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[IDENTITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR ELICITIVE CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION]

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Abstract

One of the most recent developments in the practice of conflict transformation is the systemic approach dubbed "Elicitive Conflict Transformation." As a practice, it is deeply tied to considerations of identity. This paper summarizes and synthesizes current thinking in the transrational approach to conflict transformation as the current state-of-the-art in peace theory. This approach underlies the practice of Elicitive Conflict Transformation and opens many new frontiers to peace research including an expanded perspective of what identity is and how it shapes the work of conflict transformation. After summarizing these key shifts in the development of theory, a tool for working within the complex intersections between singular and collective identity at the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels is proposed.

Introduction

This paper take the theme of "identity conflicts" and twists the subject inwardly to examine the role that one's own identity plays when engaging in Elicitive Conflict Transformation. This work is situated within a larger frame of a forthcoming PhD dissertation on "Mysticism and Conflict Transformation." This dissertation is part of a larger project of the UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich at the University of Innsbruck. The University of Innsbruck has the charge from UNESCO to further research and develop the theoretical foundations of the Transrational Approach to Peace Studies. As such the first part of this paper will largely be a synthesis and interpretation of the work of Dietrich in order to clearly define the field.

The transrational approach is the theoretical framework behind the practice of Elicitive Conflict Transformation, a field of Praxis coined by John Paul Lederach with roots in the practices and methodologies that have arisen from such diverse approaches as Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology, Group Encounters, Nonviolent Communication, Holotropic Breath Work, Aikido, Butoh and Five Rhythms Dance, Family and Political Constellations and many others. This paper will present a synthetized summary of the theory behind these state-of-the-art approaches insofar as it is relevant to understand the role that identity plays in Elicitive Conflict Transformation.

State-of-the Art

What has been called the "transrational shift in peace politics" rests upon an extensive theoretical framework which transgresses traditional academic and methodological approaches. The transrational shift encompasses the history and development of Peace Studies as a discipline along with the major

epistemological and ontological shifts that took place during its development. Key theoretical foundations stemming from transpersonal psychology, the plurality of peace's framework and the transrational approach are central to understanding the role of identity in conflict transformation from this perspective.

The term "transpersonal" came into popular usage as the field of transpersonal psychology developed out of the previously existing schools of humanistic psychology. Transpersonal psychology was pioneered by thinkers such as William James, Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow, Robert Assagioli, Michael Murphy, Roger Walsh, Stanislav Grof among many others.

The term itself, transpersonal, can be broken down into *trans,* going beyond, and *persona,* the self. Taking this further, *persona* comes from the Latin (related to the Greek) *prosopon* or the Etruscan *pherus,* meaning "the mask." In the modern understanding, peace is derived from truth itself. This is significant because it implies that the "self" which is being transcended or transgressed, is more complicated than a singular, clearly definable "truth." The equation of the "self" with the mask also implies that there is a degree of falseness to what is presented to others as the "self" since the purpose of a mask is both to conceal one's identity and to take on a new, temporary one simultaneously. It is important to note, as American Integral Philosopher and Interpreter of Sri Aurobindo Ken Wilber does, that the key to the transpersonal perspective is that transpersonal means "personal *plus* not personal *minus*," and transgression is not omission or sublimation (Wilber, 1995, p. 266).

Transrational

The term "transrational" has many origins and interpretations. At its core, its definition closely mirrors that of transpersonal in that it is an approach that goes beyond or transgresses rationality. In a similar note of caution, Wilber's comment on transpersonality can also be mirrored here in that transrational means rational *plus* not rational *minus.* To confuse this point is a common, though grave, epistemological error often found in approaches that are closer to the so-called "New Age" movement. Wilber terms this error in thinking the "Pre/Trans" fallacy, where transrational insights are confused with pre-rational narcissism (Wilber, 1995, p. 289).

Transrationality, as applied in Peace Studies, is situated within another postmodern shift in peace thinking. This turn, often termed the "Many Peaces" or "Peace Families," begins with the essential recognition that peace is not a singular monolithic and monological concept. Peace exists in the plural, in a diversity of expressions and manifestations (Stüetzl & Dietrich, 2006). Among the myriad of understandings of peaces, a few generalizable "categories" emerge. These are referred to as "Peace Families," connoting that the relationships between each grouping is not clearly defined and that there exist many overlaps in understanding. The names given to these family groups are Energetic, Moral, Modern, Postmodern and Transrational. The names refer to prevailing themes central to these worldviews and how those themes shape the understanding of where and how peace comes from.

