984. “The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism.” *International Organisation*, (38)2:287–304.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1979. *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (translated by T. McCarthy). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- . 1987. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. Twelve Lectures*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Hamilton, R.F. and H.H. Herwig. 2003. “World Wars. Definition and Causes”, in R. Hamilton and H. Herwig (eds), *The Origins of World War I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Harré, Rom. 1970. *Principles of Scientific Thinking*. London: MacMillan.
- . 1979. *Social Being*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Hayner, Priscilla. 2001. *Unspeakable Truths. Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*. New York: Routledge.
- Hawks, John, Eric T. Wang, Gregory M. Cochran, Henry C. Harpending and Robert K. Moyzis. 2007. "Recent Acceleration of Human Adaptive Evolution." *PNAS*, 104(52):20753–20758.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1994. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*. London: Abacus.
- Hobson, John M. 2004. *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Honneth, Axel. 1996. *The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (translated by J. Anderson). Cambridge: Polity.
- Horan, Barbara L. 1986. "Sociobiology and the Semantic View of Theories." *PSA: Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association*, Volume One: Contributed Papers, pp. 322–330.
- Huygens, Christiaan. 1698. *Cosmotheoros. The celestial worlds discover'd: or, conjectures concerning the inhabitants, plants and productions of the worlds in the planets*. London: Timothy Childe. Available at <[http://www.phys.uu.nl/~huygens/cosmotheoros\\_en.htm](http://www.phys.uu.nl/~huygens/cosmotheoros_en.htm)> (accessed June 17 2008).
- Jakosky, Bruce. 2006. *Science, Society, and the Search for Life in the Universe*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Jaspers, Karl. 1953. *The Origin and Goal of History* (translated by M. Bullock). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Jaynes, Julian. 2000. *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. Boston: Houghton and Mifflin (Mariner Books).
- Jessop, Bob. 2012. "Obstacles to a World State in the Shadow of the World Market". *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47(2):200–219.
- Kauffman, Stuart. 1995. *At Home in the Universe. The Search for the Laws of Self-Organisation and Complexity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1755. *Universal Natural History and Theory of Heaven* (translated by Ian C. Johnston). Nanaimo, BC: Malaspina University-College. Available at <<http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/kant/kant2e.htm>> (accessed June 17 2008).
- . 1952[1788]. *Critique of Practical Reason* (translated by T.K. Abbott), in Kant, *Great Books of the Western World* 42. Chicago, London: Encyclopedia Britannica.
- . 1983. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Latour, Bruno. 2004. "Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics?" *Common Knowledge*, (10)3:450–62.
- Mali, Joseph. 2002. *The Rehabilitation of Myth. Vico's New Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Marcuse, Harold. 1999. "Former Concentration Camps and the Politics of Identity in West Germany, 1945-1995." Paper for the Upper Great Lakes Consortium for European Studies Conference, Minneapolis, 21 Feb 1997. Available at <<http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/present/972ident.htm>> (accessed June 17 2008).
- McNeill, William H. 2005. "Foreword", in David Christian (ed.), *Maps of Time. An Introduction to Big History*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- McNeill, J.R. and W.H. Neill. 2003. *The Human Web: A Bird's-eye View of World History*. W.W. Norton.
- Morgenthau, Hans. 1947. *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*. London: Latimer House.
- . 1961. *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 3rd ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Morris, Martin. 2006. "Between Deliberation and Deconstruction: The Condition of Post-National Democracy", in Lasse Thomasson (ed.), *The Derrida-Habermas Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 231-53.
- Muthu, Sankar. 2003. *Enlightenment Against Empire*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Needham, Joseph. 2004. *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol.7, Part 2: General Conclusions and Reflections* (edited by Kenneth Robinson). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. 1944. *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness. A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Partington, John S. 2003. *Building Cosmopolis. The Political Thought of H.G.Wells*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Patomäki, Heikki. 2002. *After International Relations. Critical Realism and the (Re) Construction of World Politics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2006. "Global Justice: A Democratic Perspective." *Globalisations*, (3)2:99-120.
- . 2007. "Back to the Kantian Idea of 'Universal History'? Overcoming Eurocentric Accounts of the International Problematic." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, (34)3:575-595.
- . 2008. *The Political Economy of Global Security. War, Future Crises and Changes in Global Governance*. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2013. *The Great Eurozone Disaster. From Crisis to a Global New Deal*. London: Zed Books.
- Patomäki, Heikki and Manfred Steger. 2010. "Social Imaginaries and Big History: Towards a New Planetary Consciousness?" *Futures*, 42(10):1056-1063.
- Pomeranz, Kenneth. 2000. *The Great Divergence. China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Reagan, Ronald. 1985. "Remarks to the Students and Faculty at Fallston High School in Fallston, Maryland December 4, 1985." Available at <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1985/120485a.htm> (accessed 13 June 2008).

- Rescher, Nicholas. 1977. *Dialectics. A Controversy Oriented Approach to the Theory of Knowledge*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- . 1993. *Pluralism. Against the Demand for Consensus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sagan, Carl. 1985. *Cosmos*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- . 2000. *Carl Sagan's Cosmic Connection. An Extraterrestrial Perspective* (with new contributions produced by Jerome Agel). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2006. *The Varieties of Scientific Experience. A Personal View of the Search for God* (edited by Ann Druyan). New York: The Penguin Press.
- de Saussure, Ferdinand. 1986[1916]. *Course in General Linguistics* (edited by C. Bally and A. Sechehaye and translated by R. Harris). La Salle, Illinois: Open Court.
- Sayer, Andrew. 1984. *Method in Social Science. A Realist Approach*. London: Hutchinson.
- Scheuerman, William E. 2011. *The Realist Case for Global Reform*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Searle, John R. 1977. "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida." *Glyph*, 1:198-208.
- Smith, Michael Joseph. 1986. *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Spier, Fred. 1996. *The Structure of Big History. From the Big Bang until Today*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Steger, Manfred B. 2005. *Globalism: Market Ideology Meets Terrorism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Stevenson, David. 2004. *Cataclysm. The First World War as Political Tragedy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Tetlock, Philip, Richard Ned Lebow and Geoffrey Parker. 2006. "Unmaking the Middle Kingdom", in Philip Tetlock, Richard Ned Lebow and Geoffrey Parker (eds), *Unmaking the West. What-If Scenarios That Rewrite World History*, pp.1-13. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Thomassen, Lasse (ed.). 2006. *The Derrida-Habermas Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. 1984. *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (translated by R. Howard). New York: Harper and Row.
- UNDP. 2007. *Human Development Report 2007/2008. Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World*. New York: UNDP/Palgrave MacMillan.
- Vasquez, John. 1996. *The Power of Power Politics. From Classical Realism to Neotraditionalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Voltaire. 1752. *Micromégas. Histoire Philosophique*. Available in French with the 1829 preface by Beuchot at the project Gutenberg <<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext03/mcrrmg10.txt>> and an English edition by Blake Linton Wilfong <<http://www.wondersmith.com/scifi/micro.htm>> (accessed on June 17 2008).
- Wagar, W. Warren. 1999. *A Short History of the Future*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- 
- Walker, R.B.J. 1993. *Inside/Outside. International Relations as Political Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2015. *Out of Line: Essays on the Politics of Boundaries and the Limits of Modern Politics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wells, H.G. 1920. *The Outline of History. Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*. London: The Waverley Book Co.
- Wendt, Alexander. 2003. "Why a World State is Inevitable." *European Journal of International Relations*, (9)4:491-542.
- Wheeler, Wendy. 2006. *The Whole Creature. Complexity, Biosemiotics and the Evolution of Culture*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Wilson, Edward O. 1975. *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.





## CHAPTER 49

# Migration and Transnationalism

## Justice, Security and Harmony

*Abdulkadir Osman Farah*

### Introduction

Modernisation introduced at least two main dominant interlinked conceptions of human organisations: the state and society conceptions (Beck *et al.* 1994; Inglehart 1997; Pierson 2011). The first is the state conception focusing on the designated space for formal top down decision-making and implementing processes. Here one finds the exterior aggregated institutions that presumably monopolise and exercise authoritative power, including the contractual, the legal and legitimacy frames. The second is the society conception supposedly reflecting the internal and the ethnical aspects of human conduct, under which people interact and exchange duties and obligations. Despite the different conceptions both structures remain hierarchical (Weber 2009). Societies need to pursue nationhood and statehood in ensuring justice and security internally and externally. Meanwhile the location of states and the societies seems unclear, whether it is on the earth, in the world or beyond. The internationally accredited anthropologist Bruno Latour had during his recent public assignments with COP 21 Paris discovered that if instead of states—meaning political structures, leaders and diplomats—it was societies ordinary people who represented their respective societies and countries, global environmental problems would probably have been addressed more decisively and

collectively<sup>1</sup>. At COP 21 when researchers inquired each country to list economic plans for the next two to three decades, it was obvious for all participants that our current planet cannot accommodate such wishes. For instance, to maintain its current consumption and industrial position, US alone will require five planets- let alone how many planets China and India each will demand if they also will have to maintain their current industrialisation speed. Latour therefore argues for an urgent shift from state-centrism towards a sincere society-centrism inquiry.

This essay argues that neither the state nor the society centrism approaches and conceptions take the aspirations of for most people, particularly transnational communities (migrants and diaspora communities) who intend to move beyond the nation-centric state and society structures in their pursuing of justice and security across boundaries. The restricted conception also does not address the relationship between nature and man. The nation-centric conception assumes disjunction between nature and socio-economic and socio-political processes. Latour's suggestions is therefore not enough for those who flourish in trans-state and transnational connections. So far the only transnationalism that dominantly seems to operate with impunity around the world without serious scrutiny is the capitalist transnationalism. Clearly this form of transnationalism circumvents both the state and society restrictions and boundaries. However, neither the civic transnationalism nor the community transnationalism (including migrants and diaspora connections) seems obliged to subordinate to restricted national and state priorities. States and societies nonetheless demand that transnational communities should operate within the traditional conceptions of linear statehood and nationhood processes. The assumption is that it is only through statehood and nationhood that democracy, justice, security and co-existence can be imagined both at local, national and international levels. The state, nation and society-centric approach fails to see such common goods as democracy, justice and security can also take roots at transnational and even global levels. Current transnational connections by diverse communities and societies and their persistent struggle for transnational justice and security proves the need for such cross-national signification and recognition. In addition ethnicity is not an objective identifiable criteria but an aspect of 'performed' behaviour: it is not simply a given but is reproduced, contested, acted out, and expressed through many cultural devices (Clammer 2017).

Although accommodating transnationalism and more inclusive global system is a possibility and even necessity, diverse and multiple forms of exclusions often prevail. Such tendencies obviously restrict the achievement of fruitful solidarity with identity diversification. Human beings share common destiny with common earth and common world. The idea of common world reflects joint ethical imaginations, that is linguistically maintained through mutual conversation and

understanding. This is also linked to the dilemma of maintaining link between diversity in unity. The threat could easily come from the tribalisation of societies and communities. For Ibn-Khaldun human beings belong to families and relations but also sociologically incline to form tribal consciousness through the interplay between socialisation and the immediate surrounding environment (Baali 1988). People are clearly born in distinct families and socio-cultural relations. But for Ibn-Khaldun it is often elites and political systems that foster and sustain tribal sentiments in their quest for instrumentalisation and consolidation of hegemony. Such tribal mentality which Ibn-Khaldun refers to as *assabiya* is rather transitional as people gradually through interactions learn and mature towards stability. In addition to the power relations, the harsh natural environment such as droughts, desertification and scarcity of resources force humans to behave aggressively, in the process becoming ego-centric and skeptical towards others. Eventually people will balance and understand the superiority of the moral ethical dimension. The degradation of environment, limited resources and mass displacement nourishes human tribalisation and suspiciousness. To overcome such obstacles tranquility has to be restored through listening, social incorporation and reconciliation. Transformations in Germany and South Africa testify human capabilities to overcome *assabiya* and tribal-centric world views in the quest for comprehensive justice and security.

Unfortunately, injustices and insecurity prevail in the world despite the routinely rhetorical insistence of commonalities and solidarity. Such rift could emanate from state and society-centered “deep structures of meaning,” considering others as adversaries or much worse subordinates. Obviously, such ethno-centrism contradicts cosmopolitan values. Here we forget that it is social and ethnic communities that form a political community, which if required can serve for the common good or for the common bad. That means if we can simultaneously learn and de-learn something. Human beings can forgive and inspire. We know that humans have similar aspirations and needs that they can at least agree on principles, not to be for instance neo-Nazis or fascists and in that regard not destroy the world. If opportunities to discussing and exchanging ideas persist, people can concentrate on principles and overcome limited identity concentration and barriers.

We also need to be careful that diversity should not be confused with differences. For some, in initial glimpse, Derrida seems to insist on difference an end itself (Thomassen 2006:141). This is not entirely correct as Derrida also challenges us to realise our responsibilities to others. For non-state and non-society-centric transnational communities, difference reflects a means to an end and not an end itself. Such communities often insist on variances for mainly achieving greater and more inclusive diversification of justice and security. This requires a moral exercise of extending the “identification horizon” not just to struggling

communities and humanity in general but also to all forms of life in the cosmos and beyond. Under such conditions we might need, as thinkers such as Kant (Kant 1795/1957) implied, “a world state” that can promote justice and security for all. But humans will first have to agree on a world society. This is part of the traditional universalisation. After all the Westphalia state, a European invention is a system that fosters political communities with bureaucracy and monopolisation of power and resources sometimes into the hands of few. By insisting on assimilation and subordination, such structures ignore the universal need of diversification, justice and security.

In recent years, under the current hyper market and state global domination, concerns of participation, securitisation and ethnic anxieties targeted transnational communities such as migrants and diaspora groups. Meanwhile transnational companies—managed by the so-called transnational class—remain immune from such pressures. Other marginalised transnational communities continuously struggle in search of recognition to overcome injustices and insecurity. Such groups long for a balance between socio-economic equality and identity. This is also why transnational communities have been attempting to balance economic justice and security with identity security. The challenge is that the prevailing socio-economic dominance requires identity subordination.

If the combination of ego-centrism that eventually generates intense *assabiya* sustains ignorance, subordination and aggression against others by militaristic and power-centric political communities with expansive market economy, then the role of cohesive and progressive societies will be undermined. The alternative is to transnationally and globally pursue a common society where people seek and foster the best of societies within and beyond state-society dualism or earth and world. Recognising that the centre no longer holds, Fred Dallmayr proposes a model that could help us concentrate on larger principles:

..things are falling apart in our time. This applies to the rupture of family relations, the gulf between the rich and the poor, and the rift between nation states and between the global ‘West’ and the ‘rest’. All these forms of division are pregnant with the possibility of violence and destruction... uniting people from different backgrounds, is striving to create the world as a large family, in accordance with the classical Indian motto ‘vasaudheva kutumbakam’ (let the world become a family). (Dallmayr 2017)

So far this is the best way to overcome *assabiya* and tribalism, and this is what transnational communities have been trying to do. This will not just reduce *assabiya* among people across diverse societies but also *assabiya* against the nature

which is interdependent with human *assabiya*. For instance wars and famines bring insecurity and injustices and thereby complicate human-nature relations and behaviour.

## The Tree of Life: The Source of Harmony/Disharmony

Before Al-Gore, James Lovelock (and other bestselling environmental books as well as popular Hollywood movies such as “Whale Rider” [2001] and “The Day After Tomorrow” [2004]) promoted the urgency for global environmental consciousness. A Somali film director—Abdulkadir Ahmed Said, who currently teaches cinematography in Africa and the Caribbean, directed a film that won the prize for a best short film in numerous film festivals including Torino International Film Festival in 1988. The film lasts just about twenty-three minutes and portrays, without speech, the complexity and the relationship between human and nature. The film’s title is “Geedka Noloshu” – the Tree of Life<sup>2</sup>. It is about twenty-three minutes length with one main protagonist, a man cutting a tree. The film starts with the introduction of harmonious world of human and natural surroundings. As soon as the man begins to cut the tree the collective environment transforms (both human and nature) respond shockingly and attentively. By the time the man finishes his work to take the big tree down, the world changes from a harmony to a hell. Not just for the environment and the trees but also life in general. Mass migration among animals and humans with tremendous insecurity, desperation and helplessness follows.

Obviously in search of justice and well-being for himself and his family the man did not take into consideration of the justice and well-being of the environment and the surrounding nature. The price is collective loss for ego-centric action. The film maker was obviously concerned with environmental degradation and the consequences that might emerge from such reckless utilisation of the nature. But on the other he was using the tree as a metaphor for a particular nation – or for that matter the wider nation of humanity. Unless we consider this larger human tree as collective and beyond individual and group possession, it will be difficult to maintain justice and security.

Actually the film was predicting the demise of not just a tree but also a nation. The collapse of the tree was followed by the collapse of a nation and state. Such conditions inaugurated immense injustice, insecurity. Mass migration of both humans and non-humans becomes routine. In human terms millions were displaced both internally and externally. Similarly traditionally diversified eco and animal systems disappeared. Consequently people starve and face Hobbesian circumstances.

In a recent New York Times article Nurradin Farah, the internationally renowned Somali-born author, refers the comments by internally displaced people (IDPs) from normally agrarian rich landscape in the Horn of Africa, who are now disposed and displaced in the capital city Mogadishu. A farmer who lost his livestock and farm responds to the tragic famine story that Nurrudin refers to as “an apocryphal tale”: “A starving goat, blind from hunger, mistook a baby wrapped in a green cloth for grass and bit off a mouthful of emaciated flesh from the baby’s upper arm. The baby’s anguished cry brought the mother to her knees and she wept in prayer”. The farmer who lost everything except some members of his family responded, “I am not surprised terrible famines change the nature of both human and animal behaviour” (Farah *New York Times*, August 12, 2017).<sup>3</sup>

If the concept of harmony is an overlapping concept that brings new layers of either harmony or disharmony into complex processes of human relations, the Horn of Africa is a good example where injustices and insecurity in terms of famines overlap and generate successive exclusions that evolve from a particular action of individuals and groups and then become global. We can thereby talk about injustices and insecurity that start from one source—the falling of a tree or a nation or a country— which originally also began form injustice and insecurity—but eventually generate transnational and global injustices.

One way of understanding such development is to know the diverse injustices that might occur and interconnect. Obviously original disharmonies generate mass migration and displacement but people live not just by past and history but also for the future. From their part, transnational communities pursue transnational and sometimes global mechanisms to overcome and reverse disharmony by extending their horizons in the quest for justice and security.

The limited research linking harmony to transnationalism mainly focuses on international and transnational bargaining of states and governments for restricted political and economic gains for their countries (Müller 2004); contested struggles of meaning and interests by competing political and economic groups both at national and transnational levels (Cheung 1999); the conflict between domestic and transnational harmony (Rumford 2003). So far few studies discuss harmony and transnational communities in examining the challenges of human rights in relation to such communities (Taran 2001); navigating transnational cultural complexities (Noble 2011); vibrant cities with transnational ethnic characteristics (Timberlake *et al.* 2014). Most studies, however, relate the activities of transnational communities to the overall integration processes in the nation-state (van Hear and Sørensen 2002). Few have so far questioned such formalistic and vertical trend (Gasper and Thanh-Dam 2010; Dallmayr and Rosales 2001; Vertovec 2016).

This essay argues for the existence of diverse transnationalisms that all seek to combine national and transnational harmony while at the same time preventing injustices and insecurity.

## Rediscovering Harmony (*Kalgacal*) from the Bottom

Transnational communities link harmony with care and carefulness for each other and for others. Harmony takes time and needs space to foster. In return losing it takes lesser time, while recovering it might take generations. Harmony is *kalgacal* (willingness to love). This is an activity humans practice or should practice in multiple levels. It starts from the family—a harmonious relationship between mother and child—and between parents and children within the family. It is this love relationship that expands to the society and to other people. If there is no basic harmony the society can and will not function. For instance a country like Denmark, there is a lot of harmony that starts from the family and builds up to the society. This is not the case in Somalia and in the Somali Society where harmony because of the war and displacement is destroyed. If the people in conflict want to rediscover lost harmony they will have to start from the individual and family relationship and they will have to promote *kalgacal* from the bottom (Interviews August 2017).

For some respondents harmony is not an individual enterprise but a process starting from the family towards the society. From this perspective, for a society to be harmonious with each other internally and with other societies, then people should first ensure the justice and dignity of families, women and children. According to a respondent, *kalgacal* is a process that the Danish society, with its expanded welfare state, takes seriously in securing benefits and inclusion for its citizens. This is not the case for a civil war-torn societies like Somalia and Syria where people suffer due to oppression, exploitation and displacement. Excessive subordination deteriorates justice, security and eventually unleashes mass migration and exodus to other countries and societies that relatively live each other harmoniously.

While some respondents focus on individual family approach, others consider the challenge of harmony as a collective undertaking. The main reasons why war-torn societies suffer from disharmony include that people diverting from “the right bath” of focusing justice by not transgressing. The process of recovering societal harmony is not easy as people and society have fallen from a “Shalwad”, a cliff: In war-torn societies with recurring conflicts both the people and society have fallen from “Shalwad”, the mountain cliff. It is difficult to recover the lost form and structure. People and society in harmony rest on *isxaqdhawr* (respecting each other’s rights). If people violate these basic rights among them, in a situation where



the strong oppresses the weak, then harmony will neither be recovered nor properly established (Interviews August 2017).

For some, Harmony is also maintaining stability both among groups and society in general. They suggest it is the extremes we should avoid in stressing stability and balance: Harmony means stability and balance. People should pursue a balance regardless of what they are doing. They should avoid extremism for example. They should also have stable relationships that do not shift and change all the time (Hassan, Interviews-August 2017).

## **Transnational Communities: Seeking Harmony, Security and Justice**

Transnational communities were in the past categorised as dispersed communities (Tölölyan 1996), struggling with assimilation in host societies (Brubaker 2001); preoccupied with the nostalgic of return (Cohen 1997); long distance nationalists (Anderson 1998) as nationalist movements (Sheffer 2003). This paper suggests that instead of the static diaspora conception, the transnational community conception is more suitable to a complex and continuously changing communities in terms of locations, activities and networks (Portes 1996; Vertovec 1999; Al-Ali and Koser 2003; Levitt and Schiller 2004). Recent literature sees such communities as transnational families (Baldassar and Merla 2013); as transnational aid workers (Horst 2013); as transnational activists (Hammond 2013). The conception of transnational communities in this paper refers to evolving diaspora communities positioning themselves in between nations, states and societies for the purpose of accessing opportunities.

The paper proposes two main conceptions of transnationalism. Firstly, transnationalism in which communities are distinctive social groups that belong to the dynamics of nation-state systems. Secondly, a transnationalism in which communities horizontally diversify the processes of obtaining citizenship, precluding exclusion, developing their original homeland, promoting justice and forming novel and complex transnational connections.

The second transnationalism contradicts the more institutionalised-oriented transnationalism in which economic and political transactions cross boundaries. This type of transnationalism prevailed for centuries (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Unlike such top-down trans-nationalisms, community transnationalism often involves communities with common, real or imagined, history of migration and belonging as well as symbolic and practical relationships and interactions with a host and homeland societies and beyond (Sheffer 2003). Such communities

dialectically engage in dual or multiple processes of acquiring and maintaining a proper citizenship on one hand, while on the other preventing and overcoming exclusion.

This paper, therefore, proposes that transnational activities and connections by transnational communities represent a new form of socio-political transformation. Transnational communities are often addressed within the nation-state frame (Bloemraad *et al.* 2008; Joppke and Morawska 2014) and also within the marked boundry (Conway and Cohen 1998; Morgan 2001). So far few studies dealt with transnational communities beyond the nation-state frame, discussing methodological approaches (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002); the significance of religion (Manadville 2003); as transnational social movement involved in transnational space formation (Sökefeld 2006). This paper seeks to fill the void in discussing transnational communities from the sociological and literary perspectives. As studying transnational communities remain inter-disciplinary with the application of multiple methods and approaches (Tölölyan 2007), this paper departs from qualitative interviews and observations conducted in multiple locations (Africa, Asia and Europe). The focus rests on the activities of the community that we try to understand and interpret critically while discussing the inconsistencies in terms of what Werbner refers to “The Materiality of Diaspora – Between Aesthetic and ‘Real’ Politics” (Werbner 2000).

## Emerging Transnationalisms

When a delicate and overcrowded makeshift boat—massed with frightened youngsters from the Horn and the wider African continent—tragically capsise in the Mediterranean Sea, the public becomes alarmed and demands border closures and prevention of the youth from leaving their home countries (Follis 2015). The immediate concern herewith rests on conventional ideas of migration as movement from one country to another or from one region to another with possibilities of returning if opportunities arise. At destination countries, people call for migrant/refugee integration and assimilation.

However for transnational communities, such as migrants and diaspora, integration or assimilation is not an end in itself. People remain transnational and in constant move whether at the local, national or international levels. Consequently, communities continue to transnationally form images of what they left as well as the countries they migrate to. From the Horn of Africa, some of the first transnationals migrated to near abroad (East and central Africa, Asia and the Arabian Peninsula) due to empire prioritisations and trade enterprises. Later due to diverse society-state transformations in the region as well as global ideological

changes, second wave of transnationals moved to the west including Europe and America. Currently, a third wave of transnationals pursues transnational formations in emerging powers such as China, India and South Africa.

Unlike other ethnic or non-ethnic transnational formations, community transnationalism lacks clear cut reference to a nation-state. Instead communities prefer linking to ancestral regions and provinces. The geography of the community therefore reflects not nation-states and regions but city and province connections. Accordingly, Mogadishu becomes transnationally linked not to other world capitals but to Dixon (Kusow and Bjork 2007) and in recent years to Minnesota.

Transnational formations occur in the world simultaneously. Communities not just form and contribute to the societies they migrate to, but also to the societies they migrated from. This includes the transfer of transnational ideas, politics, language, consumerism and culture, in situations where national belonging becomes more complex and controversial. With new forms of complex transnational formations, new types of transnationalisms in seeking justice and development, transnational citizenship, transnational education and entrepreneurship emerge.

## **From Nation-State Transnationalism Towards Community Transnationalism**

### **State Transnationalism (The Vertical Conception)**

In conceptualising the state through “Westphalian” terms Max Weber portrayed the state as a ‘political community’ (Weber 2013:160). Such political construction-based on organisational hierarchy and administrative system was institutionalised in Europe and later—through colonisation and globalisation—expanded as the norm for nation- and state-building processes in most parts of the world (Renan 1996; Anderson 2006). Despite this formal expansion even powerful states fail to exercise complete territorial control (Risse 2013:3-5). In addition corporate transnationalism eclipses states due to multiple transnational “complex interdependencies” (Koehane and Nye 2000). For Africa, people still contest or remain hesitant to embrace Westphalian state conception (Laitin and Samatar 1987:88-93). Some nations are often assumed homogeneous and with traditional form of democracy (Lewis 1999:xi). A thesis confronted with heterogeneous social, economic and linguistic evidences (Ahmed 1995:xi; Kusow 2004).

Building on Habermas’ conception of the “public sphere” (1989, 2009) in which the nation-state is constructed through public interaction and discourse, recent research (Silva *et al.* 2009; Castells 2013; Ragilme and Salvador 2016; Rundell 2016) characterises the nation-state as a continuing process of reflection,

reinvention and recreation undertaken by diverse societies. Under such processes, people continuously form and shape whatever type of nation they imagine and want to be a part of.

In expanding Habermas' nation-state centric public sphere Nancy Fraser argues for a non-nation-state centric transnational public spheres<sup>4</sup>. Such transnational approach stresses new forms of transnational engagement creating transnational public spaces (Williams and Warren 2014). Departing from this theoretical position, this paper proclaims the nation-state frame been insufficient to explaining the complexity of transnational connections, particularly not transnational formations involving ethnic communities. To better understand the dynamics of such type of transnational connections we mainly rely on the conception of community transnationalism.

### Community Transnationalism (The Horizontal Conception)

In accordance with Benedict Anderson's conceptualisation of nations as "imagined communities" (Anderson 2004) as well as Max Weber's earlier idea of national transformation from for instance "peasants into Frenchmen" – Hannerz suggests that people have capabilities to move beyond the dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft* vs *Gesellschaft* towards a "Global Gesellschaft" of cosmopolitan identity (Hannerz 1996:100-111). This is connected to the emergence of "transnational commons" or "shared resources" linking social and political structures to economic, environmental and human development domains (*ibid.*). Moreover borrowing on Kroeber's idea of *ecumene* consisting of "an interwoven set of happenings and products" Hannerz argues that organisations, meanings and actions hang together (*ibid.*:7). This web of connections, he argues, promotes cultural formations across boundaries. Processes that occur within four levels of societal contexts: *everyday life, asymmetrical forms of the state, the market and purposeful change*. Although stressing the crucial link between the local to the global, Hannerz identifies no specific transnational societal structures that cross national boundaries (Durrenberger 2001).

Furthermore, Hannerz distinguishes "transnational connections" from "globalised" or "internationalised" connections. For him the term "globalisation" appears too broad for cross border activities uncontainable within nation-state context. Instead, he suggests, the term "transnational", referring to current global connections in "scale and distribution" taking us beyond international entities such as "nations, states and corporates", and in highlighting the role of "individuals, groups, movements and business enterprises" (*ibid.*:6). More significantly, the term "connections" entails what Hannerz sees as "looking at the world in terms of interactions, relationships and networks" (*ibid.*:8).

So far, few studies focusing on transnational “network” and “Simultaneity” sought to concretise transnational connections beyond cultural frames. These include research on diverse networks transnational communities often create: “villages” (Levitt 2001), “transnational circuits” (Bissell 2012); highlighting the simultaneity of transnational community networks due to advanced technology and communication that linking multiple spaces (Levitt and Schiller 2004; Vertovec 2001; Mazzucato, Van Dijk Horst and De Vries 2004).

By presenting concrete empirical cases on how such connections evolve and form across boundaries, this paper seeks beyond the vertical state-oriented transnationalism in stressing horizontal community-centred transnationalism with non-state centric varieties of community-based transnational connections. Based on extensive research among transnational communities in Africa, Asia and Europe this paper suggests varieties of transnational communities’ of overcoming insecurity and injustice. The activities of the transnational community is not just a means to cultural or nation-state structural ends but also dynamic processes of having own ends in the pursuing of citizenship, justice and development and the formation of novel transnational connections.

## **The Pursuit of Complex Citizenship**

Transnational communities often combine the deployment of ethnic identity and with the quest of citizenship rights in transnational spaces (Soysal 2000). For instance, people cherish holding citizenship privileges such as passports but refrain from cultural identification with the citizenship providing country. However, a number of research works have shown the existence of generational difference as younger generations appear more host country-oriented and has stronger citizenship attitudes towards the host country compared to the country of origin (Hussain and Bagguley 2005). In general though, communities instrumentalise citizenship rights for practical reasons such as mobility and accessibility.

Scholars refer this phenomenon as an external citizenship (Bauböck 2009). For the communities the external citizenship also reflects the diversification of belonging (Faist 2000). Through, for instance, the strategic use of citizenship and migration, people often plan mobility, return, optimising financial as well as social network opportunities in many countries (Waters 2003). Due to the possibility of claiming citizenship without compromising original identity, transnational communities disrupt the presumed link between citizenship, state and nation. Despite this fact, citizenship procedures remain nation-state domain, while research on how transnational communities instrumentalise citizenship opportunities remains marginal (Nagel and Staeheli 2004).

For instance, Somali transnational communities are probably unique in this regard. This is a community that for decades so far operated transnationally without direct reference to a cohesive nation and functioning nation-state. This position makes them both vulnerable as there is not a nation-state to lean to in crises periods. But at the same time, this provides the community essential flexibilities to combine and experiment. This essay, therefore, sees the activities and the living experiences as well as pursuing of well-being by the communities as the main objective, and not the static identification with general societal structures.

Similarly, transnational citizenship—though creating beneficial opportunities—mostly inaugurate informal transnational organisation and periodically also sustain hierarchy in the community. While, for instance, transnational communities, with western citizenship lead a transnational life occasionally accessing different resources and capabilities (Al-Sharmani 2010), they occasionally also confront legal and citizenship challenges as well as suffering from labour market exclusion as inaccessibility to social and citizenship rights (Fangen 2007). After committing some offences in host countries, some of them have been deported to volatile regions and countries where they confronted further exploitation (Peutz 2010).

Although communities might disperse due to civil wars and dispersal—remain scattered around the world—they still have some form of national identity in common and this is, according to some respondents, what the community should preserve. Communities need to overcome internal unnecessary division (constant debates on language difference and food consumption, etc.). They need to organise where they are. Actually transnational communities can lead and protect own identity at the global level (Interviews Oct 2010).

