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This issue of QHE hits the stands as we are re-energized by Earth Day, Spring's renewal of our landscapes, and world-wide concern for our ability to live in right relationship with each other and the rest of creation. The essays presented here, all developed from presentations given at FAHE's 2016 conference at the Woodbrooke Study Centre, Birmingham, UK, speak to these concerns and what Friendly scholars can contribute.

Jim Hood, professor of English at Guilford College, shares with us powerful reflections on the place of the human animal in the web of nature, as informed by his life story and exemplified through a course he has recently developed to explore a North Carolina watershed ecosystem. This presentation had attenders in tears at Woodbrooke, and we are honored to be able to share it with you.

Two British Friends, Laurie Michaelis, the Project Co-ordinator of British Friends' Living Witness, and Stuart Masters, Senior Programme Leader at Woodbrooke, provide us with two explorations of how Quaker ways can contribute to eco-theology. Laurie Michaelis is skeptical that Friends will arrive at any singular eco-theology, while Stuart Masters' goal is to "build a modern Quaker eco-theology."

This QHE issue includes two creative works, the first of which calls on you to co-create! Laura Rediehs, Associate Professor of Philosophy at St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York, is developing a manuscript about responding to the tough questions about peace, pacifism and non-violence. She shares some of her work to date and asks us to contribute our experience and thoughts on those tough questions.

Finally, we include a poem by Tarik (The Poet Amin) Clayton on homelessness, a condition he has experienced. Abigail first met Tarik in the light-filled galleries of the New Britain Museum of American Art, where he serves as a security guard—but he really should be a docent! Tarik is working towards his bachelor's degree, has founded and published a series of publications to showcase local poets and spoken word performers, and runs regular open-mic nights at the museum and elsewhere. He shared this poem with Abigail after she shared her excitement about attending a Healing Blues concert on its recent tour from Greensboro to Connecticut (QHE Vol. 9 No. 2, p.29).

Submissions: *QHE* is published twice a year, in the spring and the fall. Articles submitted for possible publication should be sent as Word documents to: either **dsmith4@guilford.edu** or to **adams@ccsu.edu**. Since *QHE* is not wed to any particular referencing format, you may use the professional style of your choice. If you would like to discuss an idea that you have for an article, our telephone numbers are: 336-316-2162 (DS) and 860-832-2616 (AEA).

FAHE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
June 16-19, 2017

Hoping to see all of you June 16-19, 2017! FAHE will meet at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC, to consider the theme of *"Global Education, Global Quakerism."* The call for papers with queries and conference registration is available at the FAHE web site and at this site.

FAHE

Educating Toward Post-humanism in the Anthropocene: The Cape Fear River Basin Studies Program

Jim Hood
Guilford College

The entire western border of the Miami suburb where I grew up was a deep, straight canal. Looming Australian pine trees lined its east bank, a small buffer between the last street west in my town and its dark green waters. It cut a surveyor's line south to north, connected at its top end to another waterway, the Miami Canal, the northwest-to-southeast diagonal the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sluiced out of swamp, straightening part of the Miami River to shunt Everglades waters into Biscayne Bay. I could ride my bike eleven blocks west from my house on Falcon Avenue and Ludlum Canal would stop me. Beyond that, a mysterious industrial area loomed, ribboned with railroad tracks and printed over with non-descript buildings. Even farther west, ten times the distance I pedaled from my house to the canal, lay the Everglades itself, the river of grass, the original South Florida that was there long before Miami perched itself on a band of fossilized coral rock at the edge of the ocean.

To my mind, I lived at the edge of a vast wilderness, in which fact I took no small amount of comfort. But borders are spectral demarcations, and I never considered how subtly human ideas and development policed this one. My high school English teacher once remarked that the suburb of Miami Springs, the triangle-shaped place where I lived, was protected on one side by the airport and on two others by moats. I remember thinking that was funny; I even recall thinking, since Miami Springs was practically all white, that he'd unwrapped the racist premise of the place. But I was unconscious then of how that canal guarded the line between civilization and the wild. To cross over was to enter a place of danger, wonder, mystery, and duress, the realm of water moccasins and anhingas, gumbo-limbo trees and sawgrass. I found it beautiful, alluring, vast, forbidding. I might find orchids and owls there, but I could not flit my bicycle on its shallow, slow-moving waters.

Ludlum Canal was no mere line on a map; it was a physical manifestation of the boundary ideal: a permanent, tangible reification of nature as one domain and the abode of human beings another. The Everglades was somewhere I had to travel to, pristinely separate, a space preserved for all time where alligators laid their leathery eggs in self-heating mulch piles and roseate spoonbills whisked low over wide waters. That wet margin etched a track in my own brain, a border line between natural and unnatural, an ultimately unfortunate but world-shaping distinction. Its line reinforced another fantasy, the loss of which I mourn deeply because the reality is so much harder, so much more at stake. That was the dream of nature untouched, my wilderness trance, the thought that the Everglades thrived apart, over there, far away from anything we as human beings could do to it.

Figure 1: Satellite view of Miami Springs, Florida (Google Maps). Note the two canals defining the West and Northeast sides of the triangular neighborhood, with the major street across the South.

Writing prophetically in 1989, Bill McKibben reminded us that "[a]n idea, a relationship, can go extinct, just like an animal or a plant" (48). He was talking, by now famously, about *the end of nature* conceived of as a "separate and wild province" (48), a realm profoundly different from the human one and ultimately unalterable by human action. The arresting thesis of McKibben's book is that the human-engendered release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, primarily through the industrial age's burning of fossil fuels, not only has altered the earth itself irrevocably—its weather and other processes—but has changed utterly the very idea of nature. "By changing the weather," McKibben writes, "we make every spot on earth man-made and artificial" (58). Global climate alteration has unleashed Armageddon upon the flesh of the earth and, concurrently, a shift in comprehension so profound as to alter forever what we understand by the meaning of the word "nature."

Since ecologist Eugene F. Stoermer coined the term "Anthropocene" in the same decade McKibben's book was published, environmentalists and others have used it to designate our current geological epoch as the one in which human interventions in the world's ecosystems have become so extensive as to change the very nature of earth. So many dams worldwide as to alter the earth's rotation. So many fracking wells in certain parts of the United States as to cause small earthquakes. So many pet cats they are a major cause of passerine bird population declines. So much irrigation sucked up from the Ogallala aquifer that groundwater levels have dropped 150 feet in parts of southern Kansas (Little). So much warming that glaciers will be gone, the seas will rise, and the Gulfstream current may break apart, leaving northern Europe in the grip of a frosting it hasn't seen in millennia.

