

The Intersection of PatternDynamics and Integral Post-Metaphysical Spirituality: What Brings Us Together?

A Conversation between Tim Winton¹ and David MacLeod²

Recorded August 1, 2018 for Integral Review

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My central passion is learning from natural systems and applying these insights to creating a better world. We are in the middle of a planetary-scale transition. The linear and hierarchical, mechanistic worldview that underpins industrial growth is breaking down. The machine model is too simple for resolving the complex problems it has created. I believe managing the complexity challenge requires the shift to a living systems operating model – one that mimics nature’s ability to self-organize for more adaptive, innovative, and collaborative problem-solving.

From my observations of the natural world, organizational life, and engagement with the complexity sciences, I created PatternDynamics, a systems thinking framework designed for purpose-driven collaboration. I share it to support the development of self-organization skills for individuals and groups. Serial social entrepreneur working at the intersection of commerce, sustainability, and social change. Roles include forester, permaculture designer, organic farmer, sustainability educator, leadership coach, organizational consultant, executive, trustee, and board member. Award-winning independent scholar. Areas of expertise include ecological design, strategy, leadership decision making, integral theory and practice, team performance, self-organization, systems thinking training, and complex problem-solving. I hold the rank of Nidan in Aikido Yuishinkai, a Diploma of Accredited Permaculture Design, and a BA in Literature. My meditation practice is grounded in the Pointing Out Way as taught by Daniel P. Brown, Ph.D. I split my time between my home in Byron Bay and an off-grid property in the hinterland of Northern NSW.

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(including Fig. 1. Diagram representing the process of integral Semiotic Realism)	

Links to the Audios

(Italicized text below is hyperlinked).

Part One: Context and the New Positioning of PatternDynamics (45 min)

Part Two: PatternDynamics and its Relationship to Spiritual Practice (51 min)

Part Three: A Deeper Dive into the Four Points of Applied PatternDynamics (51 min)

Narrative Summary and Reflective Review

The editors have asked me (Tim) to put together a narrative summary to accompany the bullet points David created to outline our conversation, “The Intersection of PatternDynamics and Integral Post-Metaphysical Spirituality.” We subtitled the talk: “What Brings Us Together.” I’ll recount how we explored that theme as well as include some reflections on the process of creating and recording our conversation and where those reflections might lead. Our talk extended to a rather long, long-form podcast recording in three parts. I’ll try and give the reader the opportunity to sense where they may want to dive in, if they do not have time for all three pieces.

Initially, when David approached me about writing a piece together for this edition of IR, I felt quite daunted. It’s been a while since I’ve had the time to take a deep dive into writing about anything related to integral theory. When I have written these types of articles and papers in the past, they tended to be all consuming, quite intense experiences. Deciding to use a conversational and somewhat informal format was a refreshing way to go about it. I think that our collaboration has yielded some results that we would not have generated with a more academic, written approach.

For instance, I’m sure I would not have been so willing to speculate on the types of correlations that may exist between some of the spiritual practices I’ve been engaged in lately, and my experience with PatternDynamics. Generally, in the past, I’ve been quite unwilling to discuss spirituality, as such – especially publicly – and definitely unwilling to talk about my own, or how I think it relates to PatternDynamics. Even in this talk there are multiple disclaimers by both David

and me about our concerns about errors and misrepresentations. David is an excellent thought partner. We share a foundational set of views grounded in ecology, sustainability, the systems disciplines, integral theory, and the practice of PatternDynamics. He has also quietly, but persistently, encouraged me, I think, to make more explicit the spiritual dimension of PatternDynamics, and to tell that through my own experience, rather than only as a set of abstract theories. I thank him for that. It was easier than I thought. In a lot of ways it felt like a coming out as a spiritual practitioner. I think my discomfort with the pursuit of spirituality in the postmodern West stems from the fetishism and dysfunction I've observed around it. I've written about this before, especially in relation to the integral community. This is the first time I've felt like I could openly talk about spirituality properly from a personal perspective. Writing about it as integral theory is one thing, revealing one's personal spiritual experiences is quite another.

Being able to do that is in large part due to my meditation training within the Pointing Out the Great Way community, a unique approach to Indo-Tibetan spiritual development initiated by Dr. Daniel P. Brown, PhD. In it, Dr. Brown brings together the great wisdom traditions of Tibetan Buddhist lineages as well as the Bon tradition and Theravadin Buddhism with the study of neuroscience and the psychology of meditation. In it, the meditation instructions are extremely precise, and if followed correctly and validated by an instructor, then it is possible to get to the point where there is no doubt about the kind of meditation experience one is having. David and I spend a considerable amount of time discussing some of the general features of this meditation method, the core Buddhist theological concept of *Paticca samuppada*, and how related concepts in Dharma theory mesh with systems thinking and the generation of non-dual awareness. We do this primarily in the second half of Part 2 of our talk. Joanna Macy's book, *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory*, features prominently in this discussion as does Nancy Frankenberry's *Religion and Radical Empiricism*.

Part 1 is spent on an overview of PatternDynamics, its development, its purpose, and how it works as a unifying force that brings us together.

In the beginning of Part 2 we discuss PatternDynamics as a bridge between the relative and absolute worlds, the curious ontological status of energy, and how its 'winding up' as higher energy quality leads to more and more complex forms and types of 'consciousness.'

In Part 3 we take a deeper dive and bring in some of David's work within the field of Radical Empiricism. We discuss four main topics here: understanding the PatternDynamics patterns as dharmas or the "felt qualities of experience" in the Radical Empiricist tradition; PatternDynamics as a pattern language in the tradition of process-relational philosophers and associated thinkers like Bernard Loomer, Alfred North Whitehead, William James, and Charles Sanders Peirce; the embodied PatternDynamics movement based workshop as a potential group spiritual practice; and, lastly, the concept of 'facilitative shamanism' in working with the patterns and energies that become available through post-formal development.

David and I cover a lot of ground. It's not always obvious that all of these topics relate to our theme of 'what brings us together.' It is perhaps only by pointing out this theme explicitly in the beginning that it may be detected in each element. That type of signification is also a theme of our conversation that similarly may take some pointing out to become revealed.

I found it quite exhilarating to be so free to range around and loosely cobble together, what is a rather loose set of ideas—at least from a more rigorous academic perspective. David and I are aware of the problems with this approach and also the opportunity for the creative emergence of useful, if not yet fully tested, ideas.

One of the most interesting things to come out of our conversation (towards the end of Part 3) was the listing of a set of complex fields and practices that chunk together to form the basis of the foundational pattern within PatternDynamics called Source. These ‘complexes’ relate to Source’s self-organizing capacity or organizing intelligence, including purpose, pragmaticist orientated problem-solving, inquiry, spontaneity, presence, non-duality, and systems thinking. This chunking of what are technically referred to (within the study of hierarchical complexity) as *abstractions* into one integrated practice, or more technically, a *principle* of the felt sense of the flow of experience, is discussed as an example of the ‘second simplicity’—a simplicity that unifies all the complexity before it.

Of course, our conversation is for folks interested in Integral Post-Metaphysical Spirituality, not for the general or even curious reader. For most of what we discuss to be relevant, people will need to have a background in integral theory at a minimum and most likely a familiarity with the Ning forum and Facebook discussion group on integral post-metaphysical spirituality curated by Bruce Alderman. David and I are not academic philosophers or theorists. We are amateurs; I hope in the best sense of that word—dedicated, curious, and knowledgeable adherents to our disciplines. As practitioners we are also both householders practicing our post-metaphysical spirituality within the milieu of everyday, workaday life. Like amateur scientists before the professionalization of that type of inquiry, we hope that the thought experiments we have tinkered with here in the back sheds of our humble computers will contribute something useful to an emerging discipline.

Detailed Topic Map of the Audio Recordings

Part One: Context and the New Positioning of PatternDynamics

- Introduction
- How Tim Winton came to develop PD (PatternDynamics)
- How David MacLeod came to find an interest in PD
- PD as a language that helps people develop their systems thinking capacity and application
- PD in relation to post-metaphysical spiritual practice
- PD in leadership and organizational consulting
- A new positioning of PD oriented around the relationship between holistically aware systems thinking and traditional spiritual practice
- The essence of PD is the Source pattern, which is the generative capacity of the universe to create flourishing systems
- A possible chaotic transition or phase shift to a more unitive shared view on a planetary basis
- What brings us together? How do 8 billion people collaborate to form a viable planetary system?
- The more connected we become, the more divisive it’s made us

- How do we balance and integrate for optimal health rather than get ideologically aligned with one approach or another? How do we unify and integrate the value propositions that each side brings?
- The subtle art of shifting the conversation to the systems level
- The power of “communicative action” (Habermas) and the core value proposition of PD: the ability to point out systemic dynamics in a way that people can see them; and then you have a reference or language with which to collectively communicate about how to balance and integrate
- “Facilitative Shamanism” as the third piece of PD
- Going to war with post-modernism vs. integrating post-modernism
- Defining Integral Post-Metaphysical Spirituality
- An over-arching cosmological umbrella
- Preserving the sacredness of the traditional view, but applying the co-creative post-modern insight

Part Two: PatternDynamics and its Relationship to Spiritual Practice

- Introduction
- No separation between the relative and the absolute, and conduct in the relative world is important
- PD as a bridge towards a more holistic and systemic sensibility that sees the patterns of energy that exist in both the inside and the outside world; integrated in a way that both scientific materialists and traditional spiritualists could honor
- The mysterious ontological status of energy, and the cosmology of PD
- The PD view is similar to that of many spiritual traditions that see reality as semiotic in nature – it is interpretive, dynamic, alive, conversational, inter-relational, and systemic.
- The pragmatism/pragmaticism of Charles Saunders Pearce; the systemic/Taoist/flow/systems view of integral theorist Edgar Morin; and the 4th Law of Thermodynamics from Howard T. Odum
- The “Pointing Out” style of teaching meditation, and its implications for PD
- Tim jumps out on a limb
- Lessons from Lectica (nod to Theo Dawson, Zak Stein, and Aftab Omer): Collective problem solving in early systems thinking, applying more robust standards in late systems understanding applied to culture, and then early principled thinking that is the second simplicity on the other side of complexity.
- More on the “Pointing Out Way” teaching of Daniel P. Brown
- The something that “pops” when we do the embodied pattern practice in the one day PD workshop – a non-dual awareness
- *paticca samuppāda* – dependent co-origination; Joanna Macy’s “Mutual Causality in Buddhism, and General Systems Theory.”
- The Dharma theory of Abhidharma Buddhism
- Dharmas as “felt qualities of experience / Whitehead’s concept of “categories of subjective form” / dharmas as energy patterns / PD patterns as dharmas
- Avoiding the mistake of reification
- Dharmas as adverbial rather than adjectival (nod to Bruce Alderman’s work)
- Gebser’s concept of the diaphanion

– Four Points of Applied PatternDynamics

1. Understanding the Patterns as dharmas or “felt qualities of experience”– always in flux, always in relationship to other Patterns. “To help us see more.”
2. PatternDynamics as a process-relational pattern language. Balancing and integrating the Patterns in collective conversation with other people. “To help us share more.”
3. The embodied PD group movement practice, taking an equal and central ongoing role in PD practice, not just an activity for the Level 1 Workshop. This activity helps connect us as a group in an ongoing Radical Empiricist “experience” practice – experiencing patterned energies, and connection to Source. “To help us live to deeper purpose.”
4. Emphasis on “Facilitative Shamanism” (Tim talks about seeing others do this, but David has seen him do it at PD Workshops) to bring in “a dimension of human experience that’s based on primal, archetypal shaping forces or patterns.” Teaching “the capacity to sense the dynamic at play and how to tweak that energy” (“knowing when to let happen and when to make happen,” as Gebser put it). This is “the ability to shift the conversation in a way that reveals the deeper reality of our inter-dependence.” And an example of what Lectica calls “early principled thinking” or “the second simplicity.” Beyond all Patterns, which are all ultimately empty or Void anyway; all simplified into Source.”

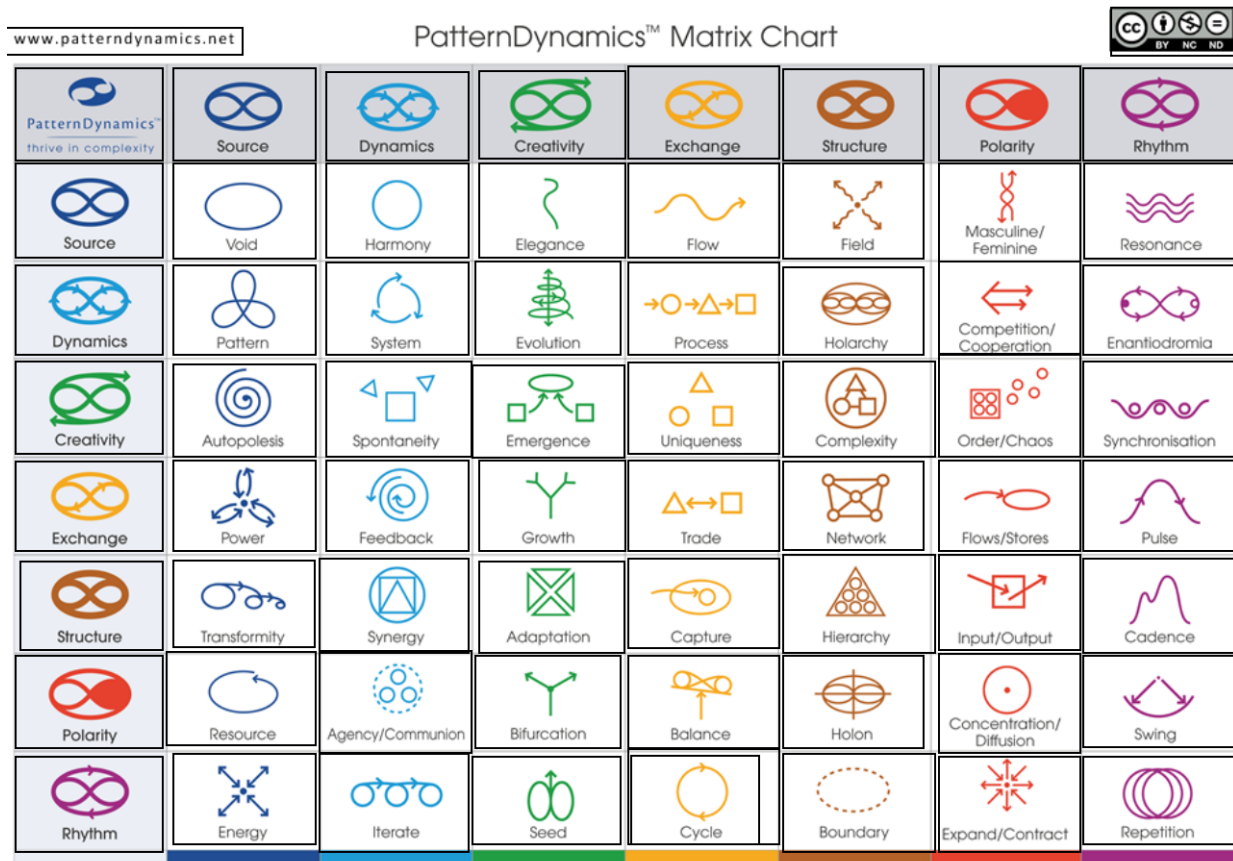
Part Three: A Deeper Dive into the Four Points of Applied PatternDynamics