The energetic peace family denotes an essentially holistic worldview. All beings – the individual, society, nature and the divine – exist within a sphere where all are equal and interrelated. There exists nothing outside this sphere

because all that are, are all that is. From this point of view, the fabric of the world is built on the foundation of the intricate webs of relationships between everyone and everything. Peace is not an intellectual concept of a goal, but it is something that is known to exist when it is perceived, and it is perceived as harmony. This understanding of peace out of harmony is deeply tied to notions of fertility, birth, reproduction and good health. It is then no surprise to find that the word for "peace" in many languages is etymologically related to the names of fertility goddesses (Dietrich, 2012).

The moral family of peaces originates as a departure from the energetic. This departure occurs when a transcendental point is posited outside of the relational sphere of webs of interrelations. Once a transcendent point is understood to exist outside of the "world" and that point is static and unchanging, the dynamics of the relationships between the individual, society, nature and the divine also shift. This transcendental point existing outside of the "world" is called "God" in many places at many times, and is usually understood as a male creator God that is capable of dispensing judgments. This is also etymologically mirrored in many words for "peace" as the word shifts from reference to fertility Goddesses to male Gods of animal husbandry and war. With a God outside of the "world," relationships change. An individual's relationships with others and with society are governed by divine rules given by the creator God. A new class of specialists emerges whose title is called "priests" along with many other. Their job is to stand at the edge of the "world," interpret the will of God, and hand down the divine regulations which structure how people are to relate to one another and to their environment. When the divine shifts to a God-point outside the "world," so, too, the afterlife shifts. Conceptions of a linear

chronosophy emerge. Life and time become straight lines from birth to a paradise or damnation that follows death. The conception of peace also shifts – it is viewed as something bestowed upon those deemed worthy, i.e. a gift from God. Since this God-point exist in a superordinate position to the world of humans, it has the capacity to define a superordinate "truth" from which conceptions of justice are derived in order to serve that truth. Thus the moral conception of peace is derived from conceptions of justice (Dietrich, 2012).

The modern family of peace closely mirrors the structure and logic of that of the moral. It can be seen as the implication of the birth of "modernity" in the epistemological history of western thought beginning with the early Greek philosophers and coming to a head in the European enlightenment of the 17-18th century. In this worldview God is replaced by "Truth," a kind of singular truth that is superordinate to all else. This type of truth is accessed by reason, making rationality the prized capacity as it is the means by which one approaches the truth. The scientific method is exalted. When God is replaced with reason, the future is no longer oriented towards an afterlife paradise but an earthly paradise – a utopia to be achieved once all is brought in line with the Truth through reason. Here the priests and other religious professionals are replaced with scientists and other professionals of rationality whose job it is to interpret the transcendental truth in order to guide the rest towards paradise. It is in this conception of the world that we find the roots of Idealist thinking and thus the perspective of "development." In the modern understanding peace is derived from truth itself (Dietrich, 2012).

The postmodern family of peaces is inexorably linked to the modern perspective. The term "post" indicates that it exists as a reflection upon modernity itself (Echavarria, Ingruber, Koppensteiner, & Dietrich, 2011, p. 603). The postmodern understanding begins with doubt. Doubt arose with the striking realization that the Idealist promises of modernity with its faith in rationality failed to produce a utopia on earth. All of the grand narratives of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Democracy, Development, and Marxism have failed to bring about peace on earth. Doubt is contagious and spreads rapidly. After the collapse of the grand narratives, every idea, paradigm, thought and word became subject to this doubt and deconstructed. The God-point or Truth-point existing outside of the webs of relationality has faded away. No Truth, no God, no interpreters of either exist. With no solid ground on which to stand, the ability to produce a coherent understanding of the world also falls away (Dietrich, 2012).

Wilber describes this crisis quite pointedly. "No longer protected by anthropocentric gods and goddesses, reason gone flat in its happy capacity to explain away the Mystery, not yet delivered into the hands of the super-conscious—we stare out blankly into that dark and gloomy night, which will very shortly swallow us up as surely as it once spat us forth" (Wilber, 1995, p. 270). This crisis gives rise to the two prevailing postmodern conceptions of peace. The first is derived from perceiving this crisis as liberation from static monological notions of the world to a much more flexible view of plurality and diversity. From an internal perspective of peace, this hearkens back to energetic understandings of peace out of harmony. The second conception occurs as a backlash against the postmodern condition. When identities are collapsing all around, a deep fear or anxiety can arise producing a need to defend oneself

against the threats which are actually internal but perceived as "all around." This is a view found in many neoliberal conceptions of the world and perhaps most famously articulated by Samuel Huntington (Huntington, 1992).

