IPI 510 'Encountering the Other'
Term Paper
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The Ethics of Presence- New Paths in Interfaith Dialogue

"The poet produces the beautiful thing by fixing his attention on the real. Just so does the act of love. To know that this man who is hungry and thirty really exists just as much as I do- that is enough, the rest follows of itself". – Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*

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Introduction- From Recognition to Communion

Is recognizing difference enough when it comes to accepting 'the Other'? One of the hallmarks of the postmodern ethos is a recognition of *difference*, an ethical emphasis on allowing others to be exactly who they are in their foreignness to us.[1] You can hear this in the words of Martin Buber, one of the most exquisite and sensitive practitioners of being present to this Otherness- "The chief presupposition for the rise of genuine dialogue is that each should regard his partner as the very one he is. I become aware of him, aware that he is different, essentially different from myself, in the definite, unique way which is peculiar to him, and I accept whom I thus see, so that in full earnestness I can direct what I say to him as the person he is".[2] This presence to the other in their full *thisness*, or *haecceity* as the medieval Scholastics called it, is a beautiful thing, and ethically it's light years ahead of the violent tribalism, nationalism, and ethnic wars of Empire that have beset humanity since the dawn of the Neolithic age. But what if there was another space of connection beyond even this letting-be-unique of what is not like us? Consider this passage from the Trappist monk Thomas Merton:

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[1] "A highly contentious concern with difference is one of the contemporary characteristics of postmodern thought". *Routledge Companion to Postmodernism.* New York: Routledge, 2005. p.199. Also: "Postmodernism is skeptical of truth, unity and progress, opposes what it sees as elitism in culture, tends towards cultural relativism, and celebrates plurality, discontinuity and heterogeneity". Eagleton, Terry. *After Theory*. London: Penguin Books, 2003. p.13

[2] Buber, Martin. *The Knowledge of Man*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965. p.78

The deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. It is wordless. It is beyond words, and it is beyond speech, and it is beyond concepts. Not that we discover a new unity. We discover an older unity. My dear brothers [*and sisters*], we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are.[3]

In this paper I want to highlight some communication tools that might help

practitioners of interfaith dialogue enter the space of communion that Merton

points to. There has been a lineage of dialogue techniques developing in the last

forty years- variously called *Bohmian Dialogue*, *Generative Dialogue, Enlightened*

Dialogue and *We-Space Practice-* that can move people beyond the recognition of

difference and into spaces of deep unity and co-creation. I will outline these

practices and explain why I think they offer an exciting new vista for the ever-

evolving realm of interfaith dialogue. I will begin by asking why interfaith dialogue

is important at all, and then explore what the core goals are in the field today. I will

then suggest that a branch of interfaith dialogue needs to develop a *spirituality of*

dialogue, where dialogue itself becomes a form of spiritual practice. I will then argue

that the Bohmian Dialogue lineage has the tools to enable such an encounter.

Globalization, Religion and the Impetus for Dialogue

We may begin by asking ourselves why the need for interfaith dialogue in the

first place? One central context has been the increasing speed of globalization over

the past century, where through media and transportation technologies- not to

mention war, refugees, and immigration- the peoples of the planet have been

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[3] Merton, Thomas. *The Asian Journals of Thomas Merton.* US: New Directions, 1981. p.308.

pushed together.[4] This has often caused strife and conflict as ethnocentric religious identities come into contact with religious Others. As Ryan Urbano writes, "The clashes [of religions] have become so frequent, there is no need to enumerate them here".[5] So the easing of this violence and the overcoming of divisions is one important reason for interfaith dialogue. But Urbano also writes that, "Though religions are the cause of so much strife, war, and rivalry, they could also serve as gateways for peace, mutual understanding, and justice".[6] There is a core dimension of virtually all religions that calls for the love of all peoples. For instance, in Hinduism, "I look upon all creatures equally; none are less dear to me and none more dear" (*Bhagavad Gita* 9:29); in Jainism, "Have benevolence towards all living beings" (*Tattvarthasutra* 7.11); and in Buddhism, "As a mother with her own life guards the life of her own child, let all-embracing thoughts for all that lives be thine". (*Khuddaka Patha, Metta Sutta*). This is a small sampling of the teachings of universal love taught in the world's religions. Thus another reason for interfaith dialogue is that it's an avenue through which religious traditions can enact and fulfill this call for worldwide compassion. If successful, and of course this is a demanding path, interfaith dialogue and cooperation could be a powerful force for the transition to a more harmonious and just planetary civilization. So there's a lot at stake in this nascent religious movement.[7]

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[4] cf. Giddens, Anthony. *Runaway World- How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives.* London: Profile Books, 2002.