Gretel Ehrlich has wondered what writers will do in the face of this new earth order. She considered, in Norwich in 2008 at the New Writing Worlds Symposium, how those whose human task it is to scribe the comings and leavings of blackburnian warblers and the skyward evanescence of sequoias will write in the knowledge of climate cataclysm:

> I think that if we choose to write about the world on the eve of the sixth mass extinction, we'll have to write out of what's left—flood waters, a revolving band of hurricanes at the equator, smoke, storm, ash fields, ash fall, the disequilibrium of glaciers, waterlessness, and the tsunami—out of a trance. We once wrote, I think, in a trance of beauty, the beauty of the world. Now we are going to write in a trance of the beauty of the death of the world and of ourselves.
>
> The land is text and we must learn to read it, to apprentice ourselves to whatever is unfolding, to the dynamics of ice and impermanence, the coming into being and the going out of being, the beholding of essential fullness and emptiness aspects of the world. I think we need to develop, to work to develop, a sacred perception of the world, which means there is no skin between us, between sacred and secular, between us and animals, us and trees, trees, rocks, and carpet. . . . We have to learn to write in these ecological fluxes, to move tracklessly, and to arrive at the unexpected.

Ehrlich sets before us a daunting, devil's bargain of a task. To write the beauty of the death of the world is to embrace thorns, to kiss coal ash.

And what is such a task for of those of us who teach? How do I teach, especially how to write and how to read, in the Anthropocene? What does it mean to lead students to new knowledge at a moment in time like no other, a moment in which the terra-reforming activities of a single species have disrupted the earth's processes to such an extent that it seems we might have as much luck stopping our planet's rotation as reversing the effects of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere? How can I sit in a classroom, parsing the ambiguities of Keats's "Fled is that music: Do I wake or sleep?", when island nations will be under water soon? How can I fly eight hours across the rising Atlantic, over the melting of Greenland, participating in the further carbonization of

Figure 2: Looking for Bald Eagles at Lake Brandt, Greensboro, NC, Spring 2016

the atmosphere, to engage in conversation with you about the end of nature and how to teach it? The irony appalls.

My central question is this one, personal, political, and practical: How do I teach out of what's left: tornadoes, hurricanes, wild thunderstorms, and the ash fall of massive boreal forest fires? 70 million acres in Russia cindered in 2012, 5 million in Alaska in 2015, and already this spring a devastating fire in Alberta. The burning of the boreal forest creates a doubled-down, ice-wrecking feedback loop by releasing carbon that's been sequestered in pine, spruce, and larch *and* by wafting that dark soot over to the Greenland ice sheet, prompting even more rapid melting there (Gillis and Fountain). How do I teach in the knowing that what we once thought fixed and unchanging—the dependable cycles of nature's way—is up for grabs?

Figure 3: Stream monitoring for the Haw River Assembly, Greensboro, NC, Spring 2016

But perhaps the end of nature somehow provides safe passage toward a new conception of the natural world. I'm thinking here of "No nature" in the sense Gary Snyder might mean in his poem "Ripples on the Surface," from his 1992 collection, *No Nature*. There he conjures images of both "the vast wild" and "the little house," the human abode, somehow dissolving into a single thing: "Both together, one big empty house" (568). This house and this wild, blending together, mean "no nature" in this sense: the clear boundary between the human and the more-than-human disappears and we come to see a seamless interpenetration in which we accept the natural in us and the natural around us as a necessary wholeness. "Nature" is no longer a separate category, an antonym for "human" in the way the age-old binary has put it. Perhaps "end of nature"/"no nature" allows me to un-etch the canal border I grew up behind, erasing both the false senses it reinforced, of security for nature and separateness for me. Perhaps such erasure can flow positively in my teaching, in a very small way, in a course I call "Animal Stories of the Cape Fear River Basin," in which we explore natural history accounts of central North Carolina across four centuries, go see bald eagles nesting on a lake fifteen minutes from campus, sample the macroinvertebrates living in the stream that empties the college lake, and test the pH of its water.

Two years ago I began teaching "Animal Stories," a transdisciplinary historical method and research-based first-year composition course. It's a course that fulfills a general education requirement, which is why most students take it, but it also serves the Cape Fear River Basin Studies program, a set of courses and experiences conceived by my colleague in the Art Department, Maia Dery. The broader program commences with a pre-first year orientation, experiential learning opportunity when we travel with students to the North Carolina coast near Wilmington where they participate in environmental service projects like replanting marsh grass or bagging oyster shells to replenish oyster reefs; hear presentations about sea turtle protection, environmental issues with the lower Cape Fear River, or plastic in the oceans; visit the North Carolina aquarium; and learn how to surf. It's a fabulous way to start college, learning about their new location in a profoundly visceral way as well as having the chance to develop, in a brief four days, a physical skill (the surfing) that makes them feel accomplished and ready to take on new challenges. We camp in the woods in oppressive heat, fending off mosquitoes, and the student leaders (juniors and seniors) organize the meals and getting-to-know-one-another activities.

My history/writing course complements this experience as well as a seminar students can take in which they develop interdisciplinary projects ranging from studies of salamander populations to films about environmental racism to photography exhibitions. What knits all these disparate things together is our focus on a single place, place as defined by shared water. Greensboro, where Guilford is located, lies near the headwaters of the Haw River, one of the main tributaries of the Cape Fear River Basin, the huge watershed that extends over 9,164 square miles of central North Carolina. It is the largest of the four river basins wholly contained within the borders of North Carolina, includes 6,584 miles of rivers and streams and 113 municipalities, has 24,472 acres of estuary, and provides water to a population of 2,072,305 human animals (2010 census figure) living within its boundaries (See "Cape Fear River Basin," shown in Figure 4). In my course, students learn the basic geography of the river basin; read, discuss, and analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first century natural history accounts of the region; write their own natural history accounts of a non-human animal native to central North Carolina; and then study, mainly through independent research projects, various forms of human impact on the river basin, everything from dams to bio-solids application on farm fields to industrial hog farming. Given that North Carolina is the second-largest hog producing state in the U.S., and that the bulk of that industrial production is located in a few counties within the Cape Fear River Basin, we learn a lot together about the environmental impact of hog Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. It's not pretty.

Figure 4: Cape Fear River Basin (map from NOAA)

I founded the course upon some key conceptions:

1. In defining a place on the basis of shared water, I choose natural boundaries, embedded by the law of gravity on the earth itself, not human constructs that map ideologies onto the more-than-human landscape.

2. I use the term "non-human animals" to reinforce continually the fact that human beings are animals, a species that has been particularly adept at shaping its own environment towards its own ends, an apex species that has no predators and has learned how to manage its own diseases incredibly well. Speciesism runs rampant in the academy; the academy as we know it was founded by humanists, promoters of all things human-centric. Think of how many courses, programs, centers, colleges, and entire institutions devote themselves exclusively to the study and benefit of human animals. I seek a kind of post-humanism in this course (and others) in

which we acknowledge and celebrate more than a single animal species.

3. The course includes a basic community-engaged research component in which we partner with the Haw River Assembly, an environmental organization dedicated to cleaning up and preserving the Haw River, by doing stream monitoring at Guilford on a branch that flows into Horse Pen Creek and then into the Haw, which flows into the Cape Fear.