Though an extremely important worldview and capacity, the postmodern perspective cannot by its very nature go beyond itself since it is rooted as a reflection on modernity. The transrational perspective describes the emerging ways of thinking about how to embrace all of these different perspectives and yet go beyond them. The transrational approach transgresses the limits of rationality value, twisting[1] it (Dietrich, 2012, p. 13). This twisting is done by reintegrating energetic conceptions of the world and peace with those from the non-modern[2] into the postmodern frame – which through its own embrace of plurality, treats rationality as just another possible way of understanding the world.

A few notes of caution on the many peaces perspective. The first is that though these peace families can be roughly placed at certain historical epochs, this is not the intent. The peaces here do not represent an evolution of the understanding of peace by which one perspective could be determined to be more evolved than another. The second is that parts of the model could lend itself to the charge of Euro-centrism. The focus on the intellectual history of Europe is intentional for several reasons. One is that the enlightenment and post enlightenment Transatlantic thinking deeply shaped educational and intellectual paradigms around the world, and this effect is important to understand. In

[1] "Twisting here refers to the term *verwindung* used by Heidegger as interpreted by Gianni Vattimo, a "non-dialectical form of overcoming characteristics of a post-modern, pluralist notion of history" (Dietrich, 2012, p. 14)

[2] "Non-modern" here refers those world views and ways of thinking that never underwent the European/American modern-postmodern epistemological historical shifts and show not be equated with un-modern or pre-modern

addition, comprehensive picture of other epistemological histories from around the world that exist outside of the moral-modern-postmodern story are only now becoming more widely understood. A major task of transrational peace research is to integrate these understandings into the transrational approach.

In the field of developmental psychology, the capacity to *twist* in the way it is meant in this paper is very similar to the individuals' capacity for self-reflective consciousness. The ability to think about one's own thinking or more accurately to be able to witness oneself thinking is similar to the transitional twist of rationality in the postmodern perspective. One witnesses oneself **employing** rationality rather than **being** rational. Once people have become aware of their own rationality, they must be something more than rational.

Wilber terms this stage in psychological development, "vision-logic." There is a correlate here in the transition from the *Anahata* (heart) chakra to the *Vishuddha* (throat) chakra; the significance of this connection will be explained later. This moment of self- reflexive capacity is a key point in many of the world's wisdom traditions. Dogen Zenji asks the question in his instructions for Zen meditation, "how do you think of not-thinking? Beyond thinking?" and advises students of meditation to, "learn the backward step that turns your light inwardly to illuminate yourself" (Zenji, 1958). Similarties can be found in the works of Sri Ramana Maharshi and the teachings of *Jnana* Yoga and *Advaita Vendanta*, Apophatic theology in the Christian tradition and many others.

The transrational space inherent in this approach places tremendous attention on the role of the peace worker. If one is to engage in elicitive conflict work, it is no longer possible to enter into a conflict situation as a neutral party with preexisting models, to diagnose the conflict as a disease, and prescribe a

cure. The elicitive conflict worker enters the conflict situation from a systemic perspective acknowledging that by simply being in the conflict situation one has become part of it. When universal prescriptive models have been abandoned, all one has to rely on is one's own capacities and the quality and type of presence one can bring to the situation in order to assist in eliciting the transformation of the conflict from within.

Since the quality of presence the peace worker can bring into their work is of utmost importance, the role of the peace worker's identity must also be considered. Going beneath the level of the persona or the mask presented to others, there are many constitutive identity levels that are important to consider as they are relevant to the contact points beyond the surface of the persona. These are the sexual, the socio-emotional, the mental, and the spiritual layers (see figure 1). From Abram Maslow's understanding of identity to that of Tantric Yoga, these layers are some of the core elements that shape our understanding of who we are and thus our identity (Dietrich, 2013, p. 201).