Moreover, transnational communities are not just the communities abroad living in host countries. An increasing number of transnational community returnees challenge the often prevailing categorisation of *Dal Joog* people living in the country and *Dibad Joog* people residing in the diaspora. Many have returned to their homelands, particularly to more peaceful regions (Lindley 2010:81). Many others also participate in the governance of the country both at regional and national levels (Hammond 2013). Here transnational communities contribute to the development of their country as they return not only with economic capital but also with social and educational competencies acquired during residence in more developed host countries. According to Baubock and Faist, globalisation and increased trans-nationalisation provide communities opportunities not to assimilate into their host societies (Baubock and Faist 2010:300-301). This happens because in certain states, multiculturalism and dual and trans-national citizenships accommodate ethnic communities' multiple priorities and connections (Cohen 1996). It is not only communities, but also countries that also strategically

exploit transnational prospects. Certain nation-states encourage their transnational communities to obtain foreign citizenships with the aim of gaining extraterritorial power and enhancing transnational political capacity through, for instance, the communities' economic remittance (Sheffer 2003:123).

## **The Pursuit of Complex Justice and Development**

### **Confronting the Injustices of Poverty and Insecurity**

Amartya Sen connects the prevalence of injustice with poverty, though it should be noted that he does not directly advocate for the universal, idealistic eradication of injustice and poverty. Instead, Sen reiterates the need for concrete steps to reduce poverty and insecurity with the aim of increasing human dignity and coexistence. Such concrete steps, he argues, can address human needs and capabilities in the short term while helping overcome structural social injustice in the longer term. We can, for instance, start with feeding, rescuing, caring for, vaccinating, and educating people before undertaking any other social endeavours. Here, the focus rests on the Realisation of justice in real-life situations, and the message is that it is best to implement justice practically and gradually instead of rhetorically engaging in imaginary or "revolutionary justice discourses" (Sen 2000). For Sen, distributing wealth from richer to less privileged constituents of the society is not enough. There is also the moral responsibility of giving people capabilities and opportunities so that they become engaged citizens who can participate in and contribute to social activities (Sen 2011). Clearly, poverty is not just a matter of suffering from economic deprivation; food scarcity and hunger also undermine the independence, integrity, and dignity of the afflicted people. Similarly, the combination of insecurity and poverty compromises people's overall ability to actively participate in society (Nussbaum 2011).

Thus, the human welfare-centric conceptualisation of justice contradicts the often proclaimed state-centred Weberian approach of linking justice with the consolidation of state apparatuses and the monopolisation of violence (Weber cited in Poulantzas 2000:80) which often leads to patrimonialism or personal rule that enriches relatives and political cronies while impoverishing the greater part of the society (Fukuyama 2014:285-89).

The Somali case, more than others, illustrates the direct link between extreme poverty and insecurity. The Horn of Africa nation is one of the world's poorest and most insecure countries. While religious and cultural differences had, until recently, less significance, the mismanagement of the political economy for decades remained the main cause for excessive violence and impoverishment. As a result of poor leadership and gross mismanagement by the dominant political system,



which applied no focus to fostering human capabilities, people eventually failed to perform, participate, or contribute positively to society.

In contrast, social movements at the grassroots and civil society-level represent a critical platform from which to ensure proper social justice (Smith 2001). Such associations not only articulate broad social justice norms but also help consolidate democracy and transparency by defending ordinary people from dictatorships. In accordance with this trend, transnational communities strive to ensure that people attain social respect while pressuring states to avoid violations of basic human freedoms. Their main goal is the appropriation of state order with an expanded social dimension. If states comply with such demands, justice parameters shift beyond enforcing laws and security procedures and begin to prioritise rudimentary welfare for a larger body of people.

### Transnational Community Efforts

The global diaspora, for example, has been involved through its efforts at remitting, investing, and empowering<sup>5</sup>. The diaspora also plays a central role in restructuring and reconstituting the national and state identity. While often targeting grassroots needs, some emerging transnational community organisations support and advocate for justice, poverty alleviation, education and female empowerment<sup>6</sup>. Because members of the diaspora originally fled from insecurity, injustice, and poverty, their initiatives take a leading role in the reconstitution of a peaceful society. Migration is an integrated part of human life. We migrate to survive and maintain a dignified life. People fled from *fitnah* (widespread intolerance and violence), poverty, exclusion, and injustice.

While communities like the Somalis have been migrating for more than a century in search of livelihoods overseas, in recent years, the seemingly endless civil strife and uncertainty over the fear of the future have driven many young people, despite the risk of drowning at sea, to search for tolerable and decent life opportunities in wealthier parts of the world (Ciabarra 2004). Significant portions of the diaspora comprise refugees and their dependents that fled their homeland following persecution and economic deterioration under military rule. Many others joined after the collapse of the regime, fleeing from the extreme civil war that generated perpetual poverty and insecurity.

Therefore, the Somali diaspora continues to be involved in and to contribute to homeland developments. Most feel guilty and express a willingness to share the privileges acquired in host countries with their distressed relatives back home. Others are involved in the movement for social status and economic reasons. The diaspora contribution is not restricted to economic and humanitarian matters but also involves political mobilisation initiatives and the acquisition of sociocultural capital.

As remittances are often deducted from diaspora members' limited incomes, their continuation might negatively impact their donor's well-being in the host country; so established transnational communities aim at contributions beyond remittances. Hence, members consider replacing monthly monetary remittances with developmental assistance.

In addition, transnational communities are among the first to respond to humanitarian needs in the homeland (Nicholas 2012). As seen, for example, in the famine of 2011-12, transnational communities donated to famine-hit regions. In the study *Cash and Compassion: The Role of the Diaspora in Relief, Development and Peace-building* contribute to about 50 per cent of investment in Somalia – significantly impacting not just the economy but the overall well-being of the society (Hammond *et al.* 2011). Furthermore, in relation to community empowerment and in partnership with NGOs, privately-owned educational institutions in major cities provide classes for formal judicial education. One well-known NGO, the Netherlands-based Oxfam Novib, supports local human rights-focused NGOs in documenting human rights abuses. The organisation offers countrywide training on investigation, report writing, lobbying, and the creation of archives. Also, a local NGO called Haqsoor has been established to form and monitor community policing initiatives through which local elders will have a formalised relationship with public authorities. In another context, resource groups established civic institutions such as Madani in Hawatako, a community-driven initiative based on *xeer*, in which local residents “committed themselves to joint neighbourhood defence, raised local money and hired an independent militia to protect citizens.” (Le Sage 2005). Since the state lacks the capacity to collect taxes and deliver services, transnational communities currently mobilise funds such as the “Fursad Fund” to provide opportunities for the youth, the unemployed, and the poor (Winsor 2016). Others call for action to raise funds to subsidise wages for the National Army, which often does not get paid for months due to corruption. Leaders of the African Union Mission in Somalia also recognise transnational communities' potential capabilities as “the champions of change and growth the country needs”.<sup>7</sup> It will, however be difficult to bring the communities' efforts to fruition without comprehensive national reconciliation and the subsequent formation of national state institutions.

## The Formation of Transnational South-South Connections and Harmony

Since countries like China and India become economically and politically assertive, new forms of state and society transnationalism emerged (Amar 2012; Gray and

Barry 2016). Such structural transformation at the state level gives way to social transformation. In the *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault describes a process where individuals and groups aim at moving beyond state structures. This is a situation in which “The political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try and liberate the individual from the State and its institutions but to liberate us both from the State and the type of individualisation linked to the State. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity (Foucault 2005:54). For Bourdieu (1986, 1990) it is not easy to overcome institutionalised bureaucratic systems but individuals and social groups can strive at achieving favourable institutional positions in accumulating diverse forms of capital in multiple social fields. Such pursuit of capital diversification takes place in relation to what Fergusson refers to transnational typographies of power simultaneously occurring at the local (community, civil society), national (state, society) and transnational levels (transnational institutions and organisations) (Ferguson 2006:90-94).

There are emerging transnational Chinese spaces in Africa as well as African spaces in China. The willingness of individuals and groups to moving beyond state structures in accessing and accumulating resources generated such transnational space formations. According to Howard French (2014) in recent years increasing number of Chinese created transnational spaces in Africa mainly to gain economic opportunities. French estimates there are at least two million Chinese in Africa are involved in trade and economic development. Most are in Africa to stay as Africa provides better social and economic opportunities.

On the African transnational community site, research conclusions by Bodomo (2012) shows that Africans got economic and educational opportunities in China. Africans in China are traders, students, professionals, teachers, professors, officials, tourists and temporary business travellers. Bodomo argues that the African presence in China will determine the future relationship between China as emerging global power and Africa.

Additional research confirms increasing ‘grassroots transnationalism’ between emerging powers such as China and other developing countries. Important factors that sustain this trend include China’s developmental seriousness and constructiveness towards Africa (Naidu 2007) as well as its developmental generosity in giving aid to Africa (Gregory and Fahimul 2012). In general therefore Africans consider China trustworthy and respectful role model for the developing world (Sautman and Hairong 2014).

This essay confirms a largely positive perception towards emerging powers like China. For the community the South-South link through China transformed African image. Community members, for instance, argue that before China’s rise, ordinary people’s ideas and opinions were not taken seriously. In certain cases,

people were considered ignorant, poor and not been able to pursue agency and imagine progress. Ordinary people can now access knowledge and initiate relevant projects on their own. In the past, even if a country wanted to develop industry, the process often took generations, but now both at project as well as industrial level projects and ideas are co-developed transnationally and instantly.

The willingness to present and co-develop ideas rests on trust between societies where a legacy of direct colonialism does not mediate relationships. People do not normally consider China as an oppressor and coloniser. By contrast, they see China as a nation of people who historically sacrificed and managed to develop from being poor to now being among the wealthiest.

Colonisation often creates barriers for the majority of the people. In certain contexts, it was just the elite who had access to opportunities to acquire knowledge. Now, with technological progress and its spread to new emerging powers, ordinary people have the opportunity to overcome both the expense and accessibility obstacles they use to confront. Although the south-south connection and transnational communities' engagement in China appear horizontal and more accommodating, it is the business and the student classes that dominate the connection. These are privileged transnational middle class that escaped poverty and marginalisation traps both in the West and in the Horn of Africa.

### **Challenges to Balance Material and Human Resources**

Development represents complex multidimensional processes involving both human agency and the accumulation of material wealth and resources. Human potential, freedom and dignity ensure development in the long term. China brings a lot of material goods. But China concentrates on development and unlike western countries focuses less on human rights and democracy debates.

Organisationally, transnational communities in China could be divided into two main groups. The first is a transnational entrepreneurship and trade-involved group. These entrepreneurs link China with Africa (Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria Congo and Angola and many others). From their Chinese networks they get accommodation (residence and business environment) and many of them have transnational citizenships. One of their major tasks is to compete with established transnational Indians and Chinese companies and communities in the African market. The second group is students, many of them with transnational citizenships, pursuing transnational education in China. Many of them study at Chinese universities (Medicine, Engineering, Business and IT). They are attracted to reasonable fees and scholarships (Haugen 2013). After finishing their education many get work opportunities in China though at the beginning they may confront language and cultural challenges.

Compared to the West and to the Middle East the presence of transnational communities is rather limited but increasingly influential. With increasing educational, economic and developmental exchanges the south-south transnational connection have the potential to compete and challenge the traditional south-north relations.

## **Conclusion**

This essay presented and discussed the pattern of activities in which transnational communities engage in pursuing transnational citizenship in multiple locations as well as engaging transnational justice and development in the homeland and beyond. Communities aim at accessing opportunities provided by emerging global powers such as China, the communities also contribute to the emerging south-south connections. The activities of the transnational community reflect an agency as well as a process of adjustment into macro-structures if the community finds crucial for its well-being. It is neither dialectical nor dualist processes of engagement but for some a quest for stability in between roots, routes and beyond (Giri 2017).

The paper suggests that the activities of transnational communities have implications for nation-state-centric theorisation on the organisation and interaction of societies. Such approaches present social and political connections in dualistic terms that presumably end history in, for instance, dividing societies into winners and losers (Fukuyama 2006), in perpetual civilisational conflict between different antagonistic nations and communities (Huntington 1997) or a process in which societies descend to “the time of the tribes” in which people abandon the virtue collectivism and isolating individualism (Maffesoli 1995). Alternatively in more optimistic tone, we should probably look “Roots and routes are perennial aspects of human condition but we do not always look at them in dynamic interaction. We usually look at ethnicity as linked to our roots but we do not relate to routes of various kinds in histories and societies” (Giri 2017).

In line with Giri’s proposition transnational communities demonstrate transnational capabilities to overcome dualism in constructing living realities—departing from what Heidegger referred to as “being and time”—in pursuing citizenship, justice and the development of novel connections. Apart from the ingrained human insistence on dignified meaningful life, this implies the multiplicity of understanding, interpreting and participating in both local and world affairs.

## Endnotes

1. <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/node/647> (accessed, August 2017)
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcJzCDvutwk-> the youtube short film from 1987
3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/12/opinion/sunday/this-is-what-hunger-looks-like-again.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=opinion-c-col-right-region&region=opinion-c-col-right-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-right-region>, accessed 18-08-2017.
4. It is common to speak of 'transnational public spheres' 'diasporic public spheres' 'Islamic public spheres' and even emerging 'global public sphere'. And such talk has a clear point. A growing body of media studies literature is documenting the existence of discursive arenas that overflow the bounds of both nations and states. Numerous scholars in cultural studies are ingeniously mapping the contours of such arenas and the flows of images and signs through them. The idea of 'transnational public sphere' is intuitively plausible, then, and seems to have purchase on social reality (Fraser in Benhabib *et al.* 2007:45)
5. "It is – difficult to differentiate a diaspora from the economic and political migration of a people stemming from a socially segmented society and comprising notable differences of identity. The recent character of migration (since 1957) and the segmented type of society constitute obstacles to the recognition of a real diaspora. To take better account of these phenomena, researchers such as Vertovec (1999) and Kastoryano (2000) have suggested the concept of transnational community." Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods, ed. Rainer Baubock and Thomas Faist (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010).
6. See, for example, <http://www.dhaf.org/>; <http://www.amoudfoundation.com/>.
7. See African Union Mission in Somalia, at <http://amisom-au.org/2015/03/amisom-head-engages-with-eu-partners-and-somali-diaspora/> (March 2015).

## References

- Al-Ali, N. and Khalid Koser. 2003. *New Approaches to Migration?: Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*. Routledge.
- Al-Sharmani, M. 2010. "Transnational Family Networks in the Somali Diaspora in Egypt: Women's Roles and Differentiated Experiences." *Gender, Place and Culture*, 17(4):499-518.
- Amar, P. 2012. "Global South to the Rescue: Emerging Humanitarian Superpowers and Globalizing Rescue Industries." *Globalisations*, 9(1):1-13.
- Anderson, B. 1998. "Long-distance nationalism", in Benedict Anderson (ed.), *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, pp. 58-74. London: Verso.

- Anderson, B. 2004. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Baali, F. 1988. *Society, State, and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*. Suny Press.
- Baldassar, L. and M. Laura. 2013. *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life*. Routledge.
- Bauböck, R. 2009. "The Rights and Duties of External Citizenship." *Citizenship Studies*, 13(5):475-499.
- Bauböck, R. and F. Thomas (eds). 2010. *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Beck, U., G. Anthony and L. Scott. 1994. *Reflexive Modernisation: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Stanford University Press.
- Bissell, W. 2012. "When the Film Festival Comes to (Down) Town: Transnational Circuits, Tourism, and the Urban Economy of Images", Marina Peterson and Gary McDonogh (eds), *Global Downtowns*, pp. 160-185. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bloemraad, I., A. Kortweg and G. Yurdakul. 2008. "Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilation, and Challenges to the Nation-State." *Annual Review of Sociology*, (34):153-179.
- Bodomo, A. 2012. *Africans in China: A Sociocultural Study and Its Implications on Africa-China Relations*. Cambria Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1986. "The Forms of Capital", in J.G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, pp. 241-258. New York: Greenwood Press.
- . 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brubaker, R. 2001. "The Return of Assimilation? Changing Perspectives on Immigration and Its Sequels in France, Germany, and the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24(4):531-548.
- Castells, M. 2013. *Communication Power*. Oxford: OUP.
- Cheung, S. 1999. "The meanings of a heritage trail in Hong Kong." *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(3):570-588.
- Ciabarri, L. 2014. "Dynamics and Representations of Migration Corridors: The Rise and Fall of the Libya-Lampedusa Route and Forms of Mobility from the Horn of Africa (2000-2009)." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 13(2):246-262.
- Clammer, J. 2017. "Performing Ethnicity: Beyond Constructivism to Social Creativity." *Social Alternatives*, 36(1):30.
- Cohen, R. 1996. "Diasporas and the Nation-State: From Victims to Challengers." *International Affairs*, 72(3):507-520.
- Conway, D. and C. Jeffrey. 1998. "Consequences of Migration and Remittances for Mexican Transnational Communities." *Economic Geography*, 74(1):26-44.
- Dallmayr, F. 2017. "Earth and World-Roots and Routes." *Social Alternatives*, 36(1):11.
- Dallmayr, F. and R. José María. 2001. *Beyond Nationalism?: Sovereignty and Citizenship*. Lexington Books.



- Durrenberger, P. 2001. "Anthropology and Globalisation." *American Anthropologist*, 103(2):531-535.
- Faist, T. 2000. *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Oxford University Press.
- Fangen, K. 2007. "Citizenship among Young Adult Somalis in Norway." *Young*, 15(4):413-434.
- Ferguson, J. 2006. *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Duke University Press.
- Follis, K. 2015. "Responsibility, Emergency, Blame: Reporting on Migrant Deaths on the Mediterranean in the Council of Europe." *Journal of Human Rights*, 14(1):41-62.
- Foucault, M. 2005. *Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France, 1981-82*. New York: Belgrave.
- Francis F. 2014. *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalisation of Democracy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- French, H. 2014. *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants are Building a New Empire in Africa*. Vintage.
- Fukuyama, F. 2006. *The End of History and the Last Man*. Simon and Schuster.
- Gasper, D. and T. Thanh-Dam. 2010. "Movements of the 'We': International and Transnational Migration and the Capabilities Approach." *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 11(2):339-357.
- Giri A. 2017. "Cross-Fertilising Roots and Routes: Ethnicity, Socio-Cultural Regeneration and Planetary Realisations." *Social Alternatives*, 36(1):5.
- Gray, K. and K.G. Barry. 2016. "South-South Cooperation and the Rise of the Global South." *Third World Quarterly*, 37(4):557-574.
- Gregory, C. and Q. Fahimul. 2012. "Introduction: Rising States, Rising Donors and the Global Aid Regime." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 25(4):493-506.
- Hammond, L. 2013a. "Somali Transnational Activism and Integration in the UK: Mutually Supporting Strategies." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(6):1001-1017.
- . 2013b. "Somalia Rising: Things Are Starting To Change for the World's Longest Failed State." *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 7(1):183-193.
- Hammond, L. et al. 2011. "Cash and Compassion: The Somali Diaspora's Role in Relief." *Development and Peacebuilding*. UNDP.
- Haugen, H. 2013. "China's Recruitment of African University Students: Policy Efficacy and Unintended Outcomes." *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 11(3):315-334.
- Horst, C. 2013. "The Depoliticisation of Diasporas from the Horn of Africa: From Refugees to Transnational Aid Workers." *African Studies*, 72(2):228-245.
- Huntington, S.P. 1997. *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*. Penguin Books India.
- Hussain, Y. and B. Paul. 2005. "Citizenship, Ethnicity and Identity: British Pakistanis after the 2001 Riots." *Sociology*, 39(3):407-425.

- Inglehart, R. 1997. *Modernisation and Postmodernisation: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton University Press.
- Joppke, C. and M. Ewa. 2014. "Integrating Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States: Policies and Practices", in Christian Joppke and Ewa T. Morawska (eds), *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States*, pp.1-36. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Kant, I. 1957 [1795]. *Perpetual Peace*. New York: The Liberal Arts Press.
- Kusow, A. and B. Stephanie (eds). 2007. *From Mogadishu to Dixon: The Somali Diaspora in a Global Context*. Red Sea Press.
- Le Sage, A. 2005. "Stateless Justice in Somalia: Formal and Informal Rule of Law Initiatives." July 2005 Report Geneva: Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Available at [www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx\\_news/665StatelessJusticsinSomalia.pdf](http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/665StatelessJusticsinSomalia.pdf)
- Levitt, P. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Levitt, P. and N.G. Schiller. 2004. "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society." *International Migration Review*, 38(3):1002-1039.
- Lindley, A. 2010. *The Early Morning Phone Call: Somali Refugees' Remittances*. Berghahn Books.
- Maffesoli, Michel. 1995. *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*. Sage.
- Mandeville, P. 2003. *Transnational Muslim politics: Reimagining the Umma*. Routledge.
- Mazzucato, V. 2008. "The Double Engagement: Transnationalism and Integration. Ghanaian Migrant Lives between Ghana and the Netherlands." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(2):199-216.
- Mazzucato, V., R. van Dijk, C. Horst and P. de Vries. 2004. "Transcending the nation: Explorations of transnationalism as a concept and phenomenon", in D. Kalb, W. Pansters and H. Siebers (eds), *Globalisation and Development: Themes and Concepts in Current Research*, pp. 131-162. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Morgan, G. 2001. "Transnational Communities and Business Systems." *Global Networks*, 1(2):113-130.
- Müller, H. 2004. "Arguing, Bargaining and All That: Communicative Action, Rationalist Theory and the Logic of Appropriateness in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations*, 10(3):395-435.
- Nagel, C. and L. Staeheli. 2004. "Citizenship, Identity and Transnational Migration: Arab Immigrants to the United States." *Space and Polity*, 8(1):3-23.
- Naidu, S. 2007. "The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC): What does the Future Hold?" *China Report*, 43(3):283-296.
- Nicholas, H. 2012. "Global Implications of Somalia 2011 for Famine Prevention, Mitigation and Response." *Global Food Security*, 1(1):74-79.
- Nicos P. 2000. *State, Power, Socialism*. London: Verso

- Noble, G. 2011. "Bumping into Alterity: Transacting Cultural Complexities." *Continuum*, 25(6):827-840.
- Nussbaum, M. 2011. *Creating Capabilities*. Harvard University Press.
- Nyberg-S., N., N. Van Hear and P. Engberg-Pedersen. 2002. "The Migration-Development Nexus Evidence and Policy Options State-Of-The-Art Overview." *International Migration*, 40(5):3-47.
- Peutz, N. 2010. "Criminal alien'deportees in Somaliland", in Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz (eds), *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*, pp.371-409. Duke University Press.
- Pierson, C. 2011. *The Modern State*. Routledge.
- Regilme, S.S.F. Jr. 2016. "Habermasian Thinking on Civil Society and the Public Sphere in the Age of Globalisation." *Perspectives on Political Science*. DOI: 10.1080/10457097.2016.1175805
- Rumford, Chris. 2003. "Resisting Globalisation? Turkey-EU Relations and Human and Political Rights in the Context of Cosmopolitan Democratization." *International Sociology*, 18(2):379-394.
- Rundell, J. 2016. "Citizens and Strangers: Cosmopolitanism as an Empty Universal." *Critical Horizons*, 17(1)110-122.
- Sautman, B. and Y. Hairong. 2008. "The Forest for the Trees: Trade, Investment and the China-In-Africa Discourse." *Pacific Affairs*, 81(1):9-29.
- Sen, A. 2000. "Consequential Evaluation and Practical Reason." *The Journal of Philosophy*, 97(9):477-502.
- . 2008. "Violence, Identity and Poverty." *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(1):5-15.
- . 2011. *The Idea of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Sheffer, G. 2003. *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*. Cambridge University Press.
- Silva, F. and M. Vieira. 2009. "Plural Modernity: Changing Modern Institutional Forms-Disciplines and Nation-States." *Social Analysis*, 53(2):60-79.
- Smith, P. and G. Luis (eds). 1998. *Transnationalism from Below*, Vol. 6. Transaction Publishers.
- Sökefeld, M. 2006. "Mobilizing in Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora." *Global Networks*, 6(3):265-284.
- Soysal, Y. 2000. "Citizenship and Identity: Living in Diasporas in Post-war Europe?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23(1):1-15.
- Taran, P. 2001. "Human Rights of Migrants: Challenges of the New Decade." *International Migration*, 38(6):7-51.
- Thomassen, L. 2006. *Jacques Derrida, and Jürgen Habermas- The Derrida-Habermas Reader*. Edinburg University Press.
- Timberlake, M. et al. 2014. "Global Cities with Chinese Characteristics." *Cities*, 41:162-170.

- Tölölyan, K. 1996. "Rethinking Diaspora (S): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 5(1):3-36.
- . 2007. "The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27(3):647-655.
- Van Dijk, R. 1997. "From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Trans-Subjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora." *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 27(2):135-69.
- Vertovec, S. 1999. "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2):447-462.
- . 2001. "Transnationalism and Identity." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27(4):573-582.
- . 2016. *Super-Diversity*. London: Routledge.
- Waters, J. 2003. "Flexible Citizens? Transnationalism and Citizenship amongst Economic Immigrants in Vancouver." *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, 47(3):219-234.
- Weber, M. 2009. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*. Simon and Schuster.
- Werbner, P. 2002. "Introduction: The Materiality of Diaspora – Between Aesthetic and Real Politics." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 9(1):5-20.
- Wimmer, A. and N. Glick Schiller. 2002. "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences." *Global Networks*, 2(4):301-334.
- Winsor, M. 2016. "Somalia's First Independent Trust Fund Offers Hope to Unemployed Youth, Raises Concerns of Corruption." *International Business News*, March 2.
- "Climate Change: How to Make the Paris Climate Conference Work?" Lecture by Professor Bruno Latour at the University of Köln, 2015- more in the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LpaSfvuE0o>
- Nyberg-Sørensen, N., Hear, N. V., & Engberg-Pedersen, P. (2002). The migration-development nexus evidence and policy options state-of-the-art overview. *International migration*, 40(5), 3-47. In the text is should be (Sørensen, Van Hear and Pedersen, 2002)
- Interviews August 2017 ( this is part of focus group discussion on the concept of "harmony")
- Portes, A. (Ed.). (1996). *The new second generation*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Weber, M. (2013). *From Max Weber: essays in sociology*. Routledge.
- Renan, Ernest. *What is a Nation? Becoming National: A Reader*. Eds. Geoff Eley and Ronald
- Grigor Suny. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 518. Print.
- Thomas Risse, "Governance under Limited Sovereignty," in *Back to Basics: State Power in the Contemporary World*, ed. Martha Finnemore and Judith Goldstein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Keohane, R. O., & Nye Jr, J. S. (2000). *Globalization: What's new? What's not?(And so what?)*. Foreign policy, 104-119.

- Laitin, D. D. & Samatar, S. S. (1987). *Somalia; Nation in Search of a State*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc.
- Lewis, IM (1999). *A pastoral democracy*. London: Lit Verlag/James Currey
- Ahmed, A. J. (Ed.). (1995). *The invention of Somalia*. The Red Sea Press.
- Kusow, A. (Ed.). (2004). *Putting the Cart before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-state in Somalia*. Red Sea Press.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge. Polity, 7(8).
- Habermas, J. (2009) *Between Norms and Facts*, Cambridge, MIT Press. (1<sup>st</sup> edition was from 1996)
- Hannerz, U. (2002) *The local and the global: continuity and change*. In *Transnational connections*. Routledge.
- Durrenberger, E.P. 2001. Anthropology and globalization. *American Anthropologist*, 103(2): 531-535.
- (Interviews Oct 2010) earlier interviews with community members
- Poulantzas, N. 2000. *State, Power, Socialism*. Verso.
- Fukuyama, F. 2014. *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*. Macmillan.
- Smith, J. 2001. "Globalizing resistance: The battle of Seattle and the future of social movements." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 6(1):1-19.
- Ciabbari, L. 2014. "Dynamics and representations of migration corridors: the rise and fall of the Libya-Lampedusa route and forms of mobility from the Horn of Africa (2000-2009)." *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 13(2):246-262.
- Sautman, B. and Y. Hairong. 2014. "Bashing 'the Chinese': contextualizing Zambia's Collum Coal Mine shooting." *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23(90):1073-1092.
- Fraser, N. 2007. "Special section: Transnational public sphere: Transnationalizing the public sphere: On the legitimacy and efficacy of public opinion in a post-Westphalian world." *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(4):7-30.
- Kastoryano, R. 2000. "Settlement, transnational communities and citizenship." *International Social Science Journal*, 52(165):307-312.

## CHAPTER 50

### Jamming with the Universe

#### A Journey and a Paradigm Shift Towards a New Song of Harmony for Humanity

*David Pepper Sarnoff*

I was very thrilled to be asked by Ananta Kumar Giri to contribute an essay for this book on *Transformative Harmony*. It seemed to me a sign that I was on the right path in my continuing search for my best possible contribution to Humanity and a continuation of what I had come to think of as my Jam Session with the Universe.

I have spent much of my leisure time over the past 50 years seeking harmony with others through music, jamming with many guitarists, singers, and other musicians. I play the flute and have learned how in an ensemble with others I can weave together everyone by picking up parts of the various rhythms that every other person is playing and by playing various notes that harmonise with the others I hear. Striving to play with a sweet tone, good intonation, and with empathic feeling for all the others, by playing a little with everyone, I can make each one and all of us sound better. I have articulated the idea just this week that in order to play or sing in harmony we must have a note that is different from some of the other notes that are being heard in the moment. We must stick strongly and clearly to our own notes while at the same time listening to all the other notes being played. So too, for Humanity to live in Harmony, we must find ways to balance diverse ways of being with mutual respect and peaceful co-existence.

My main career for over four decades has been as a practising psychologist and an educator. I have often thought of a musical jam session as a model for empathic communication with clients in therapy sessions. I have attempted to make the world a better place through all my work, yet in the past year or so my desire to make a more substantial contribution has increased manifold. The need for a Major Transformation in our culture has steadily become clearer and clearer to me. Whatever contributions I have made to individuals through conducting psychotherapy and teaching psychotherapy, appear more and more inadequate in face of the social, political, economic, and environmental challenges we all are facing. In my field, we are often blaming the victims; we tell people, you are depressed, you suffer from anxiety, you have a phobia, or you have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), when in reality these are perfectly normal people who have been traumatised by others. A kinder gentler, more loving culture would go a long way in preventing many of these so-called “mental disorders.” In recent months I have begun thinking that if you are not depressed or anxious to a certain extent, you must not be paying attention to the world around you. These are not symptoms of a disorder but rather healthy reactions to very real problems in the functioning of Humanity as a whole. Threats to our natural environment seem to me to be of particular concern because if we cannot live on this planet, where can we live? The need for Transformation in this area seems to be a matter of urgency to me.

Below is a short version of a true story about my own personal quest for emotional healing, rejuvenation, inspiration, and guidance with regard to my future path, which lead to a better harmony within myself and between the world and me. The effects of my journey include my sense that in addition to being able to jam with musicians, I am now also jamming with the Universe as a co-creator of the Transformation to the New Harmony for all of us.

## **Journey With Harmony**

I have been interested in the topic of spirituality and psychological healing since the early 1970s. I had dropped out of Harvard University half way through my Junior Year as a mathematics major during the Vietnam War and hitch-hiked to California. I was looking for a more meaningful life. I was on a quest to find myself and to find my path. I met many people during my travels with many different spiritual beliefs. It seemed to me like everyone in California had a different “trip” they were on and they all were quite willing to try to get me to follow along. I met gurus from India and learned about Meditation and Yoga. I met vegetarians and learned how to cook and eat health foods. I met a Zen Bamboo Flute maker who



made me a bamboo flute that I played on the beach in Gualala for nine months until I decided to return to Harvard, to finish my degree and shift my career in a new direction, possibly psychology. Back east, I read a book about faith healing by Lawrence LeShan an experimental psychologist from New York City who started out trying to prove that it did not work and ended creating a model for how it did work. I was intrigued and decided to take his weeklong course in faith healing. The meditations and visualisations in the course had such a positive effect on me that I was inspired to make a firmer decision to become a psychologist. When I was in graduate school at the University of Kentucky, I worked part time teaching relaxation skills at a Holistic Health Center and also studied a kind of spiritual psychotherapy, invented by the Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli, at the Kentucky Center for Psychosynthesis. I have practiced psychology in Charleston South Carolina ever since completing my internship and getting married in 1982. I have often incorporated clients' spiritual and religious beliefs and resources as part of their psychotherapy.