4. In writing natural history accounts of non-human animals native to the Cape Fear region, students must investigate primary sources in order to discover population fluctuations over time with their species. They must create new knowledge by interpreting patterns for themselves, not merely report what others have already thought and said.

5. The course is transdisciplinary because the kinds of environmental and social problems present in the river basin cannot be solved by experts studying only one aspect of an issue. To attempt to understand the complexities of the hog waste problem in eastern North Carolina, students need to know some things about geography, history, hydrology, agriculture, disease, sociology, race, and so forth. I consciously go broad instead of deep so that students begin to comprehend the interpenetration of ecological relationships. I focus on the older, discredited-by-contemporary-sciences enterprise of natural history because it is observational, not experimental, transdisciplinary to its core, and includes a wealth of fine descriptive writing.

Near the beginning of the course, I have them read an essay by Thomas Lowe Fleischner entitled "The Mindfulness of Natural History," a piece that reminds us (especially me) that the core of that observational and descriptive enterprise is paying careful attention. "[W]e *are* what we pay attention to," Fleischner writes, and "[p]aying heed to beauty, grace, and everyday miracles promotes a sense of possibility and coherence that runs deeper and truer" (9) than much of what contemporary culture has to offer. The mindfulness of which he speaks may align most closely with Buddhist tradition, but it certainly echoes Quaker centering and connectedness. When some students recall this idea of mindfulness in their end-of-the-semester reflection papers on our stream monitoring activities, remarking upon how seeing miniscule caddisfly, mayfly, and damselfly larvae for the first time reminded them of how paying careful attention to the mostly unseen is its own reward, I think something might just be working.

A few years ago, I let my subscription to *Orion*, the premier magazine of American nature writing, lapse. Reading many of the articles had left me deeply saddened. It was often at best depressing and, at worst, terrifying to read, yet again, about the Gulf oil spill, the loss of non-human animal habitat, and our human inability to take responsibility and make significant, collective change. Letting the subscription go was a passive decision, rationalized by the cost savings, but my unwillingness to confront the sharp, dark realities of global environmental degradation has haunted me.

The larger, spiritual question here is of course "In the fullness of knowledge of the world as it is, what is my task?" To be passive changes nothing or, worse, it warrants silently the changes others make. One thing I can do is teach, and I want to teach in a manner that honors non-human animals and our ecological relationships, that actively resists the trend toward greater

and greater specialization, and that critiques deeply-entrenched human constructs that misconstrue the nature of this world we share with other living beings. If I am to teach, honestly, out of what's left, I must confront openly the essential facts of what remains and what may come anew. And painful as it is, I must also choose somehow to honor the loss of what has been. Perhaps in doing so, I move closer toward "a sacred perception of the world."

At this moment of ecological apocalypse, we need such seeing more than ever. We must rub away the self-serving fantasy of human boundary lines, enter the knowing of the watershed, nest in the paradox of death rising into new life. "Keenly observed, the world is transformed," writes Gretel Ehrlich in another essay (*Solace* 7), a reminder that teaching the beauty of the death of the world, as a means of altering that trajectory, may be a calling. In our Quaker context, the exquisite narrative of the dying and rising God helps us to see one kind of sacred knowing. And behind that lies a story even older, the primordial tale of leaves that fall and die to nourish trees they sprouted on, of sea turtles clawing out of sandy nests to feed rapacious gulls, of earthworms mining in the garden ground to banquet moles, and of stars and planets spinning in a vast, still not even infinitesimally known, expanding space.

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A Distinctive Quaker Eco-Theology?

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Britain Yearly Meeting in 2011 made a commitment 'to become a low carbon, sustainable community' (Minute 36). In this paper I try to characterise some of the theologies and spiritual paths that may inform the yearly meeting, of which I am a member. We are unlikely to unite around a single eco-theology; Quaker distinctiveness lies more in a commitment to 1) openness to transformation, 2) answering that of God in the other and 3) seeking unity together.

Dualistic paths

One of God's first acts in the Bible is to separate heaven from earth. The duality of God and Creation, good and evil, the Kingdom and the World, permeates Judaeo-Christian scripture and liturgy. The Jewish Havdalah service closes the Sabbath with a blessing for God 'who makes a distinction between sacred and profane'.

In this tradition, Creation exists to praise and respond to God. Humanity should keep God's laws, walk his path. Faithfulness springs from the Earth, and righteousness shines down from Heaven (Ps 85). Prophets bring God's word to the people; priests intercede with God for the people (Figure 1).

The world is created good; the Earth and all that fills it are the Lord's (Ps 24). Humanity has a duty of care over it ('to watch over it and work/serve it', Gen 2:15). We are given seeds and fruit to eat (Gen 1:29)—and later allowed to eat flesh provided the blood, the life-force, is not consumed (Gen 9:3-4). All creation is part of the communion of worshippers (Is 55:12-13, Ps 148:7), and the land itself has spiritual needs; it requires its sabbatical years and its jubilees (Lev 25:4-10).

Humanity is sinful, fallen from its created state of communion with God. In the Noah story, human wickedness prompts God to bring about the flood (Gen 6:5). Later, when the Israelites err from God's way, they are exiled until the land has recovered its Sabbaths (Lev 26:34-35, 2 Chron 36:21).

In much of the Hebrew Bible, sin and grace are collective and inherited (Ex 20:5-6). Redemption arises from God's kindness. There is also an emerging idea of individual responsibility, freeing children from the sins of their parents (Ezek 18:1-20). Redemption takes the form of a restoration of the human relationship with God and the land. Micah (4:1-5) in particular sets out that, when people act justly and follow God's laws, a vision of peace will come about (swords beat into ploughshares…). Isaiah repeats this (2:4) and adds a further vision (11:6-9) of harmony for all life, in which lions eat straw and 'none shall hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain'.

In this frame, our ecological commitment arises from humanity's triangular relationship with God and the rest of Creation. Care for Creation takes a variety of forms[1]:

1. **The path of devotion**, following God's commands, keeping the Sabbath and sabbatical

[1] The four paths mentioned in this paper are described in Peter Tufts-Richardson (1996) *Four Spiritualities: Expressions of Self, Expressions of Spirit - A Psychology of Contemporary Spiritual Choice*. The four spiritualities derive from the Myers-Briggs personality typology. I do not suggest there is a right path for each personality but we do differ in the paths that work for us. Different paths may suit us at different stages in our lives.

years, making offerings of first fruits and tithes. These are acts of duty whereby the pious show their commitment to God, to their religion and their community. Quakers do have symbols and rituals despite our wariness about 'vain repetitions'. Such practices can help acknowledge the 'sacramental nature of the whole of life' (BYM 2005, Minute 18).

2. **The path of harmony** or compassion, respecting the needs of the land and of all life. Quakers have spoken of witnessing to 'that of God in all creation' (BYM 2001, Minute 33; Advices and Queries[2] 42). It means responding to all life as part of the community of Creation, as ends rather than means, and as persons or subjects like ourselves.