[5] Urbano, Ryan. C. (2012). 'Levinas and Interfaith Dialogue'. *Heythrop Journal.* (53). 148-161. p.149.

[6] Ibid, p.149.

[7] "While institutional belonging and personal commitment to and rootedness in a particular religious tradition or church remains essential, there is a deep consciousness of a transcultural and transreligious, indeed global, spiritual connectedness and of the possibility, indeed necessity of a

Interfaith Dialogue Today and the Need for a Spirituality of Dialogue

A survey of a few voices in the interfaith dialogue world will give us a sense for how that work is being conceived today, and what is currently trying to be achieved through this practice. Catherine Cornille says the goals of interfaith dialogue "range from simply fostering mutual understanding and tolerance, to promoting collaboration and friendship, to serving the purpose of mutual transformation and growth".[8] Leonard Swidler, a long time leader in the field, describes the three goals of interfaith dialogue as being, "(1) to know oneself more profoundly, just as one learns more about one's native land as a result of living abroad; (2) to know the other ever more authentically; and (3) to live ever more fully, a process described as "mutual transformation.""[9] And Dustin Diperna defines interreligious dialogue as "An exchange of ideas within a single tradition or between different traditions, so that both sides promote and are moved to deeper levels of understanding, respect, and mutual regard".[10] As we can see from these passages, the current emphasis in interfaith dialogue work is on coming to know the religious Other, building understanding and mutuality, and starting to feel comfortable with difference and what is foreign. This is of course crucially important work, and what I'm going to suggest in this paper could only be built on that foundation. It's not to

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global spirituality". Phan, Peter. 'The Mutual Shaping of Cultures and Religions'. *Interreligious Dialogue and Cultural Change.* US: Cascade Books, 2012. p.37
[8] Cornille, Catherine. 'Conditions for the Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue on God'. *The Concept of God in Global Dialogue.* New York: Orbis Books, 2005. p.4.
[9] Swidler's view summarized in- Fazel, Seena. 'Interreligious Dialogue and the Baha'i Faith'. *Revisioning the Sacred- New Perspectives on a Baha'i Theology.* Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1997. p.1.
[10] Diperna, Dustin. *Evolution's Ally- Our World's Religious Traditions As Conveyor Belts of Transformation.* US: Integral Publishing House, 2015.

replace that work, but to add another layer to it, to suggest further possibilities.

Both Cornille and Swidler mention the possibility of "mutual transformation", and it's this dimension that I want to pursue. Masao Abe has been working in Buddhist-Christian interfaith dialogue for a long time, and has come to a similar conclusion- "I insist that in religious dialogue today, mutual understanding, though always necessary, is insufficient; going beyond mutual understanding, interfaith dialogue must be concerned with the mutual transformation of the religions involved".[11] I want to suggest that a current of interfaith dialogue turn to developing what Raimon Pannikar has called *a spirituality of dialogue,* that is, an attention to what happens when people from different faiths show up in "a spirit of mutual openness".[12] What would happen if we did our deepest spiritual practice with one another, if we drew off our own practices of prayer and meditation and met each other with an open heart of love? What would our relationship to the Other be then? We can hear this kind of call in the dialogue work of Martin Buber. In Buber's view "dialogue can only be grasped as an ontological phenomenon- a meeting of one whole being with another whole being…Buber advocates a kind of presence to other beings in which one is receptive and open to being influenced by them".[13] There's a certain nakedness, a vulnerable presence to the other that is advocated in Buber's philosophy of dialogue, and to show up with another in this way is a form of spiritual practice, not a mental exercise in talking about theology or metaphysics. Olen Gunnlaugson writes that, "I-Thou relations are unique, unpredictable,

[11] Abe, Masao. *Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995. p.5.
[12] Hall, Gerard. (2005). 'The Call to Interfaith Dialogue'. *Australian eJournal of Theology.* (5). 1-10. p.6.
[13] Gordon, Mordechai. (2011). 'Listening as Embracing the Other: Martin Buber's Philosophy of Dialogue'. *Educational Theory.* 61(2). 207-219. p.207.

immediate, and involve the whole of oneself 'bound up in reciprocity' with the other".[14] What if we didn't stop at recognizing difference, but rather held that difference within a wider of field of communion? With the right techniques and intention interfaith dialogue can be "a dynamic process whereby one exchanges (spiritual) energy with the other, and under the right conditions this process could be a wonderful spiritual experience, leading to unity with the other and, ultimately, with the 'whole'".[15] But what techniques or methods will help us to achieve this experience of spiritual exchange and unity? It's to this we turn now.