I first met Walter Oree a few years ago after I was assigned to be his mentor in his online Ph.D. programme in Psychology at Capella University. Even before I met him, I knew we had some common interests because I saw in an email that his dissertation topic was about collaboration between Ministers and Psychologists. I had been working for Capella since the year 2000 and most of my students, or learners as we call them, were from all over the country and our contact was almost always by email or telephone. So it was a rare treat to be assigned a learner like Walter who lived less than 30 miles away from me. We began to meet in person to work on his dissertation at my favourite Sushi and Chinese restaurant, Osaka, half way between my house and office. We worked in the old-fashioned way, using a pen to make corrections and write outlines of ideas on a paper copy of his document. During these meetings we would often have discussions about our careers, religion, psychology, politics, world affairs, music, education, and other topics of mutual interest. During one of these discussions I mentioned that I was Jewish and Walter asked me if I had ever been to Israel. I said no. I explained that my father raised me as a scientist and had taken me away from our extended family and that I only had even been to a synagogue for weddings or bar mitzvahs. I told him that my parents went to Israel once and my grandparents were there once, and they had given me a silver wine cup with my initials on it, a menorah, and a prayer shawl, but I had not yet ever been there myself. As a minister for forty years and a devout Christian, Walter had always wanted to go to Israel. He suggested that we should go there together some day. Since he was beginning to approach the seven-year deadline for completing his dissertation, I told him that he should earn his degree and then we could go there as equals, as two doctors. I thought this might give him an extra incentive to finish on time.

A few months later, we had some very sad days in Charleston. First a white police officer shot a black man in the back killing him instantly, then soon after that a young white man shot and killed nine black people at a bible study in a Church downtown. As a black minister in a small town, Walter knew the minister who was killed. There was an outpouring of sympathy towards the victims' families. President Obama came to Charleston and sang *Amazing Grace* at the memorial service, and the Governor and the State Legislature worked to take the confederate flag off the state house grounds and put it in a museum. I thought to myself, that is all well and good, but we can't go back to business as usual. The supreme court of the United States ordered integration of the schools when I was a little boy. Now here I am, an old man, and it has never happened. The separation and distance between the races that allows this kind of hatred and violence to fester and erupt has got to stop. I told Walter at our next meeting that I felt we had to do something more substantial to help improve race relations in our Holy City and in our state. I thought that we should go to Israel, the Holy Land, and pray for guidance to help us know what to do to help. I thought that if he and I, one black, one white, one a Christian, one a Jew, one of devout faith and the other a scientist, could go on an adventure together, write a book together, give public lectures together, and establish some kind of successful organisation together, then we could be role models and an inspiration to others. We could show the true value of diversity and inter-racial, inter-faith cooperation and collaboration.

In the summer of 2016, Walter finally completed his dissertation just on time and graduated from Capella with his Ph.D. in Psychology. So we got together and began to plan our trip. We consulted with Rabbis, Ministers, travel agents, and of course, with our smartphones. We bought our plane tickets, reserved apartments in three different Israeli cities and arranged for a rental car.

I realised that our outward preparations were only part of what would lead to a successful trip. Any pilgrimage or spiritual quest, I had heard, takes inner preparation as well. I became determined to think, meditate, review my life thus far, and say a prayer to ask for what I hoped to gain from the journey. I decided that on the Jewish New Year 5777 coming up in October, I would go to Sandisfield, Massachusetts to write down my prayers as a start to the adventure that Walter and I were about to embark on, and as a start to the book that we would one day write.

In Sandisfield, my sister and I own a house that we inherited from our parents. It has tremendous sentimental value for us both. While I was out in California playing the flute in Gualala, my sister was also out of college and travelling around the country. Our parents came out to get us to come back east and finish our educations. It was my idea for them to get a house in the country with some land. I imagined it as a place where we could share the beauty of the world with others

as we learned about music, art, science, spirituality, psychology, and other topics of interest. Two weeks after they left California, they bought that house in the Berkshire Mountains in western Massachusetts. I lived there four days a week and commuted to Cambridge to complete my last 1 and ½ years of college in 1975. It then became my parents' weekend and summerhouse and eventually their retirement house. My mother died there. Early on my sister's husband had proposed to her there and now one of her sons, his wife and their two children live less than an hour ride from there. The house in Sandisfield had become our parents' real home and by extension a home for us. It was built in 1830 and though small had had several little additions over the years making it quite comfortable for a couple or small family. The land was beautiful with hillsides, meadows, apple trees, large rocks, a quarter of a mile of mountain stream called the Clam River, with trout and clams in it, and foundations made of very large stones that once held mills on them. The Christmas carol, "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" was written in that small town, and I often thought that if you stayed up late, you could hear angels sing there.

The Jewish New Year was going to start on Monday, so I flew up to Bradley airport near Hartford, Connecticut on Friday, rented a car and drove to the house. On Saturday I was relaxing a while looking at Facebook on my phone when I saw what I took as a sign that I was on the right track. There was a posting by one of my former learners, Asa Brown that I had not seen in ten years. The post said that he was in Albany, New York that day at Barnes and Nobles for a book signing. Asa and I had some long conversations in Scottsdale Arizona while he was in the Ph.D. programme at Capella. He also had an interest in integrating spirituality with psychology. He lived in British Columbia in Western Canada at the time but had family in South Carolina so we discussed him visiting there one day. I sent a message inviting him to meet me at a small church in Lenox, Massachusetts on Sunday where I would be playing my flute along with my Nephew who is a piano player and has a regular gig there every week. I suggested that he could then follow me back to the house and stay over night. He took me up on my invitation.

I showed Asa all around our property and we caught up on what we both were doing for the last decade. It turned out that since his graduation, Asa had been supporting himself and his family entirely on writing books and making speeches. This was very inspiring to me because I thought that this might be a way that Walter and I could serve our mission as well. New Years day came and after lunch, Asa left me alone to my thoughts, prayers, and writing.

I felt a bit tired and depleted. Not because of all the stressful events in the world but because of my relationship to them. My parents had taken me in the 1960s to civil rights marches and peace marches and I became a psychologist to

make the world a better place. In addition to doing psychotherapy with countless individuals, I became an educator teaching hundreds of students to become masters level counsellors or Ph.D. level psychologists. As an administrator of two masters programmes and a Ph.D. programme, I was able to hire the first African American faculty members in two different institutions. However despite all my good work, and all the good work of my students, I see the mental health of our country continuing to decline. I have begun to think that as a field we have been barking up the wrong tree. We diagnose our clients with mental disorders like depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and phobias, yet in most cases these were perfectly healthy people who have been traumatised by others. What we need, I believe is a large cultural shift to create healthy relationships in healthy communities where it is safe for people of all kinds to live in peace. I have not given up on wanting to make the world a better place, yet my success to date seems insufficient to our societal need. I want to talk to more people at once to influence larger numbers in positive directions. I want to write things that can reach more people. I want to work with others to do what I cannot possibly do alone. In order to do any of this, I also needed my own personal healing. I needed to be refreshed after years of long hours and short vacations, years of mind numbing paper work to benefit only insurance companies, years of clicking on websites only to satisfy a software programme. I also wanted to use many of my talents for speaking, writing, playing music, problem solving, and creativity that have been very under utilised during most of my professional career. I needed more strength, more courage, more happiness, and more love inside me to be most effective in helping others and myself.

I cleared my mind and sat down at a little desk in front of a window looking out at some grass and a row of trees beside the river. I put a pad of paper down on the table and took a pen to write in the old way. I prayed to God and wrote as I prayed.

## **Rosh Hashanah 5777 Prayer**

Thank you so much for the glorious bounty you have bestowed upon me, my wonderful wife and children, my fine home and land, the beautiful trees and water, a successful profession, the gift of music, many kind friends and family members, delicious food from all over the world, trips to many places on this fantastic planet, and other gifts too numerous to count.

Now please help me. Open my heart and mind to know how to proceed into my future life in such a way as to continue my personal well-being and expand my

creativity into new directions that will allow me to help others in a more substantial way to find fulfilment within themselves and in relationships with others.

Guide me to find a deeper peace and love within me that I can share with others. Allow me to love myself more, my wife more, my children more, my family more, my friends more, and all people more. Allow me to appreciate more deeply all the good in my life. Help me to find ways to facilitate deeper peace and love in others. Help me to find ways to get to know others who are different from me in many ways; help me to collaborate and cooperate with them. Let me be as close to them as I am to my best friends. Show me how to facilitate similar experiences for others.

Help me continue to dream. Help me to see that my dreams are coming true. Guide my thoughts and actions to accelerate this process. Help me to move slowly and quickly at the same time. Protect my balance and my health. Allow me to heal even more so that I may even more effectively serve these purposes.

Inspire me to write new words and songs that speak to the minds and hearts of others. Take me to the places I need to go. Introduce me to the people I need to meet. Guide me towards the best possible actions for all humanity and myself. Show me how to serve others and myself.

Guide me on my trip this year to the Holy land and bring me back to the Holy City where I can begin a new chapter of my life. Give me a vision of my role in greater accomplishments of peace and love among all people. Make my contribution more substantial. Fill me with the joy and confidence that comes with being on the right path. Make this my best year ever.

## **Thanks in Advance, David Pepper Sarnoff**

The next day, I returned to Charleston and my life continued on as before, seeing clients, teaching classes, playing my flute, yet the excitement about our upcoming trip continued to grow.

After a very contentious, divisive, and polarising election season, and more news of violence and fear in the US and around the world, I met with Walter again. I told him that we better really pray hard when we go to Israel. He told me yes, that the government was not going to help us so we better help ourselves.

The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays went by quickly and before we knew it, it was December 27, 2016. We met at the Charleston International Airport and got on our flight to Newark, New Jersey where we boarded our connecting flight to Tel Aviv.

On our first day in Jerusalem we started off right away to seek the fulfilment of the purpose of our trip by going to the Western Wall of the old destroyed temple to pray. It was winter so we had our coats on and had our hands in our pockets to keep them warm. From our apartment in the modern city, we had to walk down hill a ways to get to the old city with the temple in its centre. As we were approaching the three-storeyed tall wall that surrounded the old city, I began to feel warm. Then I thought to myself, "My heart is on fire." I could feel a prayer rising up from deep below my stomach. My heart then felt like it was full of liquid from the tears of all the people back home that were afraid of what might happen in their futures. I could feel a prayer rising up from my heart into my throat so that I could call out to God when I got to the wall.

When we got to the old city, we walked in through an archway above an opening in the wall and very soon were grabbed by merchants who wanted us to buy something. This distracted me from the mental and emotional experience I was having, yet I very quickly learned how to bargain for a better price as I bought a couple of silver rings for my younger daughter. I realised that in the holiest of missions business and money would have to be considered and utilised properly. As we continued into the old city a four piece Klezmer band marched next to us with a crowd of people following as if they were there to welcome us. The trumpet and saxophone sang out in sweet harmonies backed up by an accordion and a hand drum. The joyous old melodies guided us down to the centre of the old city where we would find the western wall.

When we got near the wall, we had to stop at a security checkpoint. Israeli soldiers with machine guns watched us as we put our cell phones in a little bowl and walked under the scanner to be sure we had no bombs or weapons. When I got through security and walked out onto the large stone plaza and saw the wall in the distance, I felt a strange sensation in my feet like something was different underneath them. The phrase "He walks on Holy ground" went through my mind.

We were told to go to the left with the men, and women were told to go to the right. When we got close to the wall we stopped to wash our hands with cups that hung by chains on a stone fountain. We put on Yamakas and slowly approached the wall. There were many men with prayer books, dressed in traditional Hassidic clothing with black coats, pants, shoes and hats, praying softly in Hebrew. I felt a little shy not understanding anything they were saying; yet I was determined to go up to the wall and pray in my own way. I reached out, touched the wall with both hands, and began to pray.

The stones are cold but my heart is on fire. Please God, save this beautiful planet for all the people.



I sat down in a nearby plastic chair and thought that I had so much more to pray for, yet I felt this was enough for my first time, and certainly was the most important thing for me to ask.

That evening back in our apartment, I started to read a book by a local Rabbi about how to pray. The book talked about how God is so huge, so immense, so vast, and so incomprehensible, that you might feel overwhelmed and not know what to say. You might feel small and insignificant compared to the creator of the universe, yet you need to stand with confidence, have a personal relationship with the creator, and speak your prayers in a direct way. I got about half way through the book before sleep overtook me.

The next morning, our second one in Jerusalem, we wanted to return to the Western Wall to pray again. This time when we got into the old city we walked on the opposite side of the street to avoid the merchants and went down towards the wall in the most direct way through the Arab Market. I remembered that a friend of a friend who owned a house in Jerusalem had advised me a month earlier to avoid the Arab Market to be sure I did not get stabbed in the back. I tried to forget that and continued straight on the stone road down hill, not looking into the many shops that completely lined the very narrow road on both sides.

We soon were back at the western wall and went to an empty spot, between many men already there praying, near where we had been the day before. I stood there and started to think about what the book I had read told me about how to pray, about the immenseness and vastness of God, and about how I had to be confident and ask directly. Then I asked God to help me to help the people back home. I thought to myself, this is all well and good but I need to get my heart into my prayers. I thought about the old Temple that King David, who I was named after, had ordered built over 3000 years ago, how his son Solomon had reigned over its completion, how the temple was destroyed being attacked from the east leaving only the western wall standing, how the temple was rebuilt, how Jesus turned over the tables of the moneylenders there, how 80 years after Jesus died it was destroyed again from the east and again leaving only this western wall standing. I felt I did not really know any of this but had only heard about it from others. I had to get my heart into my prayers. I thought that although this stone I was looking at had been cut open by a man thousands of years ago, and had been placed on the wall probably by a dozen men, the stone itself was part of the earth that had been created by the original creator of the Universe, God. Since I knew it was impossible to see the creator, I decided to look more closely at the creation itself. The stone just looked tan from far away, but when I looked at it closely, I could see a sort of grain made of black and grey and white flecks. I thought again, I have to get my heart in my prayers. The stone started to look very beautiful and the



grain seemed to swirl a bit. I need to get my heart in my prayers. Just then right in front of me I saw a heart in the stone. The stone had been cut open over 3000 years ago by a man revealing the heart placed there by the creator millions of years ago, and I was seeing it now, just when I needed to put my heart in my prayers. I took my two thumbs and put one in each half of the heart. I could feel the prayer rising up from deep in my guts up into my heart. I could feel my heart full of liquid from the tears of all the people back home. I could feel the tears in my heart coming out through my hands into my arms and then into the heart in the wall. I then prayed in earnest for God to help all the people back home and to help me to help them. I looked to my left and saw Walter standing facing the wall closeby and heard him speaking in tongues.

I sat down several feet back and looked at “my” heart in the stone. Very soon another man stood there to start praying. I thought, of course, “My” heart belongs to everyone. I also thought that probably thousands of men had stood right in that spot and never saw the heart. I sat a long time looking at the stone, seeing where it was in the wall. I noticed it was holding up a much larger stone that was cracked right above the middle of the stone with the heart in it. I saw that there were plants growing out of the wall between some of the stones and one was just above and to the left of “My” stone. When I looked all the way up to the top of the wall I could see that I was right under the place where the wall got a little taller, marking the north west corner of the old temple. The large stone, resting on top of the stone with the heart in it, reminded me of the large stones in the foundation from the old mill near my house in Sandisfield. I felt like I had found my home in the Holy Land. I started to think about all the talk I had heard recently about rebuilding the temple and I thought that if it were up to me, I would build a much bigger one. Inside would be many synagogues, churches, mosques, and houses of worship for all major human religions. All would pray in peace each in their own way.

The next day, we went back to the Western Wall to pray one last time before leaving Jerusalem. When we made our final approach to the wall from far away, I could see the stone with the heart in it. The heart was too small to see from that distance, but I could recognise the stone from the large one above it with the crack in it. I wondered if my mind had been playing tricks on me the day before. I wondered if the heart really existed. Yet when we got up close, sure enough, it was still there. I was not sure what to say for my last prayer. I just reached my left hand out towards the heart in the stone and noticed the long sleeve on my shirt. I thought of the saying, “He wears his heart on his sleeve.” I thought I could take one step further and put my heart in the palm of my hand. I put my heart from my palm into the heart in the stone and said, “Take my heart and do with it what you will in your time.” I looked to my left and saw Walter also touching the wall, and heard him praying in tongues.

We had many more adventures in the Holy Land that we plan to write about in an upcoming book. After we returned to Charleston, I was inspired to write a song about my experience at the Western Wall and to choreograph it as a dance of universal peace. The lyrics are:

I bring my Heart to the Stone. I bring my Heart to the Stone.  
It's Always Here. It's Always Here.  
I show you the Heart in the Stone. I show you the Heart in the  
Stone.  
It's always here. It's always here.  
All our joys and all our tears, all the tales from all our years,  
They're always here. They're always here.  
All our hopes and all our dreams,  
Nothing is as it seems.  
They're always here. They're always here,  
I give you the Heart in the Stone. I give you the Heart in the Stone.  
It's always here. It's always here.

The thrill for me in discovering the Heart in the Stone was the Harmony between the creation and myself. I came to the Holy Land with my heart open and at a place considered most Holy by my Jewish ancestors as well as by Christians and Moslems who represent almost half of the world's population, I come to the exact spot at the exact time where I could find the heart in the Stone in the ancient Temple Wall. The experience of this New Harmony created a subtle Transformation within me. I felt more at home in the world. I felt less tired, more like I could accomplish important things with the rest of my life. The Heart as in its French translation, *Coeur*, is a symbol of courage. I could now "take heart" with the sense that being more in Harmony with the creation, I could do more for others and for myself. I thought of my experience as perhaps archetypal, or representative of the experience that many others could have when devoting themselves to a spiritual pilgrimage. I wanted to share that experience through turning my song into a Dance of Universal Peace. I have already done this at a church in North Charleston with me playing the flute, a Piano player, a drummer, a dance teacher and a dozen singers and dancers. I dream about a day when I can play this dance with a much larger band and a much larger group of dancers from diverse cultures who wear their varying types of clothing representing their religions or nationalities.

Walter and I spent a good deal of time during our travels in Israel discussing what was needed to help Humanity in the near future. We realised that we could not change people's religious beliefs. It seems almost a certainty that there will be Jews, Christians, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, and other religious groups all

containing their own sub groups of varying sects and denominations, well beyond our lifetimes. So what we need is cooperation and collaboration among all these people to work together for our common good. Even though Walter and I disagree about several things, we discovered that we agreed on a hand full of basic desires for Humanity. I believe that the vast majority of other people in this world agree on these as well. The things we agree on are as follows:

1. We want all hungry people to be fed.
2. We want all sick people to have high quality health care.
3. We want people of all races, religions, and nationalities to live in peace without hurting or killing one another.
4. We want our planet to be protected and preserved for future generations.
5. We want everyone to have access to quality education so that all the best spiritual and scientific knowledge of Humanity can be applied towards achieving the first four goals.

In short, we want the world to be safe for humans with our basic needs met. After that we will be able to debate the nature of the creator of the universe at our leisure.

Walter and I filed the articles of incorporation for a charitable non-profit organisation with the Secretary of State in South Carolina. The name of our organisation is "What We Agree On." As I became more religious from our collaboration, Walter became more scientific. He said, "What we need is a paradigm shift." I immediately described it; we need to move away from the old "Might Makes Right" mentality to the new way of thinking, "Taking Care of One Another and our Home Planet is what is Right." This paradigm shift is a specific example of Transformative Harmony. In my experience feeling Harmony leads to a Transformation, which leads to a feeling of more Harmony, which leads to more Transformation, and so on in a positive upward spiral. This same process is magnified and enhanced as more and more people participate in it. An example of this is what happened a few days before we sent in our articles of incorporation as I continued my jam session with the Universe. I thought to myself, Walter and I have been procrastinating on setting up our non-profit. What we need is a Moslem woman on our board of directors to give us better gender and Spiritual balance as we move forward. I looked in my phone to find a Mosque in Charleston. There was one, the Central Mosque of Charleston. I clicked on their Facebook page and discovered that they were having an interfaith open house the very next weekend. I attended and there I met Reshma Khan. She is a devout Moslem always wearing the traditional head covering and following all the requirements of regular prayers. She has dedicated herself to doing God's work, and runs a free clinic where she

treats sick people with no health insurance for free. I realised that she was six years ahead of us in beginning to implement one of our five goals. She agreed to meet with Walter and me and in that meeting the next week she told us that she liked our ideas and would do whatever she could to help. That gave us the added inspiration we needed to file our articles of incorporation.

A similar thing occurred just a few days ago. Walter and I were again procrastinating about writing our book about our journey. Meanwhile I continued to talk with people about what we had done so far. One person said, "You need a Hindu." A few days ago, out of on where, I got a call from an old friend who used to live in Charleston but moved away many years ago. His name is Sid Jordan and although I did not know this at the time, he wrote one of the essays earlier in this book. He was calling out of the blue to ask me to host Ananta Giri, who wanted to visit Charleston. I immediately agreed. Now I am writing again and Ananta has also agreed to help me with the What We Agree On organisation. We have scheduled a meeting with Walter Oree for next weekend. The jam session continues! The Harmony is being heard. The Transformation is happening!

In my conversations with Ananta Kumar Giri during his visit we have talked about problems between genders as of significant concern and in need of Transformative Harmony. We can see this in various religious groups around the world, in our own countries, and in our own families. I am well aware of this having lived through the Women's liberation movement in the US in the 1960s and 1970s, seeing some big changes in my parents' relationship and attempting to make even more in my marriage. One frustration that I have had is awareness that in the US the Heart qualities of people like Love, Nurturance, Compassion, Gentleness, and Empathy are often devalued in our society and work places. These qualities have in the past been considered traditional "feminine" qualities. In order to succeed in work and business many US women have had to adopt more of the traditionally "masculine" qualities like aggressiveness, and competitiveness. We discussed how the Heart qualities are needed in the woman's movement and for all people. At one point in our conversation, I got a wonderful idea. I thought about the gender segregation in Israel and how orthodox Jews in control of the government insisted on men praying on one side of the western wall and women praying on the other. I thought, 'What if the Heart in the Stone which I discovered on the men's side of the western wall became a very important religious symbol that everyone wanted to see when they travelled to Jerusalem? This could provide the pressure needed to get permission for women to go to the men's side of the wall.' As I expressed that idea aloud to Ananta, I felt what has been called "The Chill Effect" as at times happens when hearing beautiful music or emotionally moving words. I could feel a shiver up my spine and in my whole body alerting me to some special importance or significance of those words. Ananta then shared

his idea of creation of circles of gender liberation in our communities where men, women and children can meet in circles in various settings and fields of life such as family, community, school, workplace and other institutional domains and share their actions, imaginations and dreams about transformative gender liberation where all concerned help each other to realise their potential for beauty, dignity and dialogues. Certainly continued Transformation and greater Harmony between men and women is much needed and may be a key to the successful survival of Humanity.

I remember a similar “Chill” I received when Walter and I were in the Holy City of Safed in Israel. It was the city with the highest elevation in Israel and a haven for the spiritually inclined. I had heard that a few hundred years ago Moslem Sufi mystics and Jewish mystics studying the Kabala worked together exploring the mysteries of the Universe. The city was built on a small mountain. There were streets, alley ways, and ramps of varying sizes going up and down and around many curves of the land. We had parked our car on Jerusalem Street and walked down several stories of stone steps to get to the Old City. After wandering around a while, I started to be afraid I would get lost and be unable to find our car, so I took out my phone to see what the layout of the streets was. When I zoomed in on our location, I could see that Jerusalem Street went completely around the old city and was shaped like a large teardrop. I zoomed back out and looked at the old city of Jerusalem to see that it too was shaped like a teardrop. The Sea of Galilee also was shaped like a teardrop. When I told Walter about what I found, I called these three places “The Tears of God.” It was then that I received my “Chill Effect.” How would any parent feel when seeing one child kill another? How about seeing ten children kill ten others? How about hundred killings? How about Millions of children killing one another? How many tears would that parent cry? In my Jam with the Universe I heard this very sad song. Much Transformational Harmony is needed to create a new song of love and peace for Humanity.

My thoughts are now turning towards the future and to what I may do to continue producing more Harmony and Transformation in my life in Harmony with others and in service of all people and myself. One of my dreams involves the flute. I made a conscious decision several years ago to make the flute my spiritual discipline. Rather than join any one religion or sect, I wanted and still want to hold out for the religion that includes all humanity. I want to love everyone. I consider “My People” to mean all people. With the flute, I could express feelings and ideas without the danger of disagreeing about the words. The flute is an ancient instrument that has been played by indigenous peoples all over the world and that has been played by diverse important spiritual figures like Krishna and King David who I was named after. I had always thought of King David as a great singer songwriter with his voice and harp, but I found out recently from my phone

that he also played the flute. Not only that, I found out that in the Temple with The Heart in The Stone on its Western Wall, the ancient Jews used flutes to call the people to prayer since the flute was considered to have the sweetest sound of all the instruments. One of my dreams is to eventually take part in events that are a fusion of spiritual retreats, concerts, motivational speeches, group therapy, and political movements. For example, I have started collaborating with an Art Therapist and a Guitarist to present "My Muse and Me." This will be a six week programme in my office in which we will act as facilitator/participants along with six other participants. We will use guitar and flute live music as the background for guided imagery and meditations in which participants can expand their creativity to envision more positive futures for themselves where they are happier, more fulfilled and doing more things to help others and society as well as themselves. The Art Therapist will then guide them to draw or paint parts of their visions for future inspiration and the two musicians will help those who want a personal song, like the Heart in the Stone is for me, to create and record their songs. In this way we hope to continue to expand our contributions towards the much-needed Transformational Harmony leading to a World Safe for Humans. As we get better and better with practice, we hope to work with larger and larger audiences, in conjunction with the good works of countless other organisations and good people, until one day we have enough people in harmony to create the human society we all yearn for and deserve.

Walter and I have launched our non profit, What We Agree On, with an 8 hour Music and Arts festival in his home town, Adam's Run, South Carolina. We have also started working on our website. Visit us at [wwao.org](http://wwao.org).





## CHAPTER 51

# Becoming Agents of Togetherness Working and Meditating for Peace and Harmony

*Thomas Menampampil*

Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of  
peace.

—Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam*

### Introduction

Is the world falling apart? It was not long ago that the Soviet Union which seemed to 'stride the world like a colossus' broke into splinters. The same thing happened to Yugoslavia. Czecho-Slovakia divided, so did Pakistan. While the two parts of Germany and Vietnam succeeded to come together again and to put their painful past behind them, distance between South and North Korea seems to be widening. Apart from such fissiparous tendencies in different states around the world, there are clashes over class, ideology, ethnicity, caste, cultures, language, religion, gender, political interests, mineral resources or market rivalry. There are further, neighbourhood tussles, domestic quarrels, social tensions, ethnic jealousy, urban violence, and communal anger...all finding expression in aggressive vocabulary, shrill voices, threats, violent protests, prophetic denunciations, and bomb blasts.

There are again deadly competitions over personal and group interests, conflicts of ideas and ideologies, action groups, authority-subject relationships and movement leaders; political violence, accusations of corruption and counter-accusations of scams; digital warfare and cyber aggression; everything leading to an impression of an all against all situation, as though truly 'Man is a wolf unto Man', *homo homini lupus*.

Where is my position in this unhappy situation? Why was I not in Hiroshima at 8.15 A.M. on August 6, 1945, or Bhopal at 11.30 A.M. on December 3, 1984? Would I have been interested at least then in such questions? Is there possibility of another world where these things will not easily happen? Is strife the only law in nature? Centuries ago thus sang an Indian poet, "A bard am I, my father a leech, and my mother a grinder of corn. Diverse in means, but all wishing wealth, alike for cattle we strive" (Rig Veda:x). Today may be our strife is for cash, not cattle; but the strife has persisted. However, let us ask ourselves: is self-interest the only motive in human beings? Can my advantage be pursued only at the expense of yours? Do we not as human beings belong together? Can we not come together for our common benefit? Can we look forward to a time when prophetic persons will arise among us who will consider it their mission to bring peoples and communities together?

## 1. Heroes/Heroines Who Will Consider It Their Mission to Bring Together the Human

### *Family*

Peace is not only better than war, but infinitely more arduous.

—Bernard Shaw

The greatest pleasure in life is achieving things that people say can't be done.

—Scott Volkers, Australian Swimming Coach

Such a task is not going to be easy. Everyone who fights feels he/she is fighting for a good cause, that he/she is giving expression to the legitimate anger of his/her people, and that point of view is perfectly justified; that it is the other side that is unjustified, ought to listen, change, and accept his/her proposals for solution to problems. My question is, is it possible that I may be wrong in some areas of this contention, that the other party may be right at least in some respects? Is it possible to build a common ground? If we succeed to do so, can we broaden those areas of

agreement? Can we look to common goals? Can we strive towards them together? Will someone take the initiative of bringing us together? Can I attempt doing it?

Ancient heroes were conquerors, who subjugated nations, dominated societies and imposed their will on others. Recent heroes/heroines have been those who struggled against domination, fought for freedom, for human dignity and the rights of the individual. A time is coming, and it is already here when the ardent lovers of peace, men and women, will strive to the utmost of their ability to bring together the broken and scattered sections of humanity. Such persons will explain one to another, encourage, dialogue, reconcile, and restore unity to the human family. For we belong together. "All people are a single nation" says the Koran II. The future epics will be about such unbelievable tales of reconciliation.

## **2. The Indian Tradition: A Concern for the Larger Cause of Humanity**

To be one with the world is wisdom.

—Tirukkural

There is no higher duty than the welfare of the whole world.

—Asoka's Rock Edict:VI

For us Indians it is not a difficult concept to understand. Ours is a civilisation that respected diversity and allowed the simultaneous flourishing of different races, schools of thought, religious convictions, traditions, and viewpoints; and worked towards common goals. The collective unconscious of our great society seems to tell us that there is something valid in every point of view, and that everyone's interest deserves some attention. If we could return to this central inspiration of our civilisation, we would re-capture the spirit behind these words of Asoka "There is no higher duty than the welfare of the whole world" (Rock Edict:VI). Nehru echoed the sentiment in his 'tryst with destiny speech' when he said, "It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity". Tagore felt that whatever has been said wisely anywhere in the world belonged to him as well. All of us belong to all. Could we develop further this 'universal outlook' on wider human concerns that these great representatives of our civilisation had?

### 3. We Need Silk Roads That Link, Not China Walls That Exclude

No man is an island, entire itself; every man is a piece of the continent,  
a part of the main.

—John Donne

The salvation of mankind lies only in making everything the concern  
of all.

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Not only such noble sentiments were expressed in the past, but there were people in every part of the world who desired to translate these ideals into life. People longed to communicate with each other, near and far. Communications created a sense of common belonging and roused a sense of responsibility for each other. Asoka sent out missionaries in all directions carrying a message of peace and social concern. Similar messages travelled from India to southeast Asia and the shores of China, even as the bearers of the Christian gospel and the teachings of Islam reached India's western coast. As the Silk Road linked China with the west and carried technical knowledge and ideas both ways, the Karakoram Highway took Buddhist insights to central Asia (Keay 2000:115). People like Fahien, Hiuen Tsang made their way to Nalanda and other places sacred to the memory of the Great Buddha. The Dakshin Path carried ideas north-and-south within India itself (*ibid.*:119). For, no one is an island; everyone belongs to a great whole. Diogenes said, "I am not an Athenian or a Greek but a citizen of the world".

Today we need to initiate communication, not only between nations and regions, but also between ideas, ideologies, convictions, and persuasions. Let ideas talk to each other. For as John Maynard Keynes says, "Ideas shape the course of history". However, many like to build a great China Wall around themselves and the concepts they have of what is best for the world. Neither those impressive walls in China nor Hadrian's wall in England ultimately succeeded to keep out intruders. After all, ideas have legs, walls have ears, and thoughts keep travelling and reaching ultimately the places from where they were most excluded. The solution then is dialogue, interaction and mutual sharing; not ethnic isolation, inward looking nationalism, ideological close-mindedness, communal isolation, mutual incrimination, or inter-movement strife. How easily we stereotype each other along cultural, ethnic, national or religious lines, descending to slurs and jokes that can have a cumulative effect. "Each individual message gains its power because of the cumulative and reinforcing effect of countless similar messages..." (Charles Lawrence, as quoted at Gurdof and Lauritzen 2010, Vol. 1:79).

Centuries ago, Akbar introduced dialogue between the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Parsis, Jews, agnostics and atheists (Sen 2009:37). This was an interesting experiment those days, though it met with limited success. But the very gesture promoted healthy relationships between communities and fruitful collaboration. Today we may have to include among our dialogue partners not only people with religious differences, but also ideological, ethnic, regional, linguistic, and cultural differences. There is nothing like free interaction of ideas to open out new vistas. Arthur Thomson says, “The most powerful factors in the world are clear ideas in the minds of energetic men of good will”. Our call today is to become such men and women who will remember that “Every human being has a responsibility for injustice anywhere in the community” (Scott Buchanan).

