

THE KYOTO TRANSDISCIPLINARY AND TRANSNATIONAL FORUM 2018

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Kyoto University

“Circle of Emptiness and Wholeness”

Part III

“Nature and Spirituality”

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“Listening to Humanity Beyond Economic Life -
A Transdisciplinary Quest”



INTRODUCTION

Opening Quote:

“We used to live in a Society. Now, we live in an Economy”

But, what has this transformation delivered?

Focus of Talk:

Listening: in particular, to what is hidden

Three Forms of Emptiness or Silence:

The Silence which *Represses*

The Silence which *Hides*

The Silence or Emptiness which *Empowers*

THE SILENCE OR EMPTINESS WHICH REPRESSES - I

The Faustian Bargain - Benefits

Global Economics: A 'Faustian Bargain': In Dante's depiction of the German Mythical Story, Faust sells his soul to the Devil for unlimited knowledge and world pleasure: a good depiction of contemporary industrial life

Benefits:

Expanded access to wealth for many: the "American (consumer) Dream" – increasingly even for elite in poor countries

Information and connection of humanity as a 'global' phenomenon, development of a more global moral consciousness after WW II and Foundation of the United Nations, towards peace and equity – including through new NGOs

But: limited by global capitalism demands and political self-interest: at root for which is the overall command of the global neo-liberal economic frame for life and lifestyle

THE SILENCE OR EMPTINESS WHICH REPRESSES - II

The Faustian Bargain – Disbenefits

The Devil claims back his benefits after a limited period of time

We have reached this ‘tipping point’: Infinite Growth in a Finite System:

Climate Change: exponential growth in degradation: the “*Anthropocene*”

Inequality: getting worse: top 0.1% = 10%; lowest 99.9% = 19% wealth

Control: 147 companies control 40% of all transnational trade wealth

Super-entities set pace and market conditions: ONLY interest, *PROFIT*

Impact of Ownership on Food: Monsanto owns 87% of all world land devoted to genetically engineered seeds; 3 companies control over 50% of the *total* seed market

Disempowerment: live within the *frame* of economy’s demands

Life-goals: understood in *economic* terms; values become our own

THE SILENCE OR EMPTINESS WHICH REPRESSES – III

Humanity Lost

The Essence of Humanity: What is *sacred* or of imperishable supreme value: what we *can be* as a conscious human race:

Empowered, fulfilled individuals, in harmony, deeply *sharing* and caring – across our separate cultural and life worlds

Economic Activity: To achieve this, must be *built* with human ‘spirituality’ as its centre, not as an accidental and marginalized byproduct.

Not So!

THE SILENCE OR EMPTINESS WHICH REPRESSES – IV

Humanity Lost

The Silence which Represses: The Silence of Humanity LOST in the Noise of Global Economics

The values of neo-liberalism/neo-classical economics become our own!

Under the ultimate *command* of a highly concentrated group of immensely wealthy, globally powerful, corporate interests

At the expense of the finite environment and viability of our food resources

THE SILENCE WHICH HIDES – I

The Grammar of Daily Life

Globalization and (Dis) – Connection

Opening Example: Digitized Sound – both unifies human thought orientation and creativity *globally* at the same time as it fundamentally weakens them (Stomu)

We do not notice what is lost in the Silence

We live within this (Silent) **Grammar** of daily life - a product of our 'Economic Frame' and its technological supports, eg:

The 'grammar' of daily life inherited from *motor cars/suburbanization design* and separation/loss of community

Contemporary *sharing* via *internet*: statistical and limited expression of subjectivity at the same time as our 'network' is massively expanded (as with digital music)

Information acquires legitimacy as *knowledge* by sheer scale of numbers: hence, the power of 'false facts'

THE SILENCE WHICH HIDES – II

The Grammar of Daily Life

The Grammar of Our Future: Economic ‘necessity’ and a return (as with Donald Trump) to an unrealistic past to solve immediate problems

The Grammar of Daily Life has Changed – but still remains deeply set in the command of economic self-interest

Yet: We confront *Major Future Transformation*, eg: with climate change and robotics, even a “*Society of Unemployment*” rather than Employment.

**The Grammar of Daily Life Hides the Crisis behind
the Noise of ‘Economic Necessity’**

THE SILENCE WHICH HIDES - III

Where is the Light?

Leonard Cohen:

“Everything has a crack in it. That’s how the light gets in.”

Now so wide, the life threatening precipice which lies beneath is exposed.

The Grammar of Economic Command: $\text{Price} = \text{Value}$; this allows the marketplace to exchange.

Confront this ‘grammar’: Not a minor adjustment to economic theory and action (re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic), but digging deep – to the essence of what our humanity is and can be.

THE SILENCE WHICH HIDES – IV

Where is the Light?