1. Understanding the Patterns as dharmas or “felt qualities of experience”
 - a. Radical Empiricism (Nancy Frankenberry, *Religion and Radical Empiricism*; William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*)
 - b. Language/Thought/Linguistic expression, the challenges Radical Empiricism has faced, and the key insight of PatternDynamics
 - c. The core dimensions of Source (Daniel P. Brown, Ph.D. Thesis)
 - d. The Eudaimonic Society (Bhaskar)
 - e. Dukkha; interrupting the flow of co-constructed experience
2. PD as a process-relational pattern language. Balancing and integrating the Patterns in collective conversation with other people. “To help us share more.”
 - a. Tim’s interest in process philosophy as “the missing piece when trying to integrate subject/object”
 - b. How is PD geared to assist in better conversations?
 - c. David’s interest in the idea of process-relational philosophy (Bernard Loomer)
 - d. Whitehead, James, and Russell and the living systems view - an integrated flux of dynamic energy patterns
 - e. Steven Meyer on Experiential Togetherness
 - f. Peirce’s firstness, secondness, thirdness (Tim’s paper on Planetary Civilization)
3. The embodied PD group movement practice, taking an equal and central ongoing role in PD practice.
 - a. Practice groups to develop community; touching into Source together, with an overriding interest in the health of humanity
4. Emphasis on “Facilitative Shamanism” - “the capacity to sense the dynamic at play and how to tweak that energy”
 - a. Tim’s podcast with Lauren Tenney: “We are the New Shaman”

- b. Diane Hamilton using the “Big Mind” process; Taoist practice of Wu Wei
 - c. Using Source for Complex Problem Solving: Purpose, Inquiry, Spontaneity, Presence, Collapse of polarities into one field
 - d. Primary motivation, and what brings us together: realization of Source
 - e. Power as another dimension of Source
5. Conclusion – the unifying capacity of PatternDynamics

Figure: PatternDynamics Visual Summary

A version with live-links for each pattern is available at <https://patterndynamics.net/patterns/>



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Transcripts

Part One Transcript

David: Greetings everyone, David here from the northwest corner of Washington State, in the United States. I'm in conversation today with Tim Winton, who's in New South Wales, Australia. We're going to be talking today about some of our shared interests, especially in relationship to PatternDynamics, which is the integral pattern language that Tim has developed. We'll have him introduce that in a bit, and its relation to this topic of integral post-metaphysical spirituality. One of the bigger questions we'll be attempting to address in this conversation is the question, what brings us together? Tim, can you briefly introduce yourself and tell us how you came to develop PatternDynamics?

Tim: Yeah. Thanks, David. It's great to be on this call with you. I developed PatternDynamics really out of my work in sustainability. Earlier in my life, I set up a sustainability education center with a focus on permaculture. At that time, I was training in Aikido and reading up on systems theory, complexity theory and integral theory. Over the course of the 10-year journey with that education center, I developed PatternDynamics (PD) as a way of communicating about the principles of sustainability, but more broadly, the principles that sustain or create wellbeing or health in any system and it sort of broadened out from that. By the time I created the chart of patterns that represent systems principles, a fair bit of time had gone by. I was involved in the integral community at that point and proceeded to publish some papers on the theory behind it, especially in relation to integral theory.

I've sort of slowly but surely been developing PatternDynamics as an educational discipline, or a practice for people who have more holistic orientations. We can recount some of that history. But today, we're talking about PD in conjunction with integral post-metaphysics and what PatternDynamics might have to offer post-metaphysical spiritual practice.

David: Right. Well, I'll just share a little bit about how I encountered you and PatternDynamics. I too was very much interested in sustainability issues. I was getting more and more involved as a community activist in sustainability type things. I initiated an energy resource scarcity task force supported by city and county authorities, and participated in that. I also was helping to establish a transition initiative in my community, and I was looking for tools to help me and our group achieve success in these areas. And, I was also fortunate enough to be working with this local friend named Alan Seid, whom I believe you know.

Tim: I do.

David: Alan reintroduced me to integral theory. I had at least one Ken Wilber book already on my shelf, but I hadn't really spent a whole lot of time with it. I started reading about integral theory through Alan's influence. Alan also had attended, with you, an integral sustainability workshop that Barrett Brown had led. He had a lot of information he was sharing with me about that. I was also around that time starting to look into permaculture. I ended up getting a permaculture design certificate. So I was looking at these two things.

In regards to sustainability issues, I was sensing that integral theory seemed a little bit weak in the lower right quadrant. At the same time, permaculture, which is also purporting to be somewhat of a holistic practice, addressed things that we would say would be in the left-hand quadrants, but it was not very strong there. So I thought it would be really interesting and perhaps very useful to combine these two disciplines. In fact, I created a blog called Integral Permaculture. And then I went online trying to see has anybody else got this idea? So I Googled integral and permaculture. Lo and behold, I came across your name and PatternDynamics. After getting over the initial hurdle about, "Oh gosh, I have to learn a language here. What's this about?" But after getting over that hurdle, I've been hooked ever since. It's been very interesting to me, to be involved with PatternDynamics, and learning a lot from things that you shared with me.

Tim: Oh, it's been great to have you as part of the community of practice. I said to you before we started the recording that I think in many ways you've really forged ahead with exploring some of the other theory and philosophy that relates to the general view of PatternDynamics. That's been really interesting for me, and I think for other people involved. It's been a great relationship so far.

David: Thank you. Maybe next, you can just go into a little bit more detail about PatternDynamics. You shared with me that you have some new ideas about how to frame it. Maybe you can introduce some of that new framing and in the process give our listeners a little bit better idea of what PatternDynamics is trying to do.

Tim: Okay. Well, that's interesting because anything that deals with systems thinking and complexity can become a very generalized form. That's how I put it. Systems thinking is a kind of thinking. You can apply it in nearly anything. At its heart, PatternDynamics is a language that helps people develop their systems thinking capacity and apply it for better communication and problem-solving, particularly in more complex circumstances—like the circumstances we're faced with today. We're on a rapidly shrinking planet with more and more complexity building in our society every day. As a generalized form, it was difficult to find a place to start with it. I started with it in sustainability because it really grew out of my work in sustainability as a sustainability educator helping people learn things like permaculture. As a practitioner, really, I had a very hands-on background and career in ecological design, forestry, organic agriculture. I learned most of the things that I developed into PatternDynamics as a pattern language from nature, from those deep interactions with nature.

And also, (I was experiencing) the kind of recursive dynamic between what I was observing while I was relating and perturbing and interrelating with these various systems, natural systems, and community dynamics at Permaforest Trust, which was the sustainability education center. And also, (learning about) the more theoretical approaches I was encountering in systems theory and complexity theory. Yeah. All three of those things combined to become PatternDynamics as a way of communicating, really, better about how systems work and what makes them sustainable and healthy.

David: I think that a real strength of PatternDynamics is how it brings together not only the influences that came to you through permaculture and other sustainability type initiatives, but you've really delved into how integral theory, systems theory, complexity theory all converge together into this discipline.

Tim: Interestingly also, and more and more now ... And we can talk about that later in this chat ... there's, to me, a relationship between spiritual practice, especially what we're referring to as post-metaphysical spiritual practice, where we can integrate the traditional, modern, and postmodern conceptions of what it might mean, what spirituality might mean. Especially in relation to that, we're trying to connect the dots and find the correlations and relationships between a kind of deeper systems thinking and traditional spiritual practice, especially as I'm encountering it in the Pointing Out Way, Dan Brown's work with essence traditions in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. We'll get to that, but I think we have a lot to talk about in the meantime.

That's the second thing that we did. By the time PatternDynamics evolved beyond a sustainability communication and design tool and into the integral theory world, I decided to try it out. I got kind of recruited into leadership and organizational consulting with this tool. Unbeknownst to me, systems thinking is valorized and a requirement for senior leaders and leaders in organizational life in general. There were people working as consultants and in organizational consulting and I was recruited in to do that piece. To be honest, it generally didn't work out that well. I know why now. Through that work, I learned a lot of hard lessons, got to do some really interesting work with some other members of the PatternDynamics community, got to try a few things, and learned a lot about what doesn't work, and over the course of that, found out why it doesn't work. And especially through my encounter with Lectica, who are ... they're really researchers and educational philosophers who've come to understand and develop a way of measuring what level of complexity we're working at and how to help people learn.

David: Tell us a little bit about why that doesn't work.

Tim: Well, the way I was pitching PatternDynamics was, I was pitching it at a fairly high level within the skill domain of systems thinking itself. Most people in organizational life have other problems to solve, and they have developed other skills. When someone comes along and starts performing at a high level, you can't really understand it (if you don't have that level of skill). If you're on the basketball court and it's Michael Jordan who's doing all kinds of tricks and things that you could never dream of, it's kind of meaningless to you and it doesn't really help you solve the problem of, say, learning to dribble down the court. So you get frustrated. I learned now that if I'm going to present PatternDynamics, I really need a way to present it and meet people where they're at with that particular skill. You can sort of translate PatternDynamics or use it as an underpinning skill for a number of other kinds of skills as a generalized form, as I mentioned.

But we're also learning to do that as a community and I'm learning to do that, and probably learnt some hard lessons in organizational life, to be honest, about what PatternDynamics is, what level and how to pitch it and frame it so that it's useful for people and it helps them

learn something that actually allows them to achieve an outcome they couldn't achieve before. There are lots of well-developed forms within PatternDynamics, like the one-day workshop on embodied movements themselves, the various learning materials at levels one, two, and three. All those are pretty tried and true. There's now (also) a kind of collaborative systems inquiry, which is a process where you can use the patterns and the systems thinking, employing them to collectively come up with better decision-making and problem-solving. We've associated with people at Lctica, who could help us measure some of the things that we're trying to achieve, like better decision-making.

There's been a lot of progress. There's a lot of well-developed stuff in PatternDynamics. There's a good community of people who've invested quite a lot in learning it and applying it and testing it. We swap notes. I've sort of been the central hub of that. A couple years ago, I took a bit of break from what I call the second phase of PatternDynamics, (the one) in organizational and corporate life as a kind of consulting tool. I took a step back and went back to my traditional base of working in forestry and agriculture. I'm now ready, I think, to ... having had many conversations with people in the PatternDynamics community about what its real essence is and how we might move forward with quite a different positioning. For me, that really is oriented around this idea that there's a relationship between systems thinking and becoming more holistically aware, where your view of reality and your consciousness is shaped more by these inter-relational dynamics and patterns, and that becomes more part of the lived view of your life, your experience.

And traditional spiritual practice, which we'll talk about today, where some of the core concepts in Buddhism, for instance, are about inter-relationality, really. There's a lot there. Joanna Macy's written a whole book on it. There are a number of people who focused on this, but it's a rich, rich field to explore. I think the essence of PatternDynamics has always been this thing we call Source, which is just the generative capacity of the universe to create flourishing systems. That seems to be its central property. There is a numinous and a sacred quality to that, that all religions and all spiritual practices have recognized. We live in a particularly technologically-oriented society where those views have been set aside, if you like, for some hundreds of years. We're in a particularly extreme technological and scientific materialist end of this trajectory. I'm wondering if there isn't going to be a big swing, which is one of the PatternDynamics patterns, you know. Once something has swung so far one way, it'll swing back the other way. You'll get a counter running or an Enantiadromia that shifts over to the other ...

David: That's a Jungian term, is that where you got that term, Enantiadromia?

Tim: Yeah, I got it from William Irwin Thompson, I think, who got it from Jung, obviously. That was Jung identifying, I think, a kind of cultural-psyche, collective consciousness dynamic or psychological dynamic that he experienced in some of his patients. Enantiadromia, in Greek, means counter running. You get a counter running force when something shifts to an extreme.

David: Yeah. That also matches up with Jean Gebser's ideas about coming to the end of the mental rational period and entering an integral type of mutation that is brought about by some

really tough things happening, and by a deep anxiety that then kind of brings about a mutation.

Tim: Yeah. I think Gebser's on the money. I really do. There are other people, of course, who've identified we're in the breakdown phase of late modernity, and that in these phase shifts in systems, you often get a chaotic breakdown before the new order emerges. It'd be easy to interpret that that's where we are, given the state of certainly politics and economics in the West, well, globally now, really. I think we need a more unitive shared view on a planetary basis, and that really ... This is where a guy like Jordan Peterson has something important to say. He said it's mythology and sacredness that unified us, this view of something greater than ourselves has always been the overarching unifying force in human affairs. Because we've set aside the mythic and the religious to such an extent, we're missing that. We're enormously powerful, but aimless and destructive because of that.

David: That kind of touches in on one of the questions or one of our themes of, what brings us together? You seem to be pointing towards the need for that.

Tim: Yeah. I think having a nice pause in the development of PatternDynamics, or at least my participation in that, is that ... a new question comes to mind. I think at the heart of Source, the generative kind of underlying organizational capacity of the universe, there's an inquiry. That's a big part of what Source is. It's the open question of, "What's happening? How do we flourish? How do we solve the problems that allow us to flourish?" The big inquiry I have now is something I actually heard Sam Harris say on one of his podcasts, interestingly. It is, "How do eight billion people collaborate to form a viable planetary system?" It's a great question. It's the question of our time, really. I think that's the question that I realize I've always been oriented around with PatternDynamics. It's always had that overarching planetary kind of view. How do we flourish? How do we thrive in complex circumstances? I think there needs to be many, many initiatives that work on that question. They all need to tie in together.