#### **4. Those Who Facilitate Communications Help**

The most immutable barrier in nature is between one man’s thoughts and another’s.

—William James

“Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus”, said Martin Luther King. For him, public discourse does not start with agreement but has it as its goal; it is an attempt to persuade the other in an encounter of friendship, understanding and cooperation. He would emphasize the right set of symbols and metaphors to suit the audience: for Christians from Christian sources, for a secular audience from other generally acceptable sources.

—Gurdof 2010, Vol.2:124

When William Jones or Max Muller translated the sacred books of the east for a western readership they brought the two worlds closer. While Mahmud of Ghazni brought ruin in several parts of India during his aggressive campaigns, his travelling companion, Al Biruni, opened out possibility for the Indian and Arab worlds to enter into dialogue. He mastered Sanskrit, translated Indian texts on mathematics, natural sciences, literature, philosophy and religion into Arabic language. The Ramayana was translated into Bengali by Muslim Pathans. It is acted in drama form in Buddhist Thailand and Muslim Indonesia. Arab scholars in Spain introduced Indian Mathematics and Greek philosophy into western universities. Indian Buddhist writings were translated into Chinese; Chinese philosophy was put into western languages which greatly influenced Enlightenment thinkers; western political thought and science-related literature have been translated almost into

all languages of the world. With faster translations and easier communications, human society is coming into continuous interaction and dialogue with each other, so much so that people are beginning to talk of co-thinking and a global brain.

There is a hidden hunger in all people, not only to communicate, but also to be understood. That does not always happen. Emerson rightly says, it is a luxury to be understood. Many of us choose to be one way communicators like the radio and the TV. We have many ideas, much to say, are eloquent, but have not developed a persuasive approach to our problems and fail to convince. Krishna Menon spoke for nine hours at a stretch in the UN, but he could not convince people. Those who make it their habit of adopting the Menon-style of persuasion, fail to win the point. Often resistance builds up. Opposition mounts. Conversation and co-reflection get interrupted; then they are consciously disrupted. And finally they break down.

In today's world you will notice that there are more persons and groups that are skilled in widening the gaps between people than bridging distances. We need others who can lead conflicting communities even a wee bit closer! That is why Asoka suggested restraint in speech (Sen 2005:182). When Asoka said that by disparaging someone else's sect one inflicted damage on oneself, he was inviting reflection on the plain truth that over-concern for one's sectarian interests is merely counter-productive. Not being magnanimous to others is itself self-injury (Sen 2009:75).

We spoke of the need for language-translators. In the present situation we feel the need of culture-translators, persons who can explain ways, styles and ideas of one ethnic group, culture or civilisation to others. When Alexander showed interest in Jain monks, he opened doors for successive generations of Greek thinkers to take interest in other ways of thinking than their own. Persons who you think are different from you are not altogether different. We need people today who can make us understand this truth and interpret one community to another; one school of thought to another; followers of one ideology to those of another; one set of movement leaders to another. For, the whole human story is not told until all have spoken.

## **5. When Emotions Run High, it is Hard to Open Dialogue**

A riot is at bottom the language of the unheard.

—Martin Luther King, speech at St Louis, 22.3.64

There are not warlike peoples – just warlike leaders.

—Ralph Bunche

When emotions run high over an issue, dialogue becomes difficult. Undoubtedly we cannot ignore the role of emotions in human affairs. We have to concede something to feelings strongly expressed by persons who have suffered a great deal. People who have lost relatives and property in an ethnic clash, for example, may not be masters of themselves when they are discussing events and issues. Communities that have been oppressed for generations and those who could not give utterance to their feelings for a very long time, may adopt dramatic ways of expressing their sorrow or grievance. What drives them at a given moment may be more their resentment than reasoning power. Persons who are used to handling rational argument in a serene atmosphere may find themselves helpless in such a situation. But, given space and time for self-expression, even the most unreasonable and discordant voices can turn milder, the language used acceptable, and logic consistent. There are persons, who are specially gifted or who have equipped themselves with the needed skills for ferrying people across their emotions to normal processes of reasoning.

Amartya Sen admitted that instinctive reactions are understandable in human situations, but insisted that unscrutinised instincts cannot be allowed to have the final say on matters (Sen 2009:51). "Outrage can be used to motivate, rather than replace, reasoning", he says (*ibid.*:389). Crude and rough protests must be confronted with 'open-minded engagement in public reasoning' (*ibid.*:390). Angry rhetoric must be followed by reasoned arguments (*ibid.*:391).

Let us look at the emotion-issue this way. If it happens that I am the aggrieved party, at a thoughtful moment I know that it will only be good reasoning that will convince people, not an emotional outburst. Even if, out of respect, my opponent seems to defer to my intemperate language, dither and wait, I know, unless I return to the way of balanced thought, sound reasoning and objective presentation, somehow I will not persuade. And even if I succeed to make some headway through stubborn determination and pressure and by taking advantage of a moment of my opponent's weakness, I know that ultimately only a sober, realistic and objective presentation of my case will win the point.

The more stubborn I remain, with greater determination will my opponent strive to blunt the pointedness of my argument and use a moment of my weakness to push off my thrust at a tangent. These elementary truths are completely forgotten even by champions of great causes, heads of states, and representatives of aggressive religious movements, whether it be in Afghanistan or Ayodhya. Such tactics only further delay the solution to problems. Violent attempts to hasten the process can even put it off indefinitely. Gradually mutual criticism puts on teeth, cynicism grows, hostility mounts, violence erupts in unexpected ways. If, on the contrary, at some stage of the struggle I change my attitude and I decide to turn my grievance



into astimulating message, the entire atmosphere changes. I meet with receptivity and attention, and readiness to listen and change.

If I keep persisting on the wrong path, I will never get closer to the destination no matter how much I try. Francis Bacon said centuries ago, “The lame man who keeps the right road outstrips the runner who takes a wrong one. Nay, it is obvious that the more active and swift the latter is the further he will go astray”. Thanks be to God, there are also persons who have developed the skill of bringing people round to reason after even serious emotional explosions. They help to replace the discussions back on the rails. Oh! for the help of such a persons when we have landed ourselves in a deadlock! Because, as General Ulysses Grant says, “There never was a time when some way could not be found to prevent the drawing of the sword”.

## **6. In Justice Questions, Study Issues From Diverse Angles**

Only justice will actually, finally, end terrorism. Violence only creates more violence.

—Susan Thistlethwaite, *New Wars Old Wineskins*, 264

Invading Celts told the Romans centuries ago that they carried justice at the point of the sword.

We know from experience that justice is an emotional issue, and when the starting point is a clear case of perceived injustice, it is extremely difficult to put a distance between strong emotions and a reasonable debate. It is true that emotion can serve a great purpose. It can bring people together and commit them to a cause even at great sacrifice. It can help to motivate people to gather related information fast, go into action without loss of time. But if emotion does not have reason for an ally, it goes off the rails and sends you marching double-quick in the opposite direction. That is what usually happens soon after an emotionally charged group takes over a situation.

The French Revolution was a clear example. French men themselves became cynical about their slogan ‘Equality, Fraternity, Liberty’ after countless number of their countrymen had been brutally killed by the revolutionaries in order to realise their noble goals of ‘fraternity’ and the ‘reign of reason’. These goals remained forever elusive. Similar stories, and even more tragic ones, may be recounted about the Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian attempts to establish a ‘perfectly just order’. A simplistic approach to justice has disastrous consequences.

Many of our activists, busy with petty local issues, can make serious mistakes and cause irreparable damage.

It is for that reason that Amartya Sen takes enormous pain in his recent book *The Idea of Justice* to make it evident that the concept of justice can be understood quite differently in different social situations, historic contexts and by diverse communities. He does not see any possible consensus on the concept of a 'perfectly just social arrangement', any more than on deciding whether *Mona Lisa* is the best picture in the world (Sen 2009:15-16). He asks whether it would not be more realistic to strive to reduce injustice and advance the cause of justice in different cases than to set entire peoples after utopian goals of justice, treading on human beings all along the way and leading them ultimately to frustration. The 'just' War at Kurukshetra lasted only 18 days, but it wiped out entire races. Ferdinand I, the Holy Roman Emperor, is quoted as having said, "Let justice be done, though the world perish – *fiat justitia, et pereat mundus*" (*ibid.*:21). It amounts to saying, let my proposals for justice be carried out, and let humanity go to the dogs!

The ambiguities surrounding justice-struggles are becoming more and more evident every day. It is in a context of such diverse views that Sen urges us to accept the possibility that another theory than our own may have the features of impartiality, fairness, being unbiased and dispassionate (*ibid.*:57). He quotes Jurgen Habermas who speaks about the importance of taking note of other people's point of view, welcoming information and remaining open-minded to public dialogue (*ibid.*:43). This is so because in discussing justice issues, we are confronted with a plurality of competing principles. That is what makes it necessary for us to subject our opinions repeatedly to serious scrutiny and to be ready at a given time to be satisfied with partial solutions (*ibid.*:106-10). He is confident that over a period of time bad reasoning will be corrected by good reasoning. Thus we make our democracy come alive with reasoned engagement, with abundant availability of information and the possibility of discussion and audibility of voices (*ibid.*:xiii).

On the contrary, why do we tend to make of our democracy a competition of Furies? Why do we seek to intimidate people or influence public opinion through political violence, throwing stones, burning buses and planting explosives in cinema halls and market places, damaging historical monuments, demonising the opponent, having recourse to the character assassination of the rival, communal riots, *gheraos*, and *rasta rokos*? We need not be over-confident about the persuasive power of such uncreative juggleries.

## 7. Avoid Hasty Categorisation, Listen to Global Voices

What plays mischief with the truth is that men will insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion.

—Herman Merville

Man tends to treat all opinions as principles.

—Herbert Agar

We have heard about what is described as *Matsyanyaya*, big fish eating small fish. The entire justice-struggle consists in opposing that, whether it be opposition against dominant political forces or vested economic interests. But in specific situations today one may wonder who is the big fish. Are they only those who exert political power and have financial clout? Are they just the ‘establishment’, as it is usually pre-supposed? Or, on the contrary, are they those who have organising power like NGOs and pressure groups, media barons, muscle men, or armed thugs? Someone has remarked that Indian democracy today is not in the hands of the majority; it has been hijacked by ‘organised minorities’, feudal type party-leaders and corporation interests. Today’s actual power-brokers are many ‘invisibles’.

To which organised group do I belong at this moment? What ethical principles am I guided by? Is it true that in the justice-struggle there is nothing like ethical principles and moral norms, and that these are mere sophisms formulated by a bourgeois society to deceive the underdogs? If we have been fed too long on these fallacies, there are consequences. Justice-fighters could ask themselves from time to time the questions quoted above. It has become morally obligatory for everyone to subject himself/herself to self-scrutiny using a variety of competing principles (Sen 2009:183). For, the victim of one form of injustice may be the author of another form of injustice. For example, a violent protester against American action in Afghanistan may be unfair to his wife, his cook, his *dalit* neighbour, or a person of another ethnic or religious group. If the first gesture of protest is most legitimate in one respect, the exercise of self-scrutiny may reveal that he is equally guilty in another respect. This realisation may have a softening effect on his over-aggressiveness; it may set him to question the validity of dividing people into clean categories of ‘oppressors’ and ‘oppressed’. For, such generalisations are inaccurate and inadequate. In spite of that, we can see clearly that many social analysers present a distorted vision of society to others. Many justice-fighters and conscientisers misguide their followers, build up collective anger and leave them to their own devices...undoubtedly with disastrous consequences. They are accountable. “He who has caused the death of multitudes should weep for them with the bitterest grief” (Tao Te Ching 31).

Sen quotes the example of Edmund Burke, who was ‘conservative’ with regard to the French Revolution, but ‘progressive’ with regard to American Independence or the British rule in India (Sen 2009:114-5), and refers to Robert Oppenheimer whose joy in his technical success in handling atomic energy turned into mental agony when it was used at Hiroshima (*ibid.*:211). Only scrutiny from different perspectives will lead to an objective and realistic understanding of things. This is precisely what often individual movement leaders fail to do. They forget that the principles that operate against the perpetrators of injustice operate against the victims too when they slide into the same mistake. For, everyone concerned is a human person. “Justice, though to the accused, is due to the accuser too” (Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo). We know that the instrument of justice cuts both ways (*The Tao of Leadership*, Heider 1988:147).

Further, we have become extremely conscious in modern times of the need to pay attention to cultural differences which have given shape to diverse ethical codes according to the differing historical experiences of communities. A cultural analysis can be helpful in such situations. Listening to the consciences of other cultures can be illuminating. Listen and you will learn. The tribal tradition of listening to everyone in village-gatherings that Nelson Mandela used to refer to is equally good for the ‘global village’. Global voices set us thinking, says Sen (2009:408). Now that human interdependence is growing, it has become all the more necessary. That is why we should respectfully study the moral codes that have developed in other cultures. Even Aristotle and Plato who condoned infanticide might have thought differently if they were familiar with other ethical codes than their own (*ibid.*:130).

Sen suggests also a view from a distance in order to see things in perspective. For example how would lynching of miscreants in America appear to other communities, or the stoning of adulterous women in Afghanistan, or abortion of female foetus in India, or capital punishment in China (*ibid.*:405), or blasphemy laws in Pakistan? To people outside each of these cultural worlds such things may appear a horror. And horrors do take place. And there seems to be no end to them. No wonder that Alexander Hamilton exclaimed in despair, “Man – a reasoning than a reasonable animal”. Views from a neutral distance can question local prejudices, challenge vested interests and suggest alternatives to unexamined preconceptions. Arguments from divergent perspectives help us to see things better.

## 8. Self-interest is Not the Only Motive That Moves Human Beings Altruism Can be as Rational and Even More Human Than Profit-motive

True self-interest teaches selflessness. Heaven and earth endure because they are not simply selfish but exist in behalf of creation. The wise leader knowing this, keeps egocentricity in check and by doing so becomes even more effective. Enlightened leadership is service, not selfishness. The leader grows more and lasts longer by placing the well-being of all above the well-being of self alone. Paradox: By being selfless, the leader enhances self.

—*The Tao of Leadership*, Heider 1988:13

All the great systems of ethics preach absolute unselfishness as the goal. Every selfish action retards our reaching the goal, and every unselfish action takes us towards the goal.

—Vivekananda

We are familiar with Bentham's utilitarian theory which proposes the greatest happiness of the greatest number. However, outsmarting others and accumulating wealth are not the only motives for happiness that we can think of. What if for someone's happiness comes from serving the least privileged in society (Sen 2009:59)? It is evident that a dedicated altruist is not less rational, less intelligent or less human than a shrewd profit-maker. We human beings are naturally inclined to feel a sense of fiduciary responsibility towards the weaker ones (*ibid.*:251). Even a person like Francis Edgeworth admitted that the human being is most part an 'impure egoist' and a 'mixed utilitarian' (*ibid.*:184).

In fact, an egoist who is far-sighted knows that single-minded pursuit of self-interest will only alienate others and damage his own long-term interests. There is very little evidence to show that our advantage is best served by being 'nasty, brutish and short' as Hobbes described human beings (*ibid.*:415). Why does Hobbes forget that humans can also feel sympathy and be touched by the pain of others; and that even after people argue, disagree and even fight, they can concur, and become caring towards each other (*ibid.*:414-5)? Why does he think that they will not take trouble and go all out to help the needy as the Good Samaritan did, crossing cultural barriers and offering assistance to persons of another community?

"Myriads have transformed the will-to-get into the will-to-give, the will-to-win into the will-to-serve" (Smith 1997:19). Can we confront the will-to-power of Nietzsche with the will-to-service in self-forgetfulness?

## 9. The Path of Persuasion, the Vicious Circle of Struggle

When the leader acts unselfishly, the group simply does what is to be done (*The Tao of leadership*, Heider 1988:113). It is more important to react wisely to what is happening than it is to be able to explain everything in terms of certain theories (*ibid.*:161). It puzzles people at first, to see how little the able leader actually does, and yet how much gets done. But the leader knows how things work (*ibid.*:73).

The earth does not argue,  
Is not pathetic, has no arrangements,  
Does not scream, haste, persuade, threaten, promise,  
Makes no discriminations, has conceivable failures,  
Closes nothing, refuses nothing, shuts none out  
—Walt Whitman, *A Song of the Rolling Earth*

Having said this much, we cannot ignore reality, nor close our eyes to normal human processes. Voices that were never heard before are making themselves heard. Nations and communities that were bypassed, marginalised or oppressed in history are making their emotions audible. Persons and groups at the periphery want to let everyone know that they do exist, that they too have needs, they too have rights. Indeed, weak or wayward, all people have rights. When we call a thief a ‘Good Thief’, we are admitting that below the surface of things there is something good in every person, in every point of view. Blessed are those who are able to identify and show respect to that deposit of goodness in people and in groups, and call it forth to life and action. Such persons stir the nobler instincts in human beings and strengthen the sense of belonging in the human family, and appeal to their higher motives to pursue worthwhile goals. They persuade, they touch hearts, they change minds, they transform lives, and they urge society onto higher levels of thinking.

Martin Luther King drew his countrymen to a moral vision, evoking moral commitments. His gestures (marches, boycotts) were also aimed at a dialogic encounter, moral persuasion through moral power not mere political power, appealing to people’s moral conscience. He appealed to their economic sense as well: his people contributed a great deal to the American economy. He believed in the power of persuasion because of his trust in American democracy, its closeness to the message of the Gospel and to the true nature of the universe (Gudorf 2010, Vol 2:125).

Persuasion is not about verbosity, it is not eloquence or scholarly display of the self, it is not screaming in the streets or defacing of public monuments. What is needed for persuasion is not the ‘Art of Public Speaking’ alone, but the art of ‘Private Sharing’ too, seeking gently to change the mind of those who differ from

you. It includes a strategy of both speaking and keeping silence. E.C.Mckenzie once said, “The real art of conversation is not only saying the right thing in the right place, but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment”. This does not however mean passively giving up nor hastily fleeing the scene of action. It means turning natural human and social processes in your favour because you make sure that what you seek is objectively right and true.

Sun Zi, the oldest strategic thinker in Chinese history thought that smartness consisted merely in handling the situation to your advantage (Zakaria 2008:127). In modern times Deng Xiaoping thought in similar manner. “Coolly observe, calmly deal with things, hold your position, hide your capacities, bide your time, accomplish things where possible.” Why are you surprised that your views or interests seem to be in conflict with someone else’s? After all, there is diversity and polarity in every society. As sexes are complementary, cultures, concepts and characters are complementary too. If you wish to bring them into conflict, it is your choice. You must take responsibility. The Ionians and the Dorians in Greece were different. They could have joined hands together in common endeavours, which they did from time to time. But ultimately they chose to express their difference in conflict which ended up in the Peloponnesian War between the Athenians and the Spartans, and which left them exhausted and exposed to the Persians. Similarly, it was the exhaustion of the Romans and the Persians in unending wars between them that led to their collapse and the rise of the Arabs.

There are ‘movement leaders’ who press their point to such an extent that they create a self-defeating situation. They opt for a shortcut to success. They want to show that they are smart enough to identify the enemy and effective enough in moving into action. But when their idealism ends up in personality clashes and ego conflicts, observers wonder what the real issue was. R.H. Tawney said. “If men recognise no law superior to their desires, then they must fight when their desires collide”. Contentious ‘movement leaders’ have an appropriate name for every opponent, whether they be exploiters, oppressors, foreigners, westerners, aliens, *vanvasis*, *mlecchas*. Anyone on the other side is an enemy, just because they belong to a different class, caste, community, colour, culture, gender; or to a particular rank, seniority, position, occupation. The other is always ‘the other’.

“Do not wish for quick results, nor look for small advantages”

—Confucius

Once befriending the enemy is not our goal as it was for Mahatma Gandhi, we fail to develop the skills needed for successful dialogue. Or else we would be counting on the submerged humanity in the opponent, and seeking to earn his esteem, elicit his good will, evoke his sympathy, and invite a change of attitudes.



But why should we exert ourselves in these exercises? We are not seeking charity, pleading for compassion, we are claiming our rights. Who can deny the truth of such claims? We agree. However, leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mandela, and Dalai Lama adopted an alternative method. No one thought that their energies were being wasted. On the contrary, the rightness of their approach gave them enormous strength when it was combined with the rightness of their cause.

Martin Luther King believed that the virtue of non-violence was that it “helps us to see the enemy’s point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn to grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition” (Gurdof 2010, Vol 2:126).

History is long. Those who have a deeper understanding of the evolution of human societies know for certain that aggressiveness only invites aggressiveness in response. Cynicism invites cynicism. When you want to teach other people a lesson, others may want to teach you lesson too. Threats draw forth counter-threats and occasionally violent resistance, even before the initiator is ready. War invites war. The Japanese invasion of China only strengthened the Chinese determination to fight back. “War can only be abolished by war” Mao screamed. Bismark, the German Chancellor, had said something similar earlier better pointed bullets than pointed speeches. And bullets were shot. But bullets came back even after generations to harass Germany. Polarisers are not persuaders.

A show of strength in tense situations is merely provocative. The weaker and the less equipped or prepared hit back harder in sheer desperation, whether in Vietnam, Afghanistan, or in the tribal belts of India; where they feel that their land is being sold off to corporations, their mineral resources are taken away and they themselves are being reduced to third-class citizens in their own land. We do not say that such responses necessarily have any chance of victory. In fact they only lead communities into a vicious circle of violence. But it is sad to see more and more people moving into this zone of no return. Once serious violence breaks out, no one knows the direction it can take nor the truth of what is really happening. Winners and losers have their own different accounts of events, and they preserve different memories. All reports from the scene are partial, at times distorted. Jean Giraudoux says that when there is war in the air, everyone learns to live with an element of falsehood.

## 10. Fighters Produce Fighters

We still have judgement here;  
 that we but teach  
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return.  
 To plague the inventor:  
 this even-handed justice  
 Commends the ingredience of our poisonid chalice  
 To our own lips.

—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.7.1

In the future no one wins a war.

—Brock Chisholm

At this stage I have only one advice. Never humiliate your opponent. Never hurt a community's collective selfhood. Do not allow any dispute to turn into an ongoing prestige-struggle. Even the weakest have some measure of self-respect. They will fight back to affirm it. And if you allow me, another piece of advice: think carefully before you take on a stronger enemy. For him (them) you are just a contentious brat. That is why you are uncertain what can happen to minorities initiating a struggle with a majority community. There are hundreds of ways they can push you aside. Since they can crush you at any time of their choice, they may keep teasing you for a while as a cat does with her victim. But when the provocation becomes excessive, things that you never desired nor intended take place, and you begin to wish you had adopted another approach. Unfortunately you put your best talent into challenging others, and you have earned what you never desired. "The world will never have lasting peace so long as men reserve for war the finest human qualities" (John Foster Dulles). As long you keep your best energies for struggle, peace never comes. You can easily see that the radicalisation of one community (Hindu, Muslim, Christian) leads to the radicalisation of the other.

When the First World War finally came to an end, the people in Europe fondly hoped for peace; they thought they had suffered enough. There were 35,000 war monuments in France alone to remind them about the tragedy they had gone through, one in every commune (Burleigh 2006:1). The British built 2500 cemeteries in the same country to honour their valiant dead (*ibid.*:3). Similar commemorative structures came up all over Europe reminding everyone about the disastrous consequences of war. People were generous in contributing to such memorials, because they wanted the young generations to remember the sacrifices of those who had gone before them. But more especially those monuments were an invitation to learn from the tragic lessons of history (*ibid.*:3), and to be committed to the cause of peace for the future. But those lessons were never learnt. And history

began all over again. And so came the Holocaust, first of the Jews, then of entire peoples! That is what makes us agree with Norman Angell when he said: every nation sincerely desires peace, but pursues courses that make peace impossible.

Centuries ago Chuang Tzu, the Taoist master, had taught, "Weapons are the tools of violence; all decent men detest them" (Smith 1997:217). Despite this great Chinese teaching, Mao believed that political power flowed from the barrel of the gun. The movements that he initiated like China's Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and efforts for fomenting revolutions abroad cost the nation 40 million lives (Zakaria 2008:116). But Mao remained unperturbed.

History tells us that fighters produce fighters, till all turn fighters. After all, most societies passed through the stages not only of being hunters and gatherers, but also of being invaders, marauders, intruders, and crusaders. That instinct is with us. We do not need too much of provocation to get it ablaze. Christopher Dawson reminds us that in Homer's world all were fighters: only knights, retainers, princes, and pirates; no citizens, priests or merchants. The same was true of the Germanic people in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century (Dawson 2002:158). The possibility of such a scenario re-emerging on the world stage is not hard to visualise. When I move into the field absolutely conscious of my rights, but not educated enough about others' rights, about the limits of my own rights, a dignified way of affirming my rights, and persuasive way of regaining lost rights, I may be hurting my long-term interests. It is not an intelligent approach to my problems. We must help people to emerge from their martyr-complexes, not add to their accumulated anger. We must suggest creative ways to the solution of problems and to single-minded commitment to the cause of peace.

Zbigniew Brzezinski lamented that there was a wrong sort of 'global political awakening' amidst communities and groups, due to 'economic success, national pride, higher levels of education, great information and transparency, and memories of the past'. He thought that this sort of political activism was going beyond useful proportions and gradually emerging as a disruptive force. He thought what was becoming visible on the world scene was a phenomenon of ongoing unrest, exaggerated consciousness of injustice, shared discontentment, growing envy of those who move ahead. Energy so generated was being galvanised and channelled for arousing demagogic, political and religious passions (Zakaria 2008:33-4). Alexis de Tocqueville used to say that any protracted conflict endangers the freedom that all cherish.

## 11. The Irrationality of Deterrence, the Beauty of Compromise

The day when nobody comes back from a war it will be because the war has been properly organised.

—Boris Vian

What difference does it make to the dead....whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy?

—M.K. Gandhi

Wars have always been cruel whether fought by the Mongols or the Nazis, Attilas or Hitlers or Stalins; whether in Korea, Vietnam, in the 'killing fields' of Cambodia, or on the heights of Kargil; whether presently conflict arises from ethnic pride, exaggerated nationalism, religious fanaticism, political ambition or economic greed; whether the struggle is between mighty nations, tiny political units, or armed young men on street corners. The Romans used to say, if you want peace, prepare for war. There is no doubt, it meant, 'peace at Roman terms', purchased with Roman arms at the cost of other people's lives. Invading Celts had told the Romans in an earlier period of their history that they (the Celts) carried justice at the point of their swords! Some justice-fighters would like to do just that! Unfortunately violence is not about measured justice, but about an unpredictable measure of waves of injustice.

Today nations are arming themselves to the point of collective suicide in deterrence, acquiring weapons beyond their economic strength. After India's first successful experiment with a nuclear device, Bhutto shrieked that Pakistan would go hungry, would eat grass, but would develop a nuclear device in response. Which they did: six blasts for five. Norman Cousins says, the possibility of war increases in direct proportion to the effectiveness of the instruments. The more prepared I am, the provocative I appear. Either side can take the initiative. And once the war breaks out, no one has full control; instead of the government taking over the industry to make it serve its purposes, the industry takes over the government to make it serve its greed, says Claire Gillis.

Arnold Toynbee in his multi-volume *Study of History* tries to show that aggressiveness on one side stirs up aggressiveness on the opposite side. For him, the Mauryan empire was an Indian response to Alexander's invasion, which itself was provoked by Persia's intrusion into Greece. The Greco-Roman forces remaining dominant for a long time on the western front of Asia and even pressing their way too far into the Asian Continent called for an Asian response. And when it actually came, it came in the form of the Islamic drive to reach beyond the

Pyrenees conquering vast areas of the earlier Roman Empire, and to the gates of Vienna. The Imperial expansion of the West during the last four centuries was, for Toynbee, the counter-response to the Islamic thrust westwards.

One may foresee, with the recent awakening of the Asian Powers a possible counter-flow, which, we pray, will be peaceful and far-sighted, generating goodwill on either side, eager to share resources, talents and competencies. An entire new world can open out before us if we seek to understand the meaning of Mahatma Gandhi's phrase, the beauty of compromise, and work for cooperation.

## 12. Bringing People Together on the Strength of Collective Anger or Ambition

I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o'er leaps itself,  
And falls on the other

—Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 7.1.16

An angry man is seldom reasonable; a reasonable man is seldom angry.

—E.C. McKenzie

We have seen that the heroes of the past were often conquerors. Persons like Alexander or Caesar dazzled many generations of warriors by the brilliance of their achievements. They were able to gather their people together and motivate them to march out to distant lands and conquer new territories. Those who led successful armies were recognised as great heroes/heroines by their people. Many of them began with defensive battles against invaders, and the very struggle against enemies built up their determination. The success that they achieved kindled fresh ambition in them. It built up strong inner loyalty and community-cohesion producing what Ibn Khaldun has called *Asabiya*, high motivation to cohere together and venture forth (Turchin 2006:91). If anger against an enemy gave them motivation to keep fighting a battle of defence, ambition for conquest and plunder urged them go on the offensive. Ultimately they succeeded to bring vast populations together under a single rule. This is the story of all conquering races and empire-builders, whether they were Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Mongols, Turks or the Conquistadores. However, the unity of peoples that an empire brings about is an imposed unity (Dawson 2002:44).

The defeated people have no choice but bow to strength. They do so more readily when the new conquerors overthrow an oppressive regime and promise them a better deal. But these hopes are soon frustrated when heavier burdens are placed on them by the new regime. And gradually discontentment spreads down the ranks to the disappointed people. Ambitious young men from within the territory or the borders take advantage of the situation, build on the resentment of the people, and set up another order of things with the use of force. Thus new rulers emerge, new dynasties come up, and new conquering races control affairs for another spell of time.

However, frequent changes are avoided when there are intelligent leaders who have the ability to place before people some noble ideals and values and keep them together. Thus Empires like the Roman State lasted out for centuries, projecting an image of fairness and equal opportunity to citizens, efficiency in administration, success in the promotion of trade, and intellectual achievements in the cultural and scientific field.

### **13. Uniting People With Ideologies of Hatred or an ‘Anti-Other’ Attitude**

The instinctive need to be the member of a closely knit group for common ideals may grow so strong that it becomes inessential what these ideals are (Konrad Lorez). Thus people are misled into deceptive ideologies.

(The Communists) are universal saviours who want to cure the whole world with their own disease, just as the Nazis did.

—Jung, *Collected Letters*, Vol. 2, p 11

We have seen how charismatic personalities were able to bring people together by the strength of their personality or the strength of their arms. But ultimately it has always been proved that people could be held together for a considerable length of time only by committing them to some great ideals and goals. Here lies a danger too. As in earlier times people were easily forced or seduced into subjection by rulers who played on their greed for booty or ambition for conquests, there have emerged in recent times leaders who have the skill of reducing people to the status of blind followers, playing on their anger and resentment against real or perceived exploitation. Millions have died in bloody revolutions and many more continue to be held slaves to ideologies of hatred. They need to be rescued. Modern Wilberforces will need to emerge to work for the abolition of this new type of

slavery, to ransom people from such ideologies of hatred, whether they be of the rightist variety or the leftist.

Christopher Dawson shares with us a perceptive insight when he says it is precisely the intellectuals without social responsibilities that become a seedbed for theories of violence. He sees leaders of revolutionary and terrorist movements rising, not from the peasant or the proletariat classes, but from the middle ranks and from the irresponsible bourgeois class (Dawson 2002:238). Vitriolic social criticism too often springs from among people with no sense of responsibility or solidarity, mere self-interest being their main concern (*ibid.*:240). And modern prophets and conscientisers can be as bloody as those of earlier times, demanding sacrifices to Moloch. Nietzsche's critique of compassion and glorification of violence, and his belief in the evolution of a Superman who would be beyond good and evil laid the foundations for a fascist theory (Veith 2000:63).

Communist radicals too were unconcerned about human pain or moral sensitivities. Ernst von Solomon, for example, claimed that they wished to set themselves free of all bourgeois norms; and being thus free, anything that suited them was legitimate, including passion and lust. There was no room for squeamish human sympathy nor insipid sentimentality. What they were aiming at was a new type of humanity, producing magnificent beasts of prey, a wrathful people, and an enraged knighthood (Burleigh 2006:7). Thus, dehumanised persons posed themselves as redeemers of mankind, thuggish and brutal, considering all political opponents as deadly enemies; respecting not even civilian population (*ibid.*:8).