“Sunspot Equilibria”: Extrinsic factors outside the ‘normal’ economic fundamentals,

eg: trust, emotion, conscience, morals, consciousness, creativity, beliefs, inter-subjective communication, sympathy, empathy, community, business organization decisions and participation structures and culture ...

Revealing: the basic platform from which ‘sunspots’ are derived, ie:

Our Humanity and Human Spirituality

The Silence which is Hidden

Asserting a Wholeness as the ‘Grammar’ of the Future

Relying on Knowledge which stretches across External Factors and Internal Conditions

Transdisciplinarity

THE SILENCE OR EMPTINESS WHICH EMPOWERS - I

Polyphony and Emptiness

The Kyoto Manifesto: *Drilled back to the very roots of our humanity in search of the power we need to confront this Global Economic Megalith*

A Path towards Wholeness: *A Transformative Platform –*

Polyphonic Interaction, and Harmony in Emptiness

Polyphony: A musical structure which brings two or more simultaneous lines of independent melody together.

The Kyoto Manifesto: Polyphony – within a Symphony: ie: resolution through bringing the independent lines of melody progressively together through each successive Movement

As with the parallel elements of ***Shinto***: past and present; nature and human ideals – *woven together into harmony*

THE SILENCE OR EMPTINESS WHICH EMPOWERS - II

Polyphony and Emptiness

The Sounds of Silence: *Emptiness, or Absence of the Noise of global economically ruled life allows us to hear that which is otherwise Hidden in Noise*

John Cage 1952 composition: “4 Minutes 33 Seconds” – ***of silence***:

Not a joke: influenced by Robert Rauschenberg’s 1951 exhibition of painted white canvases: to bring attention to what is projected *onto* the canvases, varying light conditions, shadows of people, etc.

Cage: attention to the (otherwise silent) sounds of the environment within which the music is played, the ambient sound beyond the musicians – a challenge on what music is

- the *underlying grammar*!

As with the apparent ‘emptiness’ of the cosmos, reflective silence is the source of enormous power to create energy and transformation

But we must act at *all* levels - from the individual, to community, to the global

APPLICATIONS - I

Silence and Harmony

Individual Action: Wider social harmony starts with the Individual and Positive Emotion

To share, have sympathy and empathy: **must suspend the inner voice** of prejudice and self-interest and 'grammar' of our immediate social world

Listen without barriers – **to hear** (particularly across cultures)

Not to intervene

Act Mindfully – including, in particular, in Business and Economic activity: seek maximum benefit for others, minimal harm

All interactions: Trust, and 'Hospitality-based Relationships'

APPLICATIONS - II

Silence and Harmony

The Power of Community:

The Platform: Intersubjective Community: - the source of *Meaning and Culture: basis of Empowerment*

World-wide Community Dynamic: Possible according to the Principle of “**Global Localism**”, ie: build ‘community’ concept and design into *everything* (eg: architecture and planning; *all* policy); expand local community experience and example

The platform for all community action strategies however is to start by *listening*, the basis of all successful community focused programs I personally ran when responsible for United Nations engagement across Asia and the Pacific

Economic Policy and “Viable Stasis”:

Growth: a means of *supporting humanity and community, not an end*

Re-tune Government and Business Priorities, eg: ‘social business’ and shared benefit

APPLICATIONS - III

Silence and Harmony

Target of Confrontation:

*The Underlying **Grammar** of Globalised Economics*

Hidden from Daily Life, but NOT EMPTY!

Parallel to the apparent Emptiness of the Cosmos: continuous massive 'explosions' and 'destruction' of energy

To power the ongoing expansion of the increasingly concentrated power of humanity's shallowest and most separative ideal: GREED AND SELFISH BENEFIT!

STRATEGIES - I

Evoke the Legitimacy of Transdisciplinary Knowledge

Assert the Polyphony which brings together nature, humans, and the ideal of our connectedness into HARMONY

Discover the Power of Emptiness: Still the Noise of Global Economics

– so as to ***Hear, See and Assert the Wholeness of Our Humanity***

STRATEGIES - II

Employ Change Strategies:

Fractals: Same configuration of values nesting at all levels of aggregation

Complex Systems and “Swarming” Impact: A small disturbing intervention in a complex system can unbalance and transform the whole system

Principal of Dialectics: The Antithesis derives out of the Thesis: attack weaknesses within the present ‘thesis’

Principle of Sunspot Equilibria: Assert the importance of those human characteristics which currently remain excluded from the fundamentals of neo-classical economic calculation, eg:

- trust, emotion, sympathy, empathy, altruism

***At the core of transformation:
Learning to listen, even to what is hidden, or is possible, within silence!***

AN END NOTE

T. S. Eliot's "Choruses from the Rock"

"The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to God.

Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

To which I would add,

"Where is the understanding and peace we have lost
in noise that stifles silence?"