But I think one of the main themes or one of the main areas that needs to be worked on to answer that question is, how do we start focusing on what brings us together, rather than what pushes us apart? If you look at most of the dynamics in the breakdown phase, everyone's focusing on what is different about us and why we should fight with each other.

David: Right. All around us is that kind of energy and discussions. I'm seeing people on Facebook, friends of mine saying ... They're so upset about, say, something that Trump has done. They say, "If you disagree with me, unfriend me right now," rather than continuing to have dialogue with each other and trying to understand what's going on with somebody that has a different view.

Tim: Yeah. It's really ironic, that the more connected we become, at least in the early phase of being highly interconnected on a planetary basis, the more divisive it's made us.

David: Right. That was kind of the promise of the internet, that we would all be able to come together and collaborate. We're seeing just so much ... Again, with Facebook, it's so easy

to put ourselves into different silos and just be in some kind of echo chambers that reflect our own views.

Tim: Yeah. I think that's one of the unintended consequences of being highly interconnected. This is the challenge with all kinds of systemic interventions. You make a system more interconnected, and you think that's going to be a good thing, but the unintended consequence might be divisiveness. Look, in and of itself, being more highly networked—that's a pattern in PatternDynamics—may or may not be a good thing. It may need to be that the level of interconnectedness or networkedness needs to be adjusted for optimal health. It may need to be readjusted every week or every day. It may be the types and kinds of networking that are important to create a healthier whole system.

In PatternDynamics, we try and have a more nuanced or sophisticated view. Rather than saying all networking and the more networking we have, the better the system is going to be, the question is always, how much and what type? How do we balance and integrate to get the greatest health, rather than get ideologically aligned with one approach or another? You certainly see this in things like the crypto community, like more decentralization is always better. It tends to be reactionary against highly centralized forms. So there is a fight between the ideology of being centralized and the ideology of being decentralized.

Whereas in PatternDynamics, we're trying to find what unifies us in those things. The unifying dynamic is that they're both organizational patterns, they're both important, but the type and balance of each one of those things in each particular circumstance is how we could talk about that in a way that unifies the value propositions that each perspective is bringing, and potentially integrate them so that you get a little bit more networking of the type you need over here, then a little more centralization of the type you need over there. You can change and adjust and balance those things and have a conversation about that unified and integrative approach, rather than fight about whose perspective is right.

David: Yeah. That's very important. I think that's a real key contribution of PatternDynamics. We can look at our charts or whatever of the various patterns and see not just who's right or what's my position that fits here, but always kind of looking to balance and integrate it. It's always about more than just one pattern. I think this concept of polarities, it really comes out strongly for me. Polarity is not either/or, right or wrong, this or that, make your choice, but it's about finding that appropriate balance between two sides of one thing.

Tim: Yeah, absolutely. It's a dynamic balance. It will change as the circumstances change.

David: Yeah, exactly. You don't find that perfect balance and then now you're set.

Tim: Yeah. In PatternDynamics, we're really shifting our view to be less linear, more about the interconnected systemic nature of what's going on, and less static and more dynamic, so the dynamic patterns that allow a system to be in that kind of flourishing harmony that actual systems can get into if you remove whatever's blocking them from that natural inclination.

David: For example, we see hierarchies in natural systems, but we also see holarchies or networks very strongly. It's not a matter of we just need to get rid of all hierarchies, for example.

Tim: Yeah. And that's-

David: We need to find the appropriate balance and the appropriate place and time.

Tim: That's what's so interesting about bringing this more integrative way of communicating into a conversation, it's often not welcome in a way. Many people really like to hold on to their ideological position in a fixed way. They have their hammer and every challenge is a nail that they can apply that tool to that problem. It's not always true. I think PatternDynamics works to unify the conversation, but you can't be overt with it. This is one of the things I learned in organizational consulting. Pulling the charts out and showing people the patterns and having a conversation at that level where you make explicit the tool and the language is really hard. You even mentioned at the beginning, "Oh my goodness, I've got to learn this pattern language. It looks so strange." For most people, that's the response I get.

There's a lot of people who are naturally integrative systems thinkers, but they don't really have a language to express what they're feeling. One or two in a hundred people will come up after I've done a talk or a presentation on PatternDynamics and will say, "Wow, that's how I think. I finally have a way to express what I've been thinking." That's sort of who makes up the PatternDynamics community. You've got to be a bit careful, I guess that's what I'm saying, about getting a result with this tool. It's a language tool in many ways. You can apply it to get a result. But I think this subtle art of shifting the conversation to the systems level is the first part of what allows us to explore what brings us together, what unifies us, because at the systems level, everyone's perspective is important. It has a role. It needs to be balanced and integrated in a dynamic way. You need to have a dynamic conversation about that.

I think it's like what Habermas is talking about with communicative action. I think there's something about communicative action, as he frames it, that allows the organizing process to come out of those everyday conversations about what we're doing and how we're doing it. Having a language can be a very powerful thing because it helps us talk about things that we couldn't refer to before because we didn't have the language before. It's that simple move of pointing out what's going on systemically using the principles behind the patterns. Don't whip the pattern out and show them, "This is the Swing pattern." You say it in a way that people can hear it: "I think we've gone over to this extreme, and now we're shifting back to that extreme. What do you think?" Often, you'll get an aha.

That's the kind of magic in PatternDynamics. That's the core value proposition, that pointing out move. Because in the West, especially in the modern West/postmodern West, we don't have great language if we're talking about holistic dynamics. In the studies of ecology and biology and now all the systems theories and complexity theories that are being applied to the various disciplines that we study and engage in—that's emerging. But, there's no sort of comprehensive language. Each systems theory and each complexity

theory has its own language and its own set of things it focuses on. Whereas PatternDynamics is trying to be a true language with a grammar and a set of things that you can put together to make meaning in richer ways. You can put Swing together with, say, some of the other patterns like Feedback. The stronger the Feedback gets, that's the time that it's likely that it's going to Swing back to the other side. So then you're putting two principles together, or two patterns together. But that first step where you're pointing out the systemic dynamic and you're naming it, you use the principle behind the pattern.

For people who haven't seen PatternDynamics, it's really a set of little diagrams, these little pattern drawings that represent a systemic dynamic, like Swing. The principle behind it is what tells you about the nature of that systemic dynamic. It can be Swing or it can be Emergence of a new thing that you couldn't predict from other things that make it up, like you would never predict water from hydrogen and oxygen, for instance. We get many different patterns and many different principles, and you can start putting them together. But it's that moment where you point out what's happening holistically or systemically in a way that people can hear it, without confusing them, that makes it pop. It's that subject-object move, I think, that we talk a lot about in integral circles, where if something was kind of nascent in your awareness and then there's a bit of language for it or someone points it out in a way that allows us all to discover it, it all of a sudden pops, becomes real.

David: Right. If you can name it, that's the first step towards being able to understand it. And then you start seeing it all over the place that you never maybe would've noticed before.

Tim: That's right. And then you have a good way of referring to that thing. When I look at a wall of green in the forest, it just looks like a wall of green, unless I have a name, like that tree is a *Grevillea Robusta* and has a particular leaf shape. Now that I've got a name for it, I can see it out of that background of green. It's the same with systemic dynamics. We just don't have great language for them. We don't really see them in the way that, say (the way) some cultures do—if you go to Ancient Chinese cultures with Taoist conceptions in philosophy and language, you see a much richer language for systemic dynamics. But I didn't encounter that in my world, growing up in the modern West. The value proposition of PatternDynamics is that you can point out systemic dynamics in a way that people can see them. Then you have some reference or language so that we can collectively communicate about them.

That's sort of the second step in using PatternDynamics. Once you've pointed it out and you get agreement about it, then you can start talking and communicating about how to balance and integrate it. And then you need to develop some skills around facilitation. But after that, you can get an agreement about how to adjust these various things. So you're in a business and there's a Swing coming along. You're moving from a CEO who really values centralized control to the new CEO who wants a more distributed networked kind of organization with flatter hierarchy. So you can talk about that in a more sophisticated way. There might be some parts of this organization that really do need to remain centralized, at least for some time longer, and there are other parts that are easily networked and where the hierarchy can be flattened out. You might need a particular type of network approach in this business, so you need to balance and integrate very carefully and have conversations

about that, rather than just coming in and going, "Bang. We're going to make this the flattest organization possible, because hierarchy is bad and we're going with network distributed organizational models," in a kind of blunt, ideological way. You see this a lot with different ... especially progressive organizational forms, where hierarchy is bad, and a third of the company leaves because they don't really understand this new model. It was implemented too quickly. There wasn't enough conversation about how to do it strategically in ways that work. So having that conversation is key, but you need a language to have a conversation. That's the second part.

David: One of the books that I've read, and it may come up again in this conversation, is a book called *Religion and Radical Empiricism* by Nancy Frankenberry. She says, "When we observe that often in achieving, for example, a more sophisticated vocabulary of the emotions, we acquire, also, a more sophisticated emotional life, not just an expanded power of description" (Frankenberry, p. 144). It's about really being able to come alive with learning something like this. As we learn a language about understanding systems theory, we can also achieve a more distinct and useful and enhanced experience as living members of our ecosystem.

Tim: Yeah. You could almost substitute the word system for emotion in Frankenberry's quote there. As you have a richer language for experiencing more systemic holistic nature of your reality, the more full and rich that gets. This brings us to the post-metaphysical spirituality dimension of PatternDynamics. What I've found as I've engaged with this, my world becomes a richer whole. It's kind of an unbounded wholeness of living process. So my view of reality is shifting fairly radically, not just through PatternDynamics, but also some meditation practices that we can talk about as well.

David: Maybe we should-

Tim: And there's a correlation ... Look, maybe before we move on, just I'll talk about the third piece in PatternDynamics.

David: Oh, okay.

Tim: It's really one, two, three every time you use it. And developing the skill of PatternDynamics is learning to use this in that kind of facilitative Shamanism, where you can sense the systemic dynamic. You can name it and get agreement. You can get a conversation happening about what needs to be done, or at least what hypothesis you're going to test first. You can build some trust along the way for the people who didn't get their view this time—they might get it next time.

Tim: The third part, if one is pointing out – two is have a generative conversation, three is decide on a solution to test, and make sure that you allow it to be dynamic. It's not fixed in stone. It's a continual process of reviewing and continually, dynamically balancing the system. If you listen to what Jordan Peterson actually teaches and what he's researched through what myth does in his pragmatist approach to the collective endeavor of problem-solving and getting order out of chaos, it's the same process. It's kind of like this deep, generative

dynamic pattern. That's at the heart of Source, it's that inquiry into how do we solve the problems around us in a collective system. Mythology is the great overarching unification of the greater power, the sacredness in the world and its embodiment in mythological language and imagery. It's enormously powerful in coordinating human societies. We need to bring it back in. I'm wondering if PatternDynamics can explore that same territory as a kind of emerging integrative mythology, if you like, or mytho-poetic practice. It has a very deep poetic dimension in many ways, as in autopoietic, as in self-generating.

David: Perhaps-

Tim: Sorry. I've gone off on a bit of a tangent there. But really, the first step is to-

David: Well-

Tim: ... get to the solution, you know? How do we solve our challenges? How do we flourish?

David: Perhaps in contrast with Jordan Peterson's approach, which seems to have a lot of value, but also seems to be divisive; you see a lot of people taking positions either for or against Jordan Peterson, or people using Jordan Peterson's work to further divide our conversations.

Tim: That's what's-

David: PatternDynamics hopefully, again, that emphasis on bringing us together, rather than what separates us.

Tim: Yeah. Look, making distinctions is important. Having distinct agentic entities that interrelate into systems is important. But what I find interesting about figures like, say, Sam Harris and Jordan Peterson and other figures in the intellectual dark web, so-called, is that they're moving beyond that kind of extreme postmodern form. It's a more interrogative thing. But in many ways, it's like how Wilber approached the contrast between a more integrative view and a postmodern view. It was to go to war with it, in many ways, and to point out its problems and fallacies, rather than the interrogative move, which to Wilber's credit, he also held.

David: He did.

Tim: Whereas some of these others, I'm not so sure. I think, say for instance, Peterson and Harris both understand the important dimensions to postmodernism, they just don't focus on them. They are, in their own ways, divisive. They're focusing more on the distinctions we need to make, and perhaps even the fights we need to have, than on what unites us about those conversations. Fair enough. There's a role for all of that, but that's not what we're interested in in the PatternDynamics' community. I don't think it's ever been the key, the core interest behind any kind of view of the sacred. Sacred, almost by definition, is what unifies us, the whole that we share, and less about our individuality and more about our interconnectedness and the holistic nature of our experience and our universe. So yeah,

with the sort of the one, two, three of PatternDynamics, the practice has its own kind of psycho-spiritual developmental force, I found. I think I've located that same force in some spiritual practices.

David: As we transition into a more spiritual discussion, how would you define integral post-metaphysical spirituality?

Tim: That's great question. That's what I was reading for the hour before this conversation, because it means so many things. Sometimes, it's easy to lose sight of what you want to talk about it. But there's been a lot of conversation through Bruce Alderman and conversations he's curated on the Ning site and the Facebook site about integral post-metaphysical spirituality, and some really great contributions by some people who are first-rate thinkers who've really invested in this stuff and had some really interesting conversations.

But essentially, I think for me, it's about moving beyond the myth of the given in many ways. Like Frankenberg says, there's a recursive aspect to reality that ... There's an interpretive dimension to it as well. You can't just say there's a subject and an object, and subject views an object, and that's it. The object is static, and the subject is viewing it. It's more like—sometimes it's called a double hermeneutic—that there's a subject viewing an object, but the object influences the subject. In fact, the subject's not just a subject, it's also an object. The object's not just an object, it's also a subject. So there's kind of like subject/objects interrelating and co-evolving and co-influencing each other, but on a much more complex level because there's billions and zillions of these interactions going on. It's more about the inter-relationality and the patterns of that than it is about what might be an object. What does that even mean?

David: Yes. I think that's key.