Such theoreticians emerge as a new type of religious prophets. Nazis referred to the people who slaughtered in their behalf as 'priests'. All recent ideologies like fascism, Nazism, communism manifested symptoms of pseudo-religious pathologies and were busy with quasi-religious activities such as brainwashing new recruits, extorting confession, hunting heresies, and re-educating those that erred in ideology. They eagerly looked forward to the emergence of a new man, a new heaven, and a new earth. Not surprisingly, such teachers came from families that had some religious connection (*ibid.*:xii).

'Fanatic nationalism', including the Indian version, makes global peace uncertain. Sub-nationalism threatens healthy nationalism; ethnic loyalty weakens even sub-national movements. On the other hand, hegemonic tendencies of mightier powers threaten nation-states, government-sponsored terrorism limits the freedom of democratic movements, and the so-called people's movements working at cross-purposes reduce the usefulness of all of them. Endless petty anti-authority struggles and erratic efforts to interfere in all public matters create 'failed nations', 'failed states', 'failed regions', 'failed organisations', and 'failed democracies'. Ultimately what emerges is an 'all against all' situation. Many of



them do not know what they are fighting for, nor what their demands imply in the long term. In the 1960s young people in Europe, and in blind imitation in India, were waving the banners of Marx, Lenin and Mao, when entire peoples under communist regimes were giving them up. In the mid-1920s Luigi Sturzo had spoken of the 'abusive exploitation of the human religious sentiment' (*ibid.*:xi), which we are confronted with in India today. Further, a sort of guerrilla warfare of all ideologies led by justice-activists of all sorts, communal prophets, half-mystics, godmen, seers, fakes and charlatans, keeps going on.

Observers are beginning to predict that America's interference in Iraq and Afghanistan is bound to be its end, as it proved to be for the Soviet Union (Zakaria 2008:173). But the interesting thing to note is that every aggressive nation, movement, ideological thrust meets with 'its own Afghanistan' in due time. It is only the wise and the prudent that find a way of avoiding this sort of a 'terminal ailment'. Can we help to bring down anger in human hearts? Can we be like the 'lamb of God' who takes away the 'anger of the world'? Is there no way of keeping at a distance tragedies like those of the Twin Towers, Bamiyan Buddhas, Holocaust, Hiroshima, Ayodhya, Bhopal, Chernobyl, Gulag, Jihad, culture wars, Killing Fields, and Taj Hotel?

## 14. Building Unity on the Enthusiasm for a Growing Economy

The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell.

—Confucius

When it comes to economic problems, we seem to be more skilled in 'post mortem' than diagnosis.

Amazing things are happening today. We are witnessing a global growth, and the emerging economy is accounting for half this growth (Zakaria 2008:20). More and more people in the developing world are being absorbed into a productive and growing economy. They cease to be objects, and become players on their own right. And as the world comes closer and inter-connected, it sets in motion a virtuous cycle of growth, but unfortunately also a vicious cycle of depression.

As manufacturer and saver, China comes first (*ibid.*:92). She has become the workshop of the world, as Britain was in the nineteenth century. She has begun to contribute more to global growth than America by the sheer volume of her consumer demands. The Chinese have preserved their pragmatism and competence. And of late, the Chinese government has been trying its best to shift

to a policy of non-confrontation and confidence-building, furthering the interests of her economy a great deal (*ibid.*:105). They realise that China can exercise power only through the market, not building empires (*ibid.*:108).

For all these advantages, China has to worry for her future. The one-child policy that she had adopted to control population is going to hurt the country in the long term. People generally do not realise that unreflected social engineering like this can have unintended consequences (*ibid.*:132). In a short time, China will have less of young people than she needs to maintain her production centres. It also means that she will have a shortage of talented and creative people who can think up new ventures. Even a hasty look at the list of Nobel laureates shows that the largest number of them are between the ages of 30 and 44. An ageing population in China further stands for a heavier burden of pension. And again, there will soon be more spenders and less producers and savers in China; more people comfortable and less people ready to work hard. The wheels of history turn and the rich and the poor nations change their positions.

Let us turn now our attention to India. Her growth rate during the last few years has been impressive. As China pumps out goods, India excels in services. As of now, India has more billionaires than any other Asian country, most of them self-made. The private initiative of the average Indian is amazing. "The government sleeps at night and the economy grows", claims Gurucharan Das (*ibid.*:135). It is evident that the future belongs to those who are ready for hard work. An earlier chapter in our history tells us that some 20,000 labourers worked for 20 years day and night for building the Taj Mahal. They built a ramp 10-miles long to move materials to 187-foot-high dome (*ibid.*:58). Such great things can be achieved only when people are ready for strenuous and determined effort. "The lean and hungry generate energy" and win in the struggles that lie ahead (*ibid.*:198-99).

There is a limit to all these Asian possibilities. Their sustainability will not depend only on the economic laws alone that have proved so elusive and unreliable during the last few generations. It will depend on multiple factors over which we have too little control. Further, the good news of growth is sobered by the bad news of pressure on nature (clean air, potable water, sufficient agricultural produce, etc.) (*ibid.*:30). Increase in the number of vehicles aggravates increase sharpens the pollution problem. Looking at things from another angle, it is not clear whether India can build up sufficient determination to wipe out corruption, or has the ability to reach a national consensus on certain vital issues, or the skill to control sudden decisions like the members of parliament choosing to give themselves an unusually high remuneration.

International tensions keep the Asian nations continuously in defensive positions against each other. Deterrence adds to the anxiety. Arms-selling Mighty

Powers aggravate the problem further. Social tensions in each country in every direction leave many things unpredictable. After each explosion, whether it was at Madrid, London, on 9/11, or Bali, the economy dipped, at least for some time. That is why building national unity only on the strength of the enthusiasm created by a growing economy is fragile. No doubt, it has some value at the present moment, and we need to take maximum advantage of it. Success itself is a motivation for further success and united efforts towards it.

## 15. Awareness of One's Sad Plight Can Build Up Anger or Motivate Determined Effort

Knowledge is ruin to my young men.

—Adolf Hitler

A man who experiences no genuine satisfaction in life does not want peace...Men court war to escape meaninglessness and boredom, to be relieved of fear and frustration.

—Nels F.S. Ferre

When the Japanese felt that they had been left behind, they made up their mind as a nation to catch up with the western world. So did many countries of Europe when they realised that others had gone ahead of them. Similarly, those communities that woke up to their backwardness within individual states and decided seriously to change the situation, marched ahead even of front-runners. Late beginners have certain advantages, most of all being able to build up double-determination. Thus we find the Scots catching up with the English, and even going ahead them in certain areas of life in some period of their history. They produced men of exceptional stature like David Hume, Adam Smith, Stuart Mill and others, once they decided to give attention to education.

Thomas Sowell's research leads him to suggest that the Welsh and the Irish adopted another route. Welsh movements preferred rather to take to political games and protests (Sowell 1998:49), and their working class remained constantly militant (*ibid.*:51). Sowell says that what kept rising was not Welsh entrepreneurship but resentment and strife; and what gave energy to their movements were identity claims and memories of oppression. Identity affirmation of newly emerging communities is natural, but they must go beyond it to achieve success. In Sowell's opinion, the Irish too chose a similar path, being active in labour union movements, whether in Britain, US, Australia, or Canada (*ibid.*:69). They consistently supported the labour party in England and democratic party in the US. Such comparisons of

ethnic groups can be odious and one is not bound to subscribe to these views. However, they can set us thinking.

It is often not the top-achievers that mislead when a society begins to drag behind, but the half-performers, the under-performers, especially in education and work. And they lead not by providing ideas, but by playing on emotions, whether the grievances are based on ethnicity, class, caste or gender. Ethnic leaders of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia were half-baked intellectuals who knew how to heighten anger, build up hostility against others, thwart the efforts of authorities, preserve negative memories; but they did not know how to heal wounds, restrain excesses, motivate performance, or inspire by achieving something worthwhile for their country. Those who fail in productive labour specialise in resentment-creation, says Sowell (*ibid.*:350-51). They feed people on grievances. If every nation or community ought to be punished in proportion to the wrongdoing of its past, who would survive? Are not all of us guilty? (*ibid.*:338).

When the Scots became painfully aware of their poverty and backwardness in many respects, they changed their lives. They opted for education and effort, and the world witnessed a wonder (*ibid.*:341).

Another reflection reports that the educated unemployed are the primary promoters of identity politics. Michael Radu says, “Leaders and recruits to the most fanatical terrorist groups are not the poor, unfairly treated, and the marginalised masses of the Islamic world, but rather – just as in Latin America, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines – young radicalised university graduates who have lost their traditional employment...The same syndrome applies to the unassimilated and unassimilable young, well-educated, usually second-generation Muslim immigrants in the West” (Gurdof 2010, Vol. I:186). In one thing these perceptions coincide: resentment is strongest in those who feel they ‘do not belong’. They develop ultimately a sense of belonging within the group of radicals. Is there some way of creating for them a sense of belonging within the larger society?

## 16. Civilisation as a Spiritual Communion More Precious Than Economic Assets

Neither man nor nation can exist without a sublime idea.

—Feodor Dostoevski

Ideals are like stars: you will not succeed in touching them with your hands, but like the seafaring man ...you choose as your guides, and following them you reach your destiny.

—Carl Schurz

We need to look at the social tensions we have been describing above and all the economic and political uncertainties we experience, in the context of a wider reality called 'Civilisation'. This reality has something to do with the glory of our collective past, the joys and pains of the present, and the shape of things to come as we pursue our ultimate destiny. While the political society is an association for practical ends, civilisation is a spiritual communion (Dawson 2002:54-55). It cannot be bought or sold, budgeted or planned. It is the spiritual heritage of a people which has taken shape over generations, over centuries. Everyone benefits from it, and can make a small contribution towards its development. But a civilisation's processes cannot be rushed through direct intervention. Plato tried to reform Sicily by giving the young tyrant lessons in mathematics (*ibid.*:188). In this endeavour he failed. But the ideas he left behind gave a new direction to the entire history of the western world.

Great societies like those of the Indians or the Chinese have a rich cultural heritage within the context of which they work out solutions to their problems and make a contribution to human growth. In these days there is a renewed understanding of the traditions linked with Asian civilisations, e.g. with Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism or Islam. They are showing their strength and are looked up to with respect. They have been great and have played a great role in different periods of history. We remember, for example, that the forerunners of enlightenment were inspired by the Confucian classics (Zakaria 2008:109-10).

Similarly, every nation or group of kin nations has a unique stock of cultural assets which has been the moving force behind its achievements and against which background they seek to offer something valid to the rest of humanity. As the French spoke of liberty and the Russians of equality, the English legitimately boast of their democratic traditions and the rule of law. Such inspiring ideas are more precious than the volume of accumulated capital or an abundance of natural resources. At a particular period of history, reputation for fairness brought more and more of European business to London which set going an economic boom on the island (Sowell 1998:32). In the same way, Americans are proud that they gave a lead in the area of education to creativity, curiosity, a sense of adventure, and ambition. Nations whose innovative ideas turn out to be relevant and inspiring, gradually begin to make an impact on others. There was a time when Indian insights were considered inspiring and when she acted as a soft power, as Jose Nye calls it, exerting influence by the very attractiveness of the ideas that she generated. In reality, this sort of soft power is a 'mighty power'. For, they change the world. Arms assail and crush, economy entices and enslaves, ideas enlighten and befriend. D.T. Suzuki, referring to a British team that claimed to have conquered Everest, said, "We Orientals would have spoken of befriending Everest" (Smith 1997:212).

Unfortunately, there are also weaknesses that cling to civilisations which act as a deadweight on them. Such negative cultural assets are a drag on communities and keep them behind in the global race for better times and better things. Fear of manual labour, caste and gender prejudices, and lack of thoroughness in things, can have serious economic and social consequences. And an inclination to corruption, political militancy, lack of cooperative spirit, and indifference to untidiness, if neglected, can become an unrenounceable part of our cultural heritage dragging us to dust. However, the consolation in these things is the fact that, given the needed goodwill, the worst can be averted and the best can be ensured.

## **17. Civilisations and Cultures in Rapid Transition**

Leaders are the custodians of a nation's ideals, of the beliefs it cherishes, of its permanent hopes, of the faith which makes a nation out of a mere aggregation of individuals.

—Walter Lippmann

For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic when I am human and humane.

—M.K. Gandhi

Today civilisations and cultures are in crisis. They are in rapid transition. When the ideals and values on which they were built get marginalised, the society concerned goes through an experience of self-alienation and an estrangement from its collective self. The insecurity it generates leads it to a frantic search for a substitute. If the society chooses to re-affirm the ideals and values on which it was established, it witnesses a revival of its ancient glory. Not willing to pay the price of returning to the deeper values linked with its original genius, the society opts for an alternative: glorification of an artificially constructed 'self', a distorted form of the original, an unreal collective being. In the Roman Empire, it took the form of emperor-worship, ending up in statolatry. Effectively, it is self-worship forgetting the real identity of the self; in fact, worship of the 'false self'.

This happened in Japan and in many nation-states of Europe before the War. For example, a distorted form of German identity – Aryan-Nordic-pure race – was placed before people inviting public obeisance and fanatic loyalty. This Nazi irrationality has been sufficiently exposed since; but other nation-states too were not far behind in sacrificing human lives to the cause of imperialism and exaggerated forms of nationalism. Most pre-war political history was political propaganda for nation states (Dawson 2002:4). There is a school of thought in India today that refuses to learn from such negative experiences and is eager to drag the nation into

the same sort of idolatry, worship of a distorted form of our ‘collective self’. It is our hope that the nation escapes the excesses that humanity has witnessed in the past when a fringe group of Fascists takes over the destinies of their people into their hands.

## 18. Lessons from the Decline of Greece and Rome

It (the Greek culture) withered from below, when the sources of life of the people were drying up.

—Christopher Dawson

The city ( of Rome) had become an end in itself. Materialism, spiritual exhaustion, worship of the state, neopaganism.

(Christopher Dawson), mutual exploitation.  
Rome killed Rome.

Christopher Dawson points out that Egypt and China survived for centuries because they preserved the foundations of their civilisation (Dawson 2002:66). Going further, he analyses the different stages of the decline of Greece and Rome after their republican traditions had been weakened and their self-worship had gone too far. “Civilisations and empires forget how they came into existence”, he says; “bloated and heavy they fall. Empires become self-contained and self-destructive” (*ibid.*:xvi). Likewise, he insists, Hellenism did not die so much as a result of the Peloponnesian war, malaria, exhaustion of soil, loss of nerve,...but due to failure of life. It withered from below, when the sources of life of the people were drying up. The wider Hellenic world represented a cosmopolitan society with no root in the past and no contact with the region of its origin. Gradually this rootlessness “caused the degradation of the Greek type: not the citizen soldier, but the starveling Greek of Juvenal’s satire” (*ibid.*:62-63).

Something similar happened to Rome. The early republic was the age of simplicity, military severity and discipline (*ibid.*:163). In that era the Romans were known for their virility, laboriousness, and courage. But everything changed after Rome became an Empire. The citizen-soldier was replaced by the half-hearted mercenary. The peasant culture gave place to a mercenary culture. The market economy took over, making estates and slaves available for ready purchase. An aristocracy that was strongly committed to the Roman cause was replaced by crafty money-makers who were most indifferent to anything beyond their own private interests. The urban centres lost vital contact with the countryside, depending merely on an artificially propped up political and economic system in the city (*ibid.*:69). There was no idealism, no common goals; only anonymous masses to



be appeased with doles and bribes, while the city itself lived on the loot that came from the plundering of foreign nations (*ibid.*:67). Are the economically advanced regions of the world and better-off communities in individual nations living on real 'economic loot' that comes from the plundering of the weak? Can we already foresee the 'decline and fall' of many of such mighty powers?

Dawson lamented that something similar was happening to England in his days. The Industrial Revolution had drawn vast populations from the village and country house to industrial cities and production centres. They were herded into working camps and workers' dormitories in chaotic fashion, reducing them to the status of masses, the proletariat, with no sense of responsibility, no social restraint, no sense of belonging (*ibid.*:232). This may be happening in India today. In real fact, the British working class in industrial towns ceased to be people, communities, and human beings (*ibid.*:202). This was the fertile ground for the emergence of a Karl Marx. The cities of England lived for the world market. The bourgeois who controlled the industries felt no sense of responsibility to the welfare of the people or the nation. They were only accustomed to dealing with things, quantities, money. They were happy enough to acquire and accumulate. With bourgeois predominance in English life, the English social discipline derived from the family, community and social relationships was soon forgotten. The spiritual ideals and values to which poets like Keats, Lamb, Dickens and others gave utterance had no place in public life. Is India moving in that sort of direction?

Since every idea involves its opposite (*ibid.*:402), there is the possibility of a new hope-filled situation arising, towards which all of us can contribute. This paper is an invitation to do so. When the development of a thought or process takes a new and positive direction, it can be considered part of its natural evolution. When we concede these natural processes a free space, we prevent a violent transformation, a revolution, as England did in the period of the French Revolution and India did during the decades of the Chinese Revolution. When such earthshaking events are taking place what most people do is to continue looking after their own interests, keeping close to the outmoded dimensions of their traditional social codes. Some, on the contrary, go erratic pushing new ideas and values in an irresponsible way. The traditionalists feel terribly insecure in such a context and grow defensive and rigid in established ways. Very few succeed to integrate the old and new values and make a new synthesis of ideals, values, ethical norms, philosophical principles, or religious traditions. This is where we ought to contribute. Jesus said, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17).

But one thing is certain: a new view of reality is felt intuitively before it is comprehended intellectually (*ibid.*:51). Here is where the young can contribute

while the older ones teach them. Inter-generational interactions are mutually educative.

## 19. Gathering People Together Around Great Values and High Ideals

The central conviction which has dominated my mind ever since I began to write is the conviction that the society or culture which has lost its spiritual roots is a dying culture, however prosperous it may appear externally. Consequently the problem of social survival is not only a political or economic one...

—Christopher Dawson

Leaders have a significant role in creating the state of mind that is in society.

—John Gardner

H.G. Wells used to say that thinkers were far more significant as shapers of history than politicians (Dawson 2002:388). This paper is an invitation to thought. We have seen that the unity imposed by dominant personalities or by exploiting minorities in the form of an Empire has limited future, that self-worship is suicidal. Similarly, the togetherness built on people's anger, ambition or ignorance, by enticing them with ideologies of hatred is counterproductive. In the same way, the enthusiasm constructed on impressive successes in economy, like successes in empire-building, can last only for a brief period.

Only the unity based on the spiritual bonds provided by our civilisation will have the strength to hold together our diverse cultural and religious groups, economic and political interests, ideological and philosophical perceptions. When we shall learn to give greater importance to our civilisational heritage of *dharma – satya – ahimsa* (uprightness-truth-non-violence) and other values promoting solidarity, mutual concern and a sense of common belonging, expressed in today's vocabulary and lived out in dynamic ways and relevant forms, shall we begin to regain our lost vital energies. If they are brought to actual life situations, they will manifest their strength and validity once again.

With growing violence and corruption in our country, there is no denying the fact that our ideals and values are under threat today. And this threat does not come from Christian missionaries as some of our 'cultural nationalists' seem to think; it rather comes from those trends in our society that weaken our moral fibre, social bonds, sense of common belonging, and commitment to shared values

and ideals, easy inclination to corruption, unabashed egotism and party spirit, and closed-minded sectarian thinking.

Our cultures are under threat and our civilisational foundations are being shaken due to the rapid social changes that are taking place. Many of our communities that were rural, agricultural, living generally in isolated villages, eking out an existence from seasonal labour, have moved into investment economy and global economy in a matter of a couple of decades. Along with these changes, new political forces (e.g. emergence of communal movements, ideological radicals, armed young people, political groups in religious garb using religious symbolisms) have arisen on the national scene in a manner that could not easily have been foreseen before.

The New Economy is pulling people from their homes, their families, their religious beliefs, their cultural roots, their community identities, their familiar terrain, and throwing them into the high seas of uncertainties. They have little sense of security or belonging, and experience the weakening of family or community support, no sure concept of the future, no consistent vision or convictions. They miss the cultural continuity that the presence of parents and grandparents, uncles and distant cousins used to give; the sanctions that the parents or the community used to impose; the certainties that a common heritage used to hand down; and the solidarity the village community used to offer in moments of crisis. The value-system itself is under threat.

According to Dawson, as individuals and communities grow “deracinated and despiritualised”, they become self-centred and forget the sources of their moral vitality: family, region, local clay (*ibid.*:xix-xx) and their spiritual roots. They fail to draw energy and motivation from the organic and life-giving dimension of culture and lose the ability to see the sublime in the ordinary and greatness in themselves. It is in such situations of helplessness that people, especially the youth, develop attitudes that are aggressive and contentious, grow stubborn and unbending. They do not realise how, while they fight their way forward against real and imagined enemies, they are developing skills that are counter-productive and that they are selling out their human dignity for insignificant economic advantages and passing satisfactions.

## 20. A Unifying Spiritual Vision

Wonder rather than doubt is the root of knowledge.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel

Those trees that stand erect, growing close together, are competent to resist winds more violent still, owing to mutual dependence.

—Mahabharata, Udyog Parva Sec. 36

Behind every civilisation there is a unifying vision of reality (Dawson 2002:42). In our case, it is a 'spiritual vision', and it is the most important element in a culture. For, it is at that level we stand face to face with the Ultimate Reality as a community. And as we have a glimpse of that Reality, we begin to perceive the divine in the daily events of our lives, and within the prosaic nature and the materiality of every day. This is the ability that will bring a blessing upon us every day of our life. As we move away from being an agricultural society, whose main concern was the mystery of life as noticeable in the soil and vegetation (*ibid.*:xxi-xxii), and as we begin to deal with more lifeless things within closed doors like dead furniture, lifeless equipment, laptops, profits and bank balances, we should never lose our love for life, respect for living things, and our loyalty to life-giving principles, Ideals and Values. And these are far more enthralling and enriching than the mysteries of the market. They lead us to new forms of discoveries to thrill the hearts that are searching for ultimate meanings. People are tired of the ephemeral excitement that the present shopping culture provides. They are looking for something deeper.

God reveals himself in cultures and communities when they draw closer to each other as though in a pre-ordained fashion. For a diverse people, coming together in harmony is itself a mystic experience. Indeed, "All our destinies are interwoven; and until the last of us has lived, the significance of the first cannot be finally clear", Balthasar (Dawson 2002:xxvi). That is what makes us convinced that we belong to all. Religion has something to do with this sort of conviction; for, genuine religion is not sectarianism. It is not a dignified form of collective selfishness. It is not mere social activism. It is the unravelling of the mystery that interlinks our destinies. Despite the 'uniqueness and singularity' of each event in history and of every person and movement, they are all just part of a larger order of things (*ibid.*:xxvi). Our every day life is more sublime than we think. The history of which we are part gradually reveals to be much more than what the actors intended (*ibid.*:xxxvii). We can see that clearly in the Great Revolutions and World Wars of the past. God was drawing straight through crooked lines. This Realisation may enable us to understand that "Even our thoughts, our wishes, our desires, our dreams are not technically our thoughts, wishes, desires, or dreams. They are manifestations of the total universe", says Deepak Chopra (2003:182).

That is why we firmly believe that there is hope even in desperate conditions, in the most helpless situations. Adam Smith admitted that "even the greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society", is not without some concern for

others (Sen 2009:19); he added that qualities like sympathy, generosity and public spirit are ingrained in human beings (*ibid.*:185). Serious students of human nature are convinced that the cleaver promotion of self-interest is not the only “Rational Choice Theory” that people make. They know that they have received much from others and ought to give back something in return. They are eager to give attention to healthy relationships that build up the human family. They feel a sense of obligation to other living creatures as well. Buddha thought that human beings being stronger, have some special responsibility towards other weaker species, as a mother has for her child (*ibid.*:204-5).

However, the news that bombard us every day merely obscures this vision and prevents a helpful interpretation of events. That is why we need to stand aside and develop a detached view of things, withdraw for a while and reflect, move apart and meditate. So often we are lost amidst the sensationalist media that debates insignificant trivia, deals with politics as though it were a theatre, refers to money as though it is an adorable object, speaks of a grievance as though it is the only cause living for, and is at its best when it is dealing with its own ideology or agenda. But we know that another world is possible. A small group with a wider outlook, ingenuity, passion and determination to bring people of diverse category together around certain unshakable principles has every chance to win attention. People are waiting for such angels bringing good news. It is a spiritual mission.

Let us then be Agents of Togetherness and light up the lives of people with inspiring ideas, ideals and values that speak about the human family as one and the human cause as identical. Ardent lovers of their own country like Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore, Sun Yat-sen, Aung San Suu Kyi or others were never exclusive. Persons specially committed to their own communities like the Dalai Lama, Mandela, Mother Teresa, or John Paul II still had a universal outlook. They were the representatives of the entire human family. With the right approach, we are bound to succeed. “There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world: and that is an idea whose time has come” (Victor Hugo). May be such a time has come for human togetherness. However, it can only come from the inner conscious of being united in one heart. Mahatma Gandhi said, “Such power as I possess for working in the political field has derived from my experiments in the spiritual field.”

## **21. Every Community Must Contribute From Its Own Resources**

The best methods of controlling communalism is to get moderate religious leaders on public forums to address the masses, spiced with

examples from the scriptures. Those who are inflamed by religion can only be calmed down by religion, not by a slick or rational explanation.

—Uma Bharati, quoted at Kessler 151

Let the lives and hearts of the sons and daughters of my country be one, my God.

—R.N. Tagore

Everyone makes a start from his own situation using the means he/she has and inspired by the lights he/she holds. Every ethnic group looks to its own prophets for guidance. Every religious group does the same. We Christians look to Jesus for our inspiration. Early Christians did not agitate for the abolition of slavery, but by planting the values that Jesus taught in their society, they changed the institution. John Paul II transformed Communist Poland, drawing people together, not with prophetic aggressiveness, but with the strength of his moral philosophy, cultural sensitivity, non-violent resistance, and credibility which proved his unlimited capacity to stand suffering, and inexhaustible reserves of spirituality (Burleigh 2006:419). Mother Teresa touched the conscience of the world with her powerful witness love, even without a single word of rebuke, said Jimmy Carter.

In Christian understanding Jesus' mission was "to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth" (Ephesians 1:10), "to bring together into one body the scattered people of God" (John 11:52). Under his guidance "the whole body is nourished and held together by its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God wants it to grow" (Colossians 2:19). Surprisingly the most recent scientific theory provides an adequate image in this connection, "Quantum theory thus reveals a basic oneness of the universe...As we penetrate into matter, nature does not show us any 'basic building blocks,' but rather appears 'as a complicated web of relations between various parts of the whole' (Capra 57). Martin Luther King, speaking of human destiny uses similar cosmic language, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality; tied in a single garment of destiny...I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way the world is made. I did not make it this way, but this is the interrelated structure of reality" (Gurdof 2010, Vol 2:127). King built his faith in God, "the creative force in the universe that works to bring the disconnected aspects of reality into a harmonious whole" (*ibid.*:129).

Whenever we say a kind word or perform a kind deed, whenever we whisper an assurance of forgiveness, whenever we bring together people alienated from one another, whenever we offer encouragement to the weak and a correction to the strong, whenever we call people to reflection and self-correction, whenever we try to ease tension and explain one group to another, whenever we promote the virtues of compassion, kindness, generosity, fairness, and concern for others in ourselves

and in others...we make a small contribution to bringing people together. We bring to concrete life-situations the message we heard long ago from holy men of old, "Hear this, everyone! Listen, all people everywhere, great and small alike, rich and poor together"(Psalms 49:2). The Almighty God, the Lord, speaks; he calls the whole earth from east to west.." (Psalms 50:1). You hear a whisper:

Be united;  
Speak in harmony;  
Let your minds apprehend alike;  
Common be your prayer;  
Common be the end of your assembly;  
Common be your resolutions;  
Common be your deliberations;  
Unified be your hearts;  
Common be your intentions;  
Perfect be your unity.

—Rig Veda 10,191,24

## References

- Burleigh, Michael. 2006. *Sacred Causes*. London: Harper Press.
- Capra, Fritjof. 1984. *The Tao of Physics*. Boston: Bantam Books.
- Chopra, Deepak. 2003. *SynchroDestiny, Harnessing the Infinite Power of Coincidence to Create Miracles*. London: Random House.
- Dawson, Christopher. 2002. *Dynamics of World History*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books.
- Gudorf, Christine and Paul Lauritzen (eds). 2010. *Studies in Christian Ethics*. Kottayam: Andreas-Punnoose Publishing Co.
- Heider, John. 1988. *The Tao of Leadership*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Keay, John. 2000. *A History of India*. London: HarperCollins.
- Kessler, Gary. 2000. *Ways of Being Religious*. California: Mayfield Publishing Co.
- Sen, Amartya. 2005. *The Argumentative Indian*. London: Allen Lane (Penguin).
- . 2009. *The Idea of Justice*. London: Allen Lane (Penguin).
- Smith, Huston. 1997. *The World's Religions*. New Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers India.
- Sowell, Thomas. 1998. *Conquests and Cultures*. New York: Perseus Books Group.
- Turchin, Peter. 2006. *War and Peace and War*. New York: A Plume Book (Penguin).
- Veith, Gene Edward, Jr.. 2000. *Fascism: Modern & Postmodern*. Mussoorie: Nivedit Good Books.
- Zakaria, Fareed. 2008. *The Post-American World*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India.





# Afterword

## Harmony, Society and Transformation

*John Clammer*

It is rare indeed in the context of contemporary social theory to see the notion of “harmony” raised at all. A search through the index or bibliography of any major text is likely to reveal a complete silence on this fundamental issue. At some intuitive level we are all aware that in the absence of harmony, disorder or dissonance prevails. But even in the context of chaos theory, the very name of which suggests disorder, we find that at a deeper level the most complex systems tend towards their ideal state which might be called by a number of names—integration, equilibrium, rest, or harmony. But we know also from such studies that such states are not passive, but dynamic in nature. It is in their very flow that higher levels of order are achieved. The obvious analogy, touched on in a number of chapter in this book, is that of music. A musical score is simply a mark on paper until it is performed: it is only in play, its dynamic state, that its potential is realised. To bring the notion of harmony out of its purely cultural usage into the wider discourse of society at large, including its political and economic aspects is an important task, realised in many respects in this volume. Having it read as such, and not simply as a “fringe” manifestation of a distinctly minority position on cultural theory will be however a difficult task.

Part of the reason for this is the dominant discourse of contemporary cultural theory, which is itself challenged here. When I hear the word “harmony” I am often reminded of the extraordinary work of one of my favourite artists – the German

Swiss painter Paul Klee. Klee was equally adept at music (he was from an early age an accomplished violinist), painter and poet, and in much of his painting he strove to create a bridge between music and painting, seeking a harmony that could not be achieved in any one of the art forms alone, but rather in their mutual dialogue. Klee was himself critical of what we would call “abstract” art and in particular the forms of Cubism, then in its early stages, that he encountered on a visit to Paris in 1912. Although he incorporated some visual ideas from Cubism into his own later work, he saw the analytical techniques of that style, particularly as expressed in the work of its early exemplars Picasso and Braque, as fragmenting the way the world was seen, rather than as integrating it into a liberating vision. Others, outside of art as well as within it, have taken a similar position, seeing abstraction as a symptom of a trend away from harmony, representational art and a concern with nature. The “abstraction” which this signals may indeed be a cultural characteristic of our contemporary world reflected in its fragmentation, movement away from holism to specialisation, and, in many areas from architecture to design, the loss of beautiful form. To begin to recover that holism without succumbing to false views of unity where none actually exists is a significant task for all contemporary social and cultural theorists.

The question then arises of where the issues raised in this book might take us in pursuit of this task. Building on the foundations created here, I would like to suggest a number. Cooperation need not signify the absence of competition. As Hegel saw generations ago, higher levels of integration have to be found through dynamic movement not stasis. But as we all know, the person who took up Hegel’s challenge was Marx, not the idealist philosophers of the Nineteenth Century, as he saw quite rightly that so much of our subjectivity is shaped by the economy in which we are embedded. The notions of “market integration” and equilibrium posited by neo-liberal economics, while they seem to point to ideas of harmony are really quite different. The seeking for a new economy in which notions of harmony are embedded is thus a critical task for any positive future social theory so too is the linking of the ideas in this book with the profound current significance of ecology as we enter the era of climate change with all its unknown and unpredictable consequences (few of them attractive). Nature in the past, and should be again now and in the future, be seen as the paradigm case of harmony – precisely because it is dynamic, and both competitive and cooperative. It may well be that the loss of a significant relationship with nature is one of the major reasons why a concern with harmony has so declined. Such a dimension needs strengthening.