An individual never exists in isolation. What is inside of the individual effects that which are outside of the individual. An understanding of "conflict work" becomes increasingly accurate, though also complex, through the recognition that all individuals in the conflict system, the peace worker and everyone else, possess these layers as do their correlates at the collective levels. This view or picture of conflict work must be expanded further on two levels. The first expansion comes through the recognition of the multiple levels of focus that make up peace work. These levels, expressed in Lederach's model, are the grassroots, middle level and elite level actors (Lederach, 2003). His model, often depicted as a triangle, was intended to be a pyramid and thus it contains another

dimension. The second expansion hearkens back to the previous discussion of the nature of peace or rather peaces manifests in the plural. Thus when the model is expanded to include all of these elements, it appears as follows (see figure 2).

While it is the persona that forms the primary visible contact point within the conflict system entered into by the peace worker, the constituent layers beneath the persona influence the collective layers beyond the persona. This, in part, is the transrational shift in how the peace worker operates in a conflict situation through the inclusion of these transpersonal layers.

The interpersonal layers of sexual, socio-emotional, mental, and spiritual are highlighted here because of their significance in shaping conflict systems and thus are core elements of the transformation. The levels of interpersonal correlation are those of family, community, society, policitary and global (Dietrich, 2013, pp. 200-224).

At the intrapersonal level, sexuality is found directly beneath the contact boundary of the persona. This is because the sexuality of an individual is perhaps one of the most pervasive and most influential forces shaping the ego and thus the persona. Raw sexual life energy, though at times elusive to concise definition, shapes many aspects of one's identity. From its most expansive definition, a feedback mechanism that regulates how the individual interacts with others, to its more specific elements tied to sexual relations and fertility at its very core as the raw expression of Dionysian force, it represents the creative potential in every relational interaction. The denial or suppression of this layer of intrapersonal identity is ineffective if not impossible, and it does not lend itself well to control or subjugation. Rather, as will be seen with the subsequent layers,

developing awareness and empathy is more appropriate than attempting to control (Dietrich, 2013, pp. 209-212).

On the other side of the contact boundary of the persona is the familial layer. This layer takes an understanding of family beyond pure biological relations and expands it to refer to a group of people who care for one another. The influence of the family on the individual of course begins at birth. Familial systems are responsible for early imprinting of values and communication styles that undoubtedly deeply shape the peace worker as an individual but also shape all of the individuals in the conflict system. For anyone engaging in peace work, it is essential to work towards a degree of understanding of how one's own identity is shaped by the ways in which they were raised. Likewise it also is essential to recognize that the same fact is true of all others. This level of work requires a particularly skillful touch because much of the way the family shapes the individual lies beneath or just at the boundary between the subconscious and the conscious (Dietrich, 2013, pp. 213-215).

The next layer as one progress inwardly and outwardly from the persona is the socio-emotional on the intrapersonal level and the cultural level on the interpersonal. This is a potentially volatile layer because it deals with the interaction between the individual's deep desire to belong and have their socio-emotional needs satisfied and the tendency of individuals in larger cultural groups to seek power and dominance over one another. The work of this layer can be best described as "trust building" because it involves the transformation of dysfunctional bonding between individuals into relationships shaped by trust (Dietrich, 2013, pp. 215-219). This type of work requires a delicate balance of subjective and objective work. There are many things that can be done to

increase trust between individuals and groups such as transparency and accountability measures. But in the end, trust is felt not intellectually understood.

The next layer of the model represents in many respects the "key" of elicitive work – the connection between the mental layer of the intrapersonal spectrum and the societal layer of the interpersonal (Dietrich, 2013, pp. 219-223). This layer is key because it is the mental layer, which allows conscious access to the sexual, socio-emotional, familial and communal levels. Without access to the mental layer, one would be merely subject to these layers rather than conscious of them through the capacity of self-reflexive consciousness. It is the capacity of reason and awareness which allows for work to be done on all of the other levels both internally and externally as well as individual and collectively. It is also through the mental level that the "heart" qualities such as love, compassion and devotion can be brought into the episode of a conflict (Dietrich, 2013, pp. 215-219).

Movement beyond this layer is distinctly transrational in nature. To work on the intrapersonal spiritual level alongside the interpersonal policitary[3] level involves going beyond the rational mind. It goes beyond the rational mind not only at the level of perception but also in its method of "action." Action here is not understood as a "doing" but rather a kind of loving observation of all that is arising (Dietrich, 2013, pp. 219-223). This observation, Dietrich notes, is neither a tool nor a method, but it is "the peaces themselves consciously perceived" (Dietrich, 2013, p. 222).