Tim: Yeah. I think it's a key theme because it is the unitive force. You could see individuals that look like objects, but really, they're highly interrelated into systems, which aren't things, they're patterns of relationships, energy flows. Maybe that's what the Buddha was pointing out, about this idea that there's no self, or that there's a kind of mutuality in the causality in the way that we perceive the world. We suffer because we think we're an independent entity. We're highly interrelated. That includes the interrelationship between your mind and the world ... Again, whatever that is ... but that we construct it. I guess this goes back to Kant, really. It's not just we have perceptions about a reality out there, it's that we're highly conditioned by our experience, and I guess in integral terms, there's a kind of a construction of reality. An enactive paradigm, I think, Sean Esbjörn-Hargens refers to it as.

In terms of integral post-metaphysical spirituality, it's about recognizing that. It's also about how you might integrate traditional modern, postmodern views on the sacred or religion or spirituality or all those things, you know, the numinous. And finding, what for me anyway, is what I call the overarching cosmological umbrella. How can a whole human family find a way to engage in what unifies us? That more systemic, more holistic, more sacred aspect to our reality.

David: Yeah. For myself, I don't carry around a strict definition of integral post-metaphysical spirituality, but I generally think it's the attitude you bring, and being able to integrate these different insights, as I think Bruce probably wrote as one of the descriptions on the Facebook page, how might insights from modernity, postmodernity, how might they inform and impact humanity's ancient wisdom traditions? It's like all of this stuff together, and how do we bring this together and allow it to be generative for us? Different people will emphasize different aspects. I think that's good.

Tim: Yeah. I think the more traditional view of the sacred is that there's a god, for instance, that organizes all this stuff. And it's "out there". Whereas a post-metaphysical spirituality might orient more around the fact that we're co-creative of reality in an interpretive paradigm. It's a bit wordy. We're somehow preserving the sacredness and the wholeness of the traditional view, but we're applying the postmodern insight, that it's not just some reality out there. It's not an idealistic set of Platonic forms that creates this, or it's not just an object out there. It's co-creative. It's more systemic, in fact, more inter-relational. Influences run both ways. What does that mean, when you're in an interpretive paradigm, when you have a full postmodern insight around the enacted constructed nature of our subjective and inter-subjective realities, and the more traditional views of the sacred?

David: Yeah. You mentioned Kant earlier. Again, Nancy Frankenberry in talking about radical empiricism, which I think is very much aligned with all you've just been talking about in terms of interrelationships. She said, "For Kant, the world emerged from the subject. For radical empiricism, the subject emerges from the world" (Frankenberry, p. 173).

Tim: Oh, wow.

David: But really, it does go both ways. She says that in other places.

Tim: Yeah, that's interesting. When you start to conceive of the fact that what you think is out there is far more of a construction in your own mental stream, it's really, really interesting. I think the spiritual traditions have always been aware of that reality, but maybe not with, say, postmodern insights. This is where something like the Wilber-Combs Matrix can be really helpful, I think.

David: Yeah. Do you want to talk in that direction and embed in what you've learned from Dan Brown's *Pointing Out Way* practice? Is that a good place to go next?

Tim: Yeah, sure (we can talk about *Pointing Out Way* practice). We can talk around that. I'm not sure how qualified I am to talk about a lot of these practices. But in general generalities, for sure. There's lots of interesting connections to make there. But look, do you want to have a short break and come back and start part two?

David: We can do that.

Part Two Transcript

David: Okay, Tim, how about we transition here to talking a little bit more explicitly about PatternDynamics and its relationship to spiritual practice.

Tim: So I guess I'd just qualify that by saying it's all pretty nascent. I'm starting to find correlations and if you like, connect the dots. And finding the relationships between traditional spiritual practices and experiences that they generate, or help you gain, and what I've found with some of the deeper aspects of PatternDynamics, and where some of those similarities lie. Especially in the origins of that, and particularly in relation to Buddhist teachings and Buddhist practices, which have for some years now been the focus of my own spiritual practice and meditation practice.

David: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tim: So, I guess to set a bit of context about all that, might be a good place to start. I see PatternDynamics as a deeply relational systems thinking discipline, as a bridge really, between what we might call the relative world of everyday material existence, where we have all the preoccupations of making a living and bumping into things and that view, and the absolute reality which in spiritual traditions, or some spiritual traditions at least at some levels, will reference and have practices that will help you avail yourself of as experience. And often those two worlds are—they don't meet. There's this kind of the idealist or idealism philosophically associated with that kind of metaphysics over here in the absolute world, and the more kind of material scientific hard-nosed relative reality view; sometimes those worlds are quite far apart. Currently, at least politically, on our planet it seems like those things are diverging. The scientific materialists who believe in rationality and a world out there you can observe and manipulate, and people who are engaged in spiritual realization where absolute reality is the focus. They leave relative reality behind, sitting on top of the mountain.

The tradition that I've been engaged in is a fully non-dual tradition, that is, conduct is important in a relative world. You can't just say I've had this absolute realization and I can do whatever, because of crazy wisdom, I'm enlightened now. There isn't a separation between the relative and the absolute in the same way, they're more integrated or more inter-related. That is, you can have realizations through the practices that are about sacred and the spiritual and the unitive, but they must be expressed through your conduct in the relative world, or they're meaningless.

David: I'm remembering in Ken Wilber's book, which one was it? [*A Brief History of Everything*] Where he talks about the Ascenders and the Descenders.

Tim: Yeah.

David: We tend to emphasize one or the other, but we really need both of them to really have a healthy system.

Tim: I think so. I think it's that integration where PatternDynamics is interesting. It's often a bridge for people with fully developed mental rational faculties. In the modern, sort of post-modern now, West, we have come from that. PatternDynamics is a bridge where you start to develop a more holistic systemic sensibility, and at first that's about what seems to be the outside world, you know the systems of the world.

David: Yeah.

Tim: And in its later phase, it becomes more about, you become more aware that reality is really just patterns of energy and that, that doesn't just apply to the outside world. That applies to the inside world, in fact there's not such a boundary between the inside and the outside world. Your mind is a flow of constructing the reality that you experience, but it might not be as solid as you think.

David: And it's really interesting to think of this word 'Energy,' which as you have pointed out in your 2013 paper for the Integral Theory conference – it's really kind of an elusive word, you can't ... Energy isn't anything you can feel or touch. So it's kind of already somewhat mysterious; we have this way of looking at it, through physics, that seems kind of straight forward. But, if you really think about energy, it's like subtle energy is not very different from physical energy, maybe it's just at a higher level of quality—there's different qualitative, there's definitely qualitative differences, but in my view anyway I'm seeing energy as energy.

Tim: Yeah, I think this is something that you and I share as a kind of foundation view, because of our, both of us understands the implications of Howard T. Odum's work with energy quality.

David: Yes, yeah.

Tim: How that relates to sustainability, how that might relate to more subtle energies of the spiritual practice. I've always felt like we're very kindred spirits, you and I, we're kind of standard bearers, if you like, for that kind of ... really it's a kind of realist cosmology, but it's a spiritual realist cosmology.

David: Yeah.

Tim: And energy as a kind of ... you know it has an interesting ontological status; it's not a thing, right, and it's relational but it's not and it has a kind of motive causal force. We can get to this because causation and the concept of causation, especially in Buddhism, is foundational to how the Buddha conceived of the way the world was and what causes our suffering and the pathway out of it. I think that's where PatternDynamics has this bridge; there's a cosmology that I've developed out of PatternDynamics that's aligned with what we've just been speaking about with the way that energy expresses itself in higher and higher energy quality, as systemic complexity builds.

And that consciousness, certainly higher forms of consciousness emerge out of the higher energy quality, even though it's made of diminishing energy quantity, if you like.

David: Right.

Tim: So we're not contravening the second law of thermodynamics. It's just that the quantity's going down in the system and the quality's going up, and the consciousness, that's one way to reference the nature of higher energy quality such as exists with the human brain, and the symbolic abstract conceptual experiences and worlds that that creates. If people were interested, there's three papers, articles published in the Journal of Integral Theory and Practice, that lay out the foundations of PatternDynamics, this underpinning theory, within the integral purview. Its (PatternDynamics') cosmology is in the final paper; it's called 'The Meaning of Planetary Civilization; Integral Rational Spirituality and the Semiotic Universe.'

David: Right.

Tim: So when I wrote that, I was unaware that I was probably speaking to some of the same kind of views of reality that many spiritual traditions have—that is co-creative, that there's a relationality, there's a communicativeness, that co-creates our experience. So it's semiotic in nature, you know, it's interpretative, it's dynamic, it's alive, it's conversational, it's inter-relational, it's systemic, and the causation is not linear. It's much richer than that and more systemic. We'll get to that bit in a minute.

David: It seems like in that paper, in your 2013 paper on planetary civilization, one of the big influences was Charles Sanders Peirce and his ideas around pragmatism.

Tim: Absolutely. Yeah. So, you know, Dewey and James, as pragmatists, often get a run here; they often get referenced in relation to concepts like mutual causality or dependent origination or dependent co-origination, that we were talking about, as core conceptions in the Buddhist theology. But, it's actually Peirce, I think, who really brings alive as a major philosopher the notion that there's inter-relatedness in the way that reality is constructed. That there's always an interpretant, as he calls it.

David: Yeah.

Tim: It's not just subject viewing an object and the object's sending a signal and imprinting it on a subjective brain, like a seal on a wax tablet. It's that there's an interpretive act that takes us back to Kant, I guess. The thing in itself is—who knows what that is, but you know what, the signal comes in, we interpret this, we construct a world in our mind stream and we project it out there. But, yeah I think Charles Sanders Peirce is a major figure and he really does feature in this cosmology, along with Edgar Morin as this kind of third meta-theorist in the integral world. I think he has a more integrative theory, or set of theories, than either of say Bhaskar or Wilber; he's very much of a systemic kind of Taoist view, you know, flow systems view.

David: Yeah.

Tim: And that, as far as I can interpret him, he lays out his views of the world and what we should do about our challenges (in this way). And there are other figures, like Odum and the tradition back through Lotka and Boltzmann that started to discover the nature of energy quality and how to measure it and what it is, and bringing it in as kind of a fourth law of thermodynamics. That's really interesting, that's kind of another part of this. I just tried to lay out a cosmology that was systemic, included idealist spiritualist views, honored the material scientific views, and that could integrate them in a way that both scientific materialists and traditional spiritualists, would honor.

That is, they both can participate in this work, you know, at least tolerate this all encompassing cosmology that I think, can emerge out of PatternDynamics and its view. So cosmology is very much a view, as in a view of reality and a story about it. (In the West,) it comes out of that, the cosmological big bang and the energy that emerged from that, if that's what it was—that's a scientific kind of view of it.

And, how the extension of that energy and the fact that energy gradients exist and they can be degraded, or energy can be used to create systems with higher and higher energy quality and more and more consciousness, if you like, you know, that kind of integral view. The root of the cosmology is that, in one respect it's very much grounded in realist science and ecology and biology and what we know about systems and complexity; and, on the other hand, it honors the Descenders as well—(this belief) that there's an order, there's an ordering force to the Universe that is connected to that sacredness and our overall unity, that we experience sometimes, and can practice to experience.

David: And I resonate with just everything you said, and I found that paper to be quite fascinating. I remember when you said... coming across the section where you're writing about Odum's theory about energy quality and the fourth law of thermodynamics. I was especially excited because until that time I didn't know that we shared that level of interest in Howard Odum's work, so that was pretty cool.

Tim: Alright, okay, yeah he's the grandfather of this stuff, really.

David: Yeah, that was one section of the paper that I, I guess the section that maybe I had the most problems with, or had some things come up for me around. I'd be interested in your updating of your current understanding. You wrote that, you called it 'Integral ...

Tim: integral Semiotic Realism, iSR?

David: Right, 'integral Semiotic Realism,' as you named it there; you said, "It does not reject spirituality, spiritual realities are fully supported within it, but they are located in a way that recognizes at which levels of semiotic depth they're expressed. In integral Semiotic Realism, spirit and spirituality are only significant within the transpersonal, post-formal domains, the subtle energy fields, visions, luminosities and radiant ecstasies of the

theosphere, and the causal witnessing presence field of the cosmos-sphere.” Do you have an update on how you're thinking about that currently?

Tim: Yeah, that's a very deep rabbit hole, that one; maybe we won't dive down there, but to answer your question, yes and no. I still like to hold onto that idea or test the hypothesis more fully. I think there are problems with the signifier “spiritual” for trying to achieve, you know for the goal of an overarching cosmology, in that it has to refer to all of reality. I think that the main take aways from spiritual experience, you can put mostly in the theosphere, right? The subtle and causal, let's say. I like the term “Realization” for the more overarching non-dual integrative experience of reality that the higher teachings value—especially in the essence traditions of Buddhism. So I'm not sure that's going to be useful in a pragmatic sense, and for me, you know, the Source of what's generative has to be deeply pragmatic—you have to evaluate it on the effects you perceive it to have.

David: It seemed to imply for me that spirituality is kind of irrelevant at lower levels of development.

Tim: Hmm. Yeah perhaps, and maybe that's a problematic aspect of it, but certainly, you know, it's not at the fore. We have those experiences sometimes just spontaneously, you know, when we're only six. So it doesn't preclude those things, but they don't become the main experience of reality certainly in this view anyway, they're propagating at the theosphere, but it's the Cosmos-sphere, that is, the more fully Enlightened, view that is more interpretive. It's the middle path. It's heaven and earth, and we don't have to give away material reality for the spiritual, at some point they're so deeply integrated. So this is an attempt to bring together the traditional, modern, post-modern within an integral kind of cosmology, so you know, you have to trade off.

David: Update us with what you've learned since writing that paper and things you've studied since then in relation to a PatternDynamics and spiritual practice.

Tim: Okay, so PatternDynamics can be that bridge between the kind of mental, rational, material, scientific view that many of us carry and then we often just kind of take a rocket ship ride over to a spiritual experience and leave all that behind and reject it, and now it's all about that spiritual absolute. But it's ungrounded, it's untethered from your conduct in the everyday relative world. Whereas, PD is more of a gentle journey, more of an opportunity to learn and make small mistakes along the way, in a supportive way. This will segue us into the Pointing Out Way, because the pointing out style of teaching meditation, which this kind of practice certainly will help you avail yourself of, the experiences, the higher experiences that often get referenced in so called “spirituality,” you know, spirituality in inverted commas.