But finally, beneath all such discussions must be the paramount issue of ethics. Preoccupation with power and domination and with war as the “solution” to political problems has brought us to our contemporary planet-wide crisis, and at a fundamental level paths must be found out of this failed paradigm. The notion of

---

harmony, when used in a critical and constructive way points to one such route, and it is to be hoped that, by re-introducing it into social and cultural discourse, the essays in this book will open one such positive way towards a livable future. It is through the arts in many cases that the basis of such harmonic thinking can be found, and this creates not only a challenge for artists in many fields to seek harmony in their own work, but also to continue to explore the interface of ethics and aesthetics. And sadly, since the word “dance” does appear in this book, there is no essay on that art form, one which has long sought to achieve the harmony of movement, music, and the visual arts. But having said that, this book itself represents a kind of symphony, and it is to be hoped that echoes of its notes will resonate far and wide and certainly through the corridors of contemporary cultural theory.



## Notes on Editor and Contributors

In

**Ananta Kumar Giri** is a Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai, India. He has taught and done research in many universities in India and abroad, including Aalborg University (Denmark), *Maison des sciences de l'homme*, Paris (France), the University of Kentucky (USA), University of Freiburg & Humboldt University (Germany), Jagiellonian University (Poland) and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has an abiding interest in social movements and cultural change, criticism, creativity and contemporary dialectics of transformation, theories of self, culture and society, and creative streams in education, philosophy and literature. Dr. Giri has written and edited around two dozen books in Odia and English. His recent books are *Sociology and Beyond: Windows and Horizons* (2012), *Knowledge and Human Liberation: Towards Planetary Realizations* (2013); *Philosophy and Anthropology: Border-Crossing and Transformations* (co-edited with John Clammer, 2013); *New Horizons of Human Development* (editor, 2015); *Pathways of Creative Research: Towards a Festival of Dialogues* (editor, 2017); *Cultivating Pathways of Creative Research: New Horizons of Transformative Practice and Collaborative Imagination* (editor, 2017); *Research as Realization: Science, Spirituality and Harmony* (editor, 2017); *Beyond Cosmopolitanism: Towards Planetary Transformations* (editor, 2017); and *The Aesthetics of Development: Art, Culture and Social Transformations* (co-editor, 2017). He can be contacted at [aumkrishna@gmail.com](mailto:aumkrishna@gmail.com) / [aumkrishna@hotmail.com](mailto:aumkrishna@hotmail.com).

**Binod K. Agarwala** (born 1953) is currently working as a Professor of Philosophy at North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India, after teaching for more than two decades at Lucknow University, Lucknow. He began his academic career with a brief stint at Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan. He graduated with first class honours in Physics from Hans Raj College, University of Delhi. With M. A. and M. Phil. from University of Delhi and Ph. D. from Lucknow university, Agarwala is actively engaged in research in Critical Philosophy of Kant, Political Philosophy, Philosophical Hermeneutics, and understanding of classical Indian texts like the Bhagavadgītā, the Upaniṣads, two Paramārthasāras by Ādiśeṣa and Abhinavagupta respectively, and Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya etc. He has

published scholarly essays in political philosophy, Kant's Critical Philosophy, and the philosophy of the Bhagavadgītā in international Journals like *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, *Sandhān*, and *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* and in books edited by eminent scholars.

**Rajesh Bag** is doing Ph. D. in the Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad. His areas of research interest include xenophobia, ethnic nationalism, communal violence and subalterns, secularism and justice. He is currently teaching Political Science in the degree college Kalinga Mahavidyalaya, G. Udayagiri, Odisha.

**Christian Bartolf** (born 1960) is an educational and political scientist from Berlin and the president of the society, Gandhi Information Center, Research and Education for Non-violence ([www.nonviolent-resistance.info](http://www.nonviolent-resistance.info)) since November 1993. From 1991 to 2011, he counselled more than 20.000 war resisters, from 2008 to 2017 he curated sixteen exhibitions on Non-violence and from 1993 to 2017 he organized the international "Manifesto against conscription and the military system" ([www.themanifesto.info](http://www.themanifesto.info)). His english language publications are *Hermann Kallenbach: Mahatma Gandhi's friend in South Africa*, *The Breath of Life: The Correspondence of Mahatma Gandhi (India) and Bart de Ligt (Holland) on War and Peace*. [mail@bartolf.info](mailto:mail@bartolf.info).

**Stephen A. Bissonnette**, M.Ed., is a Boston-based educational program manager and writer who was born and raised on the south coast of Massachusetts. He attended Skidmore College in New York where he studied Sociology and Gender Studies with a focus on social justice and environmental sustainability. He went on to receive his Master of Education in Memphis, TN where he initiated an urban environmentalist extracurricular program for his students. Most recently, Stephen has begun to oversee college access programs across New England as well as consult with the Earthos Institute, an environmental start-up in Boston, which seeks to foster resilient communities and bioregions through urban design and development.

**Marcus Bussey** is a futurist and educator with a keen interest in intercultural encounter. He teaches courses in world history, sustainable futures and cultural change theory at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia. His research interests focus on cultural transformation and the embodied processes we need to foster to further this important next step. Bussey publishes widely and has co-authored *Futures Thinking for Social Foresight* (2005) and co-edited *Neohumanist Educational Futures: Liberating the Pedagogical Intellect* (2006) and *Alternative Educational Futures: Pedagogies for Emergent Worlds* (2008). For more information: <http://www.usc.edu.au/explore/structure/faculty-of-arts-and-business/staff/dr-marcus-bussey>.

**Meera Chakravorty**, Ph.D. is a Research Faculty in the Department Of Cultural Studies, Jain University, India. She has been a member of the Karnataka State Women's Commission, Bangalore. Her engagement has been with Philosophy, Women's Studies, Cultural Studies Consciousness Studies and Translation projects. She has translated some Award winning literary works of renowned authors published by Sahitya Akademi (The Academy of Letters, India). She was awarded for her writing on 'Time' by University of Interdisciplinary studies, Paris, sponsored by John Templeton Foundation. She has also been awarded for her literary work by the Tagore Cultural Centre, Bangalore. She can be contacted at [chakram.meera@gmail.com](mailto:chakram.meera@gmail.com).



**John Clammer** is a visiting professor at the Institute of Advanced Studies, United Nations University, Tokyo. He has previously taught or researched at universities in the UK (Oxford, Kent, Hull, and Essex), India, Germany, Singapore, South Korea, Argentina, Australia, and Japan (Tokyo, Sophia, the International University of Japan, and Kanda University of International Studies). His teaching and research interests include issues of culture and development, the sociology and anthropology of the arts, development alternatives, the sociology of religion and dialogues between Asian and Western social theory. He has written widely on these subjects and recent books include *Culture, Development and Social Theory* (Zed Books 2012), *Vision and Society: Towards a Sociology and Anthropology from Art* (Routledge 2014), and *Art, Culture and International Development* (Routledge 2015). Email: clammer@unu.edu

**N.K.Das**, PhD, is a social anthropologist. He has conducted fieldwork in Eastern Himalaya- Northeast India during last three decades. Having superannuated as Deputy Director of Anthropological Survey of India (ASI) he re-joined ASI as its Visiting Fellow to study indigenous knowledge and belief systems in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. N.K.Das has published over one hundred papers in reputed journals and edited volumes. He has published fifteen books. His recent publications include ‘*Dissent Discrimination and Dispossession: Tribal Movements in Contemporary India*’ (with K.K.Misra), and ‘*Northeast India: A Profile*’ (2015). He has translated *Peasant Life in India* by Nirmal Kumar Bose and published as ‘*Bharat ka Gramin jivan: Ekta avam Vividhata*’ (Hindi, Rawat Books). Earlier he edited *Journal of Social Anthropology* and also directed and scripted the ASI documentary film ‘*The Apatani- Sacred Landscape and Indigenous Agriculture in Eastern Himalaya*’ that was submitted to UNESCO (‘Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity’, 2009). He was Social Protection Consultant for UNICEF (Assam 2014 and Madhya Pradesh 2016). He had organized and chaired several international panels/seminars in India, Germany, China, England, Japan, Thailand and Croatia, last four as Member of IUAES.

**Swati Desai**, born in India and trained as a computer programmer, came to Los Angeles and received her Ph.D. in Management from the Anderson School at UCLA in 1992. She worked and taught in the field of Computer Information Systems. After years of dabbling in Jungian Psychology and working as a paraprofessional counselor, she began her graduate work in Clinical Social Work and received MSW from UCLA and LCSW license to practice in California. In 2014 she founded 2Meditate, an App and website for creating a global group of mindfulness meditators who can meditate together any time they want, or choose individual meditations from the list in the voice of well-known meditation teachers. Currently she is teaching Mindfulness classes at University of California San Diego, for the Center for Mindfulness. Swati blogs extensively for *Huffington Post* and *Positively Positive*, and wrote several columns for the *Times of India*. She has appeared on a TV show in India called “Good Life.” Her faith in “global citizenship” is reflected in her writing as well as her purposeful travels to India, China, Hong Kong, and Europe. Visit [swatidesai.com](http://swatidesai.com) to know more about Swati’s work.

**Elaine Desmond** is a full-time author of fiction and non-fiction based in Cork, Ireland. Her academic work explores the themes of legitimization, democracy and risk in India. It has been published in journal articles and book chapters, as well as in a book entitled *Legitimation in*

*a World at Risk: The Case of Genetically Modified Crops in India* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Further details can be found at <https://cambridge.academia.edu/ElaineDesmond>.

**Mike Doogan** holds a PhD in Transpersonal Psychology from Sofia University and an MA in Teaching from Concordia University. He has maintained a private practice emphasizing holistic and integral transformation for the past 15 years and draws upon a wide variety of interventions for this purpose. He also teaches graduate Psychology to researchers and counselors with Capella University in online and hybrid formats. His current research with Saybrook University, a qualitative case study on hypnotherapists who experience transpersonal states during sessions, should be completed and ready for publication in 2019. He lives peacefully in Portland, Oregon, USA with his wife and five children. He can be contacted at <https://michaeldoogan.wixsite.com/contact>.

**William Falcetano** received the Ph.D. in philosophy from Boston University. His dissertation was about the civic humanism of the Italian Renaissance. He was a Junior Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, Austria. He has given lectures on philosophy and poetry in Vienna, Paris, and Florence. He has taught philosophy, rhetoric, and communication theory in colleges and universities in Massachusetts for twenty years, most recently at Curry College. His current research project is a book by the title *After Man: Meditations on the Post-Human Condition*.

**Abdulkadir Osman Farah** is an associate Professor at Aalborg University where he teaches transnationalism, development, transnational connections, transnational NGOs, New-regionalism and transnational state and policy formations. He is co-founder of the Centre for Research and Integration in Denmark and North Eastern African-Nordic Network (NEANOR). He serves as an associate editor of the *Journal of Somali Studies* and is also a member of the editorial board of number of journals focusing on political sociology and development. His latest books include: *Somalis: In Search of Nationhood, Statehood and Transnational Connections* (2015); *Transnational NGOs: Creative Connections of Development and Global Governance* (2014); a co-edited book on *China-Africa Relations in an Era of Great Transformations* (2013).

**Julie M. Geredien** is an independent writer and educator and an active member of the Baha'i community. She lives in United States of America. She has taught both children and adults for fifteen years in public and community school settings. She has trained as a Facilitator with Foundation for Community Encouragement and is a certified Integral Yoga instructor. Julie holds a B.S. from the School of Speech at Northwestern University, MFA from the Center for Excellence at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and an M.S. in Education from College of New Jersey. Her forthcoming book is *Toward a Cosmopolitan World Social Body: A Treatise on Harmony*, to be published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

**Artyom Goncharov** is a historian, combining in himself science and arts. He has been a historical consultant at the "Earth is Our Common Home" project, awarded in 2010 in Switzerland by S.E.R. Foundation as an outstanding project for peace and reconciliation. Artyom is author of the "Wheel of History" project awarded by the head of Novosibirsk city. He envisions a new historical path of humanity and has a bright understanding of a new outlook for creating harmony of individual and collective for a future society of

humanity. His other side is artistic one. He has a feeling of beauty and creates pieces of art full of love, inspiration and his presence.

**Paul Hague** was born in England and educated mainly as a mathematician, spending most of his business career with IBM in sales, marketing, and software development in London and Stockholm. Since 1980, he has been doing some fundamental research into the root causes of conflict and suffering, to see how we could cocreate a synergistic society living in love, peace, and harmony in the Eternal Now. To explain humanity's Origin and Destiny as a species in holistic psychospiritual and mathematical terms, he has recently written two books titled *The Four Spheres: Healing the Split between Mysticism and Science* and *Through Evolution's Accumulation Point: Towards Its Glorious Culmination*. Email: paul@mysticalpragmatics.net.

**Sapir Handelman** is the co-laureate of the 2010 Peter Becker Award for Peace and Conflict Research. He is an associate professor (senior lecturer) and the director of the Center for Diversity and Multiculturalism at Achva Academic College. He leads the Minds of Peace initiative and was the first scholar to receive the Lentz fellowship in Peace and Conflict Research three times in a row. He was a post-doctoral fellow and an associate at the psychology department of Harvard University. Email: Sapir.handelman@gmail.com.

**Tom Hastings** is Assistant Professor and co-coordinator of the undergraduate program in Conflict Resolution at Portland State University, USA. He is a former member of the Governing Council of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA), former co-chair of the Peace and Justice Studies Association, current member of the IPRA Foundation Board as well as the Academic Advisor Committee of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict. He is founding director of PeaceVoice, and has written several books and many articles about nonviolence and other peace and conflict topics. He is a two-time Plowshares resister, a founding member of two Catholic Worker communities, and currently lives in Whitefeather Peace House.

**Sarah Howard** is an bioregional urbanist and educator. In her practice, she systemically and holistically addresses themes of community actualization, resource stewardship, resiliency, justice, sustainability, as well as barriers to these. Her background includes: environmental and experiential education, community organizing/education, and sustainable design practice. She brings to her work personal practices of Quaker, yoga, meditation, walking, and nonviolence. Howard has formal education in architecture, public policy, environmental science, and the intersections. Address: 37 Thorndyke Road, Worcester MA 01606. Emails: sarah00howard@gmail.com, sarah-earthos@LDParch.com.

**Sabine Jell-Bahlsen** holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the New School University in New York and a MA from the Free University in Berlin, Germany. She studies African cultures focusing on the Igbo people of Southeastern Nigeria since 1978. Her particular interests are socio-economic and political organization, gender, art, architecture, environment, African spirituality and cultural transformation. Her publications include the books, *The Water Goddess in Igbo Cosmology* (Africa World Press, 2008) and *Mammy Water in Igbo Culture* (Nigeria 2014), and in refereed journals including *Dialectical Anthropology* and the *Journal of West African History*, as well as several documentary films, among them *Mammy Water* (1989), *Owu* (1991) and *Tubali* (1994) distributed by www.der.org. Sabine has taught at the Rhode Island School of Design, The Papua New Guinea University of Technology and

Ball State University, served as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, Dialectical Anthropology, and curated exhibitions of Papuan New Guinean Artifacts in Germany. A detailed list of her publications can be found on my homepage, [www.sabinejb.com](http://www.sabinejb.com).

**Sid Jordan** Ph.D. has combined a career as a licensed clinical psychologist and yoga/meditation teacher since 1971. As a clinical psychologist he taught psychotherapy and community psychology in the department of psychiatry and served as director of Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Services in a community center at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, SC over a period of 25 years. Since 1994 he has been working with others to develop a green intentional community on 140 acres on the French Broad River near Marshall in Madison County. He received training as an Ananda Marga yoga and meditation teacher (Family Acarya) in 1998 in India and is a registered yoga teacher with Yoga Alliance. In the past he has served on the Child and Mental Health/Substance abuse committees of the Madison County Health Consortium. Presently he is working with the Prama Institute and Wellness Center, a seminar and retreat center on the intentional community. He serves as the president of the educational board of Ananda Marga which supports a global network of over a 1000 schools, including two colleges and a developing global university campus. He heads up a local board in Marshall NC of a licensed pre-school, Mountain Breeze School, for three, four and five year old children. He continues to offer his 40 years of experience and teaching of yoga psychology, philosophy and practices to audiences worldwide.

**Mala Kapadia**, PhD, is a writer and researcher in Management, Ecology, Psychology, Ayurveda and Yoga. Her work in Management & Literature, specially poetry and creative essays have got her National & State level awards. She is the founder of Human Potential Consulting named 'Tame the Monkey'. She is faculty with S.P. Jain School of Global Management Singapore Dubai Sydney campuses since 2005. Researching in area of Wellbeing, Holistic Healing and Integrated Intelligence for more than 2 decades, she has been renowned speaker internationally. She has developed psychometric based on ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and has designed a certification course of the same. Her book *Heart Skills Emotional Intelligence for work and life* has been awarded ISTD Award 2008-2009. Her work integrates Western Competency Framework of EI (Emotional Intelligence) with Eastern perspectives and wisdom of Yoga and Ayurveda. She has been pioneer in teaching EI and Leadership as one credit course to MBA students in India and Singapore since 1999. She has taught courses in Literature, Leadership, Gandhian Philosophy, Organizational Behaviour and Development, inclusive of Ayurveda and Yoga. Contact: [tamethemonkey@rediffmail.com](mailto:tamethemonkey@rediffmail.com).

**Ravik Karsidi** is the Rector of Universitas Sebelas Maret. He is Chairman of Indonesian Development Counseling Association; Chairman of Indonesian Bachelor of Education Association; Coordinator of Lemhannas RI Central Java; and Chairman of Indonesian Rector Forum; and Chairman of the Indonesian Society for the Development of Social Sciences.

**Narayan B. Khadka**, Ph.D. is a qualitative research social scientist and psychoanalytical cultural anthropologist focused on exploring the underlying drivers of intractable violent ethnic conflicts and inhibitors of successful resolution. He completed his Ph.D. from Nova Southeastern University's Department of Conflict Resolution Studies. He serves as a

Research Fellow for the Center for New North Carolinians, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Senior Researcher/Clinician/Trainer for Valka-Mir Human Security and Development Company. His research interests are about refugee resilience, collective trauma, and the impact of caste dynamics in South Asian communities of Guilford County NC. He has spent several years teaching law and conflict resolution and researching and engaging war refugees and indigenous communities in South Asia and conducting qualitative field research in the southeastern United States.

**Hans-Herbert Kögler** is Professor of Philosophy, University of North Florida, Jacksonville and Regular Guest-Prof., Alpen Adria University, Klagenfurt, Austria. His major publications include *The Power of Dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics after Gadamer and Foucault*, (1999); *Michel Foucault* (2004), *Kultura, kritika, dialog* (Prague 2006), and the co-edited volume *Empathy and Agency: The Problem of Understanding in the Human Sciences* (2000). He has published numerous essays on hermeneutics, critical theory, normative grounds of the social sciences. His recent work focuses beyond those themes especially on a hermeneutic theory of agency, intercultural dialogue, as well as cosmopolitanism.

**W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz** is professor of philosophy at Zayed University in Dubai and Lazarski University in Warsaw, and author of *Tractatus Politico-Philosophicus*. He studied philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, and then continued his studies abroad. In 1999 he completed a doctorate from the University of Oxford and since 2000 he taught at a number of universities around the world. In 2014 he completed a habilitation in philosophy at the University of Poznan. He is the author of many research articles, including encyclopedia entries in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and has written four books.

**C.T. Kurien** is one of India's senior economists. He was Professor in the Madras Christian College (1962-78) and Director of the Madras Institute of Development Studies (1978-88). His books include *Poverty and development* (1973), *Poverty, Planning and Social Transformation* (1978), *Dynamics of Rural Transformation* (1980), *Growth and Justice* (1991), *The Economy: An Interpretative Introduction* (1992), *Global Capitalism and the Indian Economy* (1994), *Rethinking Economics: Reflections based on a study of the Indian Economy* (1996). Through his many books, professional papers and newspaper articles he has influenced generations of economists and the reading public.

**Fidele Lumeya** holds an M.A in Peace and Conflict Studies and a MBA. He is a Guest Lecturer, Foundations of Not-for-profit, Peace and Conflict Studies, Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA. He is the author of three books and contributed articles in books, magazines, newspapers, scholarly journals, Radio-tv contributor and blogger. Fidele is a member of American Academy of Religion and Pennsylvania Council of Mediation. He worked with the US State Department and the office of Migration for the resettlement to the US of 700 families who survived the Gatumba massacres. Fidele is also Guest Commentator at the Voice of America/French on Interfaith dialogue since 2000. He holds other position like COO of the Congolese American Council for Peace and Development (CACPD), senior advisor, land reform policy analyst/cabinet of Ministry of land, DR Congo current government, Deputy Director, Church world Service disaster response and intl dev. program/ Africa, Latin America and Caribbean countries.

**Babli Mallick** is pursuing her PhD from the Department of English, Banaras Hindu



University. She did her Graduation from University of Calcutta and Masters from Banaras Hindu University. Her area of interest is the North Eastern Indian literature in the perspective of crisis of identity, autonomy movement and political insurgency. She has published several articles, creative writings in various prestigious journals and taken interviews of noted authors. She has participated in national and international conferences and contributed journalistic writings in newspapers and little magazines based in West Bengal. Her Monograph *A Disturbed Existence in the Backdrop of Serene Green? A Literary Analysis of North-East India* (Germany: GRIN Academic Publishing, 2016) deals with the marginalized socio-political and cultural facets of Northeast India.

**Manisha A. Mehrotra** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, Banaras Hindu University since 2005 and has her specialisation in Industrial Economics and currently pursuing research in the area of Cultural Economics with interdisciplinary approaches to link Industrial economics with Cultural economics. She has an experience of twelve years of teaching diverse papers at the UG, PG level and has guided many PhD students on various topics related to Indian economy, social sector, gender disparities, microfinance and financial inclusion, handicrafts and handloom sectors of Varanasi. She has more than fifty papers to her credit in various conferences and seminars India and abroad, the most recent being in Harvard University, USA in March 2017 on Holistic education necessary for harmonising human consciousness and economic development. She has written seven books namely *MNCs in India* (2006), *Globalisation and MNCs* (2016), *Economic Impact of MNCs in India* (2016), *Pro-poor tourism for Economic Development of Varanasi* (2015), *Cultural Economics* (2016), *Cultural Tourism in India* (2016) and *Industrial Structure and Organization* (2016). She is also a practitioner of Energy Healing science called “Pranic Healing and Arhatic Yoga” and is pursuing extensive research in the area of higher consciousness and energy transference and its impact on the different levels of the subtle bodies like mind intellect and body. Email: bebugupta@gmail.com

**Thomas Menampampil**, born in 1936, did his studies in Calcutta University and Shillong. His special interest has been history, culture, ethnic diversity, peace, reconciliation and ethics. He has been in the field of education and social work during the last forty and more years. He has been involved in several initiatives for peace. He has presented papers recently in the several universities of the world on themes of ethics and values. He lives in Guwahati and continues to write articles and give talks especially on themes related to peace.

**Karyn Moskowitz** is a native New Yorker who landed in the Ohio River Valley Region in 1998, experienced first-hand the devastating effects of the lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and her life, fortunately, was never the same. She now has 18 amazing years’ experience as a food justice organizer and social entrepreneur, and is one of the founders of the New Roots Fresh Stop Markets, which she has operated since 2009, in partnership with hundreds of volunteer leaders. She has received numerous awards for her food and environmental justice work, including being inducted into the Kentucky SISTER (Sisters Inspiring Sisters to Eradicate Racism) Hall of Fame, Heartwood’s Hellbender Award, named 1 of 12 Jewish Women in Environmental Activism by National Women’s Archive, 1 of 10 “Green Jewish Women” honored by Jewish Woman Magazine, two-time food justice delegation leader to Slow Food’s Terra Madre Conference in Italy, recipient of a

Rockefeller Fellowship from the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky, and was a U.S. Senate Candidate for the Green Party of Oregon. She holds a B.A. from Boston University in biology and an MBA in environmental management from the University of Washington Foster School of Business and ESCP Europe. She is an engaging and passionate, sought-after speaker and has spoken near and far about fresh food as a right, not a charity or a privilege. She is a proud mom of a 18-year old daughter who loves to eat her Kentucky-grown spinach. email: karyn.moskowitz@newroots.org.

**Felix Padel** is the author of *Sacrificing People: Invasions of a Tribal Landscape* (1995/2010), *Out of this Earth: East India Adivasis and the Aluminium Cartel* (2010) and *Ecology, Economy: Quest for a Socially Informed Connection* (2013). Trained at Oxford University in Social Anthropology and at Delhi School of Economics in Sociology, he has recently been Professor in School of Rural Management, Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) and Visiting Professor at North East India Study Programmer (NEISP), Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Email: felishmr@gmail.com.

**S. Painadath SJ** is a Jesuit priest of the Catholic Church. He holds a doctorate in Religious Sciences from the University of Tübingen, Germany. He is engaged in conducting seminars and meditation sessions in India and Europe, in view of promoting a culture of inter-religious harmony. The basic theme of the 20 books that he has brought out is inter-religious relationship. He is the founder- director of Sameeksha, Centre for Indian Spirituality, at Kalady, Kerala. He can be contacted on spainadath@gmail.com

**Kuruvilla Pandikattu** (1957-) is a professor of Physics, Philosophy and Religion at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, India. Currently, he is the Dean, Faculty of Philosophy. He has been actively involved in dialogue between science and religion. He has authored more than 36 books and 160 articles. Pandikattu is a Jesuit priest belonging to Dumka-Raiganj Province, India. He been involved in organising national and international conferences on science-religion dialogue. Main topics of his research are: anthropology, eschatology, life-management and transhumanism. He may be contacted at kuru@jdv.edu.in.

**Bishnu Pathak** is the creator of the Peace-Conflict Lifecycle, the architect of Human Security Studies, the founder of the Principles of Process Documentation (End-to-End-Lifecycle) of any development project and the pioneer of Process Documentation for Interfaith Peacebuilding Cycle. His modest finding "Peace-Conflict Lifecycle" has been nominated for Nobel Peace Prize Award by the Government of Nepal in 2016. Arduous Mr. Pathak is a professor of human security studies who holds a PhD in inter-disciplinary "Conflict Management and Human Rights". Professor Pathak has been working as a Commissioner at the Commission for Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) for the sake of truth, justice and reparation for dignity. He is the Board Member at TRANSCEND Peace University, Vice President at the Global Harmony Association, Founding Chairman at Peace and Conflict Studies Center and among others. He is the author of more than 100 international papers and has co-authored several books on human security, transitional justice, human rights, DDR-SSR, civil military relations, conflict transformation, peace, community policing, federalism, principles of harmony. His book *Politics of People's War and Human Rights in Nepal* (2005) is a widely circulated volume.



**Arun K. Patnaik** is a professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, India. He obtained his doctorate from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, in political theory. He specialises in Gramsci's dialectical exploration into themes of common sense, civil society, party, religion and political society. He is currently interested in exploring India's intellectual traditions especially the contributions of B R Ambedkar, R M Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan and also the nature of Indian secularism. His publications include a monograph (co-edited) *Gramsci Today* (2007); 'The contemporary significance of Gramsci's critique of civil society', *Working USA: the Journal of Labour and Society*, 15, December, 2012; 'A Critique of Political Secularism', *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 22, 2011; (co-author) 'Indian secularism, dialogue and the Ayodhya dispute', *Religion, State & Society*, December 2014; 'Tagore and Folk Religion: Potentialities of Indian Secularism', *Journal of Polity and Society*, January-June 2014 and more than 30 research papers, project reports and book chapters.

**Heikki Patomäki** is Professor of World Politics at University of Helsinki. Patomäki's research interests involve philosophy and methodology of social sciences, peace research, futures studies, economic theory, global political economy and global political theory. His most recent books are *Disintegrative Tendencies in Global Political Economy: Exits and Conflicts* (Routledge 2018) and *Brexit and the Political Economy of Fragmentation: Things Fall Apart*, ed. with J. Morgan (Routledge 2018).

**James Ponniah** is Assistant Professor of the Department of Christian Studies at the University of Madras, Chennai. He holds membership in various scholarly associations such as EASAS, AAR, SHCS, AAS and ACPI and has presented scholarly papers in their annual conferences. In addition to many articles in various international journals, he has authored a monograph *The Dynamics of Folk Religion in Society: Pericentralisation as Deconstruction of Sanskritisation* (2011) and co-edited *Dancing Peacock: Indian Insight into Religion and Redevelopment* (2010), *Committed to the Church and the Country* (2013) and *Identity, Difference and Conflict: Postcolonial Critique* (2013). He was a project co-investigator with Chad Bauman (Butler University, USA) on 'Christianity, Religious Freedom, and Religious Violence in Contemporary India' funded by Berkeley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Washington. He was awarded Collaborative International Research Grant by American Academy of Religions in 2015. His areas of research and teaching include folk religious practices of India, ritual power, popular Catholicism, Dalit Christianity, Inter-faith religious practices, Religion and Globalisation, religious violence and Christian responses in India and Sri Lanka. Email: jamesponniah@gmail.com

**Minati Pradhan** wrote her first poem at age seven. Since then, she has written hundreds of poems and short stories. Being a bilingual writer, she presents the social issues, women's empowerment and education in her unique way. Her poetic insights are thought provoking and compel readers to take a new perspective. She has presented some of her poems and essays in some seminars and workshops. She holds a Post Graduate degree in Management from Pondicherry University. She now lives in Bangalore with her husband. Her recent poetry book is *A New Dawn* (Studera 2019).

**Anthony Savari Raj** is Professor of Philosophy & Head, Department of Arts at Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. He has served as a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer at the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, for more than a decade. His areas of

interest include Intercultural Philosophy, Cross-cultural Philosophy of Religion, Modern Western Philosophy, Ecophilosophy, Interreligious Dialogue, and Raimon Panikkar's Thought. He has enjoyed several National and International Research Fellowships, such as the Charles Wallace Visiting Fellowship, University of Bristol, UK, the Woodstock International Visiting Fellowship, Georgetown University, USA and Fulbright-Nehru Visiting Lectureship at George Mason University, USA. He has authored two books and numerous research articles in several reputed national and international scholarly journals. He has been a Visiting Professor of Philosophy and Religion in several prestigious institutions of India, including Indian Institute of Technology (IIT, Chennai). He can be contacted at [ansraj65@gmail.com](mailto:ansraj65@gmail.com).

**Sudha Sreenivasa Reddy** has more than 25 years of experience in social development sector in India. She has Masters in Sociology from Mysore University; Diploma in Community based Rehabilitation of the Disabled in India; Diploma in Social Leadership and Rural Development, Xavier University, Philippines; and International Course in Development Communication from International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Philippines. Presently, She is the Director of Eco Foundation for Sustainable Alternatives (EFSA), Bangalore, working at the grassroots among marginalised communities in the urban and rural areas and action research related to vulnerable groups. She is actively involved in the promotion of rights and responsibilities and interdependence principles for the protection of vulnerable groups and sustainability in law, environment, education, gender relations and Universal Charter of Human Responsibilities globally. She has participated and presented papers at the international conferences in India and abroad on climate change, agriculture & people's initiatives; human rights & responsibilities; gender & societal relations, globalisation, sustainable development, eco spirituality, inter-faith dialogues, women's role in conflict transformation and peace initiatives; social and solidarity economy; Gandhian perspectives on economy and non-violence. Email: [sudha179@gmail.com](mailto:sudha179@gmail.com).

**Karl-Julius Reubke** is a retired chemist, freelance writer and lecturer. He taught chemistry and Bhagavad Gita in Panyotai Waldorf School, Sai Mai, Bangkok (2008-2011) and at Sloka Waldorf School, Hyderabad, India. He is the Founder/President of "Freunde von Ekta Parishad e.V." (Member of Ekta Europe Network). His publications (non-chemical) include "Indien im Aufbruch", Mayer, Stuttgart, (2006), "Die Fremden Gesichter des Todes", Mayer, Stuttgart, (2008) and published many articles in various journals and collective volumes. Contact: [kjreubke@t-online.de](mailto:kjreubke@t-online.de).

**Jeremy A. Rinker**, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of North Carolina Greensboro where he researches the intersections between narrative and nonviolent social change. Jeremy's research interests revolve around the centrality of justice discourse, trauma awareness, and collective resilience in movements aimed at transforming social conflict and structural violence. Jeremy lives in Greensboro North Carolina with his wife and two sons.