Bohmian Dialogue and A New Direction for Interfaith Practice

In the 1970s the physicist David Bohm started having conversations across disciplines, including sessions with the philosopher and spiritual teacher J. Krishnamurti. Over time Bohm came to discern a series of techniques that he thought led to the most optimum dialogue experience, and these were published in his 1996 book *On Dialogue.*[16] These were eventually picked up and recodified by people working at MIT, particularly Otto Scharmer.[17] His version of these practices has come to be known as *Generative Dialogue*, and has gained much traction in the

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[14] Gunnlaugson, Olen. (2009). 'Establishing Second-Person Forms of Contemplative Education: An Inquiry into Four Conceptions of Intersubjectivity'. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice.* 5(1). 26-50. p.29. Also: "The basic word I-You can be spoken only with one's whole being... The relation to the You is unmediated. Nothing conceptual intervenes between I and You, no prior knowledge and no imagination". Buber, Martin. *I and Thou.* New York: Touchstone, 1996. p.62.
[15] Massoudi, Mehrdad. (2006). 'A Systems Theory Approach to Interfaith Dialogue'. *Intercultural Education.* 17(4). 421-437. p.433.
[16] Bohm, David. *On Dialogue.* London: Routledge, 2004. (2nd Edition)
[17] Scharmer, Otto. *Theory U- Leading From the Future As It Emerges.* US: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2009.

business world.[18] Another stream of this type of dialogue practice was developed within a few spiritual communities in North America in the 2000's, and has been called by the names *Enlightened Dialogue*[19] and *We-Space Practice.*[20] To my knowledge none of these streams have been applied to the field of interfaith dialogue. The only comment I found in this direction was in a footnote to a paper by Gerard Hall- "Although not dealing explicitly with interfaith dialogue, an interesting presentation of optimum conditions for dialogue and desired outcomes is provided by David Bohm, *On Dialogue*".[21] I've personally been doing these forms of dialogue practice for several years now. I was first introduced to a group doing Bohmian Dialogue at the University of Victoria in the late 1990s. In the mid 2000s, I took part in a men's group who did Generative Dialogue practice every Sunday for a year. And I've done Enlightened Dialogue and We-Space Practice at various retreats over the years, and still meet with a group online once a month to do an hour of practice. Through this work I have experienced directly the often profound possibilities for communion and co-creativity, and when I started learning about the field of interfaith dialogue, I new this lineage of dialogue practice had something to offer that important work. Let me now turn to a detailed description of the practice itself, and how it might open new vistas for the interfaith encounter.

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[18] Senge, P., Scharmer, O., Jaworski, J., & Flowers, B. S. *Presence- Exploring Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society*. New York: Currency, 2004

[19] Cohen, Andrew. *Evolutionary Enlightenment- A New Path to Spiritual Awakening.* New York: Select Books, 2011.

[20] This has been developed within communities who have followed the work of the American Integral philosopher Ken Wilber. The organization *Next Step Integral* has in particular done much work in this area. Cf. http://nextstepintegral.org/resources/ic

[21] Hall, Gerard. (2005). 'The Call to Interfaith Dialogue'. *Australian eJournal of Theology.* (5). 1-10. p.7.

Suspension- Redirection- Letting Go (Letting Come): The 3 Dimensions of Generative Dialogue

From now on I will refer to this dialogue practice as Generative Dialogue, and I'll use the terminology employed by Scharmer and his colleagues. The three facets of this practice are found in all the variations I've mentioned, so it will be easier now to just use one particular set of signifiers. The *setting* for such practice would usually be a small group meeting in a circle, sitting present and open to one another.[22] The group might be seeded with a question to explore together, or at least to use as the starting point for an emergent conversation. As people begin feeling into the inquiry they are asked to follow three distinct instructions, what Scharmer refers to as "three gestures of becoming aware".[23] A condensed version of these instructions is often read out before the dialogue begins, as a helpful reminder.