Tim: Yeah, the pointing out style is a supported learning journey through various meditative techniques and states, that's sequential and really is in line with good learning theory. We don't jump too far ahead, we don't make it boring or too simple so we lose our enthusiasm for it, but we move along just the right kind of pace through the journey from the mental,

rational, scientific material to more full blown experiences in the absolute, and we can keep, keep the tether if you like between the two; they remain integrated.

David: So it's more than just go and keep meditating and eventually you'll figure it out, kind of thing?

Tim: No, it's much more than that.

David: There's a lot more pointing out, that goes on in this practice.

Tim: Yeah, much more close attention to the learning journey you're on with meditation. I'll get to that in a minute in relation to the Pointing Out Way, and why I think it's such an important style for Westerners in terms of learning meditation. I'm going to jump out on a limb here. I like to be quite careful about how I talk about other people's theoretical work and their research. People like Kegan (for instance) or someone like Theo Dawson at Lectica, from whom I've learned a lot; or Dan, Dan Brown's very careful work in translating the Mahamudra and Dzogchen essence teachings. But I'm going to free-form a little bit here because if I'm too careful I will have to sit down and take six months to write a very carefully referenced paper. But we're being a bit loose here and I'm open to being criticized. This also relates to when we move on to talking about concepts like Paticca-samuppada, I'm not even sure that's how you say it, but you know the core to Buddhist theology.

These conversations have been going on for thousands of years by high scholars, and I'm a bit of a dilettante here to be honest, right. I'm just trying to pick up enough of this while I do my householder thing in the workaday world as a forester, and try to relate it to PatternDynamics. So I'm willing to be criticized here, I'm willing to be wrong, but I think there's enough value in trying to loosely put together some of the stuff so it can coalesce.

David: Sure.

Tim: Or not, right. Just try the hypothesis and it might be faulty, but I'm going to go forward on that basis and go out on a limb a bit.

David: Sounds good.

Tim: Yeah, I think it's useful to tell you that I'm uncomfortable about that. With Lectica, they can measure the complexity of performance, and this has to do with (in part) post-formal development, which is what we're talking about when you're moving beyond the mental rational. I see the post-formal stages as kind of where humanity's heading by and large; it's the kind of thinking and performances that we need to solve problems at this complex planetary level. We need a more systemic view, better application of systems thinking to various skill domains, such as decision making and problem solving and self-awareness and all kinds of other things. And that's how Lectica references the level of your performance. And like I said, they have psychometrics that can measure the level of various performances—of the ones I'm interested in like decision making, because it's directly related to problem solving, as a main interest. If you're interested in how we're

going to have a flourishing planetary society, especially (with regard to) collective problem solving, (then this is important).

David: Right.

Tim: So at Lectica they can measure a performance that's in (demonstrating) early systems thinking, which starts to emerge in post-formal ways of solving problems and making decisions and seeing the world. You can grasp a few systems concepts and apply them to how you go about navigating the world and solving problems and developing skills. In late systems thinking, you've got a more robust set of kind of systems understandings that you can put together and you start to apply them, not just to the outside world but to fields like culture or organizational cultures. In fact you start to have the view of the overarching concern for the whole of humanity. They can also measure performances of what they call, early principle thinking, where you chunk all that systems thinking together into some very simple, but powerful ways of viewing the world and acting on it. I think I've heard Aftab Omar and Zak Stein refer to this as the second simplicity. You know, simplicity on the other side of complexity.

So there's the journey through complexity, I guess, in integral terms it's sort of a journey through teal and turquoise and by that time (of the second simplicity) you're at the end of turquoise in any skill domain. I'm being very sloppy here with how I apply these different constructs and I'm over-lapping them and someone's probably going to not be happy about it.

David: Well, I'll just insert a little plug here that you had a podcast conversation with Zak Stein, where you talked about complexity and the second simplicity, and so I would just recommend folks to check out that podcast as well on this discussion. [*The Beautiful Mind of Dr. Zachary Stein*, found at <https://patterndynamics.net/the-beautiful-mind-of-dr-zachary-stein/>]

Tim: Oh, thanks, yeah, I thought it was a great conversation. Zak's a supremely intelligent and caring dude, so I love that one. Yeah, so once you're getting into the principle thinking, you know, beyond systems thinking, the world looks different, there's a kind of luminosity and sacredness that comes into it, and you start to realize that the world out there isn't as concrete as you thought, that it's really kind of a projection of your own mental stream. So reality becomes different, how you act on reality becomes different, and really in any skill domain that you apply this kind of thinking or awareness to, you're going to have more capability in more complex circumstances.

In simpler circumstances you might just need a simpler kind of cognition but, I'm interested in very complex challenges and developing skills for that. To get back to the Pointing out Way in Dan Brown's work, this is Daniel P. Brown, so he's a lecturer at Harvard University amongst many other things; he's a translator and meditation teacher.

David: So, we'll make clear that this is not Dan Brown of the *Da Vinci Code*?

Tim: No, no. Daniel P Brown, Dr Daniel P. Brown, is also an author but he writes books on the essence traditions and the various meditation practices; he translates these texts from Sanskrit and also Tibetan. He's a highly accomplished meditator and meditation teacher, who has taken some of the most potent essence tradition practices, worked with lineage holders, gained their permission to translate these works and teach them to Westerners like me. I think they're profound practices and they're especially well suited to Westerners because it's a very close relational style between a student and a teacher, but it's *not* got any of the guru stuff going on, where you need to submit all your worldly possessions and et cetera, et cetera. Conduct is supremely important. Dan's own conduct is impeccable, and it's the same with the other teachers, as far as I know.

I have deep respect for the integrity of these lineages and how Dan is presenting them and teaching them, and I think they're particularly potent. I have engaged in other meditation teachings in other spiritual traditions and styles (but not gotten the same effects). Within Buddhism, these, the Mahamudra in particular—I think this is more usually associated with the Kagyu Buddhist school—is a very precise set of instructions to full blown non-dual awareness that primes you for Awakening. And then, there's Dzogchen, which is more about once you can stabilize Awakening. The Dzogchen practices are the essence tradition that take you to Enlightenment, most usually associated with the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, but also alive and perhaps even older in Bön, the indigenous Tibetan spiritual practices and indigenous religion of Tibet. Dzogchen is more associated with that. But Dan's put those two together in his teachings and gained the approvals of lineage holders and teaches with these lineage holders, so you can get the transmission. So you make your way through this pathway where it's exquisite how precise these teachings are. If you just follow the instructions, you get the results as a meditator. I've never experienced anything like it in my attempts at various meditation practices or spiritual practices. So the pointing out style is very relational. I think it's very well suited to Westerners. It's based on very good pedagogical science. Dan's a Neuroscientist, so he understands what's going on in your brain; he's actually done neuro-imaging to discover what's going on in his meditators' brains and published those papers.

David: Right.

Tim: Dan is a living example of how, if you train your mind through these meditation techniques, you can attain skills that make you appear frankly, superhuman. The amount of stuff that guy gets done is profound and almost unbelievable. But it's because, and he'll tell you, and he'll tell you how, he has trained his mind or mindstream through these practices to gain high levels of skill that allow him to achieve high levels of things that most of us find astounding. But it's possible and he can teach you how to do it, too, and he teaches other people. He does teach people like judges and other high officials how to train their minds in the same way to gain the same kinds of performances.

So, there's a lot going on with Pointing Out Way and with Dr. Daniel P Brown's work, and all of the other teachers who are engaged in this work, and there's some great ones. Being a part of that, Dan's teachings and the community, the Pointing Out Way community, I'd

recommend it to anyone who's listening to this podcast, if you have an interest in spiritual practice and the kinds of things David and I are talking about here.

David: You started off talking about PatternDynamics as a bridge, this middle way, so how do you see what you're learning from Dan Brown that's applying to PatternDynamics?

Tim: Right. Okay, so again, this is pretty loose and I'm not sure how much of it's going to stand up; it's speculative at this stage. So when we do the PD one day workshop, and when we get it right, something kind of pops right with the Source experience. It's like there is this unitive, non-dual field that can emerge, sometimes not for everybody, but certainly for some. I know what kind of meditative experience that is now, and I think it's truly non-dual. But certainly in the essence traditions, non-dual awareness is really just a beginning. It's just a preparation for what can allow you to Awaken, and Awakening is not Enlightenment; that's a long way away. But, Awakening is the first major step most people take, but experiencing the non-dual, you can do it with something like a PD workshop in one day, if you get it right.

Because in an embodied sense, we're experiencing our deep inter-relatedness and the energy flow and the conversation that's happening between us at that felt level that Frankenberg talks about.

David: Yeah.

Tim: And we start to give it signifiers and we develop a language around it, so we can talk about it and so that we can adjust the dynamics so that we have more of it and we can experience it more richly. I find it interesting, because I didn't know what was going on with the PatternDynamics workshop, and why. All of this came as a sort of a download and it was kind of high intuition for me. I couldn't unpack it. It's taken years. But now I'm a little more clear about what happens, I think, and it turns out – and again, there's been scholars who've been at this stuff for a couple thousand years and I'm just going to jump in as a dilettante, and talk about the core concept in Buddhism, this Paticca-samuppada that's the translation from the Pali.

It sounds slightly different when it's been translated from Sanskrit, when it's from the Sanskrit, but I'll go with the Pali because that's how it was originally written down. The Buddhist teachings apparently are originally written down in Pali. So Joanna Macy wrote a great book called, *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory*, where she relates this core concept of Paticca-samuppada in the Buddha's teachings to General Systems Theory. There's a lot of correlations (with systems theory), and she translated from the Pali and this is a work of serious scholarship. I found it particularly interesting when I first read it. I read it when I first read *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality* in the late 90s, I guess, and I sort of put it away in a bookshelf and only found it because I moved my books, and we were going to have this conversation. I pulled it out and started looking at it going, holy cow. And I've got highlighter through it, and underlines and notes in the margin where, obviously it had a profound influence on me and it just went to the back of my mind and churned away.

David: Wow.

Tim: But I realize now, that the concept of Paticca-samuppada, which is sometimes translated as mutual causality, which is how Joanna Macy's referenced it in her title. But I asked a question of Dan in one of the meditation retreats, and I used the term 'mutual causality'. He said, no, 'dependent origination'. Dan's a translator and he's very precise about the language that you need, and the concepts and the references.

David: Did he unpack that at all, as far as the distinctions go?

Tim: No, I was so intimidated, I just let him go on. But I appreciated the distinction. I went and looked it up and went back to Joanna's book and then started reading about some of the things that you encouraged me to unpack with Abhidharma Philosophy and views on the Buddhist teachings. We'll get to that—dependent origination. I think you said that Frankenberg refers to it as, dependent co-origination.

David: Right, yeah.

Tim: Or conditioned co-arising. These are very systemic concepts and Joanna Macy points out that it's about feedback. It's about a double hermeneutic, about a conversation back and forth. Not just linear causation, A, bumps into B, right. It's also B bumps into A, and that happens on a multitude of levels and it's kind of like, what co-arises in your experiences is dependent on these conditions.

David: So, Frankenberg describes it as “a relational process which co-ordinates the momentary factors (dharmas), as they pulsate in and out of the causal process... And by perceiving causality as a multiple directional convergence, the Buddha discards the notion of a one directional movement of power from a prime substance to another independent substance.” She says, “It refers to the dynamics and momentary experiential process and has a close affinity with what Whitehead called, ‘causal efficacy’ and James’ ‘perceptual flux.’” She said, “The multi-faceted dependent or relational nature of ordinary experiential process” (Frankenberg, p. 166).

Tim: Yeah, you can see how rich the language has to become to support the interdependent dynamic co-coordinative flux that is at the foundation of experience at a certain point. In Joanna's book, she talks about Buddhaghosa, who was one of these pandits, I think, who was in the Abhidharma school. Buddhaghosa used the term to qualify the import of the causal doctrine as a whole. He defined Paticca-samuppada as the mode of causality according to which phenomena arise together in reciprocal dependence, or you could say interdependence. So I guess this is (what they call) Anamanda-paticca. Like I said, there's been some very deep scholarship over a very long time and many arguments that have sometimes gone centuries about the nature of these terms and what the Buddha really meant and what that means for practice.

But, Joanna Macy makes a very good argument for it, and I think if you go back through James and people like Dewey and Frankenberg, and there's a whole list of other people who have started to relate to the kind of more general systems view to training your mind

in the way that the Buddha advocates. And these are the kind of practices you'll find in the essence traditions of Buddhism. And finding those relations is what I'm interested in and is there anything related to PD? Well, yeah. There's at least a loose relation in it, there's a systems thinking language and a pedagogy associated with it so you can develop the ways in which you can see the more systemic inter-related nature of reality out there and apply that to what goes on in here, how you construct reality and how that becomes more alive for you. I think so, I do. But I don't think PatternDynamics goes too much further than the non-dual. It will get you there, but if you want to step into Awakening and the practices that will take you to Enlightenment, you need something else, so I'm recommending the Pointing Out Way. It's by far the most powerful set of teachings I've encountered, that have the most integrity. That makes clear some of the distinctions about what I think PD can do and where it does act and it acts in that middle ground (between the mental-rational and the non-dual).

David: Well, that's a great endorsement of the Pointing Out Way Practice.

Tim: Oh, yeah, yeah it's fantastic. I mean if you're serious about gaining meditative skill and spiritual practice, I can't recommend it any more highly. Do we want to talk about this Abhidharma notion of the Dharmas?

David: Yeah, I think that's a good lead in. Yeah, the Dharmas. There's a lot of different ideas about Dharma theory and what this actually means. The Abhidharmists, I believe, came before the Mahayanists; they had these very richly developed and complex ideas around Dharmas. Frankenberry described them as a universal matrix of causation. So the Abhidharmists held that the Dharmas are like elemental conditions. And then when they came together they would cause the conditioned co-arising of existence, so this relates very much to this idea of dependent co-origination. And they really have to work together. This, as I understand it – understanding each helps you understand the other, I guess I'd say. But the Mahayanists came along, and they had some criticisms of the Abhidharmists. They thought they were kind of reifying Dharmas as things.

But there's at least some evidence that they didn't do that. But I think the correct way that I see it, is that if you view these Dharmas as part of this conditioned co-arising, they rise and they fall according to the dynamics and flux of experience. And then I read about how they saw Dharmas as a universal matrix. PatternDynamics is like a matrix, it's one way of presenting it and I started seeing this connection. The way that Nancy Frankenberry describes Dharmas, she describes them as “felt qualities of experience.” Then she relates that to Whitehead's concept of categories of subjective form, and to me there does seem to be a lot of parallels here to how we can think of the patterns of PatternDynamics as Dharmas.