[3] "Awareness of the individual and collective existence in time and space, without any judgment, structure or value system" (Dietrich, 2013. 220)

It is at this point that the practicable limits of elicitive peace work are reached. Between the level of awareness at the intrapersonal level and truth on the interpersonal, the realm is largely noetic in nature and ineffable by definition. This is the realm of the mystics. Once the layer of the observer is transgressed, all duality falls away. There is no subject to be aware of the object which is observed. All boundaries fall away, and there is no longer any separation between the episode of the conflict and the epicenter of the individual (Dietrich, 2013, pp. 223-224).

Identity Considerations for Elicitive Conflict Transformation

Each of the layers in this model represents key factors that shape the persona and thus one of the main identities of the individual. These layers of identity influence the web of interrelations that make up a conflict system. This model provides a map for elicitive conflict work is not the territory. The common step that would normally be undertaken in peace education from the modern perspective would be to transform such a complex map into some type of actionable tool. This move, though perhaps academically tempting, would be antithetical to both the transrational perspective and the elicitive approach. Such normatization would be perceived in the very least as unhelpful and in its worst manifestations as a form of intellectual violence.

What follows will be an attempt to slide in between the space of distilling the map and avoiding normatization. The research methodology applied in this task is transrational in its nature and transpersonal in its approach. Just as a compass has no beginning, neither does this model. The process can be entered

from any point. In this research project, the map was entered into at the point between the intrapersonal level of awareness and spirituality – at a vision quest in Austria in the summer of 2012. This journey was undertaken with the intention of better understanding the relationships between mysticism and conflict transformation.

Rather than a clear model for understanding how identity shapes the work of conflict transformation, this paper proposes a "weak" one[4]. Orientational considerations for conflict transformation function much like a compass does for a map. Key components of elicitive work are derived from the transrational approach as well as shamanic and Tantric thought and practice. This "compass" places "Power" and "Path" on its East to West axis and "Voice" and "Vision" on its South to North (see figure 3). The shape of this compass mirrors many similar tools for spiritual growth. Its archetypal shape is similar to that of the medicine wheel found in a myriad of manifestations and forms among indigenous peoples in the Americas. The compass, despite being a tool for a systems map, avoids the circular tendency in many holistic models specifically because its intent is to function in an orientation capacity. Thought of as a graph, its x- and y-coordinates are intended to serve a partial function of helping peace workers orient themselves to where they are in the present moment. This focus on the present moment is precisely why the graph lacks a z-axis indicating time.

As the map outlined by Dietrich is heavily influence by Tantric thought, so too is the compass. Each of its coordinates corresponds to different chakras. Chakras, in Tantric thought, are understood to be key energy centers located

[4] "Weak Thought" here is inline with the tradition of Gianni Vattimo, a form of understanding truth which does not have to appeal to an objective truth.

throughout the body that are the central conduits for the flow of life energy or *prana*. They also represent the archetypal spiritual journey as Yogi progress through their spiritual path opening up each chakra as the individual soul or *ataman* seeks liberation into the universal soul or *Brahman.* "Power" as a point on the compass corresponds to the 3rd chakra (*Manipur*) located slightly below the naval. "Path" is related to the 4th chakra (*Anahata)* located in the center of the chest near the heart. "Voice" points towards the 5th chakra (*Vishuddha)* located in the throat. "Vision" can be seen as representative of the 6th chakra (*Ajna)* located at the position of the "third eye" in the center of the forehead between the eyebrows.

As the chakras relate to the spiritual journey, the compass only describes a part of the process, that which begins at the 3rd chakra and proceeds to the 6th. This is intentional because beyond the 6th chakra lies, once again, the realm of the mystics described by Dietrich as the connection between the intrapersonal level of awareness and the interpersonal layer of truth. At this point, the perceiving subject deteriorates and research and writing about this realm is, for the most part, counterproductive.

For purposes of clarity and flow, what follows will be a description of each of these orientational generalizations in the order of the chakra system. Each of these orientational generalizations has many facets and can be understood from both within and without as well as singularly or plural.