3. **The path of works**, letting our lives speak (A&Q[2] 27, 37, 41), undertaking acts of righteousness and justice that witness to the Kingdom of God now and in the future, the vision of the Holy Mountain where none shall hurt or destroy, Christianity as 'not a notion but a way' (A&Q 3) and the example of Jesus as 'love in action' (A&Q 4).

It is perhaps the third path that is most specifically embodied in Quakerism, not because the others are absent, but because we have orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy. Quakers have a well-developed tradition[3], expressed through the disciplines and practices that constitute 'right ordering' or 'Gospel Order', and through our Testimony over-and-against the values and practices of the World[4].

Although many early and more recent Quaker writings embody a concern for, and sense of unity with, all Creation[5], Quaker Testimony has focused most on human relationships. The underlying principles – of truth, equality, simplicity, nonviolence, answering that of God in everyone – are mostly transferrable from our relationships with people to the whole community of Creation. There is a clear Quaker model for engagement with each other and the wider movement for ecojustice.

Nondual paths

Nondual spiritualities offer a fourth approach, which has been described as the **path of unity**, most evident in Buddhism. Unity arises in Quaker experience especially in the 'gathered' meeting for worship, and the discernment of the 'sense of the meeting' in a meeting for worship for business. Meeting for worship can be a place to practise our consciousness of unity with each other, and can be a bridge to a wider sense of unity.

Mystics of all traditions describe experiences in which the distinctions between God and Creation, self and other, dissolve or at least blur. God, creation and self are one; the relationship of self and other goes beyond the intersubjective 'I-Thou' to becoming 'not one, not two' in subjectivity. From this place, compassion for all life and all suffering is inevitable. However, nondual spiritual paths may cultivate equanimity and nonattachment, rather than a zeal for social reform.

[2] 'Advices and Queries' or 'A&Q' refers throughout to Chapter 1 of Britain Yearly Meeting (1994) *Quaker faith and practice: the book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, BYM, London.

[3] I use the word 'tradition' in the sense of Alastair MacIntyre (1985), *After Virtue*, Duckworth, London. It includes shared values, practices, narratives and roles. It offers a vision of the Good Life and the Good Society, and provides an ethical framework for personal behaviour and interpersonal relationship.

[4] Rachel Muers (2013), *Testimony: Quakerism and Theological Ethics*, SCM Press, London.

[5] Comprehensively collected by Anne Adams (ed.) (1998), *The Creation Was Open to Me: An Anthology of Friends' Writings on that of God in all Creation*, Quaker Green Concern, Wilmslow.

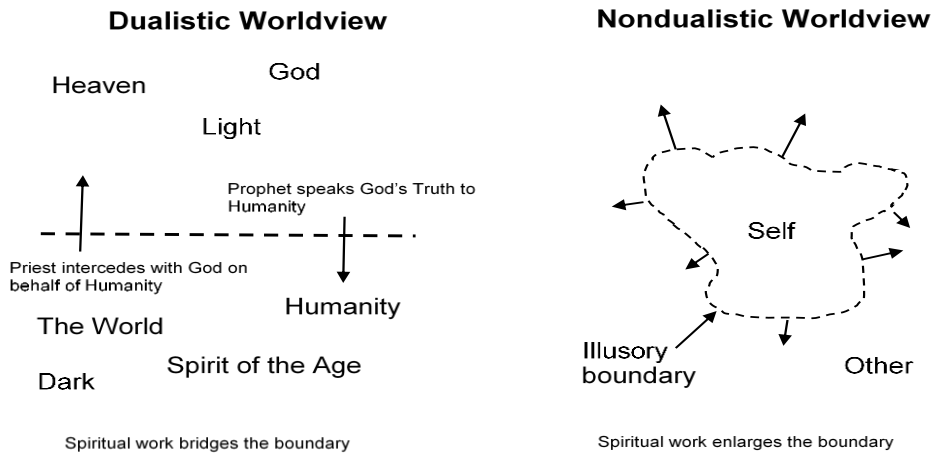

Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of Dualistic and Nondualistic Worldviews

Quaker faith and practice embraces both dualism (prophetic, reformist) and nondualism (compassionate, accepting and forgiving). We need this combination if humanity is to develop a sustainable civilisation. As Marion McNaughton has said, drawing on the words of the Benedictine monk Jean Leclerq: if we are to be effective prophets, we must love the age we live in[6].

Quaker distinctiveness

The elements of corporate Quaker narrative that most obviously connect to eco-theology are not unique to us. Most faith traditions reject consumerism, advocate simplicity and frugality, and emphasise a duty of care for nature and all life (as we do in A&Q 41 and 42). Our 2011 commitment is a matter of good citizenship, rather than a particular Quaker path.

However, I do believe that distinctive Quaker contributions to eco-theologies can be found in the advices on spiritual practice, on letting our lives speak, and on relationships and community. These can be summarised in three points:

First, an openness to our own awakening and transformation. If we hope the world will change, we start with a readiness to change ourselves, to learn from the experience and share it with others. If we see darkness around us, the first step is to stand still in the Light, letting it show us our own darkness and bring us to new life. That is how we become patterns and examples. Darkness is not badness. It is just an absence of illumination. The spiritual life is a process of becoming conscious, of allowing the Light to dispel the shadows, and of awakening to God's Truth, Love and Will. This means acknowledging that we are part of **both** the problem **and** the solution. Guilt is neither necessary nor helpful in this.

Our Quaker approach involves a) heeding the inner Light and b) when a way seems to open, testing our leadings in the gathered meeting. The testing is important because we each have areas where we are more or less conscious, where the Light is distorted, filtered or obscured. We also have areas

[6] Marion MacNaughton (2007) *An Orientation to Prophecy*. Address to Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial, Dublin.

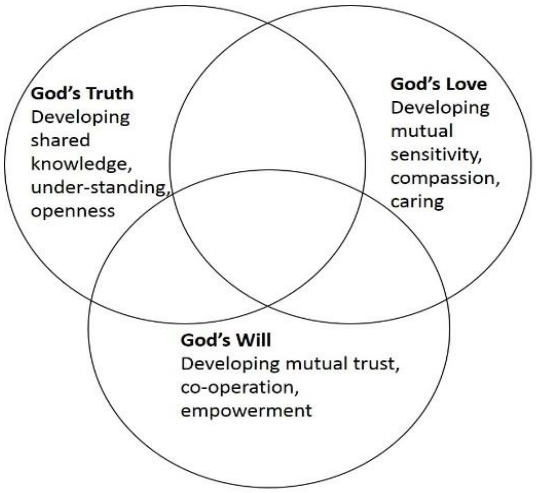

Figure 2. Awakening to God's Truth, Love and Will

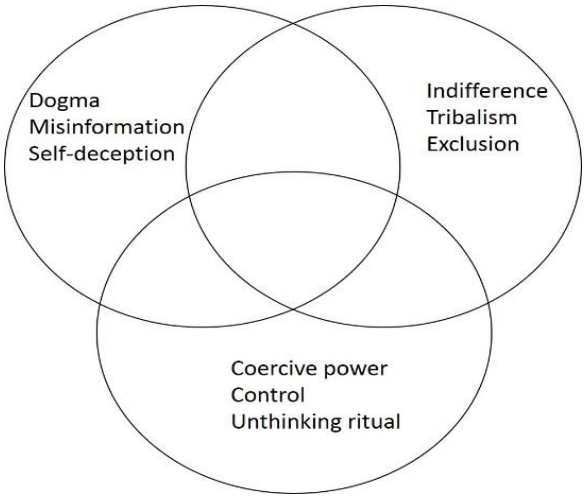

Figure 3. Recognising the shadow

where we are more awake, where the Light may shine through us, so we may act as channels for gifts of the Spirit.