Tim: I found that really fascinating when you brought it up, when you alerted me to it, and it's interesting, isn't it? Because, you don't want to reify them, I mean certainly not in the Buddhist view. Not things, but they could be energy patterns. They're in the middle ground between something that's material and something that's an ideal form, aren't they?

David: Yeah, there's always a dynamic interplay between them, as our understanding is with the patterns in PatternDynamics. It's not like one pattern exists here and another pattern exists there. They're always in relationship, it's this idea of that inter-relationality of everything, and so that's why we focus on balancing and integrating.

Tim: That's a way, I guess, of seeing and sensing more fully, the interdependent co-origination as causation of what goes on in the world.

David: Yeah.

Tim: So it is that middle ground between the absolute idealist spiritual kind of view that some spiritualists have, that there's just 'Consciousness'—as the new age people like to call it. It sometimes makes me laugh. It's just like there's this absolute thing that pervades everything and that's what everything's made of. It's pure subjective idealist kind of consciousness. I'm okay with that, but I just don't think that, that's what Realization is about. Realization is about the fact that there's heaven and earth. There's consciousness and material stuff and there's energy patterns in flux. The isomorphism that runs between all of that is Paticca-samuppada. The same systemic inter-relational causation at work in the material world and cosmos is at work in the mental realm, where we exchange mental rational symbols. It's at work in the theosphere, where we exchange more subtle signifiers, and it's at work in the more causal and the more Enlightened fully Realized dimensions where all of that is integrated. But the Buddha's insight, we might say, is that, as a systems theorist would put it, the isomorphism, the self-similarity that runs through all those levels and all those domains of existence and ties them together into experience is, exactly that, Paticca-samuppada.

David: Nancy Frankenberry said that "The word to watch here is 'quality.' The other thing to keep an eye on is the way in which the dharmas are factors within and of the experiential process, and so they are not dominant or the primacy of that Paticca-samuppada. With this in mind, we can avoid the mistake of reification which the Mahayanists charged to the Abhidharmists. But we also need to avoid the mistake of foisting onto dharma-analysis the categories of British empiricism, in which the real objects in the world are reduced to simple particulars which 'have' qualities of one sort or another and stand in external relations to each other" (Frankenberry, p. 183). So she, kind of like you, talks about the middle view of this. The alternation is small but dramatic. So instead of as some people have described Dharmas as being adjectival, she says Dharmas are adverbial, not adjectival.

Tim: Wow, that brings us to Bruce Alderman's work, but go on.

David: She says, "as concrete facts they refer to qualitative events which cannot be described or analysed exhaustively in terms of universals" (Frankenberry, p. 183). So then she argues, that's why she sees Dharmas as felt qualities of experience.

Tim: Yeah.

David: She ties that to James and to Whitehead. Whitehead said, I think, that the flow of experience is really the meaning of all. I think it's something like that. [Actual quote is "...what is most real is the flow of experiencing." (Frankenberry, p. 183)]

Tim: Yeah, that's what's so interesting. As a dimension of reality, certainly in the essence traditions, there's a lot of reference to space. You gain a capacity to become spaciousness or space. Space takes on a different meaning than in a three-dimensional view. We've got up, down, back and forth. Space becomes an extension of your experience or your mind. So it's like, when you get to this point, reality has another dimension that appears in it. It's that fullness, it's that depth, it's that kind of richness and it becomes kind of lucid and luminous and diaphanous. I think we're referencing the same sort of thing here and reality ceases to become a subject looking at a bunch of objects out there, and it becomes a rich mind-flow that you realize is highly constructed. And that what's actually out there, the things in themselves, well, you don't know what they are. Again, Peterson talks about this. He's on the cusp of this stuff and he's found an important dimension to this which is the (traditional) mytho-poetic structures that we left behind.

But that dimension comes to the fore for me in both Pointing Out practices and also to a point, you know up to the non-dual. The lucidness that comes in the non-dual, you can get through PD in a particular way. So there's correlations here, but I think in the same way that in the Renaissance we started to discover representations of the third dimension, of depth and perspectival drawing and painting. Maybe, what Gebser was calling the Diaphanion or that spacious luminousness that emerges as innateness, as part of the nature of reality or experience is the dimension that's now emerging in a world view that's going to be widely held. I don't know, but I speculate on that sometimes and it's certainly real for me.

David: So the Diaphanion that Gebser talks about is, describing that which shines through or that which makes transparent. So he's talking about rendering visible, I think, the incarnation of the whole at once. Shining through the whole.

Tim: Very hard to put language around this stuff. You almost have to use poetry to make any sense because language, our language is mostly about communicating about objects rather than experience. I remember the first time I had this kind of experience was when Genpo Roshi did Big Mind at one of the Integral seminars. That's the voice dialogue process he's developed in relation to some of his Zen teachings. In the Big Mind process, it's phenomenal, it just pops the lucid non-dual richness of space and its luminosity and diaphanousness just popped. That process, it's an amazing, effective process. It only takes about an hour, but it's not very stable. So I found Pointing Out Way is (also) a very stable set of steps. You get to one stable place and you move to the next stable place, so it's sort of more reliable in that respect, but Big Mind was a very powerful state experience for me.

David: Well, maybe at this point we should maybe think about wrapping up this section and summarizing how we can maybe bring it back to PatternDynamics a bit. And I came up with – as I mentioned to you a little while ago, it was after either reading something you said or listening to something you said in a podcast. Somehow four major points came

together for me and these points are not anything new that PatternDynamics as its community of practice and as it has been taught is not already doing, but for me it kind of seemed to represent things we can continue to emphasize and develop, and I'll just read off my four points if that's okay and then we can ...

Tim: Oh sure.

David: ... comment on them after that, if you will.

Tim: Okay.

David: So the first point is to understand this idea of, that we were just talking about, understanding patterns as Dharmas or felt qualities of experience as Frankenberry put it, always in flux, always in relationship to other patterns. So this is just the aspect of kind of learning the language of PatternDynamics, learning what the patterns are and seeing them as these felt qualities of experience, then maybe starting to have this richer life as a result of this vocabulary coming alive for us. And as you have put it, Tim, this part of the practice is to help us “see more”. We start to see more when we understand more about patterns.

And then the second step or the second part would be to help us “share more.” That would be PatternDynamics as a process-relational pattern language. So this is about balancing and integrating the patterns in our collective conversations with other people, rather than just for ourselves gaining understanding. We can share with others and we can communicate in some of these ways that we've talked about today. And the third point is, the idea you briefly mentioned, the embodied PatternDynamics group movement practice that we do in the one day workshop. I would like to see that practice, not just for a one day workshop, but maybe used more often in different PatternDynamics engagements and see how that can develop.

It's interesting to hear you talk about that today in terms of how that experience of that pop that happens when you feel that non-dual awareness come up, and you didn't know how exactly what was happening. It would be really interesting to further develop this practice. What I said about this, this activity helps connect us as a group in an ongoing, what I described as a kind of radical empiricist experience practice. Experiencing the pattern energies in our bodies and connecting to Source. So this helps us to live to deeper purpose when we do that. And then the fourth and last point I wrote down was an emphasis on what you've referred to in a podcast you did with Lauren Tenney, emphasizing what you called facilitative shamanism. You've talked about seeing others do this, especially Diane Hamilton, but I've seen you do it as well, at some of these PatternDynamics workshops where you start off with a very tightly organized structure how the workshop is going to proceed. Then as it develops you kind of become less tight with that structure, and morph into sensing into the energies of the moment and responding in the moment to what's coming up, and working with that.

So if we can develop a way to teach that practice, that capacity to be able to sense these dynamics at play and how to tweak the energy in just the right way or as Gebser put it, “knowing when to let happen and knowing when to make happen.”

Tim: Yeah.

David: And you had written that this is the ability to shift the conversation in a way that reveals the deeper reality of our interdependence, and it is an example of what Lectica calls this early principled thinking, or the second simplicity. So that we get beyond all the primary and secondary patterns, which ultimately takes us to the pattern of Void, and then all simplified into the fundamental pattern of Source.

Tim: Yeah.

David: So, that's the four step summary that I came up with, I'm curious how you might respond to that.

Tim: I think that's great. I think, I'd like to talk about that. Perhaps we can do that for the third segment.

Part Three Transcript

David: Okay, Tim, so we just reviewed these four points that I brought out; now let's dive a little deeper into them. I have a couple things I want to say about this first point. It's relatively straightforward except for the part about the new dimension of understanding the patterns as Dharmas, or felt qualities of experience.

Tim: Maybe it'd be good if you could say a bit about radical empiricism, felt qualities of experience. Just dive in a little there.

David: Yeah. So radical empiricism was the term that William James came up with, and another interesting perhaps convergence between us Tim, is that you found your way into pragmatism emphasizing Charles Sanders Peirce in his work. Independently, I ended up getting turned on to this book called *Religion and Radical Empiricism*, which we've mentioned a few times. It covers radical empiricism from James, Dewey and through some number of other people, linking it to Whitehead's work and to the Buddhist kind of thinking that we've been talking about.

I think I want to read a little bit of a long paragraph that Frankenberry wrote, because there is a direct connection between pragmatism and radical empiricism, very much covering a lot of same territory with just maybe a little bit of different emphasis. Frankenberry writes, "For all three thinkers [Peirce, James and Dewey], each with different emphasis, radical empiricism is defined by the understanding that sense perception is neither the only nor the primary mode of experience, but is rather derived from a still more elemental and organic togetherness of the experiencing subject, and the experiencing environment. In the language of Dewey, experience designates ALL transactions between organism and environment both of which are co-constitutive of one another. On this view, before ever undertaking the comparatively high-level discriminations of the world by means of the senses or linguistic forms, the subject is aware of itself and others as causally efficacious powers mutually interacting with the world of qualitative values, where memories of the past and anticipations of the future are felt as given. Thus at every point, radical empiricism challenges the assumptions of classical, logical and linguistic empiricism" (Frankenberry, p. 84).

So one thing to understand here is that radical empiricism is not to be understood as an extension of Humean empiricism, but rather as a counter to it. Something quite different in its approach.

Tim: It's almost the opposite extreme of Hume. Didn't he indicate that there are no connections; that's just made up, there's just (isolated) things. Radical empiricism seems to be saying more like there's just the felt relationality, there are no things. Is that how you view it?

David: Yes, yes, exactly. John McDermott, who wrote a book on William James, described it as participating in the very rhythm of the world at large with this process.

But there is a potential problem here in that we're bringing up aspects of things that are beyond linguistic expression. One of the radical empiricists, his name was Bernard Meland, he liked to say "we live more deeply than we can think." I have a thread on radical empiricism on the Ning forum of integral post metaphysical spirituality, and I got an interesting reply from Layman Pascal. He caught on very quickly to the problem that presents itself with statements such as those that Bernard Meland said.

Layman wrote, "The problem is that our thinking cannot perfectly evaluate itself, it has no more right to assert its limitations than to assert its supremacy. A thinking being using language to express a thought is on very shaky ground when that thought is, that thought cannot encompass reality."

(<http://integralpostmetaphysics.ning.com/xn/detail/5301756:Comment:58473>)

So I think he was absolutely right to bring this up, and Nancy Frankenberry talks about that as well. Nancy Frankenberry is deep in the postmodern linguistic turn, very much an advocate of, in some ways, of those like Rorty and Davidson. She says, "If it is the case that 'we live more deeply than we can think,' then we are at a loss to describe any awareness which surpasses language or thought without employing language in the very process, and thus exhibiting the more as intra-linguistic after all" (Frankenberry, p. 137).

That's pretty interesting. So for me, I'm seeing PatternDynamics as a solution to this dilemma, because remember when we talked earlier about when we can name something, it gives it more concrete existence. We make the subject more object and then we can see it better. So this is about helping us to see more, right? So we develop a vocabulary and we can put names to something, and this is what helps us to express maybe what we couldn't previously put words to.

Tim: Well, yeah. There were a couple of things there I'd like to comment on.

David: Sure.

Tim: I guess one is Gödel, is that's how you say his name, the mathematician? The other is Charles Sanders Peirce. So I guess Gödel, he ended the notion that there was somewhere to stand—that you can have an axiomatic foundation that is solid and unchanging, and you can work from there. So I think Whitehead worked on Principia Mathematica, with the other major philosopher who wrote that with him...

David: Bertrand Russell.

Tim: Yes, they did this gigantic work on that basis. In the analytic tradition it was like an ultimate analytical philosophy work. I think Gödel comes along and just says, "No, everything's recursive. The axiom you started with changes because there's feedback essentially." Hofstadter has written about this extensively, so everything is recursive. Peirce pointed this out with what he called a sliding chain of signifiers. First there's the felt quality. Firstness he (Peirce) called it, then there's Secondness—we collide (with that felt quality).

This becomes a real thing, like the felt experience of touching a hot stove is that sensation before you can even name it, or it even hurts. It's just felt quality and then it slams into you, or you slam into it. It becomes pain but until you signify it, until you have the word "stove" or "hot," it's not reified in the world—that is, the dependent origination of this (occurrence) has not been made concrete. It's effete still, that's how Peirce referred to it.

David: So there's a reifying that goes on, but at this point it's a healthy thing. It's bringing meaning.

Tim: Right. So meaning is at the heart of all this, meaning making is "methodology," is the double hermeneutic. The meaning making about what is there is what reifies what's there. Sure, that occurrence can be linguistically mediated and therefore more concrete, but at the beginning of every cycle, if you like, of a pragmatic world discovery, or problem solving (event), is the sensation, is immediate sensation. In the human realm that's what we get, and then it slams into us—it's something and then we have to name it. It becomes more concrete, becomes object and so emerges from the deep subjective domain to the more concrete external thing that becomes real for us in our field of experience. Our mind stream has constructed it and we can share these constructions via our language of that.

What's important I think about what Frankenberry's on about is that it's recursive. So language helps you discover the world, but don't reify it. Don't stop there, don't ignore when you come back around to the sensation again because you're going to polish that reification. Something is going to change and you may discover aspects of reality that are outside of the current constructs that constitute your experience, if we're sensitive to these things. So yeah, you're right. I think that PD, PatternDynamics, has a role in using that very agile language that isn't very concrete, doesn't particularize things. It just really honors the notion that they're energy patterns that are continually transforming and transmuting and that we construct them and that with a more sophisticated, pragmatically oriented use of language, we can explore different terrain.