Beginning the descriptions with power is a logical choice for those engaging in peace work. Power is connected to the Manipur chakra which is the energetic system of the body which governs all the mechanisms for how physical and subtle energies are acquired and used. As a noun in English, "energy" is

related to the Middle French *énergie* meaning "force of expression." The Middle French is derived from the Late Latin *energia* and Greek *energeia* meaning "activity or operation" which is derived from the early Greek *energos,* "active or working." In classical philosophy, Aristotle used energy with the meaning "force of expression" (Harper, 2001-2013).

The challenges faced by the contemporary peace worker are many. The sheer size, scope, and complexity of most conflict systems can be overwhelming. Such work places tremendous demands on the peace worker's personal power, which can also be understood as physic/psycho/spiritual energy. It is of no surprise, then, that peace workers engaged in the field are especially prone to burn out. These energies are depleted because they are the fuel for interpersonal interactions, the key relational tool in elicitive conflict transformation work. The key task for peace workers' self-exploration is to identify the sources and dynamics of their internal strength and what depletes their energy in order to develop a more keen awareness of how to regulate these dynamics.

Power, from an external perspective, is also a core consideration for peace workers. Power influences almost all human relationships. Working with power dynamics is unavoidable, especially when working in conflict systems as reflected by the socio-emotional-community level on the map. The primary tool for working with power relations is awareness. Awareness is crucial because it liberates individuals from the influence Power has in shaping their identity. Power "works" through shaping narratives. Narratives are the stories we tell ourselves about who we are, who others are and how we relate to one another.

The most influential, though most elusive, aspect of Power is its ability to shape these narratives, to control how meaning is made and how identities are

shaped. Through awareness of this process and expanding one's capacity for self-reflexive consciousness, the relationship of one's own identity to these narratives begins to shift (Taylor, n/d).

From the internal perspective of the individual, Path refers to what we are doing and where we are going. In the more immediate perception of time, it refers to what we are doing in a specific situation and how we are doing it. In a more expanded understanding of time in one's own life, it refers to vocation. Who are we as peace workers? What does it mean to do this type of work? Who am I in this situation? What do I value? And how do I proceed to act from these values. It is connected to the *Anahata* chakra, which is the heart chakra. This is referred to in Dietrich's diagram as the intrapersonal level of the mind because it is the mental faculty which allows for transformation of the heart qualities of love, compassion and devotion into actions which can be perceived in a given situation. The same qualities of understanding Path at the intrapersonal level are mirrored at the collective level. Understanding group identity and questions of who we are as a group in a situation and what we are going to do is essential in transforming heart qualities into perceivable actions.

The third orientational consideration is "Voice" and corresponds to the *Vishuddha* chakra located in the throat. This point functions in many ways as a bridge; it is the halfway point between the heart and the third-eye, between Path and Vision. One of its functions is the journey to find one's voice, i.e. one's authentic self-expression. Bruce Lee calls this the highest form of the martial arts – to be able to perform any action as a form of pure expression of the self (Lee, 1975). Finding one's voice occurs when knowing what one needs to do and how to do it becomes reality. Dietrich notes that, "the human voice is a key tool

of conflict transformation" (Dietrich, 2013, p. 74). It is a tool for conflict transformation because it represents self-expression and also because it represents the element of will, especially in regards to choice and making those choices known.

From the Tantric perspective, the *Vishuddha* chakra is the first transpersonal chakra. The very nature of voice is transpersonal because the function of voice is to transmit the meaning of language beyond the mask of the persona. As a step in the archetypal spiritual path, the *Vishuddha,* having transgressed *Anahata,* moves towards the liberation from all conceptions. To move beyond the *Vishuddha* means to move beyond language. Language has become the primary vehicle for understanding reality. With script, each character represents a sound made by the voice. Once language evolved beyond ideograms or glyphs into script, it became about as far removed from a direct perception of reality as a linguistic medium can be (Mckenna, 1991). When a person moves beyond language and thus beyond most conventional conceptions, the hold of the ego or "I" begins to dissolve as well because the concepts which nourish and sustain the ego are no longer present (Dietrich, 2012, p. 238).