Second, a commitment to answering that of God in everyone. We are called to enter into relationship with the other (human or not), answerable to that of God revealed through it, ready to be transformed by it. That means listening, reaching deep for the truth others' words may hold for us, prepared to be challenged, to find we have been mistaken. We embrace difference as well as similarity, recognising others' gifts and seeing how they complement our own.
The call to answer that of God in others may take many forms. Figure 2 shows three foci: love, truth and will. In trying to engage others in responding to climate change (or perhaps any issue), there is a tendency to focus on just one of these, which may be our own area of strength, or where we've had breakthroughs.

- Often there is an expectation that if people only knew the truth – the science of climate change, the emerging impacts on ecosystems and vulnerable people – they would respond.
- Some activist networks, including Quaker activists, are more focused on power dynamics (the realm of action and will), seeing the problem as lying in 'corporate greed' and vested interests.
- Ecopsychology and related approaches have tended to diagnose emotional disconnection as the problem; their solutions involve bringing people into closer contact with nature and their local communities, and encouraging them to explore their feelings about climate change.

In fact, we probably need all three of these approaches.

Listening to others, we free them to listen to us and begin to build mutual understanding, compassion and empowerment. There may also be a call to engage with the Shadow – what nonviolence theologian Walter Wink calls the Domination System. We need to recognise the Shadow when it is manifest in the people we engage with *and in ourselves* (see Figure 3). Sometimes, when we find ourselves in conflict, we are being offered a mirror to see our own areas of shadow.

Our work with agents of the Domination System must be to answer that of God in them – i.e. to work on mutual understanding, compassion and empowerment. Opposition may be part of this but unless it occurs within a well-developed positive relationship it is liable to lead to a breakdown in communication. What does it mean to oppose agents of the System? Do we seek to replace them with new structures? Or do we oppose some of their actions, while supporting them in being part of the solution rather than the problem?

Third, we seek unity in a way forward together. Quaker unity is heavily dependent on following the two disciplines above – openness to our own transformation, and answering that of God in each other. It also involves a discipline of nonattachment, setting aside our own positions and expectations as we seek a way forward together.

Our search for unity is most explicit in meetings for worship for business. Sometimes it arises in the 'As Led' sessions towards the end of a yearly meeting, when we may have been wrestling with a complex and conflicted question for several days. Out of a period of 'gathered' worship comes ministry that opens a door, and the meeting steps through it. The ministry can seem to arise out of the collective consciousness of the worshipping group, rather than from the individual speaker.

Quaker meetings for worship and meetings for worship for business are opportunities to practise the disciplines that underpin unity; but these disciplines are very much needed in the wider movement for ecological awareness and action. An effective response to climate change requires humanity to get beyond words and develop the collective will for a transformation in technology, lifestyles, institutions and infrastructure. So Quakers do have a particular contribution to make in modelling and sharing our disciplines.

Exploring Some Ecological Dimensions of Quaker Faith and Practice

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A. INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to identify a number of ways in which Quaker faith and practice is implicitly ecological in orientation. I am not arguing that Quakerism, across its history, has been consistently ecological in practice; the Quaker story is a mixed one in this regard. Instead, I am suggesting that the Quaker way displays a number of ecological dimensions that could provide a helpful foundation on which to build a modern Quaker eco-theology.

Spiritual Ecology

For the purposes of this analysis, I will work with a model of spiritual ecology that makes the following assumptions:

- Creation is a living system that has coherence and order.
- Creation is a living system made up of a complex mix of individual parts.
- The individual parts that make up creation are interconnected.
- The individual parts that make up creation are interdependent.
- The diversity of the interconnected and interdependent parts that make up creation is beneficial to the health of this living system.
- Humanity is but one part of this interconnected and interdependent creation.
- Humanity has self-consciousness and a degree of free will.
- Other animals and the rest of the natural world have integrity and value as essential parts of creation as a living system.
- Creation has both spiritual and physical dimensions; heaven and earth are not mutually exclusive but, rather, different aspects of one reality.

B. QUAKER CHARACTERISTICS

1. This-Worldly – Quaker spirituality is essentially 'this-worldly' in orientation. The desire to escape the material world and the promise of a spiritual afterlife have never been primary Quaker preoccupations. Instead, the Quaker way has tended to focus on the possibility of real change within this life.

Ecological Significance – This means that Quakerism should be focused on the health and well-being of the creation here and now. There is no radical dualism that encourages people to ignore the material world and focus instead on the promise of a separate spiritual dwelling place after death. We have an interest in protecting this creation in which spirit and matter, heaven and earth are interconnected and interdependent. That said, there is a danger in the Quaker emphasis on an inward-focused practice, which can lead to a disembodied spirituality and a neglect of the material world.

2. Experiential – Quakers have generally given priority to what can be known individually and corporately by direct experience using the discipline of spiritual discernment. This has produced a faith and practice that engages with life as it is

experienced in the present moment and in specific places.

Ecological Significance – The experiential dimension of the Quaker way demonstrates a commitment to engaging primarily with what actually exists and experiencing it directly, rather than prioritising speculative and theoretical notions about it. We should value what we experience.

3. Relational – The Quaker way is essentially relational in the sense that it gives priority to right living over right believing. Its focus is directed toward a Spirit that indwells all things and has the power to bring people into right relationship with God, with each other and with the whole creation.

Ecological Significance – The relational aspects of the Quaker way demonstrate a strong affirmation of the interconnected and interdependent nature of the creation. Given this, it is clearly in our interests to maintain positive and healthy relationships with everything that we are connected to.

4. Process-Based – The experiential and relational nature of Quaker spirituality means that it is best understood in terms of a commitment to an on-going process (to living 'a way') rather than a more static focus (on having arrived at a fixed destination or status). What is important is maintaining a continuous spiritual practice of listening, seeking guidance and being faithful to that guidance.

Ecological Significance – The Quaker commitment to maintaining an on-going experiential and relational practice reflects the nature of the universe understood as an unfolding and evolving creative process. We are all caught up in a process in which we are actively involved but which transcends our limited contribution.

5. Contemplative – The contemplative nature of Quaker worship and spirituality gives priority to a practice of paying attention to God (as the source and animating power underpinning all things) over 'talking to' or 'talking at' God. This practice assumes that God as Spirit is directly available and intimately involved in the creation.