David: Yeah, and one of the ideas I had here – and this is why all three of these, or I mean all four of these points that I brought up all support one another – is we can learn the language of PatternDynamics and learn these patterns, but we also have to be careful about reifying them. One way we can do that is keep iterating and keep coming back to not just to the cognitive understanding, but touching in continually with embodied movement practices, or with the facilitative shamanism, and continuing to iterate between these different practices, and to have an intention of remaining fresh, remaining sensitive to the dynamics at play at all times. Then this vocabulary will increase in its richness, and our experience will increase in richness. Our understanding will increase hopefully ongoingly.

Tim: Yeah. I think for me, you're starting to flesh out some of the aspects of Source, the deeper aspects, and that it's inquiry related. A lot of spiritual practices have inquiry at their core, like the Diamond Approach for instance. So this is pragmatic inquiry all the time, hypothesizing, and a testing, and a learning, and going around again. That's sort of pragmatist nature of it. It's got subjects and objects that are integrated, it's got parts and wholes that are integrated, it's got past and present that's integrated. Presence, the present

moment and attending to the unfolding dynamics in your emerging awareness—that manifest in your field of awareness.

The flowing present moment and tweaking that rather than acting on objects, and thinking about the past and the future. So there's a whole bunch of stuff that probably needs to be made more object in relation to Source, and then let go and not made more object. Parts and wholes start to collapse, it's just systems and past and the present start to collapse as the present unfolding moment.

David: I'll share one more quote. This is from William James himself and this was from the conclusion of *Varieties of Religious Experience*, where I think he was just starting to gain some clarity about radical empiricism. I think he may have mentioned the term before completing *Varieties*, I can't be sure about that. But I think this statement to me, in my limited understanding of James... (I'm not a real scholar here, like your disclaimer earlier). This seems to me to be indicating what occupied a lot of James's thought which he attempts to further develop after this point.

[Clarifying note from David: The earliest reference I could find where James used the phrase “radical empiricism” was in the preface of *The Will To Believe*, which was published in 1897. What we know as *Varieties of Religious Experience* was first delivered as the Gifford Lectures in 1901. I'm not aware of the phrase “radical empiricism” coming up in this work, but I believe the quote below refers to it. James' full development of the concept of radical empiricism came to the fore in his 1904-1905 writings, especially in the essays *Does Consciousness Exist*, and *A World of Pure Experience*, both published posthumously (1912) in the volume entitled *Essays in Radical Empiricism*.]

He wrote, "The world of our experience consists at all times of two parts, an objective and a subjective part. The conscious field plus its object as felt or thought of, plus an attitude towards the object, plus the sense of a self to whom the attitude belongs ... It is a full fact even though it be an insignificant fact; it is of the kind to which all realities whatsoever must belong. The motor currents of the world run through the like of it; it is on the line connecting real events with real events" (James, pp. 428-429).

Tim: Wow.

David: I like that; it touches on a lot of points there and I feel like that's what he was continuing to try to develop from that point on [as he further developed his thinking about radical empiricism].

Tim: So yeah, how would you unpack or interpret what he said there? What does that mean to you?

David: Well, he understood that the world - he uses this phrase where he said the world is made of what he called “pure experience;” it is this idea of him trying to defend this notion of a full fact which includes not just parts, but the parts as they interrelate and the parts as wholes that they make up. Then the section about the motor currents of the world run

through the like of it, that's the flow I think that's happening. The flow of energy that he saw running through all events and then connecting real events with real events. Everything's on a moment-to-moment basis, and the past affects future and the future in a way affects the past even.

Tim: Yes. It's interesting, you could read out of that he's collapsing the parts and wholes that we normally associate with stuff into the systemic whole. He's collapsing the subject and the object into a non-dual pure experience. Pure experience is made up of the collapse or integration of the part and the whole, the subject and the object, and the past and the present, so there isn't any, there's just present changing, unfolding flux of subject-object part-wholes. Interestingly, those are the three core dimensions of Source in the PatternDynamics system. Interestingly Dan Brown, Daniel P. Brown's Ph.D. research centered around the main principles behind the efficacious spiritual teachings for high meditation attainment, let's call it.

One of them is called emptiness of time. One is called emptiness self, and the other one's emptiness of thoughts. So what that means is there's no independently existing self, there's no independent object. There's no independently existing thoughts, subject, or parts, or wholes. There's no independently existing time continuum, it's just a construct of unfolding change. Then you put all those three collapsed polarities, or integrated polarities together, and you get pure experience, which I think is pretty analogous to my sense of Source, when the non-dual aspect of it emerges. In that Source moment, when you're in that flow, you can sense really exquisitely what little parts of the dynamic system have tensions.

You can sense where the conversation needs to go, what you need to point out, what needs to be talked about in terms of balancing that dynamic. Then how you might go about getting agreement to change that dynamic to adjust the well-being or the eudaimonia of the system. I think either we're telling ourselves a really interesting story here that's way off base, or there's a bit of truth in all these figurings, whether we're talking about PD (or these other things), we're referencing very similar, or at least overlapping terrain or experience.

David: What's this term eudaimonia?

Tim: Right. So I think it was an Aristotle, it's like well-being or flourishing. Its most often interpreted as, I guess Bhaskar uses it (in his idea of) the eudaimonic society. The free flourishing of each as a prerequisite for the free flourishing of all – that drive to freedom kind of thing is allowing the free flow of flux, or experience, or life, or systems. This will allow for flourishing. It's when we get in the way and there's blocks, and there's kinks, where there's a limitation of the expression of this.

David: That comes back to that term dukkha. In Buddhism that's often been interpreted as suffering, but as you've pointed out, and as I've also read it in other places, the better translation of that is “stuckness.”

Tim: Yeah, being stuck on the idea that there's a separate self and they're separate objects out there that you need to act on as independently existing objects. Everything that comes forth in our field of experiences is interdependently co-originating with the Dharmas. So, as the

Buddha looked at it, we suffer because we think there's a world out there that's causing us grief when it's just our own nature as the flow of co-constructed experience.

David: Right, or we get attached to some particular expression and rather than allowing that flow to continue to flow, we interrupt the flow and we get stuck. The flow of experiencing.

Tim: Yeah, and it's most easy to get ... That interruption happens because you get stuck on yourself, you get stuck in the past or the future when you're thinking about it. You get stuck in your thoughts. Then suffering goes away once you start to sense the emptiness, or the lack of independent existence of those things, and you start to explore into the lack of independent existence of those things. Then pure experience becomes more manifest. You can learn to train your mind, and rewire your neurology such that that your experience becomes the lived experience, the most prominent experience of your life. Similar to how (previously) everyday material reality and a viewing subject called you, used to perceive the world, but now you can shift into a more awakened state if you can keep the non-dual view stable enough. Then from there the essence traditions have quite a lot to say, as very well tried and true practices, for taking it to the end of the path (Enlightened Realization).

David: So maybe we can go to the second point of PatternDynamics as a process- relational pattern language, balancing and integrating the patterns in collective conversation with other people, to help us “share more.” So you've talked about... I call this the process-relational pattern language, and you've talked about it as a process philosophy. You mentioned to me once recently that process philosophy is the missing piece when trying to integrate subject-object.

Tim: Right, yeah.

David: Can you talk about that?

Tim: Yeah. Well, I haven't read a lot of Whitehead, but I understand the main concepts in some of his work. I understand the notion of process philosophy, especially – shout-out to Bonnitta Roy here for being a bit of a standard bearer for process philosophy within the integral world. So I guess another disclaimer, but seeing more yourself doesn't work after a while. Reality becomes more richly relational and so sharing, and interconnecting and realizing the interconnected organizing flow of nature, or reality, becomes more interesting. Developing skills for doing that becomes highly motivating, I think. As a purpose-driven collaborative form of systems thinking, PatternDynamics is well-suited to having those more relational conversations about the system itself, and about bringing all the perspectives into some coordinated flow.

PatternDynamics, I think, has pretty well developed ways of doing that. It has a language, it has an emergent grammar about how to use that language, about the nature of the system and it's free flourishing well-being. What (I think) Will Vary calls apithology, it's generative health. There are some tools like collaborative system's inquiry, and locating perspectives, and outlining structures, and coordinating perspectives, and designing decisions, and governing reflectively, keeping all of that grounded in your Source, or your

deeper purpose together and using that as a way to coordinate perspectives, and share perspectives, and ultimately you'll get to some hypothesis to test. Some result that might get you somewhere.

What I mean by get you somewhere is, makes things better, more flourishing. Not growth but flourishing, health, not development per se. Something like this generativity, well-being or flourishing becomes a primary motivating factor.

David: The reason I brought in this point number two, as the conversation, collective conversation with other people, is because I wanted to emphasize it's not just the individual practice of learning the cognitive level of the different patterns in PatternDynamics, but it really does come alive when we come into conversation. If we can use this with other people - and I enjoyed in our level two training in PatternDynamics, with working with a group of other people, and we would have these collective conversations.

(In the level two PD training), there's the collective of the people in the room or on the call, and we're also dealing with the collective of the different patterns. It's not patterns in isolation, it becomes really interesting when we start talking about how different patterns start to integrate with one another. Then it's what is emerging from that and it can go very deep.

Tim: Well, I sensed amongst the two or three, four cohorts of level two where people were using the language, and sharing their experience of the world with each other explicitly using PatternDynamics system as the language of what was unfolding in their field of awareness, or the stream of their mind. My sense was, and my own experience of that was, it's really rich, as a natural system's thinker. It was really deep and meaningful for me, and really rewarding to be able to share my life with people and get their reflections back using the language in its depth. Combining the patterns and being able to hear stories, and reveal stories and gain insight. The insights I gained in some of those conversations are insights I could not have gained by myself, and could not have gained without that language, and people who could help me ... Thought partners who were thinking at this depth.

I think that's one way that PatternDynamics can be useful, where it sits within the community of practice, with people who have that level of skill to relate to each other and create that value. The other way is (the application of a somewhat) different skill where you need to translate what you're seeing in the system into the language that will allow people to hear it and resonate with it. I think that's the higher skill, I think that's what the PatternDynamics community is really all about, is learning that skill. We're like these... it's like we've got these invisible levers we can put into the systems. People can't really see them, but we can get huge leverage if we can just identify something to help people share a bit about what might need to be tweaked, get some agreement and try the change.

It's (a kind of) wizardry; this is where this facilitative shamanism comes in. You're working with a world of energy flux and flow. It's not magical power but it's what Asimov (or was it Arthur C. Clarke) said about magic: it is just technology that you don't understand; it's that cool, but it's not magic. It's just developing a skill, a facilitative skill to help tweak the

system and get agreement to help people see something, help people share about it and help people adjust. I think that's the value proposition of the subject-object move, we could point out what the systemic dynamic is. Then the skill based on that is this being able to facilitate at that level.

David: Well I used that term process-relational pattern language and I noticed when you're talking about it, you also used the word "relational" a few times. I wanted to make that part explicit here in that there was a fellow named Bernard Loomer, not very well known, but more well known was Charles Hartshorne as a Whitehead interpreter. Charles Hartshorne credited Bernard Loomer with coming up with the name process philosophy. Early on, he [Loomer] was influenced by some radical empiricism and it seemed to then shift to be more purely Whiteheadian. Then the last decade of his life, he shifted back towards a more of a radical empiricism emphasis, and he had an interesting thing to say.

He said, "In some place or other, Charles Hartshorne generously credits me with possibly having baptized this mode of thought with the name 'process philosophy.' ...As a shorthand form of designation, it is popular and convenient - and misleading. It suggests that the defining characteristic of this outlook consists in the ultimacy of becoming in contrast to the classical primacy of being; but the ultimacy of becoming is only half of the story. With equal appropriateness this metaphysical viewpoint may be characterized as a 'relational' mode of thought. Except for the cumbersome quality of the phrase, the more adequate name should be 'process-relational philosophy'" (Frankenberry, p. 145). I think giving it that name brings a little bit more emphasis to the aspect of relationality that is inherent in what Whitehead was on about.

Tim: Yeah, and it brings us closer to a more full-blown systemic view where it's not just about relationships or interrelationships. It's not just about dynamism or process; it's about many things actually. Systems theory is rich with concepts within the different systems and complexity disciplines. There's a real richness there and I've tried to embody it in a very simple symbol, Source, whereas subject-object, part-whole, past-present—the present non-dual flow, but it's inquiry based. There is something about this sensing of the world, and testing hypotheses and learning.

David: Yeah, and that's part of the middle path, that's part of bringing in an empirical approach. Remain in inquiry, test hypotheses.

Tim: Yeah, very pragmatic system.

David: Whitehead acknowledged his indebtedness to James by the way, and can be very much be interpreted as a radical empiricist in many ways himself.

Tim: Interesting.

David: Some have said that when James was writing, I think his last work (*Some Problems of Philosophy*), he's talking about... trying to construct an arch, and he realized he was not going to be able to complete this arch, and he was hopeful that someone would come along

and do it. Some people, such as in a Steven Meyer presentation which I listened to a little while back. He said that it was Whitehead of all people that came along to complete that arch, which in some ways was rather surprising, because Whitehead had been associated with, as we mentioned earlier, Bertrand Russell, who was often in communication with James and they had very different views.

They (James and Russel) were very cordial and collegial but they had very different approaches; and Whitehead and Russell (also eventually) realized that their approaches differed quite a bit. In fact, there's another interesting quote, if I can find it, where Bertrand Russell said this about what Whitehead had said to him. He (Russell) said, "Whitehead said to me once, this is a fine riddle. You think the world is what it looks like in fine weather at noonday, I think it is what it seems like in the early morning when one first wakes from deep sleep." So there's Whitehead likening reality to this flux of everything being conjoined together, and it's very difficult to see where they separate out into their parts. It's an interesting way of looking at this inextricable togetherness that the world is.

Tim: Yeah. There's something unstoppable about holding that view. It pulls you along in your psychospiritual development, that the view, I mean that living systems view of integrated flux. It's not a bunch of things, it's a bunch of interrelated dynamic energy patterns. In fact in the Pointing Out Way there is the saying that the view is the meditation—that attaining a meditative skill is really about holding the view correctly. Yeah, so it may be that that living systems view that PatternDynamics promotes has its own motive force.