The final point on the compass is "Vision" which correlates to the *Ajna* or third-eye chakra. It represents the last contact boundary described by Dietrich, lying between awareness on the intrapersonal level and truth on the interpersonal. On the more practical level, it represents the ability to see with clarity the way forward. It represents movement from knowing one's path to seeing one's path. It is the capacity to envision beyond the vision constrained by fixed concepts rooted in egotic identity. It is the "fully liberated I" which is no longer content to live in illusions and, through dropping these illusions, becomes

the witness to oneself. One is no longer identified by reactions to disturbances in the contact boundary between the persona and the outside world nor the contact boundaries that exist at other intrapersonal levels. In Tantric thought as well as in that of many depth psychologists and psychoanalysts, this point represents a type of death because it is the door through which the ego cannot pass. If this death can be endured, the space that opens up beyond it is free from separation; conflict does not exist in the way once thought. It arises in the sea of existence that is witness to it, thus peace pervades and endures within and beyond any episode of conflict as a fundamental quality of reality (Dietrich, 2012).

Conclusion

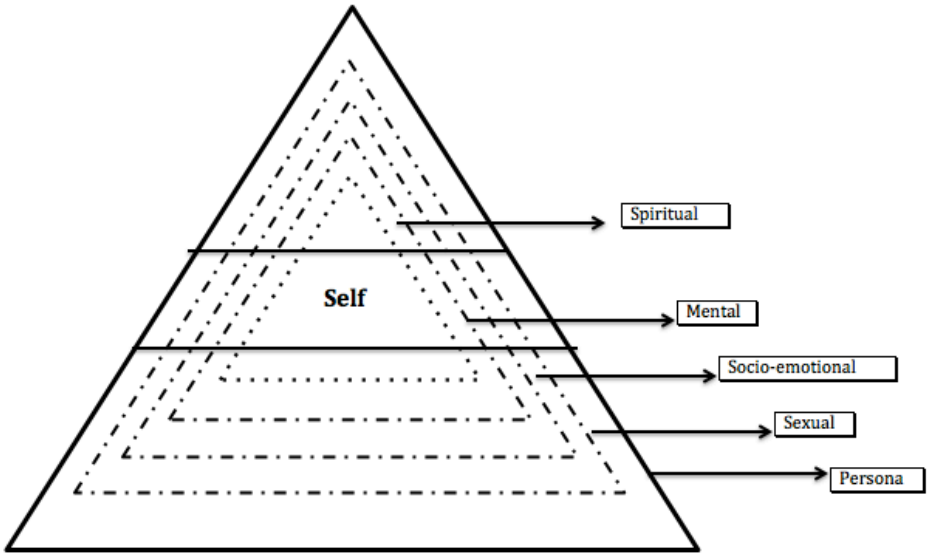
Identity is a constitutive element of how conflicts arise and are sustained. Conventionally identity is understood as a static or quasi static phenomenon shaping the relationships between discrete entities at the interpersonal level. When this subject is pursued deeper and the nature of identity is questioned directly, another realm of complexity opens up. What is commonly thought to be the identity of an individual is more often than not the persona and the contact boundary between the persona of an individual and the outside. If the mask of the persona is set aside, many constitutive layers are revealed.

These layers have been explored in detail in humanistic and transpersonal psychology, psychoanalysis, and many of the spiritual and wisdom traditions of the world. The transrational approach to peace and conflict studies represents a shift in peace thinking to a large, multifaceted perspective in which to examine the intrapersonal layers that make up the persona in order to begin to understand not only how they shape the persona but also the dynamic by

which they have effects beyond the persona and interact in a interpersonal fashion with both the collective layers of identity as well as the intrapersonal layers of others in the conflict system. When these approaches are brought together, the map that emerges is complex and yet still only approximates a small percentage of the territory. Approaches and tools are needed to orient the peace worker within this complexity. One beginning approach to the development of these orientational tools is the compass which includes the key elements of identity – Power, Path, Vision and Voice – and their interrelations at both the inter- and intra-personal levels. Through its roots in transpersonal psychology and Tantric thought, it builds on an extensive lineage of thought on these layers. This tool represents only another small step in the emerging field of transrational peace research but an important movement in clarifying and articulating the theoretical foundations underlying the practice of elicitive conflict transformation.