Ecological Significance – Contemplation requires us to give up our plans, our agendas, our busyness and our desire for control of things in favour of an attitude of surrender. We open ourselves up to an awareness of the source and animating Spirit of our lives and humbly accept our place within the web of life. Contemplation is often associated with a decline in the urge to own and control things. It can be an effective antidote to human hubris.

6. Charismatic – The Quaker way is a spirit-led tradition. The focus of Quaker worship and discernment is on attending to the creative and sustaining presence of the Divine Spirit. Our conviction is that this Spirit has the power to transform people, bringing them into harmony with the order of creation (the grain of the universe).

Ecological Significance – The Holy Spirit is a life-force that is both free and untameable. It can undermine common assumptions, reveal how things really are and unsettle comfortable complacency. It cannot be owned by the human species because it is a creative and sustaining presence within the whole of creation. Modern eco-theology seeks to rectify the neglect of the Spirit within Western Christian culture by uncovering its significance within the

biblical narrative and within other and earlier forms of Christianity.

7. Faith in Action – Quakers have always sought to bind together their inward experience and their outward lives. Quaker testimony represents an individual and collective response to God's leadings and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Rachel Muers has argued that testimony often constitutes a double negative, the denial of a lie. It is 'a sustained enacted opposition to some power or structure of thought that claims to shape and uphold the world but in fact destroys it' (Muers 2015, p.21, p.54, p.58 & p.63). In a positive sense, testimony offers a vision of a more just and healthy world.

Ecological Significance – With regard to the integrity and well-being of creation, the negative response of Quaker testimony might proclaim that, 'when humans assume that they own and are sovereign over the non-human creation, this is a systematically enacted falsehood that needs to be challenged' (Muers 2015, p.183).

C. THE QUAKER VISION

1. Gospel Order – The Quaker vision assumes that God has given an order to all that exists, which early Friends called Gospel Order. American Friend Lloyd Lee Wilson has offered the following definition:

> 'Gospel order is the order established by God that exists in every part of creation, transcending the chaos that seems so often prevalent. It is the right relationship of every part of creation, however small, to every other part and to the creator. Gospel order is the harmony and order which God established at the moment of creation, and which enables the individual aspects of creation to achieve that quality of being which God intended from the start, about which God could say "it was very good".' (Wilson 1996, p.3)

Ecological Significance – The Quaker vision of Gospel Order is strongly ecological in shape and orientation. It prompts us to ask a crucial question: are we living in harmony with this Gospel Order or not? Is our way of living contributing to the harmony or fuelling the chaos?

2. All Things Are Sacramental – The Quaker way has generally rejected the traditional distinction between the sacred and the secular. For most of their history, Friends have effectively abolished the secular and asserted that all things are potentially sacred because the Holy Spirit has been poured upon all flesh (Acts 2) and indwells the whole creation. Every place and every time can witness activity of divine creativity, grace and healing.

Ecological Significance – If the Divine Spirit indwells and sustains the whole creation and if the earth and all things in it is God's Body, then there is nothing that is not of God. All parts of creation have integrity and are worthy of our ethical concern.

3. Human Disorder – As we have seen from Wilson's definition of Gospel Order, Quakers have generally held a strong commitment to the fundamental goodness and orderliness of the creation. The core problem is that humans have moved out of harmony with this order and become a dysfunctional element within the creation. When early Friends talked about the 'ways of the world' they were referring to the dysfunctional and destructive aspects of human culture such as violence, hatred, greed, pride, injustice and destructiveness. It is from bondage to these ways that we need to be liberated. We are like a diseased organ within a body that is in need of healing.

Ecological Significance – In the context of ecological crisis, the reality of human dysfunction and disorder forces us to recognise that, as a species, we are fundamentally part of the problem. How can we be healed so that the whole creation experiences healing?

4. A Healing Spirit – Despite the seriousness with which Friends have taken the destructive and dysfunctional aspects of the human condition, they have tended to be optimistic about the possibility of positive change or transformation. The Quaker way is founded on the conviction that there is a Spirit, a source of guidance, to be found deep within everyone which, when attended to faithfully, has the power to bring people into right relationship with God, with each other and with the whole creation. No-one is excluded from this opportunity, but it does require individuals and groups to commit themselves to an on-going discipline of spiritual discernment.

Ecological Significance – Douglas Gwyn has noted that 'the Word that created all things is a Light in each person that guides into unity with the creation' (Gwyn 2014, p.xvii). In this sense, because the Holy Spirit has been poured upon all flesh, the key to experiencing right relationship with God, with others and with the whole creation is to be found deep within all of us.

5. Heaven on Earth – The Quaker way asserts that internal spiritual transformation leads inevitably to external social transformation and therefore contributes to cosmic transformation. Being in harmony with God reveals itself in a changed life within the world. The kingdom of heaven is established progressively and incrementally as each person and each community is transformed and brought into harmony with God and the order of creation. Although individual Quakers may disagree about whether the coming of the kingdom of heaven is an inevitability or merely an ever-present possibility, there is no denying that the vision of heaven on earth has been a source of inspiration across the past 360 years.

Ecological Significance – Salvation for Friends is understood in terms of the healing of creation, where all its interconnected and interdependent parts exist in right relationship. This leads us back to where we began, the value of a this-worldly spirituality that is not seeking to escape material reality, but rather to perfect it.

D. CONCLUSION

In this paper I have attempted to describe and reflect upon a number of characteristics of the Quaker way that can be regarded as ecological in orientation and emphasis. However, Quakerism in principle may well be quite different from Quakerism in practice. We know that, in practice, Friends have not always recognised or acted upon the ecological potential to be found within Quaker faith and practice. However, we cannot change what has gone before; we can only learn from it and seek to make a difference here and now. How might we build on these foundations to realise a modern Quaker eco-theology that meaningfully addresses the significant needs and challenges of this age? What specific gifts and insights do Quakers have to bring to humanity's shared discussion and collective endeavour of securing a sustainable future and a creation whose interconnected and interdependent parts are in right relationship?

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The Tough Questions About Peace

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I have been writing a manuscript entitled "How to Answer the Tough Questions about Peace," and in this preview of that longer work I share the listing and typology of the tough questions I have heard. At the FAHE gathering at Woodbrooke in 2016, I shared a first draft of these questions, and here now share a revised listing, reshaped from the feedback I received from the conference presentation. I welcome further feedback. In the longer piece that I am writing, I suggest a concise answer to each question, and then I also include longer commentary on each question that includes citations to research that supports those answers. Due to limitations of space, this preview article does not yet include the actual answers I suggest, but I welcome feedback on the questions themselves. Are these the questions you hear? Are there others as well that need to be included? Have you found concise and effective ways to respond to any of these questions? If so, please be in touch!

In my years of teaching Peace Studies at a non-Quaker college, my students as well as my colleagues often ask the tough questions about peace and nonviolence, the questions intended to expose the harsh "truths" that humans are supposedly violent by nature, that war could never be abolished, and that nonviolence (that is, "not doing anything") lets the terrorists win. These questions are ones that Quakers and other pacifists may have difficulty answering effectively because the very premises of such questions are so far removed from our own ways of thinking that we feel at a loss and do not even know how to begin to respond. Yet not answering these questions well keeps misconceptions about peace and nonviolence alive.