**David Pepper Sarnoff** earned his AB in mathematics from Harvard in 1975, his MS and PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Kentucky in 1982 and has been a practicing psychologist in South Carolina since then. He also teaches psychology on line for Capella University. He plays out with his flute a few times a month. His new mission is to help launch "What We Agree On" and to join with all good people to make the world

safe for humans. Email: [dauidsarnoff51@gmail.com](mailto:dauidsarnoff51@gmail.com)

**Paul Schwartzentruber** is retired theologian and retreat centre director from Canada. He has worked as a volunteer for last 6 years in India for the Gandhian land rights organization Ekta Parishad and the International institute for Non-violence and Peace. He has written recent articles on Gandhi, Illich, George Grant, Simone Weil and Thomas Merton published in *Ahimsa/Nonviolence*. More recently, (the last three years) he has been living in the Middle East writing about technology, nationhood and identity. He can be contacted at [pschwartzentruber@gmail.com](mailto:pschwartzentruber@gmail.com).

**Nirmal Selvamony** is currently Associate Professor and Head of the Department of English Studies at Central University of Tamil Nadu, India. His major areas of interest are Ecocriticism, Theory, Dramatic Theory, and Ecomusicology. He introduced the course “Ecocriticism” in the Indian university system and founded a forum now known as *tiNai* (formerly, OSLE-India) and also a journal (*Indian Journal of Ecocriticism*) to promote this course. He also introduced the courses “Tamil Musicology” and “Music and Literature” in the University of Madras, and also a new area of study known as *tiNai* musicology. By means of extensive research in *tolkaappiyam* and *tiNai* society for more than thirty-five years, he revived the traditional Indian philosophical tradition called “*kaaTci*” (in a publication titled *tamiz kaaTci neRiyiyal*, 1996 [The Methodology of Tamil Philosophy], which precedes the *darshanas* and formulated a theory of *tiNai* poetics (formerly, oikopoetics). He has published ten books, several chapters in edited books and essays in journals.

**Subhash Sharma** is an eminent management thinker and author, well known for his significant contributions to Indian management thought, management education and development thinking. He is author of the creative and thought provoking books such as *Management in New Age: Western Windows Eastern Door*, *Quantum Rope: Science, Mysticism and Management*, *New Mantras in Corporate Corridors*, *New Earth Sastra*, *Wisdom & Consciousness from the East: Life, Living & Leadership*, *New Ideas in Strategic Thinking & Management*. He has experimented with creative and innovative approaches to learning such as 3D (Discussion, Dialogue, Discourse) Approach, Candle Light Experiment, ‘Corporate Rhymes’, Creative Meditative Research and Moon Ocean Thinking. He is the founding member of WISDOM (Women’s Institute for Studies in Development Oriented Management), Banasthali University, Rajasthan, Founding Director, Indian Institute of Plantation Management, Bangalore and is currently Director, Indus Business Academy (IBA), Bangalore. Email: [prof.subhash.sharma789@gmail.com](mailto:prof.subhash.sharma789@gmail.com).

**Viviana Siddhi** is the author of Multiple Awarded Poetry: *Life of the Spirit*, *Pearls of Ancient Wisdom*, *On the Wings of Grace*, *Stillness an Beam of Light*. She is a Slovenian-born poet, yogini, healer and artist. As MTC Global leader she received Multiple Awards. She works directly with those who are open to improving and transforming their lives through a healthy and synergistic lifestyle based on the wisdom derived from the cross-cultural exchange of traditional wisdom. She also guides others to learn transformational healing methods that include many types of approaches to healing, including some which are currently considered highly metaphysical in nature. In Slovenia, she founded “Little Princ”, the first vegetarian kindergarten, and authored several articles for spiritual magazines. In 2010, Viviana moved to California and became American citizen. Viviana

is also a founder and director of the NGO Mandala Transformation Foundation, Inc., a 501-c-3 public charity that aims to improve lives on a deeper level by transmission of sacred wisdom, performing artistry and other traditional cross-cultural exchanges. In 1999 she received a diploma as a Yogini Siromani and in 2011 diploma as Yogini Bhaskara in India.

**Warayuth Sriwarakuel** currently works at the Institute for Research and Academic Services and Department of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University of Thailand. Warayuth does research in Social Policy, Social Theory and Sociobiology. He wrote PhD dissertation in process philosophy under the title "Hartshorne on God: A Defense". His current project is "Relations Between Religions and Cultures in Southeast Asia".

**Piet Strydom** has retired from the School of Sociology and Philosophy, University College Cork, Ireland, in 2011 where he taught since 1976. His research interests cover from critical theory, social theory and cognitive sociology, through the philosophy and history of social science, to substantive areas such as rights, risk, cosmopolitanism, environment and the human mind. He is currently associate editor of the *European Journal of Social Theory*. Besides many articles, some well noted, in anthologies, encyclopaedias and journals, major publications include *Contemporary Critical Theory and Methodology* (2011), *New Horizons of Critical Theory: Collective Learning and Triple Contingency* (2009). He edited *Philosophies of Social Science* (2003) as well as special issues of the *European Journal of Social Theory* and the *Irish Journal of Sociology*. At present, he is continuing his pursuit of a new version of a critical-pragmatic social science vitally enriched by an often misunderstood cognitive component. He can be contacted at [strydom@eircom.net](mailto:strydom@eircom.net).

**Bani Sudardi** is the Head of the Postgraduate Program of Cultural Studies in UNS. He is assessor team for undergraduate and postgraduate program of Indonesian Language and Literature Education. He is an active reviewer of PHK DPT DIKTI and Grant Competition Education Quality Improvement and Consultant Expert R & D Department of Religion of Central Java.

**Henk de Weijer** is a retired designer of construction and coherence in architectural buildings. He was tutor at the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam, and external expert at exam designs of students in architecture at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. He was an advisor to students working on their Master's design and in 2016 member of a Master's graduation committee. In 1998 he started research in the subject of microvita, wrote essays for *Gurukula Newsletter*, *BOMRIM* (Bulletin on Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine), *Gandhi Marg* and *Crimson Dawn*. He was invited lecturer at CNS (Centre for Neohumanist Studies) Sweden, as well as at Universities in India and Venezuela. At various international conferences on Consciousness he gave concurrent lectures on microvita. He is faculty member of GANE (Global Association of Neohumanist Educators), fellow of SMRIM (Society for Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine) and member of the editorial board of BOMRIM (Bulletin of Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine).

**Agung Wibowo** is the Head of Undergraduate Program of Agriculture Extension in Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS), as secretary of the Career Development Center UNS, peer group at the Javanology Institute, in organization as Executive Board of Alumni Association of UNS and as deputy secretary of PERHEPI Surakarta. One of books that have been written and best seller is *Humanism Participation*.

**Mahendra Wijaya** was born in Surakarta. He completed Doctor of Sociology degree at Gadjah Mada University. He is an active member in the Indonesian Sociology Association Branch of Surakarta and has served as Chairman of Sociology Postgraduate Program Universitas Sebelas Maret.

**Sara J. Wolcott**, M.Div, is an interfaith minister, healer, artist, and continual student of eco-theology. She has over a decade of experience in various dimensions of international sustainable development and has worked in India, Indonesia, Kenya, England, and in different parts of the United States. She obtained her MA from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK. She is currently connecting the dots between ecology, spirituality, and anti-colonial mind-body approaches as a consultant, educator, speaker, writer, and coach. She works closely with Samanvaya Social Ventures in India and is lead creator of Sequoia Samanvaya, an enterprise dedicated to Re-Enchanting the World at the beginning of the Anthropocene Age. She grows deep fellowship and fresh herbs in the Bronx, NY. Email: sara.j.wolcott@gmail.com

# Index

## A

- Academies of Harmony 5  
actor-agent 74  
Addiction 123, 444  
advaita 185, 186, 187, 188  
Advaita 34, 138, 183, 186, 190  
advaitic intuition 184, 186, 188  
Advaitic Trinitarianism viii, xxiv, 183, 184, 187  
ahimsa 54, 55, 56, 255, 259, 882  
Akashic paradigm 32  
Albert Einstein 27, 341  
alchemy 20, 21  
Alchemy 20, 21, 34, 60  
Alewife-Mystic Corridor 322, 347  
Alexey Stakhov 13  
Alexis de Tocqueville 3, 869  
Alfred Margulies 275  
Alfred North Whitehead 22, 23  
Alliance for Mystical Pragmatics 28, 31  
altruism 131, 134, 178, 271, 445  
amorphous unity 186  
Ananta Kumar Giri ii, iii, vii, xiii, xviii, xxi, xxii, 3, 15, 16, 17, 470, 487, 526, 544, 686, 837, 849, 893  
Andre Beteille 6  
Androgyny 20  
anti-modern modernism 53  
anti-semitism 131  
Antyodaya 54, 360  
anudhyana 119  
anyatva 185  
Aparigrah 255, 257, 258  
apprenticeship 51  
Aquarius Age 243  
Ārambha 214  
Archer 73, 74  
archetype of wholeness 44, 45  
Ardhnarīnateshwar 244  
Aristotelian logic 192-193, 195, 196, 197, 199  
Aristotle 17, 23, 32, 67, 74, 80, 92, 140, 141, 142, 154, 157, 158, 174, 180, 193, 194, 196, 201, 239, 391, 401, 450, 459, 863  
three laws of logic 193  
idea of equality 180  
principles of syllogistic reasoning 23  
Armed Forces Special Power Act x, xxvii, 689, 690, 697  
ARTfarm Project 344  
Artha 110  
Art of Living 242  
Artyom Goncharov ix, xxv, 419, 896  
Arun K. Patnaik x, xxvii, 565, 902  
Asana 254  
asanas 115, 116  
A.S. Dalal 254

- Ashis Nandy 59  
 ashtanga yoga 114, 116, 118, 120  
 Ashtanga yoga 114  
 Ashtanga Yoga 114, 254  
 Ashtavakra 109  
 Astanga Yoga 109  
 Aung San Suu Kyi 137, 885  
 Aurobindo ii, xv, xix, 9, 13, 16, 20, 29, 32, 33,  
 157, 248, 252, 254, 262, 374, 375, 379,  
 381, 411, 412  
 Purna Yoga 248  
 Supermind 29  
 Austin 276, 301, 521  
 hidden' biology of harmony 276  
 autocracy 128  
 Ayurveda 243, 245, 457, 740, 898  
 healthy person 245
- B**
- Barack Obama 5  
 Baudhañyana Śrautasūtra 237  
 Bauls of Bengal 132  
 Behavioral Kinesiology 246  
 Bellah 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 152, 171  
 benevolent harmony 107, 109  
 Bernard Phillips 8  
 Bertrand Russell 23  
 Beteille 3, 6, 7, 8, 15  
 Béteille 151, 157  
 Bhagavad Gita viii, xxiv, 25, 32, 33, 48, 56,  
 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 213, 214,  
 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 227,  
 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 256, 543,  
 548, 553, 903  
 artha 132, 224  
 ātman 223  
 dak i ā 220, 238  
 desire xxviii–xxx, 4–16, 5–16, 32–34,  
 42–61, 49–61, 51–61, 82–94, 95–103,  
 100–103, 105–125, 108–125, 119–  
 125, 120–125, 157–159, 171–182,  
 175–182, 176–182, 179–182, 180–  
 182, 205–239, 206–239, 207–239,  
 208–239, 209–239, 210–239,  
 211–239, 212–239, 213–239, 214–  
 239, 217–239, 218–239, 219–239,  
 220–239, 222–239, 226–239, 227–  
 239, 228–239, 247–263, 248–263,  
 257–263, 271–303, 315–316, 375–  
 383, 388–401, 390–401, 391–401,  
 393–401, 396–401, 397–401, 400–  
 401, 409–417, 509–524, 516–524,  
 548–554, 551–554, 562–563, 638–  
 641, 673–688, 689–700, 701–709,  
 735–740, 743–762, 745–762, 746–  
 762, 747–762, 748–762, 768–774,  
 797–809, 838–851  
 karma 206, 207, 209, 211, 213, 214, 216,  
 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 224, 228,  
 230, 233, 236, 237, 238, 616  
 karma phala 207, 216  
 karmasa nyāsa 231, 232  
 Karmasanyāsa 215  
 karmayoga 216  
 Knowledge viii–xi, xxv–xxx, 16, 29–34,  
 75–77, 76–77, 92–94, 103, 109–125,  
 110–125, 121–125, 165–182, 206,  
 206–239, 206–239, 233–239, 249–  
 263, 302–303, 332–358, 353–358,  
 368–371, 373–383, 382–383, 403–  
 417, 416–417, 489–491, 491, 522–  
 524, 797–809, 800–809, 806–809,  
 808–809, 876–887, 893–906  
 lokasamgraha 225  
 lokasa graha 207, 211, 219, 225, 227, 228,  
 229, 230  
 nityasa nnyāsi 216  
 puru ottama 223  
 sa grāma 225  
 sa g hita loka 225  
 sa nyāsa 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 222,  
 228  
 sa nyāsayogayuktātmā 216  
 sa nyasta karma 218, 233  
 sarvasa kalpasa nyāsi 217  
 yajñakarma 220  
 Binod Kumar Agarwala viii, xxiv, 205  
 biohappiness 359, 363, 364, 365, 366, 368  
 Biohappiness viii, xxv, 359, 362, 363, 364,  
 365, 368, 370, 371  
 biological evolution 105, 777, 788, 799  
 Bion Theory 301  
 biopsychology xxiii, 109, 110, 115, 119, 120,  
 121



and Yoga Sadhana 109  
 Biopsychology vii, xxiii, 105, 109, 114, 121  
 Biopsychology of Cooperation 105, 121  
 bioregion 318, 319, 322, 323, 326, 327, 328,  
 331, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 341,  
 342, 344, 345, 348, 349, 350, 351  
 bioregional coalition 343, 344, 347  
 Alewife-Mystic Corridor 322, 347  
 ARTfarm 344  
 Roxbury Memory Trail 322, 342, 344  
 bioregional leadership 319, 328, 334, 341,  
 342, 346, 347, 349  
 Bioregional leadership 328  
 Bioregional Resiliency Index 337, 338, 344,  
 349  
 Bioregional Urbanism viii, xxiv, 317, 319,  
 321, 334, 336, 342, 344, 345, 348, 349,  
 350, 351  
 Bioregional Urbanism framework 334  
 Bishnu Pathak x, xxvii, 611, 638, 901  
 Bissonette 330  
 Bissonette viii, 317, 321, 329, 335, 340, 341,  
 894  
 Black Death 149  
 blind mechanism 50  
 Bodhisattva 18  
 body~place~commons 283  
 Bohm 22, 25, 26, 33, 74  
 Boston Bioregion 318, 321, 322, 323, 341,  
 350, 351  
 Initiatives 323  
 Boston Bioregion Project 318, 341, 350  
 bottom-up 282, 283, 284  
 Brahma Sūtra 224  
 Brene Brown 332  
 Bryan Magee 23  
 Buber xxi, xxix  
 Buckminster Fuller 124  
 Bucky Fuller 105  
 Buddha 11, 14, 15, 21, 26, 40, 127, 130, 374,  
 375, 379, 439, 440, 441, 482, 856, 885  
 eightfold path 11  
 essential characteristics of teaching 40  
 Trilakshana 21  
 Buddhist logic 200  
 bureaucratic rationality 82

## C

Candace Pert 113, 114  
 Canonicity 131  
 Capital-Romanticism 135  
 Carl Gustav Jung 20  
 Carl Jung 41, 604  
 Cartesian dualism 23  
 Cartesian ego of modernity 173  
 Catherine Elgin 272  
 Catholic Charities Refugee Agricultural  
 Partnership Programme 312  
 Catholicism 57, 902  
 Centering 259, 287  
 Centre for the Study of Existential Risk 30  
 centrifugal 95, 96, 97, 98  
 centrifugal forces 95  
 centripetal 95, 96, 97, 98  
 chakras 109, 110, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118,  
 119, 120, 404, 405, 406, 415, 454, 455,  
 456, 468  
 āji á chakra 112  
 anáhata chakra 111  
 mañipura chakra 111  
 mūlādhāra chakra 110  
 Subtle Energy Associated With 112  
 svādhiśt hāna chakra 111  
 vishuddha chakra 112  
 Chandogya Upanisad 186  
 chaos xiii, xiv, 4, 31, 32, 98, 107, 129, 130,  
 155, 225, 226, 227, 253, 268, 284, 287,  
 292, 318, 319, 324, 325, 331, 333, 334,  
 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 342, 343, 345,  
 346, 348, 350, 351, 405, 413, 470, 487,  
 512, 516, 517, 544, 557, 889  
 Chaos 125, 193, 273, 274, 275, 277, 283, 284,  
 287, 288, 292, 297, 298, 299, 300, 339,  
 347, 461, 524, 544, 558  
 Charles Biederman 26  
 Charles Hartshorne viii, xxiv, 191, 197  
 Charles Sanders Peirce 25  
 Chinese Taoism 19  
 Chipko movement 133, 706  
 Chittaranjan Das 9  
 Christendom 184  
 Christian ii, x, xxvi, xxviii, 20, 22, 44, 48, 50,  
 52, 56, 59, 143, 164, 180, 182, 183,  
 184, 185, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 287,

- 388, 420, 434, 437, 454, 483, 484, 485, 486, 489, 512, 514, 515, 516, 517, 519, 522, 523, 535, 536, 568, 569, 571, 572, 658, 686, 723, 749, 751, 763, 792, 793, 794, 795, 804, 805, 807, 833, 839, 840, 856, 857, 868, 882, 886, 887, 894, 899, 902
- Christian Bartolf ii, x, xxviii, 763, 894
- Christian theology 192, 434, 437
- Christian Trinity 44
- Chung-ying 266, 267, 268, 280, 284, 291, 293, 294, 295, 296, 299, 301
- four-dimensional structure of harmony 267
- Civil Rights 57, 768, 769, 774
- classical theism 198, 201
- Claude Levi Strauss 136
- Cloud Model 153
- cognitive meta-problematic 74
- cognitive order 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 73, 291
- Cognitive Order 65, 77
- Cognitive Principle 117
- cognitive universality 73
- coincidence of opposites 20
- coincidentia oppositorum 20
- Cold War 17, 611, 688, 718, 776, 795
- commodity fetishism 135
- communion 35, 36, 37, 39, 57, 162, 176, 188, 438, 878
- Communitas Harmonia x, xxviii, 741
- Community Farm Alliance 307, 308, 316
- community making xxiv, 273, 274, 277, 279, 280, 281, 282, 289, 291
- Facilitator 275–303, 287–303, 288–303, 289–303, 290–303, 300–303, 896–906
- four discernible stages 273
- harmonisation process 280
- Community organising 307, 308
- Community Supported Agriculture 308
- compassion xxii, 4, 10, 11, 18, 32, 55, 95, 100, 146, 150, 155, 179, 242, 244, 250, 252, 284, 331, 375, 410, 441, 443, 445, 510, 515, 516, 522, 545, 615, 646, 647, 650, 679, 682, 685, 703, 704, 708, 733, 735, 740, 867, 873, 886
- Compassion 10, 11, 100, 121, 423, 434, 441, 443, 444, 445, 679, 682, 826, 832, 849
- compassionate confrontation 11, 12, 28, 100, 152
- Compassionate confrontation 11, 18
- Compassionate Confrontation 11, 152, 704, 709
- Compassionate Listening Project 320
- Competition 259, 687, 905
- concentration xxv, 113, 116, 117, 118, 337, 344, 347, 467, 468, 678, 790, 813
- concept of mutuality 167
- confrontation xxii, 4, 10, 11, 12, 18, 28, 95, 100, 101, 152, 545, 669, 679, 682, 685, 706, 708, 875
- non-violent confrontation 10, 706
- Confrontation 10, 11, 100, 152, 679, 704, 709
- Confucian 5, 91, 284, 285, 295, 878
- Confucius 271, 284, 866, 874
- consciousness 3, 14, 18, 19, 21, 26, 27, 28, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 52, 58, 74, 84, 95, 100, 101, 113, 120, 124, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 164, 165, 170, 185, 223, 224, 242, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 255, 257, 261, 268, 269, 271, 278, 280, 283, 286, 288, 289, 299, 301, 318, 319, 328, 329, 338, 350, 374, 397, 398, 401, 404, 406, 407, 408, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 421, 422, 423, 432, 454, 457, 459, 470, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 562, 593, 604, 605, 708, 743, 756, 768, 781, 786, 788, 793, 794, 799, 813, 815, 869, 900
- and Energy 154
- Consciousness ix, xviii, xxv, 16, 22, 25, 32, 41, 58, 60, 76, 93, 102, 117, 122, 154, 155, 156, 157, 168, 187, 190, 246, 247, 261, 302, 408, 417, 447, 452, 458, 459, 548, 759, 781, 806, 807, 894, 904, 905
- consumerism 132, 133, 256, 257, 259, 447, 758, 762, 820
- contract theorists 64, 72
- cooperation xxii, xxv, 86, 109, 120, 121, 125, 141, 146, 147, 151, 152, 154, 155, 156, 157, 188, 366, 385, 386, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 397, 399, 400, 499, 500, 501, 534, 613, 646, 651, 681, 684, 718, 840, 848, 857, 871

- biopsychology of 121  
 Cooperation vii, viii, xxiii, xxv, 77, 105, 106,  
 121, 146, 385, 390, 392, 395, 450, 451,  
 685, 801, 806, 832, 833, 890  
 Cosmic Equation 27, 28  
 Cosmogonic Cycle 30  
 cosmomorphic process 68  
 cosmopolitanism xxviii, 64, 68, 69, 71, 72,  
 410, 413, 551, 773, 777, 779, 782, 783,  
 787, 797, 803, 899, 905  
 cosmos xvi, 27, 42, 173, 198, 205, 221, 222,  
 233, 254, 405, 408, 409, 412, 414, 432,  
 434, 437, 467, 471, 474, 478, 484, 486,  
 487, 720, 786, 787, 793, 794, 814  
 cosmotheandric intuition 186  
 counterfactual principle 68  
 counterfactual principles 66, 70  
 counter-valuing 32  
 Cozolino 122, 125  
 C.R. Das 151  
 Creative society 14  
 critical traditionalist 53  
 cross-sector community-driven bioregional  
 coalition 343  
 crowdsourced cultural map 335  
 crucifixion 42, 50  
 C.T. Kurien ix, xxv, 427, 899  
 Cultural change 320  
 Cultural evolution 97  
 cultural experimentation 102  
 Culture vii, ix, xxiii, xxv, xxvi, xxix, 15, 61, 93,  
 95, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103, 158, 180,  
 181, 189, 190, 233, 302, 356, 388, 401,  
 416, 425, 431, 488, 489, 507, 511, 517,  
 518, 519, 520, 522, 553, 560, 608, 638,  
 639, 641, 658, 724, 759, 760, 804, 805,  
 809, 830, 836, 893, 895, 897  
 as an evolutionary process 97
- D**  
 Dalai Lama 4, 5, 15, 21, 293, 301, 421, 423,  
 867, 885  
 Dallmayr xiv, xvii, 11, 15, 177, 181, 300, 302,  
 328, 340, 814, 816, 831  
 Dam Square 145  
 Daniel Quinn 143, 329, 331, 340  
 Ishmael 143, 331, 340, 356  
 Daniel Siegel 280  
 COAL, (curious, open, accepting and  
 loving) 280  
 community making 280  
 FACES, (flexible, adaptive, coherent, ener-  
 gised, and stable) 280  
 interpersonal neurobiology 280  
 Dasoha 134  
 David Bohm 22, 74  
 David Pepper Sarnoff xi, xxix, 837, 843, 903  
 David R. Hawkins 243, 246, 261  
 Map of Consciousness 246  
 de- and re-territorialisation 98  
 deep humanism 155  
 Deep organicism 155  
 Democracy 99, 189, 302, 303, 382, 547, 548,  
 550, 553, 554, 558, 580, 582, 583, 688,  
 728, 807, 832, 836  
 democratic secularism 100  
 democratic transformation 277  
 demonic harmony 9, 14  
 Demonic harmony 9, 156  
 Depression 124  
 Descartes 23, 33, 147, 158, 191  
 desire for Brahman 208  
 desire for the maintenance of the world 208  
 desire for the self 208  
 de-territorialisation 129  
 deva 96, 220, 480  
 Devanandan 185  
 Dewey 74, 254  
 theory of public communication 74  
 Dewey's theory of public communication 74  
 Dharana 118, 121, 254  
 Dharma 110, 116, 119, 122, 243, 545, 550,  
 573, 654  
 five Dharmic principles 243  
 Dharma Sadhana 116, 119  
 Dharmashastras 132  
 dharma wheel 21  
 Dhruvasmṛti 119  
 Dhyān 254  
 Dhyana 118, 121  
 Diagram of Supreme Ultimate 19  
 Dialectical logic 195, 199  
 dialogical normativity 86  
 dialogical processes 87

- Dierckxsens 179, 180, 181  
 dignity xvi, xxviii, 5, 10, 145, 171, 269, 275,  
     277, 278, 280, 286, 294, 299, 366, 389,  
     412, 433, 458, 465, 471, 511, 528, 531,  
     566, 567, 575, 621, 637, 660, 704, 705,  
     725, 817, 824, 828, 850, 855, 883, 901  
 discrimination 111, 151, 208, 319, 337, 513,  
     570, 573, 577, 615, 653, 658, 705, 708  
 disharmonic forces 95  
 disharmonic system 6  
 Disharmonies 152  
 disharmony xiii, xxvi, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 17, 25,  
     100, 106, 122, 124, 132, 133, 147, 151,  
     152, 155, 161, 268, 385, 386, 387, 396,  
     412, 419, 443, 470, 487, 526, 530, 534,  
     536, 537, 547, 549, 551, 553, 755, 816,  
     817  
 Dissipative structures 107  
 Dmitry Medvedev 5  
 double contingency 288  
 Dow Jones Industrial Index 337  
 Dualism viii, xxiv, 191  
 Duane Elgin 268  
 Durkheim 64, 72, 75, 469  
 dynamic harmony xxiv, 9, 10, 14, 149, 153
- E**
- Earthos 319, 320, 321, 327, 340, 341, 345,  
     348, 349, 894  
 Earths Institute 318  
 East-West fecundation process 185  
 Eckhart Tolle 29  
 ecological bill of rights 329, 340  
 Ecologism 71  
 economy of the gift 177, 178  
 ecoregional map 335  
 Edmund Husserl 12  
 egalitarian liberalism 199  
 ego-less politics 52  
 egotism 55, 212, 213, 883  
 Eisenstadt 8, 15  
 Ekaagra 249, 251  
 Elaine Desmond ii, ix, xxvi, 543, 895  
 Elaine Pagels 22  
 Elitist Equipose 150  
 emancipation 56, 768  
 Emile Durkheim 64, 469  
 Emmanuel Levinas 175  
 Emptiness 273, 275, 276, 277, 281, 282, 287,  
     288, 289, 298, 299, 300, 301, 440, 444  
 Energy balance 244  
 Energy Balance of Yin/Yang 243  
     aspects of 243  
     Masculine energy 244  
     Shiv/Shakti Balance 244  
 Engaged Buddhism 11  
 enlightenment rationalism 129  
 environmental degradation 319, 493, 717,  
     719, 815  
 epi-level cultural models 71  
 epoch-making revolution 32  
 Equipose 150, 156  
 Erich Neumann 58  
 Ervin Laszlo 32  
 Estonian Singing Revolution 268  
 Euclid 23  
     principles of mathematical proof 23  
 Euclidean geometry 13  
 European romanticism 100  
 ever green revolution 359, 361  
 existential risk 30, 545  
 external disharmony 3, 6, 7, 47, 117, 118,  
     122, 146, 151, 152, 153, 154, 157, 214,  
     215, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 230,  
     255, 290, 374, 380, 401, 440, 441, 537,  
     552, 561, 574, 613, 616, 721, 738, 743,  
     751, 752, 757, 781, 822, 905  
 extraterritorial power 824  
 extremism 197, 198, 818
- F**
- Farmer Liaison Team 312  
 F.C. Happold 22  
 feed-back' process 59  
 Felix Padel viii, xxv, 373, 381, 901  
 Feminine Energy 244  
 Ferdinand de Saussure 136  
 Fibonacci numbers 13  
 Fidele Lumeya ix, xxvi, 525, 899  
 finite transcendence xxi  
 folk philosophy 132  
 food desert 305, 306, 309  
 food inequity 306  
 Food Justice 305, 308, 311, 312, 352

Food Justice Class 308, 311, 312  
 Forgiveness xvi, 103, 121, 169, 181, 568, 583, 660, 805  
 Formless Absolute 19, 24  
 Foucault 39, 90, 92, 93, 98, 99, 103, 139, 143, 270, 302, 827, 832, 899  
 Foundation for Community Encouragement 281, 287, 290, 298, 299, 896  
 Fourth Avenue Fresh Stop 310, 313  
 Francis Bacon 157, 860  
 Fred Dallymayr 273  
 French Revolution 99, 513, 860, 863, 881  
 Fresh Stop viii, xxiv, 305, 306, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 900  
 Fresh Stop Project viii, xxiv, 305, 306, 308  
 Fritz Schumacher 140, 143  
 functional cooperation 147  
 fusional union 167

## G

Gadamer 86, 89, 92, 93, 899  
 Galtung 12, 15, 98, 103, 616, 639, 675, 681, 686  
 Gandhi ii, xvi, xvii, xxii, xxvi, 10, 18, 31, 32, 37, 41, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 96, 158, 302, 303, 320, 360, 411, 412, 416, 490, 543, 544, 545, 549, 552, 553, 554, 556, 557, 558, 567, 575, 578, 580, 582, 613, 614, 637, 639, 640, 641, 720, 771, 772, 866, 867, 870, 871, 879, 885, 894, 904, 905  
     political principle 54  
 Geist 290, 291, 292, 521  
 gendered essentialism 164  
 Genuine Community 273, 274, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 283, 284, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 296, 297, 298, 300  
     presence of Holy Spirit in 290  
 Geographic Information Systems 350  
 Georg Cantor 23  
     set theory 23  
 George Boole 21  
 GIS 350  
 glands 110, 115, 116, 118  
 Global Footprint Network 327  
 global governance 69  
 Global Harmony Association xvi, xxix, 5, 6, 16, 17, 490, 901  
 globalisation 14, 64, 68, 91, 192, 241, 362, 370, 385, 387, 396, 405, 448, 486, 508, 618, 638, 792, 794, 799, 820, 821, 823, 903  
 globalization 823  
 global nuclear disarmament 5  
 God within 45, 46  
 Gross National Happiness Index 337

## H

Habermas 9, 16, 66, 73, 75, 76, 77, 86, 93, 199, 201, 303, 545, 547, 550, 553, 554, 667, 668, 789, 802, 803, 805, 807, 808, 820, 821, 834, 836, 861  
     different pragmatic functions 201  
 Hans-Georg Gadamer 86  
 Hans-Herbert Kögler vii, xxiii, 79, 899  
 Harmon 5  
 harmonia 139, 140, 143, 266, 732, 753, 754, 755, 758  
 harmonic diasporas xxiii, 96, 102  
 harmonic system 6, 7, 337  
 harmonious global society 69, 71, 72  
 harmonious social communion 36  
 harmonious social conviviality 143  
 harmonious society xxiii, 30, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 423, 732, 739  
 Harmony  
     aesthetic nature of 67  
     as an element of social process 99  
     as an Element of the Cognitive Order 65  
     Confucian traditions of harmony 5  
     dimensions of 266  
     intrinsic nature of 146  
     Limits of 82  
     non-utopian view of xxiii  
     Prama and 100  
     value of 87  
     value priority for 132  
 Hartshorne viii, xxiv, 191, 193, 197, 198, 200, 201, 905  
     Hartshornian way 199  
     Hartshornian Way 197  
     panentheism 198, 201  
 Hartshorne's panentheism 201