David: Patterns are emerging out of this... well, what James called the big blooming buzzing confusion that is, and then we articulate patterns and suddenly these things emerge.

Tim: Yeah, we learn the-

David: It helps us to see things more clearly so we can articulate, we can talk about.

Tim: Yeah, Peirce's thirdness.

David: The thirdness, yeah, back to that.

Tim: Yeah, yeah.

David: Then the cycle continues and the Source pattern is sometimes called a lemniscate where it cycles back and forth.

Tim: Yeah, that's how it's represented by that infinity symbol, it's a toroidal integrative symbol, all systems have toroidal form whether it's conceptual, abstracted or whether physical like a tree, or even human body. It's not a bad symbol (for that).

David: So if any of our listeners are curious about this, I would say again check out Tim's paper on planetary civilization where he talks about Peirce's ideas around firstness, secondness and thirdness, and illustrates with the Source pattern how that works.

Tim: Yeah, and there's also an outline in there of a depth methodology (semiotic). Bhaskar has a depth ontology and Wilber has a depth epistemology, and this is depth methodology (in the form of a depth semiotic), if you want to check that out.

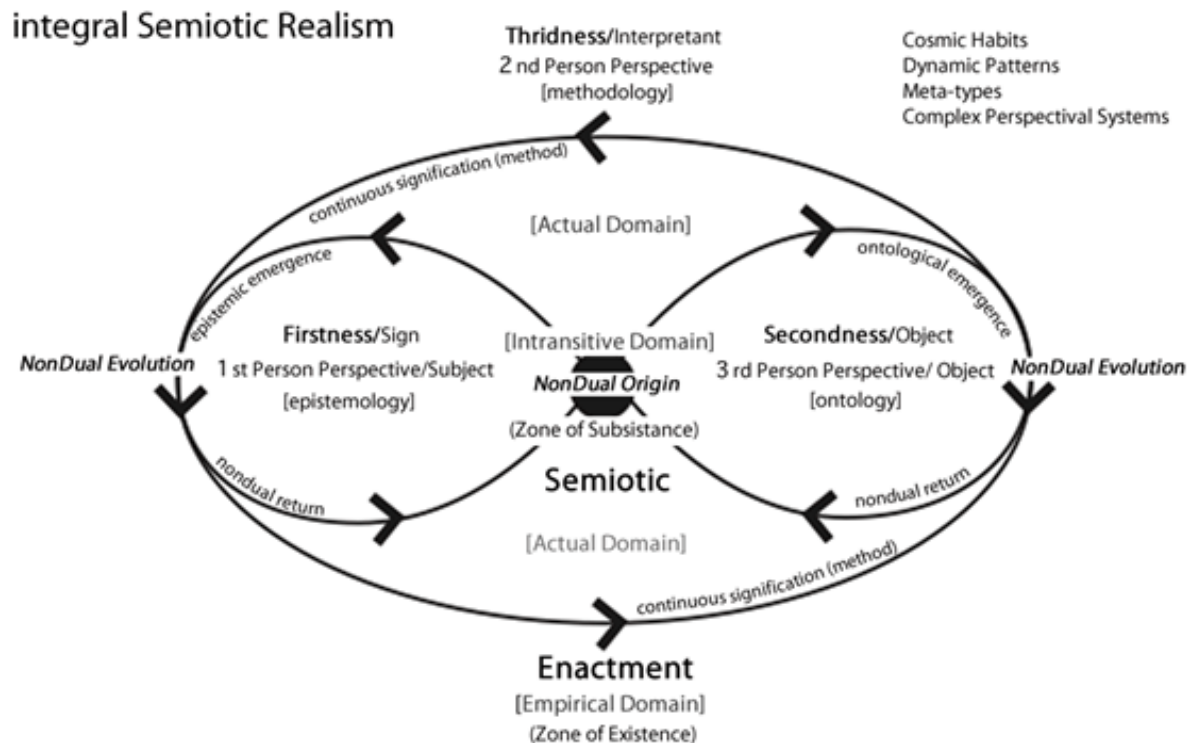


Figure 1. Diagram representing the process of integral Semiotic Realism; reproduced from *The Meaning of Planetary Civilisation: integral Rational Spirituality*, Figure 7

(https://www.academia.edu/5395136/The_Meaning_of_Planetary_Civilisation_Integral_Rational_Spirituality_and_the_Semiotic_Universe)

David: Let's move on to point number three, the embodied PatternDynamics movement practice. The idea of taking that to making it more central in ongoing PatternDynamics through practice, and bringing in some of these ideas that we're talking about that we might relate to radical empiricism more versus thridness. What do you think about that?

Tim: Yeah, it feels right. I got the same notion myself that maybe the next evolutionary phase of PatternDynamics is that it's a regular group practice where we come together to co-create a non-dual field, and learn skills, and relate more deeply, and have richer experiences. I like the notion of facilitative shamanism, working with energy flows in the inter-relational, intersubjective field using your felt sense, and that very present awareness of interrelatedness. Lack of separateness of us, our systemic nature, and learning to tweak the dynamics to get a more full-blown field.

More people plugged into it, and people who are good at that to help people who are learning those things gain that capacity, whether they're using it invisibly just in their family, or community where they can do the one, two, three, of pointing out the dynamic,

bringing a conversation there, getting agreement about changing something for the better, or hopefully changing it for the better, or whether they're at that practice session and they're using the language with other people, who can use it at a deep level and getting more meaning in their own lives. I guess it's really a hypothesis to test, isn't it? I mean the one day workshop works well enough for what it does, it's an introduction and you can have a non-dual experience, but it was never much good at helping people work with PD beyond that or useful for them beyond that.

I think having more regular practice groups and things where the community practice comes together in real space, and developing community on that basis is... where you're really touching into Source together, and how our various... Most of the people who will show up will have that overriding interest in the health of humanity, supporting each other and our work that way, and that would be interesting. That's what PD is all about, I guess, in my own mind, but its expression is its own. That's like... I just try and pay attention to what the possibilities and intentions are, and just facilitating that conversation actually using the system on itself.

David: That brings us to point number four about putting an emphasis on facilitative shamanism. I saw you do that in the one-day workshop, but you didn't really talk about what you were doing or explain how to do it. I know you've had conversations with Lauren Tenney and Terra Soma, both Lauren and Terra are trained integral facilitators. You also have mentioned that ... some I think, some influence here from Lectica?

Tim: Yeah.

David: Well, there seems to be some real potential here on learning from these different sources including PatternDynamics, and bringing it together into something that can help us move further along.

Tim: Yeah, so interesting signifiers—both “facilitative” and “shamanism” are loaded terms. I guess anyone who's interested can go to the patterndynamics.net site and listen to the podcast with Lauren Tenney called, “We are the New Shaman” (<https://patterndynamics.net/we-are-the-new-shaman/>) where we unpacked what we mean when we're using this word Shaman, and talk about the challenges and problems of cultural appropriation. What the word actually means, are there actually Shaman – but to cut a long story short, what we're talking about is working with the more subtle energy domain of archetypes, and patterns, and energies and these become more real. And PatternDynamics is definitely a tool where these can become more alive and more reified interestingly but not reified as well, and where we can be more fluid and agile in that space.

The first time I encountered this was with Diane Hamilton, I just couldn't believe it. She was facilitating a large group, 100 people. Diane Hamilton, for those people who don't know her, is a well-known figure in the integral world and founder of Integral Facilitator, but also did the Big Mind process with Genpo Roshi. She was facilitating using the Big Mind process, and it got a little heated. Big room, really challenging conversation going on, and there was one moment where somebody said something. Before I even finished

registering what that person had said, Diane had sent it back, her hands moved and her body changed. I could see her catch the energy (in the statement) and send it back. It was the most incredible thing and it just boom, it just changed everything. She couldn't have thought about it, there's no way. So this is a really high level of spontaneousness, this is another thing about Source.

There's presence, there's inquiry, notice the collapse of those three polarities but there's spontaneity. Wu Wei, the Taoists talk about it as doing without doing. You're not thinking about it, it's just happening because you can ride the flux and sense the kinks in it, and just smooth them out. When a good facilitator does that, when they can work on the level of the intellect and the intuition, and the causal presence, it's pretty fascinating to watch and be a part of. So having seen Diane do that, and to experiment a bit with that myself and talk to people like Lauren Tenney, who are really accomplished facilitators who have learned from people like Diane. Yeah, I think it's possible that you can do it in a very seamless way. You don't necessarily need to reveal what you're doing.

If it's helpful reveal it, if it's not helpful don't reveal it, but it's really about getting into the flow, that's the Source state and getting stable in that, which I think you can learn by doing repeated PatternDynamics workshops. Just learning to get in the flow, the more you do it, the easier it'll come. Once you're there, then staying in that with your present sensing and inquiry, and spontaneousness and just sense the energy (becomes easier). It'd be useful to use PD because you can name it where you need to name it even to yourself, or to the others and respond in a skilful way. If you need to neutralize something, balance something, or integrate it more fully, we can stoke it up. Whatever, you can play in that field and it's the non-dual field. It's very effective if you get it right; you can definitely achieve things you can't achieve just with your rational mind, or simple techniques or even good strategies.

It's beyond that, you're plugged right into Source. You can think of it as tactics, strategies, purpose—in those three levels. Single, double, triple-loop learning, Torbert calls it, Bill Torbert. Tactics is single-loop. You try something, it doesn't work, you try something else until something works, but if you apply strategies, or high-level principles, you don't have to try every tactic. You just try the ones that are probably most likely to work, that's a higher level of thinking for complex problem-solving. Being plugged into Source is being plugged into purpose and when you can get to Source, you get in that non-dual state. Source is composed of purpose, inquiry, spontaneity, presence, the collapse of the three polarities all into one simple sensing of the field. The flow of field.

David: Purpose, inquiry, spontaneity-

Tim: Presence.

David: Presence, yeah.

Tim: Then what we call 1) part-wholeness, 2) inside-outness/subject-objectiveness and 3) past-presentness, which is presence, but we don't have a word for subject-objectiveness. Part

wholeness we usually call... refer to as a “system”. Subject-objectness, I guess you could call “non-dual,” but I think Source is composed of all those things and probably a couple of more major concepts. If you think about it that way, then you have an early principle. You have an integration into a chunk, a simpler form, that integrates all those systems of thought and practice before it into something that's simple. So having to be present and in an inquiry state, and non-dual and systemic, you can just chunk all those things together into Source, and the felt sense of the flowing field.

That Source, plugging into that, gives you a whole range of capabilities if you develop them in particular skills like facilitation, or decision-making, which I'm a great believer in. I think the applications are really strong in collaborative problem solving, complex problem solving. So those three go together: facilitation, good decision making by groups for meeting collective challenges (complex problem solving). (This is a) pretty good set of practices to learn together as community practice to develop these skills, and to do it from a place of depth. So I would call it a place of where our primary motivation is the realization of Source. So spiritual practice will be a part of it but I'm referring to those things as more (related to) the theosphere or the causal (realm). Realization is more full-blown. I know perhaps you're challenged by that interpretation and maybe it won't work. It might be a flaw, but I think Realization is really the thing that unifies us the most, to tie back to our theme from the beginning.

David: Yeah, what brings us together, what unifies us.

Tim: Yeah, and I think traditional religious and spiritual folk could understand that Enlightened Realization of the nature of reality; and the materialist modern types come at it because it's a realist view. It's based on energy and it's winding up throughout the universe, and its expression as consciousness. Postmodern should come at it because it's relational and semiotic enough; it satisfies their need to deconstruct those rigid static hierarchies of concentrated power, and to acknowledge the notion that our values and our interest in objective constructions are ultimately are about power.

Power is another dimension to Source, you could write that one down. It's a big one. It's just the reality of social life. It is so often not talked about. It's always the part that you get to by reading between the lines. Who wants what and why. Very rarely is it talked about explicitly. I think this one got me into trouble in organizational consulting because you just can't talk about that stuff sometimes. It's too raw.

David: Power is work rate per unit of time, right? It's about that flow.

Tim: Well it's about having control of the flow. Who has control, who dictates where resources flow? Power is where you deploy the work rate at the abstract level of human organization, and the symbols we use and the structures that we create around who has power, and who wields it, where they put resources and at what rate. That one is really interesting because frankly, I think we have really poorly developed ways of dealing with power, especially amongst our leadership elite. I think they're really struggling at the planetary level of

complexity, and retreating to just taking what they can get for themselves, and finding it a little too hard to coordinate the whole in a way that's generative.

Tim: I think Globalization has been an attempt at a planetary level of organization and it's retreating, failed. We are getting more grounded in political realities again as we wrap this up, take it back to the real world. We are retreating back to more national chunks, that first foray into developing a more planetary level of organization. The EU is the probably the best expression of it, but now it's going backward at a fair old rate, just didn't get it right. Neoliberal globalization just didn't have enough problem-solving capacity at that level of complexity. That's my view, I don't know. It's an interesting place to start the next conversation maybe.

David: Yeah, and what are different interpretations of power? That's one of the patterns, the Power pattern. What is a generative version of that, Bernard Loomer wrote a great essay on two types of power (<https://www.religion-online.org/article/two-conceptions-of-power/>). So there's the power over that we're all familiar with, and there's another type of power that's a relational power.

Tim: Yeah. Well, you could say then there's both generative and pathological expressions of both those types of power. The PatternDynamics views is getting the balance right for a generative expression rather than a pathological expression in many ways. So there's types and then there's balance, these are all the things we can explore together in the PatternDynamics community practice.

David: Absolutely. Well, that I guess brings us full circle; I think we probably hit our agreed-upon time limit here for a long deep dive conversation. I really enjoyed this, Tim. Thank you so much for having this conversation!

Tim: Yeah, thanks, Dave.

Tim: I'd just like to wrap it up by saying that I hope in this conversation, for people made it all the way to the end, I hope we have articulated well enough the unifying capacity of PatternDynamics, how to learn it, and how to use it as a unifying force. We went through a lot of theory and philosophy, and took some deep dives and down some rabbit holes, and explored a lot of territory, really. I'd like people to leave with the idea that here's a discipline that can help us find what unifies us.

Tim: Thanks again for organizing this.

David: Thank you, Tim. We shall remain in touch.

Tim: Okay.