In addition, the questions sometimes come at us with an unexpected hostility that takes us by surprise. Peace and nonviolence may seem so obviously desirable to us that it is difficult for us to comprehend how others could possibly perceive these concepts in a negative light. An example of this in my own life was shortly after 9/11 when a student told me, publicly, in class, that I was "uncompassionate" towards the victims of that day's events -- "uncompassionate" because, presumably, the "compassionate" response was to desire vengeance on the "evildoers." This response not only took me completely by surprise, it hurt! I regard compassion as one of the very highest virtues, and so being perceived as uncompassionate shook me to my very core.

While I was surprised by the student's response, I also recognized this moment as supremely important. I realized I did not at all understand this student's perspective, and thus had something important to learn. I took a deep breath, reminded myself that I wasn't in a Quaker college, and looked at the moment as an intercultural experience. The student was coming from a different set of cultural expectations from those I had absorbed from my years of immersion in Quaker subculture. Furthermore, he lost a cousin that day, in the attacks. Sensitive to this, I did not argue against him. But in my startled and hurt state, I could not stop myself from saying, "But the violence of that day shows us how awful violence is! I thought my response *was* the compassionate

response: to try to stop the cycle of violence!" I then invited further discussion, stopped trying to defend myself, and focused on listening to where my student was coming from, to learn about his perspective.

Similar difficult conversations were happening in many ways on our campus: on our open faculty/staff listserv, in public gatherings such as teach-ins, and in less formal conversations during our normal cycle of campus events and meetings. In these various conversations, I continued to be surprised that others, too, sometimes reacted in surprisingly hostile ways to my advocating for nonviolent solutions to violence, but the dean and president of my college, witnessing some of these conversations, each encouraged me not to be silenced. My dean suggested that I teach a course on peace and nonviolence. I teamed up with our university chaplain to offer such a course in our college's First Year Program. The president of my college invited us and several other faculty members to begin an annual public sharing of these ideas through a Martin Luther King, Jr. event. In the early years, we organized multi-day events including lectures, discussions, film screenings, and educational protest-music demonstrations, and the tradition continues now in an annual MLK Gospel Service that opens every spring semester. After three years of teaching peace courses in the First Year Program, seeing the profound impact these courses had on our students, the chaplain and I gathered other interested faculty members to develop a peace studies minor. While the student whose cousin had died did not take any peace studies classes, he continued to take philosophy classes with me, and I am happy to report that he and I parted on very good terms when he graduated. I learned from my journey with him and others that it is important for us to be honest with each other, even when, or especially when, we disagree.

Through my conversations with my student and with many others, I gradually began to learn how to answer the toughest questions about peace, although that is not to say that I no longer find myself at a loss for words when I encounter new questions that catch me by surprise. It is difficult to answer these questions concisely and well, because the questions are usually asked across different paradigms that are nearly incommensurable. I am aware, that because of the great difficulty of communicating across such different points of view, it is tempting to give up before really trying, retreating to the humility of uncertainty. While there is virtue in humility, an overly-cautious uncertainty may leave our questioners walking away unconvinced, or perhaps further confirmed in their skepticism (or even antagonism) towards peace, nonviolence, or pacifism.

One friend told me that there are no answers to the tough questions about peace. He seemed to suggest that any claims to definite answers would be intellectually dishonest. These questions are a matter of personal belief and commitment, he said, not a matter of facts or concrete knowledge. While I agree that he is right about some phrasings of some of the questions, other questions can be answered by drawing on facts and knowledge, and can and should be answered in ways that intend to convince or persuade. For example, people often assume that humans have always been violently fighting against each other, but archaeological research suggests that there is little to no evidence of human-to-human fighting for the first 99% of human history, when people lived in hunter-gatherer societies. It is only

in the last 1% of human history, when people began settling and farming the land, that humans began fighting each other (see for example William Ury's book, *The Third Side*). Another example is that people often assume that violence works more quickly than nonviolence, when research actually indicates that neither violence nor nonviolence works more quickly than the other: there are examples of each taking a long time, and examples of each acting quickly (see Gene Sharp's *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*). A final example is that people often assume that violence is more effective than nonviolence, but recent research shows that nonviolent action is significantly more effective than violence (see Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*).

While research and arguments can be persuasive, sometimes it is more effective to share true stories instead. The most powerful stories are ones from personal experience. But, because each of us has limited experience, we sometimes need to draw on the stories we have heard from others. In my introductory peace studies course, I have my students read a collection of true stories that represent "creative and compassionate responses to conflict" (Mark Andreas, *Sweet Fruit from a Bitter Tree*) to help feed their imaginations with new possibilities for how to respond to conflict besides the "fight or flight" responses we are taught are the main two ways we tend to respond. Most of the stories in this collection demonstrate "the third way" beyond the fight or flight response: staying engaged with the situation, but non-violently. These stories show ways that people were able to respond to intruders, flashers, would-be muggers, angry protesters, intoxicated men ready to fight, guerilla soldiers, murderous psychiatric patients, and even a prison riot in ways that prevented (further) harm or ways that even completely transformed the situation. My students analyze these responses, finding patterns. They are especially amazed to realize that the act of remembering that even scary people are human beings is often the key to the success of the third way: by not allowing yourself or the other become objectified in the fear and tension of the moment, but calling everyone to remember the full humanity of the other, new possibilities emerge for mutually-beneficial outcomes.

I believe that many of the tough questions are asked from a spirit of genuinely wanting to understand peace, nonviolence, or the pacifist position, and the two approaches described above work well in these situations. There are times, though, when the tough questions are rhetorically designed to try to expose flaws and inconsistencies in pacifist position(s). While it can be helpful to try to answer these questions by appealing to facts or stories in an attempt to correct the misunderstandings or transform the outright trickery embedded within such questions, there are other ways to respond as well. One way is to respond with further questions. These questions may expose the assumptions behind the original questions and reveal that those assumptions themselves might not be true. Such counter-questions are especially powerful when they connect to people's own personal experience. For example, if someone associates "nonviolence" with "doing nothing," we can ask, "in your own life, when you are dealing with conflict, are these your only ways of responding: you either literally fight or do absolutely nothing?" When they realize that in fact they often employ the "third way" of nonviolent engagement with the situation (involving

persuasion, negotiation, etc.), then they can begin to appreciate that "nonviolence" is not as negative, passive, or uncommon as they had previously thought.

Another possible response in these or other cases may be active listening. This response can itself be a demonstration of nonviolence: instead of judging, countering, projecting, or leaping to conclusions, we can listen to a deeper understanding. After clarifying the other person's assumptions, we can further ask why they care about the issue, and why they want to believe what they believe, especially seeking insight into the experiences that give rise to those beliefs. Two things can happen once the core experiences are identified: we might come to change our minds and accept their point of view, or they might come to see the possibility of interpreting their experiences in new ways.

