CHAPTER 16

Transformative Harmony and the Community-Making Process

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> 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.
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> —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.[1] 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 (*ho*), 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

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 Christophere 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*)[2] 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.[3]

   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)[4]. 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"[5] (1987:83).

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

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 *saa*⁶ 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.[7] 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].[8]

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-realisations 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.[9]

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."[10] 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 ipseitious 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 (*ho*) 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 ipseitious 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:[11]

> 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 8th and 9th relational senses described in Part I of this book.[12] 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 6th 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[13] 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.
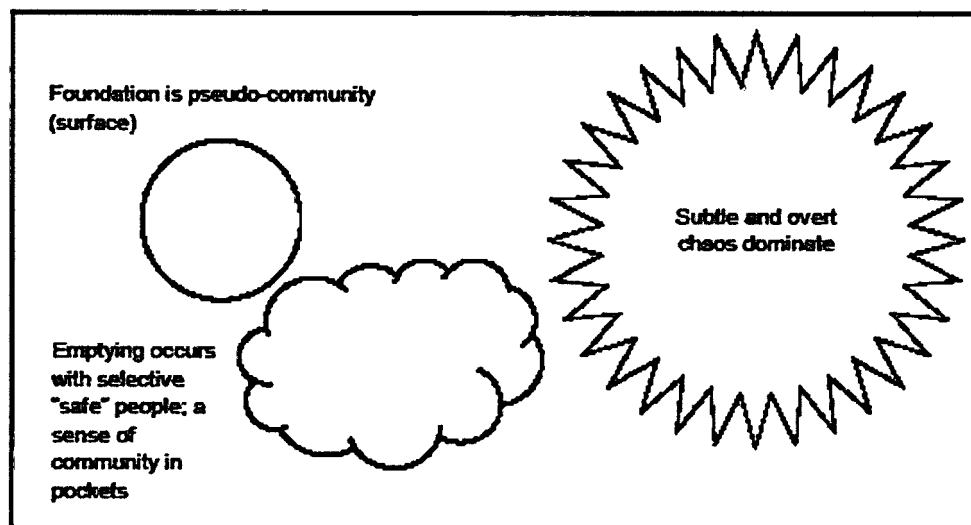

Figure 1. Radical Strife In the visual representation above, the rectangle represents the rigid conventions of Pseudo-Community that remain the foundation for the social agreement; the circle represents emptiness; the cloud represents the moments of Genuine Community that a few individuals may experience 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.
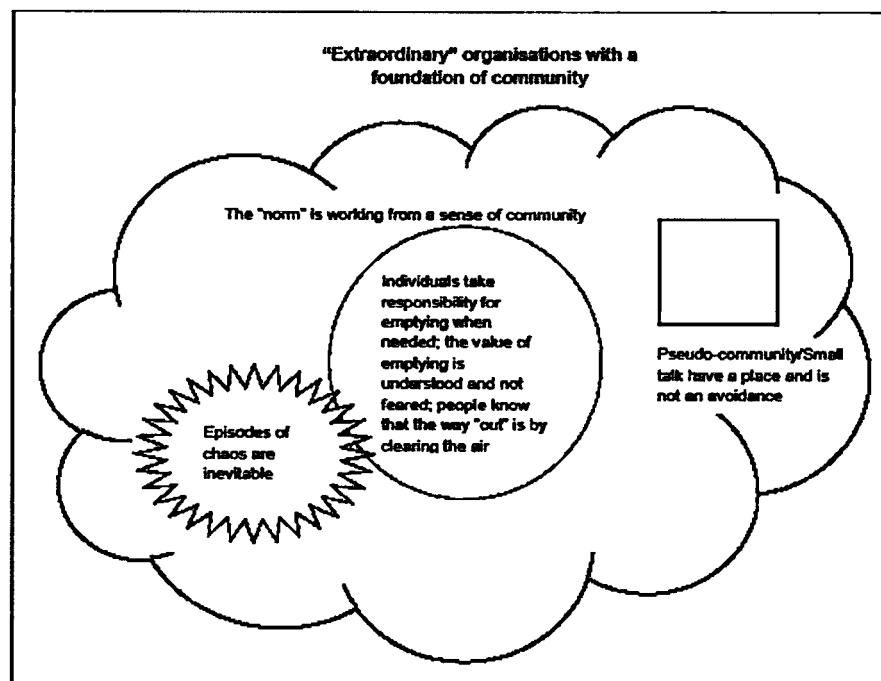

Figure 2. Relative Strife When Genuine Community is our ontological resting place, Emptiness is expanded, and the dynamics of change and strife (Chaos) live in a manageable proportion to our own capacity for transcendent perception, creativity

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.[14]

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

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