The first practice or gesture is called *suspension*. This is where we try and enter the dialogue without speaking from any knowledge we are bringing to it; we try and resist speaking from the conditioned habit patterns of our mind and emotions. Olen Gunnlaugson, who teaches Generative Dialogue at Laval University in the business school's Department of Management, writes that "suspension helps groups become more aware of the pervasive tendency to reenact past patterns

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[22] As mentioned, I have done this practice online via Skype and other technologies and we are obviously not in a circle. However, it's remarkable how a powerful field of connection can still be established in that setting. I have also done Generative Dialogue practice in large circles, sometimes up to thirty people, but found that there needs to be similar levels of previous experience for a circle of that size to have optimum results. Six to eight people seems to be a good size for going deep into the work.

[23] The phrase originates with Francisco Varela- Scharmer, Otto. (2000). 'The Three Gestures of Becoming Aware: An interview with Francisco Varela'. *Dialogues on Leadership.* Retrieved from: http://www.iwp.jku.at/born/mpwfst/02/www.dialogonleadership.org/Varela.html

based on unexamined assumptions, perspectives or beliefs. Similar to meditation,

suspension facilitates in-the-moment awareness of our thinking and emotional

processes, in turn helping us temporarily shift from a first to third person

perspective of the contents of our consciousness".[24] When we learn to become

present to the habitual patterns that arise in our consciousness, and not act on them,

we make space for curiosity and for others to show up before us in an unfiltered

way. As Massoudi writes about the conditioned mind, "The mind has the inclination

to think that it has learned and known all that is needed for a given situation…The

'judging mind' is very active and works very hard; while it is judging and comparing

it is almost impossible for all the messages and information [coming at it] to be

consciously received".[25] But when we practice suspension we become receptive and

open to what we do not know, bracketing off the 'judging mind' so that we may be

fully attentive to what is before us. This could be powerful in interfaith dialogue

work, because we all come to such encounters with presuppositions and possibly

prejudices about the religious others before us. But what if we were able to suspend

those narratives, and simply be present with those we are with? What would we

see? How would this change our relationships?

What's interesting about this practice of suspension is that some version of it

is already found within many of the world's religious traditions. For instance, this is

what's called *beginner's mind* in Zen Buddhism. As D.T. Suzuki writes, "This [means]

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[24] Gunnlaugson, Olen. (2007). 'Exploratory Perspectives for an AQAL Model of Generative Dialogue'. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice.* (4). 44-58. p.47.
[25] Massoudi, Mehrdad. (2006). 'A Systems Theory Approach to Interfaith Dialogue'. *Intercultural Education*. 17(4). 421-437. p.430.

an empty mind and a ready mind. If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything; it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few".[26] It's worth noting that for Zen Buddhism this beginner's mind is also "the mind of compassion".[27] Taoism speaks about returning to the Great Vacuity, a formless source from which all things come and all things return.[28] Chapter 16 of the *Tao Te Ching* advises to "Empty your mind of all thoughts", and Chapter 4 states that the "Tao is like a well: used but never used up. It is like the eternal void: filled with infinite possibilities".[29] It is through emptying ourselves that we connect to the infinite source and to wisdom, and it's from there that right-action proceeds. There are strong resonances with these teachings in various streams of Christian mysticism. For instance Meister Eckhart taught about *Gelassenheit*, a process of 'releasement' whereby we let our preconceptions go in order to let things be in their uncertainty and mystery before us. John Caputo writes that, "Eckhart thinks of *Gelassenheit* as a way to enter into the unconcealed abyss of the Godhead, as a way to be admitted into the being of things

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[26] Shunryu, Suzuki. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind.* New York: Weatherhill, 1973. p.21. Also: "It is a hallmark of beginner's mind teachings that the deeper levels are said to be accessed only by letting go…On the surface is the mind of ordinary concepts, emotions, desires, fears, even boredom—the mind with which everyone is familiar. Below that is the mind that is more in contact with basic wisdom and better able to see and act from it". Rosch, Eleanor. 'Beginner's Mind: Paths to the Wisdom that is Not Learned'. *Teaching for Wisdom- Cross Cultural Perspectives on Fostering Wisdom*. US: Springer Netherlands, 2008. p.136.
[27] Shunryu, Suzuki. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind.* New York: Weatherhill, 1973. p.22..
[28] "Attain complete vacuity, maintain steadfast quietude. All things come into being, and I see thereby their return. All things flourish, but each one returns to its destiny. To return to destiny is called the eternal (Tao). To know the eternal is called enlightenment". Chan, Wing-tsit. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963. p.147.
[29] Translation Stephen Mitchell. *Tao Te Ching*. USA: HarperPerennial, 2000.