While I am a pacifist and in some contexts may wish to convert others to pacifism, in my teaching and in this article my goal is different. I know that not all Quakers necessarily regard themselves as pacifists. I know that most of my students at my non-Quaker college do not regard themselves as pacifists. Even so, most people deal with the conflicts in their own lives nonviolently most or all of the time. Most people would rather not have to resort to violence, and doubt its general efficacy. Almost everyone agrees that it would be better if we lived in a world with less violence. And so there is great value in teaching everyone about nonviolence. Even those who believe that violence is sometimes justified generally believe that it is still unfortunate to have to resort to it. And of course those who believe that violence is sometimes justified also believe that there are many times when it is not at all justified. Thus, we all benefit from learning more about the history and practices of nonviolence. We all benefit from becoming more aware of how much we use nonviolence in our own everyday lives. We all benefit from honing our skills of nonviolent conflict resolution.

The Questions

Misconceptions of Basic Concepts

Some questions are based on confusions about certain key terms such as thinking that nonviolence means doing nothing, regarding peace as the absence of all conflict, regarding conflict as synonymous with fighting or violence, or making problematic assumptions about terms such as religion, pacifism, or extremism.

- If "war is not the answer," then what is? We can't just do nothing!
- Isn't peace unrealistic, because there will always be conflict?
- Isn't religion the cause of all violence?
- Pacifism is an extreme position. Since extremism is bad, doesn't that make pacifism bad?

Questions about Human Nature

The following questions are rooted in questionable assumptions about human nature, many of which have been overturned by research.

- Aren't humans violent by nature?
- Haven't humans always been fighting?
- Doesn't game theory indicate that humans by nature are not altruistic but seek just to protect their own interests?
- Aren't some people just plain evil? Or psychopaths, or sociopaths? Impervious to reason? Lacking empathy or compassion?
- Isn't it unfair -- even uncompassionate -- towards those who are victims of injustice to be nice to the evildoers? Or: what if the victims

want those who did wrong to be punished? Don't they deserve to have their wish fulfilled?
- Aren't pacifists just cowards?
- Isn't nonviolence just foolhardy? Isn't it just stupid to go into a conflict situation without any protection?
- Don't you have to be a saint to employ nonviolence successfully?
- Or: the great heroes of nonviolence were not always saints -- doesn't that invalidate all they have done?

The Glorification of Violence

These questions presume that violence is sometimes necessary, and may also presume that violence tends to work well or is a fairly straightforward and easy way to successfully accomplish worthy ends. In fact, violence is difficult to employ, and often does not work at all. Maybe seeing violence as a strategy is in fact deeply mistaken. Maybe violence is a symptom of the failure to adequately address a crisis.

- Isn't violence sometimes justified?
- Don't we need "good guys with guns" to take down the bad guys?
- What if someone were about to kill your grandmother, and there happened to be a gun nearby, and the only way you could stop the person from killing your grandmother would be for you to kill the attacker -- then don't you have a moral obligation to shoot the person in order to protect your grandmother?
- Aren't pacifists ungrateful, sanctimonious moochers -- hating the military and the armed neighbors who are actually protecting them?
- Isn't the real reason the Civil Rights Movement worked was because of the threat posed by the violent wing of the movement?

Role of War in Society

These questions presume that war serves necessary functions in society.

- We've always had wars. Isn't it unrealistic to think that we can stop having wars?
- Isn't it just easier to go to war? Or, isn't it just easier to fight for what you want or what you think is right?
- Isn't it unpatriotic to try to negotiate with your country's enemies?
- Don't some people just need a socially controlled way to act out their aggression? Isn't that part of the function of having a military?
- Isn't war a "force that gives us meaning" (from the title of a book by Chris Hedges)?
- Isn't war impossible to eradicate, because it always stands there as a "last resort"?
- Doesn't war serve important economic functions, by providing jobs and stimulating innovation?
- Isn't the abolition of war unrealistic on the grounds that some powerful people make lots of money from war and use their power to make sure this system never changes?

Peace is Actually Violent

The following questions attempt to uncover inconsistencies in pacifism and nonviolence.

- Those who advocate nonviolent action often point out that nonviolent action is not without risk, and that you have to be willing to endure suffering. If nonviolent action provokes a violent response, doesn't that make it violent? And isn't a willingness to suffer actually masochistic?
- Some forms of nonviolent action are actually coercive rather than persuasive: but isn't coercion really a kind of violence?
- Isn't promoting nonviolence a luxury of the privileged, or even a method of disempowerment? Isn't it even racist or classist? (The presumption behind this question is that those who advocate nonviolence are the privileged, and their real agenda is to protect their own interests and to render the oppressed harmless by denying them access to a set of actions -- violence -- presumed to be more effective and powerful than nonviolence.)

Pragmatics: Not Understanding How Nonviolence Works

These questions arise from not really understanding how nonviolent action works.

Many people presume that nonviolence either means "not doing anything," or that it is limited to persuasion, negotiation, and compromise. Most people who have not studied nonviolent action have not learned about the power of noncooperation or nonviolent intervention, which are ways we can directly (but nonviolently) act to change unjust structures of power.

- Isn't it ridiculous to think that nonviolence could have worked against Hitler and Nazi Germany?
- Isn't it naive to think that everyone can be persuaded by reason or moral appeal? Related: some think that nonviolence only worked in India because Britain had a moral conscience. Nonviolence cannot work against brutal dictators, can it?
- Shouldn't one be prepared to defend oneself and one's family?
- Doesn't nonviolence take too long?
- What if you try nonviolence, and it doesn't work?
- How can there possibly be nonviolent ways to deal with extreme forms of violence (mass shootings, terrorism)?

Co-create!

Laura Rediehs appreciates your thoughts, experiences and additions to the tough questions about peace. She can be reached at lrediehs@stlawu.edu

Homelessness

The Poet Amin (Tarik Clayton)
New Britain Museum of American Art

The sun brightens our world everyday
Walking on a path full of chaos as our soul decays
Depression alone causes anxiety
How can individuals be lost within this society?

The weight of my brain feels like external pressure
Like a college professor
Head in the drawer of the dresser
That represents the evils of two lesser
Trying to clean up an unknown world that has gotten messier

Through the times
Hearts are surrounded by darkness and empty minds
The shadow of death hides me in the day time
Then tortures me at night
And expresses itself in anything that I write

Knowledge and wisdom have no meaning
When the conscious sleeps
And the god within stops dreaming

Everything we need becomes irrelevant
A shelter-less world is evident
Therefore our forefathers get no credit
I'm just one of the many poets with a story that's telling it

On the highway of life where only deaths and exit
A graveyard comfort with pain becomes our residence
A forever lasting memory that's always present

Cunning and stunning
With perception that's a prolegomenon
An issue that even the universe is shunning
Ummmmm, What? But! Probably struck and stuck
So wake up! "America" it's time to make the donuts!!