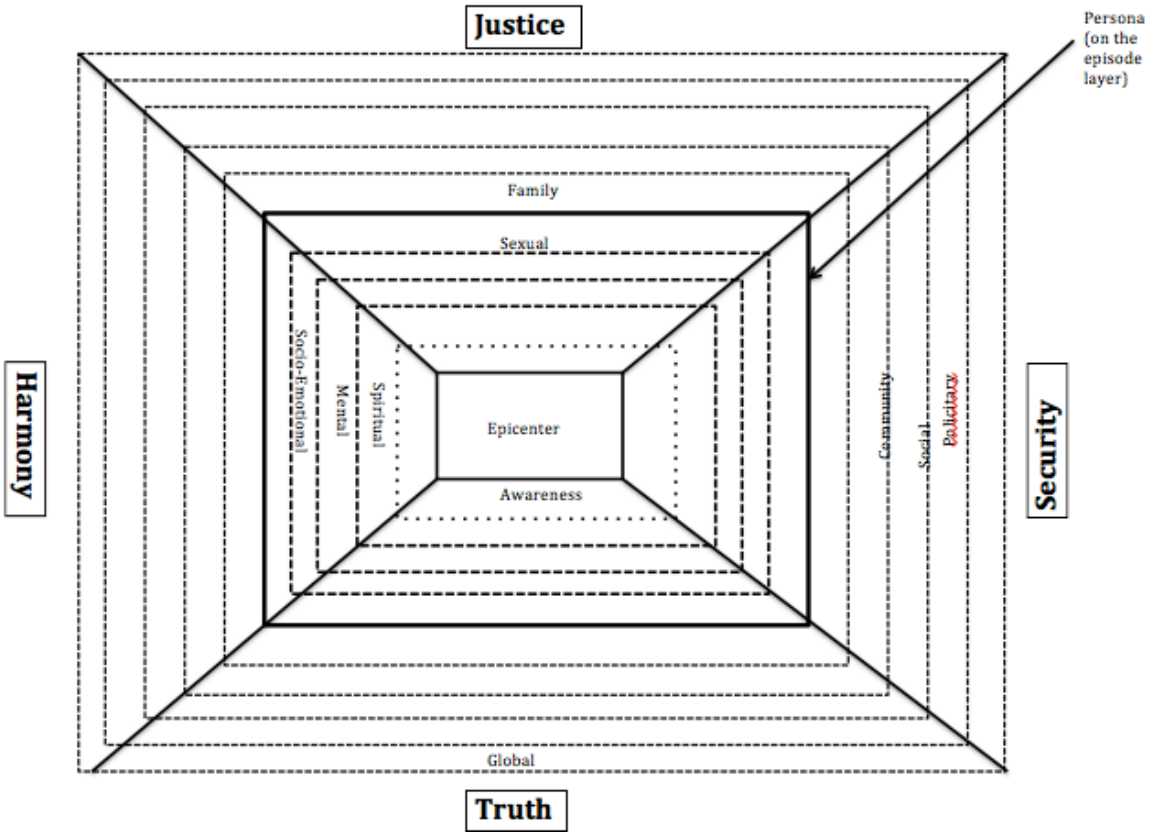
Figures

Figure 1



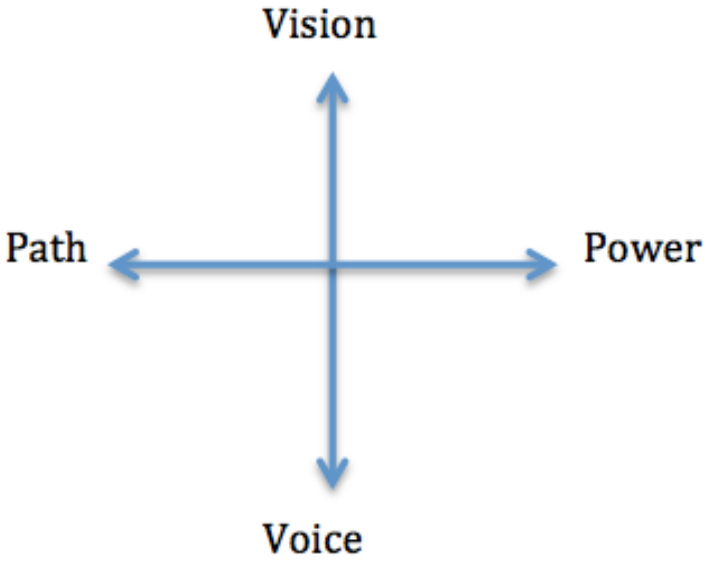
The Intrapersonal layers of Lederach's pyramid; lateral view (Dietrich, Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture, 2012, p. 202)

Figure 2



"The inter-and intrapersonal layers of Lederah's pyramid; birds-eye view (Dietrich, 2013, p. 203)

Figure 3



"Orientational Considerations for Transrational Peace Work" (Taylor, n/d)

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