prior to their being created".[30] Thomas Muntzer spoke often in his writings about "the abyss of the soul or heart, emphasizing its importance as the place where the word of God is heard and received".[31] This in turn sounds very much like a description of Quaker listening practices, where through silent awareness one discovers that "deep within us all, there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return".[32] Several more comparative examples could be added to this list, but these samples gives a glimpse of the remarkable fact that many of the world's religions have already identified some form of suspension as a way of connecting to the divine and the source of our deepest wisdom and compassion. If we were able to cultivate this practice within the context of interfaith dialogue, it could be very interesting to see what would emerge among the practitioners.[33]

The second core practice of Generative Dialogue is called *redirection*. In this we try to always redirect our attention back to the raw present moment as it is arising within us and within the group field. Gunnlaugson calls this process

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[30] "Eckhart demanded that the soul cast off all talk, both inner and outer, all concepts, all images, and all representations, in order to have an "empty temple" into which God could come". Caputo, John. *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought.* US: Fordham University Press, 1986. p.179-180.
[31] Bradstock, Andrew. (2001). 'Thomas Muntzer: Mystic and Apocalyptic Revolutionary'. *Reformation*. 5: 28-53. p.34. Also: "Through his spirit, our soul must be freed and introduced into the deepest ground of the soul, in which the uncreated light of the Godhead dwells. It is here that one must lay down his very self before the divine abyss and give himself up with simplicity of spirit, with his faculties subjugated, with simplicity of heart. This must occur without any understanding, image and likeness". Nieuwenhove, Rik Van (Ed). *Late Medieval Mysticism of the Low Countries.* US: Paulist Press, 2008. p.248.
[32] Thomas, Kelly. *A Testament of Devotion*. US: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992. pg. 3.
[33] "When one is open to the other's being, one does not try to speak for the other or to impose one's own language, concepts, and interpretive schemes on the other…For Buber, a real conversation is one that is not preconceived and that develops spontaneously, in which an individual speaks directly to his or her partner and is able to respond to the unpredictable response of the other". Gordon, Mordechai. (2011). 'Listening as Embracing the Other: Martin Buber's Philosophy of Dialogue'. *Educational Theory*. 61(2). 207-219. p.207.

surrendering into witnessing, and describes it as involving a "slowing down to encounter experience more directly", which "opens up a clearing from which everything arising can be seen more clearly and vividly with less personal identification".[34] Through this still presence "listening and speaking can be expressed from moment-centered relating and communing from a deeper collective transpersonal context".[35] When people are speaking from this place of witnessing one can feel how of the moment the discussion is- fresh, alive, emergent- and furthermore, as Gunnlaugson points out, a 'transpersonal' realm begins to open up. For example, someone might say what we were about to say, or someone's words might open up in our mind with a flash of illumination, or sometimes the whole group sits in a pregnant silence for several minutes. For anyone who has done this work there's clearly a collective dimension to it, not unlike the hive mind or swarm intelligence that's found throughout the natural world.[36] In general Gunnlaugson reports that, "Research has highlighted key aspects of what is experienced in surrender[ing into witnessing], including timelessness, openness, limitlessness, connectedness, mutuality, receptivity, non-judgment, dynamic immersion, improvisation, suspension, and mindfulness without thoughts".[37] That's a pretty impressive list of attributes that this practice can help bring to the work of interfaith

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[34] Gunnlaugson, Olen & Moze, Mary Beth G. (2012). 'Surrendering Into Witnessing- A Foundational Practice for Building Collective Capacity in Groups'. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice.* 7(3). 105-115. p.106, 107.

[35] Ibid, p.109.

[36] cf. Carl Zimmer. 'From Ants to People, an Instinct to Swarm'. *New York Times.* November 13, 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/13/science/13traff.html?ei=5087&em=&en=2770422853e9f63e&ex=1195102800&pagewanted=print&_r=0; Tom Malone. 'Collective Intelligence'. *The Edge.* November 11, 2012. https://edge.org/conversation/thomas_w_malone-collective-intelligence

[37] Gunnlaugson, Olen & Moze, Mary Beth G. (2012). 'Surrendering Into Witnessing- A Foundational Practice for Building Collective Capacity in Groups'. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice.* 7(3). 105-115. p.106, 107.

dialogue.