- Heart-centred approach 120  
heart chakra 112, 117, 120  
Hegel 24, 164, 168, 181, 195, 196, 200, 201, 801, 890  
    dialectical logic 24  
    Hegelian logic 196, 197, 198, 199, 200  
    Hegelian Logic 195  
Hegelian inflection 45, 46  
Hegelian logic 196, 197, 198, 199, 200  
hegemonic culture 134  
Heikki Patomäki ii, x, xxviii, 775, 902  
Henk de Weijer viii, xxiv, 145, 905  
Heraclites 141, 144  
Heraclitus 17, 19, 22, 27, 28, 292, 293, 296, 723  
    philosophy of strife 293  
    Strife 296  
Heraclitus of Ephesus 17  
hermeneutical philosophy 173  
hermeneutic philosophy 88  
heterotopia 98, 99  
Hidden Harmony vii, xxii, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33  
Hindu cosmology 96  
Hiroshi Motoyama 112  
Hitler 46, 790, 876  
Hobbes 57, 64, 72, 75, 387, 390, 391, 397, 401, 722, 801, 864  
holistic reflexivity 88, 89, 90, 91  
    Eastern modes of 90  
Homo divinus 31  
Homo sapiens 31, 713, 714, 720, 721, 777, 794  
Horst Rittel 330  
human agency 48, 79, 80, 84, 828  
human development xxiv, 52, 243, 245, 246, 247, 252, 253, 254, 259, 261, 281, 285, 416, 447, 449, 801, 821  
Human Development viii, xxiv, 203, 241, 242, 245, 261, 448, 459, 808, 832, 893  
    New Paradigms of 261  
Human Development Index 245, 261, 448  
humanism 155, 896  
Humanistic psychology 252  
humanity xiii, xvii, xxix, 5, 18, 19, 28, 30, 31, 38, 55, 97, 101, 143, 161, 163, 164, 169, 242, 243, 252, 266, 269, 270, 271, 272, 277, 279, 284, 285, 286, 287, 385, 390, 391, 392, 395, 396, 398, 399, 400, 408, 414, 415, 422, 423, 431, 433, 435, 437, 438, 441, 448, 452, 461, 463, 469, 478, 515, 529, 548, 549, 613, 637, 701, 706, 713, 714, 715, 717, 718, 720, 721, 722, 726, 745, 752, 776, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 791, 792, 794, 795, 796, 797, 803, 814, 815, 843, 850, 855, 861, 866, 873, 878, 879, 880, 896, 897  
Humanity x, xi, xvii, xxviii, xxix, 30, 33, 58, 61, 140, 162, 164, 241, 262, 265, 269, 390, 479, 488, 638, 715, 724, 727, 775, 794, 837, 838, 847, 848, 850, 855, 895  
human rationality 84  
human rights 64, 71, 72, 91, 420, 422, 508, 537, 557, 581, 589, 592, 593, 595, 596, 606, 613, 618, 621, 626, 629, 637, 665, 689, 690, 691, 698, 701, 790, 798, 816, 826, 828, 901, 903  
human temporal existence 173  
Husserl 12, 73, 75  
hypostatisation 66, 68
- ## I
- Ian Barbour 192, 200  
Ibn Khaldun 98, 831, 871  
idem-identity 166  
identity xxviii, 10, 22, 40, 41, 45, 58, 79, 84, 86, 87, 90, 95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 155, 157, 165, 166, 167, 168, 171, 172, 176, 188, 193, 196, 218, 249, 253, 254, 270, 276, 286, 296, 297, 400, 407, 408, 409, 410, 415, 428, 435, 436, 440, 472, 512, 515, 516, 518, 528, 531, 532, 562, 588, 602, 603, 606, 611, 637, 645, 647, 648, 650, 654, 658, 660, 663, 668, 709, 735, 750, 751, 755, 775, 776, 777, 778, 780, 781, 782, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 812, 813, 814, 821, 822, 823, 825, 830, 876, 877, 879, 900, 904  
idiotic compassion 11  
immanent transcendence 66, 73  
Immanuel Kant 165, 777  
inalienable concomitance 154  
incarnation 44, 50

- India iv  
 Individual harmony 151  
 individualism xxix, 171, 395, 409, 420, 421, 423, 829  
 individual meditation 327  
 industrial civilisation 5, 13, 803  
 inner engineering 242  
 inner revolution 242  
 integral community 143  
 Integral Operating System 25, 27  
 integral physiology 113  
 Integral physiology 113  
 Integral Relational Logic 26, 27  
 integral yoga 20, 248  
 integrity xv, 171, 175, 241, 249, 270, 272, 278, 279, 292, 341, 463, 528, 617, 637, 647, 720, 824  
 internal disharmony 152  
 internal togetherness 266, 267, 269, 270, 272, 274, 277, 278, 293, 297  
 inter-religious climate 185  
 intuitive faculty xxv, 431  
 ipse-identity 166  
 Irfan Habib 136  
 IRL 26  
 Isaac Newton 31  
 Ishvara Pranidhana 116  
 iterative experiential learning approach 342
- J**
- Jacques Derrida 101, 175, 805, 834  
 James Austin 276  
 James O'Dea 31  
 James Ponniah viii, xxv, 359, 902  
 Jean Houston 31  
 jihad 11  
 jivan-mukti 30  
 J. Krishnamurti 18, 458, 702  
 J.N. Mohanty 12  
 Joan Baez xxviii, 768, 771, 772  
 Johannes Kepler xxii, 32, 141  
 Johann Galtung 12  
 John Clammer ii, xi, xvii, xxix, 889, 893, 895  
 John Diamond 246  
 John Dourley 58  
 John L. Petersen 31  
 John Naish 242
- John Rawls 86  
 Jonah Syndrome 32, 33  
 Joseph Campbell 27, 29  
 Judaeo-Christian mysticism 52  
 Judaeo-Christian mythology 143  
 Julian Huxley 18  
 Julie M. Geredien viii, xxiv, 265, 896  
 Julien Benda 131  
 Jump Time 31, 33  
 Jung 20, 21, 25, 33, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 52, 53, 56, 58, 59, 60, 379, 559, 563, 604, 686, 872  
 Jürgen Habermas 86, 789, 834
- K**
- Kabir 108, 119, 129, 131  
 Kāma 110  
     reasons for not accepting as motivation for action 209  
     Satisfaction of 211  
 kāma 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 222, 234, 235  
 Kandhamal x, xxvii, 565, 568, 573, 575, 577, 579, 580, 583  
 Kant 67, 73, 75, 76, 84, 93, 165, 401, 552, 554, 724, 726, 727, 777, 782, 783, 785, 786, 798, 801, 803, 806, 814, 833, 893, 894  
     post-Kantian world 84  
     pre-Kantian philosophical universe 83  
 Kantian conception 85  
 Kantian force 84  
 Kant's philosophy 84  
 Karen Armstrong 58  
 Karl-Julius Reubke ii, viii, xxiii, 139, 903  
 Kashmir Shaivism 10, 14, 15  
 kensho 275, 276, 277  
 Ken Wilber 25  
     AQAL 25  
 Knowledge viii, xxv, 16, 29, 75, 76, 92, 103, 109, 110, 121, 165, 206, 233, 249, 302, 332, 353, 368, 373, 382, 403, 416, 489, 491, 522, 797, 800, 806, 808, 876, 893  
 Kshipta 249, 250  
 kundalini 106, 119  
 Kundalini 109, 454  
 Kunitz 284, 285, 302  
 Kurt Gödel 23



## L

- Laj Utreja xxix  
 Lanley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute 106  
 Laozi 19  
 Law of Contradiction 17, 19, 23  
 Law of Identity 194  
 Law of Non-Contradiction 194  
 Law of the Excluded Middle 194  
 Leibnitz 141  
 Leibniz 83, 84, 93  
 Le Malheur 46  
     affliction 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 490  
 Le Milieu Divin 22  
 Leo Semashko v, xvi, xvii, 5, 17  
 Liberation Theology 188  
 Libya 136, 831, 836  
 life-and-death diagram 30  
 Life resiliency 337  
 lifeworld 88, 90  
 limbic system 105  
 Living Beings Scale 326, 344, 345  
 Logic xiii, 26, 27, 75, 177, 193, 195, 558, 727, 831, 833  
     logic of equivalence 178  
     logic of super-abundance 177, 178  
     Logic of Superabundance 177  
 Logos 19, 27, 187, 434  
 Lokasa graha 222

## M

- MAD 101  
 Madhuvidya 117  
     honey knowledge 117  
 Mahābhārata 221  
 Mahatma Gandhi xvi, 37, 60, 320, 412, 553, 582, 637, 771, 772, 866, 867, 871, 885, 894  
 Mahavira 127, 130, 404, 411  
 Mahavratam 255  
 Mala Kapadia viii, xxiv, 241, 898  
 malnutrition 241, 242, 364  
 mandala 21, 415, 467, 468  
 Mandala ix, xxvi, 467, 468, 905  
 Marco Iacoboni 122  
 Marcus Bussey ii, vii, xxiii, 12, 13, 14, 95, 894  
 Margaret J. Wheatley 253

- Mark Sunder Rao 185  
 Martin Luther King 10, 37, 320, 637, 720, 769, 771, 857, 858, 865, 867, 886  
 Mary Helen Immordino-Yang 285  
 Marylynne Robinson 36  
 Mary Pfeifer 320  
 Maslow, Abraham 32, 33, 244, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 258, 259, 261, 262, 263  
     concept of Self-Actualisation 252  
     Healthy people 258  
 masters of suspicion 39  
 Materialist Equipoise 150  
 Maurice Friedman xxi  
 Max Weber 82, 521, 801, 820, 821, 835  
 means-ends oriented attitude 83, 85  
 means-ends rationality 82, 84  
 Meera Charkavorty xxiii  
 Meister Eckhart 20  
 Merton 35, 37, 38, 41, 42, 57, 60, 904  
 meta-conventional rules 66  
 method of critical rationality 39  
 Michael Fox 242  
 migration 822  
 Migration x, xxviii, 601, 811, 825, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 899  
 Mike Doogan x, xxvii, 559, 896  
 Minoan culture 253  
 Mircea Eliade 20, 438  
 mirror neuron system 122, 295, 301  
 M.K. Gandhi 59, 870, 879  
 modernism 53, 54  
 Modernity vii, xxiii, 6, 15, 76, 79, 93, 103, 141, 303, 410, 411, 412, 414, 582, 583, 805, 834  
 Mohandas Gandhi 18, 52, 556  
 Mokśa 110  
 moksha 30, 132, 543  
 Monarchomachi 72  
 Mondragon 326  
     Regional Cooperative Economy 326  
 monolithic unity 183  
 Moodha 249  
 moral imagination 102, 779  
 Morality 59, 114, 233, 263, 302, 728  
 morality of super-abundance 174, 179  
 moral skepticism 127  
 Mother Teresa 124, 125, 885, 886

M.S. Swaminathan viii, xxv, 359, 360, 361,  
363, 365, 366, 368, 370  
multidimensional Cross of Duality 25  
multidimensional learning process 69  
multilevel learning processes 70  
Mutually Assured Diversity 101  
mutual recognition 85, 164, 167, 169  
Mutual Recognition 167  
Myanmar 137, 694  
Mystical Society 29

## N

Narayan Khadka x, xxvii, 600, 643  
narrative harmony xxvii, 586  
Nathaniel Samuel 171  
navel chakra 116, 120  
Negative capability 275  
Negative Capability 275  
Nelson Mandela 37, 56, 127, 677, 687, 720,  
863  
Neo-Confucian 91  
Neo-Confucian ethical principles 91  
Neohumanism 120, 155, 158  
Neohumanist education 119, 120  
NHE Learning Outcomes 121  
Neohumanist Game 120  
Neumann 46, 58, 59, 60  
New Roots 306, 308, 314, 315, 316, 900  
New Roots program 306  
Newtonian triangle 148  
new world order 64, 188  
Nicholas of Cusa 20, 33  
Nick Bostrom 30  
Nietzsche 39, 42, 387, 723, 725, 728, 776,  
781, 864, 873  
Ninian Stein 334  
Nirmal Selvamony x, xxviii, 741, 761, 904  
Niruddha 249, 251  
Nirudha 249  
Nirvakalpa samadhi 118  
nirvana 11  
Nirvāna 18  
Niyama 114, 115, 121, 243, 244, 254, 255,  
259, 261  
Five 255, 259  
Ishvar 255, 259, 260  
Pranidhana 116, 255, 259, 260

Santosh 255, 259, 260, 695  
Shaucha 255, 259, 260  
Swadhyaya 255, 259, 260  
Tapah 255, 259, 260  
N.K. Das ix, xxvi, 469  
Nondual Absolute 26  
non-dual dualism 114  
non-violence 5, 54, 59, 60, 127, 128, 130,  
131, 255, 556, 557, 704, 708, 767, 772,  
867, 882, 903  
ahimsa 54, 55, 56, 255, 259, 882  
non-violent civil rights movements 133  
Non-violent strategies 128  
Numinosphere 22  
nurturing dialogical qualities 267  
Nyaya logic 200

## O

oddball effect 281  
OECD 69, 451  
Oliver James 242  
Olweus Model 320  
Omega circle dialogue 256  
Omega Point 24, 29  
Omega Point of evolution 24  
one-dimensional holomovement 22  
One Planet Living 327, 334, 340  
ontological epistemology of participation 4  
oppression 11, 47, 53, 91, 163, 164, 274, 296,  
311, 393, 507, 508, 588, 592, 596, 597,  
600, 692, 701, 706, 764, 817, 876  
socio-political forms of 47  
oppressive force 267  
Order of the Star 18  
ordinary consciousness 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45,  
46, 48, 52  
ordinary rationality 39  
original unity 35, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46,  
52, 54, 56, 57, 58  
drawbacks of 37  
Orthodox Christian Church 20  
Ouroboros 44, 45, 58, 59  
Outer engineering 242

## P

panentheism 198, 201  
Panosophy 27

- pantheism 198, 201  
 Pantheism 198, 201  
 Parsons' theory 73  
 Patanjali xxiv, 114, 248, 254, 255, 256, 259, 260, 263, 379, 383, 456  
   Yoga Sutras 248  
 Pathless Land 18  
 Patricia Evans 324  
 Paul Gilbert 245, 258, 262  
 Paul Hague vii, xxii, 17, 897  
 Paul Ricoeur xxiv, 39, 161, 172, 175, 181, 182  
 peasant demonstrations 133  
 People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights xxvii, 592, 610  
 permanent renouncer 216, 217  
 Peter Singer 195, 201, 725  
 Pete Seeger xxviii, 768, 769, 772, 774  
 Philip Loheed 327, 334  
 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin 18  
 Piet Strydom ii, vii, xxii, 63, 265, 400, 905  
 Piscean era 243  
 planetary cooperation 109, 120  
 Planetary unity 109  
 Plato 140, 141, 143, 193, 400, 723, 758, 760, 804, 863, 878  
 polyglot culture 106  
 post-modern consciousness 39  
 Power Over 324  
 prama xxiii, 96, 100, 125  
 Prama vii, xxiii, 95, 100, 416, 898  
 Pranayaam 254  
 Pranayama 117, 121  
   breath control 117  
 pranendriya 117  
 Pratyahaar 254  
 pre-established harmony 83, 84, 141  
 Prema Chodron 11  
 Presbyterian Hunger Programme 311  
 prima materia 45, 58, 59  
 principle of a "pre-established harmony" 83  
 principle of duality 24  
 Principle of Duality 24, 25, 26  
 Principle of Unity 26  
 Principles of Unity and Duality 26, 28  
 principles of Vedanta 137  
 problem of dualism 196  
 problem of social integration 64  
 problems of theodicy 49  
 Project Heraclitus 28  
 Project TEAMWORK 320  
 Protestantism 129  
 P.R. Sarkar xxiii, 96, 109, 115, 119, 155, 158  
   biopsychology of the glands and chakras 115  
   difference between "knowledge" and "understanding" 119  
 Pseudo-Community 273, 274, 279, 283, 284, 287, 288, 297  
 psi-energy 112  
 psychological poverty 258  
 Pure institutional consciousness 223  
 Puru a 219, 221, 223, 226, 228, 231, 232  
 Purusharthas 132  
   principles of 132  
 PVCHR xxvii, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 599, 603, 604, 606, 609  
 Pythagoras 140, 193
- ## Q
- Quarter Life crisis 254  
 quasi-Hegelian inflection 46
- ## R
- Rabindranath Tagore 3  
 Radical acceptance 124  
 Radicalism 133  
 radical strife 296, 299  
 Radical strife 297  
 Radical Strife 292, 297  
 Radical Trinity 187, 190  
 Rahim Jahanbegloo 53  
 Raimon Panikkar viii, xxiv, 183, 184, 185, 190, 903  
   Advaitic Trinitarianism viii, xxiv, 183, 184, 187  
   cosmotheandric vision 186  
 Rajas 210, 243, 244, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 255, 261, 405, 415, 553  
 rajasik 100  
 Rajasik 100, 415  
 Ralph Waldo Emerson 265  
 Ramachandra Gandhi 59  
 Ramakrishna Paramahansa 129  
 Ramana Maharshi 29

- Rāmāya a sa nyāsa 216  
 Rationalism 331  
 rationality 39, 54, 55, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 88,  
     92, 149, 178, 376, 397, 403, 714  
 recognition xxvi, 32, 37, 41, 50, 73, 83, 85,  
     86, 87, 90, 92, 155, 162, 164, 165, 166,  
     167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 176, 179, 180,  
     267, 269, 277, 285, 329, 364, 365, 393,  
     394, 412, 428, 431, 480, 497, 511, 516,  
     537, 544, 545, 546, 547, 549, 567, 659,  
     662, 696, 706, 779, 791, 798, 800, 812,  
     814, 830  
     and Harmony 170  
     Recognition of the self in the other 168  
     theological recognition 169, 171  
 Redemption 30  
 Reflexive subjectivity 89  
 Regional Cooperative Economy 326  
 Reification 68  
 relational living systems 319, 320, 323, 324,  
     325, 326, 328, 329, 334, 340, 342, 344,  
     345, 347, 349, 350, 351  
     Cellular Scale 326  
     Living Being Scale 326, 344, 345  
     Scales of 325  
 relative strife 296, 298, 299  
 Relative Strife 292, 298  
 Religion 15, 58, 61, 64, 103, 182, 189, 192,  
     200, 201, 233, 301, 406, 410, 411, 414,  
     428, 431, 432, 438, 478, 479, 488, 489,  
     490, 491, 508, 515, 519, 524, 538, 554,  
     571, 583, 584, 653, 835, 884, 899, 901,  
     902, 903, 905  
 religious consciousness 41  
 Ren 271  
 René Descartes 23  
 Restorative Justice 329, 582, 661  
 re-territorialisation 98, 99  
 Richard Kearney 173  
 Richard Tarnas 27  
 Ricoeur viii, xxiv, 39, 58, 61, 161, 162, 164,  
     165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171, 172, 173,  
     174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181,  
     182  
     forms of recognition 165  
     Hermeneutics of Narrativity 172  
     narrative theory 173  
     scientific conception of the world 58  
     structure of recognition 164  
 igveda 219, 221  
     parjanya 221  
     Puru a 219  
     yajña 219  
 Rinker x, xxvii, 585, 589, 605, 609, 903  
 Robert Bellah 9, 16, 152  
 Roxbury Memory Trail 322, 342, 344  
 Rudolf Otto 185  
 Rudolf Steiner 13, 143, 379  
 Rumi 107, 108, 124
- S**
- Saa 300  
 sacred non-sovereignty 273, 275, 276, 277,  
     280, 287, 289, 297, 298, 300  
 sadhana 4, 9, 12, 95, 96, 101, 106, 109, 110,  
     114, 115, 119, 155, 158  
     biopsychology of 109  
 Sadhguru 242  
 Sahara Desert 140, 526, 527  
 samadhi 11, 118  
 Samadhi 118, 119, 251, 254  
 sa nyastakarma 213, 215, 216  
 samsāra 18  
 Sant Gyaneshwar 154  
 Sapir Handelman x, xxvii, 669, 897  
 Sarah Howard viii, xxiv, 317, 897  
 Sara J. Wolcott x, xxviii, 731, 906  
 Sarvodaya 11, 54, 360  
 Sarvodaya Sramadana movement 11  
 Satan 43, 59, 522  
 Sattva 243, 244, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 258,  
     261  
 sattvik 100, 415  
 Sattvik 100, 415  
 Sattwic harmony 14  
 Satyagraha 18, 52, 55, 552, 553, 554, 581  
 Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram 243, 245, 261  
 Savikalpa samadhi 118  
 Schrödinger's model 153  
 science-technology-capitalist-industrial  
     society 64  
 Scientific Revolution 28  
 Scott Peck 273, 301  
     Emptiness 273

- negative capability 275  
 Second World War 675  
 self-actualisation 244, 253, 254, 258, 261  
 self-engagement system 296  
 self-recognition 164, 166, 167, 169, 170, 171  
 Self-Recognition 166  
 Self-reflective Intelligence 19  
 Self-rule 55  
 Self-Transcendence xxv, 439  
 self-transformation 42, 43, 46, 52, 53, 56  
 Semashko v, xvi, xvii, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16,  
     17, 34, 95, 470, 490, 526, 613, 641,  
     745, 761  
     new mathematics of harmony 13  
 Shannon 142, 144, 354  
 shared humanity 161, 163, 164, 279, 285  
 Shared sovereignty 286, 300  
 Sharing Economy 28  
 Shri Anandamurti 152, 154  
 Shrii Shrii Anandamurti 114  
 Shrii Shrii Anandamurti 109, 124, 125  
 Sid Vishwamitra Jordan vii, xxiii, 105  
 Siegel 276, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286,  
     295, 300, 301, 303  
     resonance circuits 301  
 Simone Weil 41, 46, 59, 60, 61, 904  
 Social change 320  
 social communion 36  
 social demography 127  
 social harmony xxv, xxvi, xxvii, 7, 8, 13, 106,  
     121, 122, 123, 124, 151, 386, 387, 415,  
     510, 586, 587, 589, 599, 605, 606, 613,  
     617, 644, 650, 666, 738  
     biopsychology of 121  
     four-dimensional and tetra-mathematics  
         of 13  
     tetra-mathematics of 8, 13  
 Social harmony 151, 385, 399, 400  
 social inclusion 161  
 social integration 64, 114, 518, 622  
 socialism 131  
 social structures 8, 70, 136, 277, 293, 778,  
     784  
 social-theoretical perspective 88  
 social theory 7, 65, 66, 69, 73, 90, 91, 889,  
     890, 895, 905  
 Social Theory vii, xxii, 16, 63, 64, 74, 75, 76,  
     77, 93, 303, 805, 895, 905  
 social world 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 162, 374,  
     380, 545, 797  
 solicitude 162, 174, 179, 180  
 Solitude 179  
 Somali Diaspora 823  
 South Africa 56, 528, 556, 616, 637, 671,  
     673, 674, 676, 677, 684, 686, 688, 790,  
     813, 820, 894  
 S. Painadath ix, xxv, 431, 438, 901  
 Spanish civil war 47  
 Spinoza's pantheism 201  
 spiritual harmony 9, 14, 153  
 Spirituality ix, xxvi, 15, 16, 34, 103, 243, 258,  
     260, 301, 303, 352, 400, 401, 409, 410,  
     411, 412, 416, 417, 431, 432, 433, 458,  
     541, 582, 893, 901  
 spiritual journey 27  
     stages 27  
 spiritual poverty 241  
 spiritual practices 21, 109, 110, 114, 116, 118  
 Spiritual Renaissance 28  
 Sri Lanka 11, 877, 902  
 Sri Sri Ravi Shankar 242  
 Stakhov 13  
 St. Augustine 46  
 Stephen Hawking 27, 30  
 Stephen Sedley 133  
 stereoscopic' sociological procedure 73  
 Sthitaprajña 211  
 Strife 292, 293, 294, 296, 297, 298  
     kinds of 296  
 Strydom ii, vii, xxii, xxiii, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68,  
     70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 265, 288,  
     289, 290, 291, 303, 400, 905  
     critical theory 288  
 Subash Sharma ii, xxv  
 Subhash Sharma ix, 256, 260, 403, 904  
 subject-centred model of intentional agency  
     85  
 subjective well-being 245, 449, 450  
 Subtle energy 113  
 Sudha Sreenivasa Reddy x, xxviii, 701, 903  
 Suffering 47, 52, 55, 156, 174, 179, 444  
 superconscious mind 120  
 Supreme Consciousness 122  
 Supreme Spiritual Beatitude 114

Susan Visvanathan 12  
 Swami Vivekananda 129, 137, 138, 411, 412  
 swaraj 54, 55, 549  
 Swaraj 52, 53, 60, 553  
 Swaroop Sthiti 251  
 Swathi Desai xxv  
 syllogism 82  
 Syria 136, 692, 817  
 Systems theory 268

## T

tadatmya 185  
 Tagore 3, 12, 855, 885, 886, 894, 902  
 Talcott Parsons 64  
 Tamas 181, 243, 244, 248, 249, 250, 251,  
 252, 255, 261, 405, 415, 553  
 tamasik 14, 100  
 Tamasik 100, 415  
 Tamasik harmony 100, 415  
 tantra 20  
 Tao 19, 33, 284, 285, 286, 434, 862, 863, 864,  
 865, 887  
 Taoist logic 200  
 Tavistock Model 301  
 Teilhard 18, 22, 34  
 territorialisation 96, 98, 99  
 testimonial therapy xxvii, 592, 593, 594, 595,  
 596, 597, 599, 602  
 Testimonial therapy xxvii, 593  
 Tetrasociology 8, 16, 526  
 Tharu Community x, xxvii, 643, 668  
 theological recognition 169, 171  
 theory of the emotions 114  
 Thera Island 253  
 Thomas More 57  
 throat chakra 115, 120  
 Tiananmen Square 91, 718  
 Tom H. Hastings x, xxvi, 555  
 top-down 275, 283, 284, 286, 322, 493, 818  
 traditional culture 53, 54, 55, 476  
 transcendence xxi, xxv, 66, 67, 73, 84, 168,  
 171, 185, 253, 327, 363, 429, 431, 432,  
 434, 441, 561, 757  
 transcultural harmony 109  
 Transformative diasporas 101  
 transformative harmony xvii, xxii, xxiii, xxiv,  
 xxv, xxvi, xxvii, xxix, 9, 10, 11, 36, 37,

64, 68, 69, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102,  
 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 120, 123, 124,  
 125, 127, 130, 132, 134, 153, 161, 162,  
 272, 286, 317, 319, 320, 322, 323, 325,  
 328, 330, 335, 339, 342, 346, 351, 359,  
 433, 437, 470, 487, 508, 515, 516, 525,  
 526, 527, 545, 546, 549, 551, 552, 585,  
 586, 587, 588, 589, 593, 594, 595, 596,  
 597, 598, 599, 601, 603, 604, 605, 606,  
 636, 669, 670, 679, 731, 734, 736, 738,  
 773  
 Transformative harmony xxvii, 4, 9, 10, 11,  
 12, 18, 99, 100, 318, 319, 343, 593,  
 735  
 Transformative Harmony i, iii, vii, viii, ix, x,  
 xiii, xvi, xxi, xxii, xxiii, xxiv, xxv, xxvi,  
 xxvii, xxviii, 1, 3, 9, 10, 12, 17, 19, 28,  
 32, 33, 68, 75, 92, 95, 105, 124, 127,  
 136, 158, 161, 203, 265, 302, 317, 340,  
 355, 406, 416, 425, 431, 439, 507, 525,  
 528, 535, 541, 543, 592, 611, 614, 640,  
 669, 676, 686, 763, 768, 837, 848, 849  
 features of 136  
 Transhumanism 18, 33  
 transhumanist movement 30  
 Transnationalism x, xxviii, 811, 820, 821,  
 830, 831, 833, 834, 835  
 Trappist monk 57  
 Trinitarian Advaitism 187  
 trinitarian unity 186  
 triple contingency 74, 288, 289, 290, 296  
 social and political implications of 289  
 Triple Contingency 75, 76, 77, 301, 303, 905  
 true self 41, 118  
 Tulsidas 131  
 two-world theory 84  
 typal-conventional 9, 151, 157  
 typal-conventional harmony 151

## U

Umashankar Joshi 59  
 unconscious mind 117, 120  
 Unified Relationships Theory 27  
 United States 56, 98, 106, 294, 312, 313, 335,  
 357, 450, 504, 538, 552, 597, 598, 600,  
 607, 718, 784, 793, 831, 833, 840, 896,  
 899, 906

Unity viii, xxiv, 21, 26, 28, 38, 52, 121, 183,  
221, 411, 431, 433, 874  
universal moral beliefs 86  
Upanishads 48, 127, 130, 458  
uroboros 58  
utopian xxiii, 56, 81, 91, 713, 779, 861  
Utopian 91

## V

Vachana 131, 134  
Valerie Hunt 113  
value priority of harmony 5, 8, 14  
Vāsudevāśrama's Yatidharmaprakāśa 214  
Vatican committee 73  
Vedas 245, 247, 458  
Asur 247  
Dev 247, 627, 639  
Manav 247  
Vedic foundation of Satyam-Shivam-Sund-  
aram 243  
vertical integration 282  
Vertical neural integration 283  
Vietnam War 57, 378, 772, 838  
Vikshipt 249, 250  
Vimala Thakar 31, 255  
Vipasana xxv  
Vira Somboon 11  
Vyas 255

## W

Wall Street 135, 241  
Wall Street Movement 241  
Walter Benjamin 13, 67  
Wars of Religion 64  
Watersheds 335  
Wealth Health Organisation 241  
W.E.B. DuBois 343  
Weil xxii, 41, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53,  
56, 59, 60, 61, 904  
mystical journey 51  
poetic mysticism 52  
Western logic 23  
Western philosophical discourse 86  
WHO 241  
wicked problem 330  
William Falcetano x, xxviii, 711, 896  
W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz viii, xxv, 385,

401, 899  
Wolff 76, 83  
Wordsworth x, xxviii, 741, 742, 743, 744,  
745, 746, 747, 748, 750, 751, 752, 753,  
755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762  
world health organisation 246  
World Peace 18, 28  
World War II 145

## Y

Yahweh 43, 44, 45, 434  
yajña 212, 214, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 225  
Yajña 219, 221  
Yama 114, 115, 121, 243, 244, 254, 255, 256,  
259, 261  
Ahimsa 255, 256, 257, 904  
Aparigrah 255, 257, 258  
Asteya 255, 256, 257, 259  
Brahmacharya 255, 257  
Five 255  
Satya 190, 255, 256  
yoga 20, 107, 109, 114, 115, 116, 118, 120,  
123, 216, 228, 242, 248, 254, 318, 326,  
379, 456, 897, 898  
Yoga xxiv, 20, 32, 34, 109, 114, 125, 215, 216,  
245, 246, 248, 250, 251, 252, 254, 259,  
262, 263, 379, 383, 401, 416, 452, 453,  
454, 455, 457, 458, 740, 838, 896, 898,  
900  
Yoga Samadhi 251  
Yusuf Islam xxviii, 763, 764, 765, 766

## Z

Zen Buddhism 27  
Zhang Jiahuan 147







# TRANSFORMATIVE HARMONY

PHILOSOPHY  
SOCIOLOGY  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

*Transformative Harmony is all-embracing in its scope and concerns; it traverses personal and planetary issues of harmony. This collection of essays analyses the interrelations between humanity, culture and nature and pleads for consensual harmony as against coercive harmony which prevail in inegalitarian and hierarchical societies. A contribution which feels the pulse of contemporary conflict-ridden time.*

— **Professor T.K. Oommen**, Emeritus Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and President International Sociological Association (1990-94).

*This impressive volume offers a refreshing, original and entirely unexpected perspective on the contemporary social world. It combines the idea of harmony with Eastern and Western traditions in order to establish a normative understanding of the globalized world based on spiritual and peaceful interaction.*

—**Professor Boike Rehbein**, Humboldt University, Berlin.

*Today, when the world is experiencing the time of turmoil and uncertainty, this volume reminds of harmony as something what can and should be (re)established. The book does not provide recipe of how to achieve harmony, but rather makes its reader think of harmony as of not less natural for the humankind than disorder; and this is really important.*

—**Dmitri M. Bondarenko**, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

*Transformative Harmony should be required reading for all those searching for ways to understand the chaos in our world, our countries, our families and our own personal lives. The wisdom in this book illuminates our struggles with the age old fragmented approaches to the Divine and Human; the feminine and masculine, self and other. Our world needs to understand harmony as a primal concept that is both real and ideal to allow us to appreciate its role in the regeneration of culture at a time of ecological, psychological, environmental and social crisis. Transformative harmony is a concept that restores to our conscious awareness the natural desire in human beings to express an all embracing love for humanity and respect and well-being of all life. As an African woman, this concept resonates with Ubuntu.*

—**Mamphela Ramphele**, Distinguished Anthropologist and Public Intellectual, South Africa

*A powerful global initiative that discovers mutuality of life in all spheres that propels creative transformation generating hope and joy for all.*

—**Manoranjan Mohanty**, Distinguished Professor, Council of Social Development, New Delhi and Former Professor, University of Delhi

**Dr. Ananta Kumar Giri** is Professor at Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai, India.



**STUDERA PRESS**

1586/113, FF, Tri Nagar

Delhi- 110035, India

Ph: 011 27383728

Email: [info@studerapress.com](mailto:info@studerapress.com)

Web: [www.studerapress.com](http://www.studerapress.com)

978-93-85883-21-7