The third and final practice, or gesture of becoming aware, is known as *letting go (letting come)*. This is where we subtly shift from the emptying and surrendering practices of presence, to sensing into what wants to emerge through the conversation. Gunnlaugson describes letting come as "a recursive move of attention that involves being receptive to new meaning, knowledge and insights…There is a learning to engage with future not-yet-embodied possibilities [that are] arising".[38] This is the realm of emergence, of creativity, and Generative Dialogue opens up powerful spaces in this direction (a key reason the business world has been so receptive to utilizing these practices). For the Christian mystics mentioned earlier it was only after the emptying and releasement of our preconceptions that the voice of God comes. Similarly, it's into the empty receptacle that the Tao flows anew. In his paper *The Tao of Holding Space,* Chris Corrigan writes, "To hold space is to rest in the chaos that is darkness; a darkness that represents a vast field of unknown potential…From this field understanding will blossom, light will emerge, possibilities will grow".[39] When we cultivate the practice of letting come, we become present to the creative source of our own experience and the womb from which all emerges, and we do so in a shared sense with the others involved in the dialogue. I think it could be a powerful thing to have multiple faith leaders locked into the kind of collective creativity that's engendered through

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[38] Gunnlaugson, Olen. (2007). 'Exploratory Perspectives for an AQAL Model of Generative Dialogue'. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice.* (4). 44-58. p.47.

[39] Corrigan, Chris. *The Tao of Holding Space.* 2006. Chapter 1. http://www.chriscorrigan.com

the practice of letting come. God only knows what would emerge within a field such as that.

Conclusion- From Mutual Regard to Communion, From Theory to Practice

Global humanity is hurtling along within the turbulent transitions of the 21st century. For us to find a successful way forward healthy forms of religion will need to play a productive part in stabilizing an enduring planetary civilization.[40] The move to interfaith dialogue in the 20th century has been an important step toward overcoming the divisive relations between the religious traditions. Thus far the goals of interfaith dialogue have been to develop mutual understanding and respect, and to become comfortable with religious difference. In this paper I've wondered if there are further possibilities for interfaith dialogue, a realm of practice that would bring about a deeper mutual transformation. I've called for the development of *a spirituality of dialogue*, and I've drawn attention to a dialogue lineage that I think has the tools to advance such a spirituality. The practices of Generative Dialogue- *suspension*, *redirection*, *letting go (letting come)*- help us to be present to the religious other free from our prejudices and habit patterns, which allows us to develop a deep receptivity to those before us. By releasing into beginner's mind, or the Great Vacuity, and redirecting our attention to the sheer present moment as it unfolds within and between us, we tap into a powerful realm of co-creativity as we

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[40] "Even up to 1950-1960, we were living on a misapprehended Earth, on an abstract Earth. We were living on Earth as object. By the end of the century, we discovered Earth as system, as Gaia, as biosphere, as cosmic speck- Homeland Earth. Each of us has a pedigree, a terrestrial identity card. We are from, in, and on the Earth. We belong to the Earth which belongs to us…We must transcend, without excluding, our local cultural identities, and awaken to our being as citizens of the Earth". Morin, Edgar. *Homeland Earth*. New Jersey: Hampton Press, 1999.

let the future come into being through our collective intelligence. It's through this type of presence to one another that I feel we will truly come to know and love the other as ourselves, still maintaining our differences but including those within a wider field of communion.

This kind of interfaith work will not be for everybody, and it shouldn't be the first practice offered to someone who is just opening up to the possibility of engaging with the religious other. Those who possess some degree of personal development and spiritual practice, and feel called to this work, will likely be the first to take up Interfaith Generative Dialogue practice. But I am very curious to see what would emerge between groups of interfaith leaders who practiced together in this way. And to that end, I've committed to myself to convene such a group in the coming year. To leave this paper simply in the realm of a paper is to leave it in the realm of theory only, and there's too much at stake in the world today to ignore the demands of praxis and enaction. So hopefully in the future this paper will have an addendum, one that builds off of what I've written here, and reports back from the field to assess whether my intuitions in the paper were on the mark or not. The unknown that is held in such a venture is both daunting and thrilling.

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"And all must love the human form
In heathen, turk or jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too".

– William Blake, 'The Divine Image', *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

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