Restorative Justice Principles and Practices: Beyond Dialectics

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Abstract

The authenticity of restorative justice must be safeguarded from being compromised or adulterated by ideologies inconsistent with restorative justice values and principles, and practitioners must maintain the integrity of restorative practices being consistent with their professed restorative values and principles that shall determine their purpose, strategy, and action. The distinguishing core imperative of prevalent social justice activist movements are contrasted with that of restorative justice to illustrate their ideological incompatibility. A limited review of the historical origins and evolution of both creates a factual background for distinguishing differences in theory and practice. Activism is defined in common current usage and examined in practice for alignment or incongruence with restorative justice practices. Restorative justice principles and associated values shall be clarified that they not be compromised by the natural human tendency to react to observed injustices and social inequities with retributive intent or effect. The intention and strategy of activism concerning social issues of injustice and inequity may be characteristically retributive and incongruent with practices representing restorative values and principles. Activism acclaimed as restorative shall be examined in terms of intent and practice for being restorative or a pretense for retributive action. The discipline of engaging in personal examination of motives and self-management inside a personal commitment to restorative principles will encourage fidelity and credibility that authentic practitioners not be deceived by retributive agendas nor by their own bias and emotion, which determines the implications for practitioners engaging in restorative initiatives. Having demonstrated that restorative practices are incompatible with critical social justice theory principles both socially, politically, and personally, the paper concludes with admonitions for practitioners being restorative in the world and true to the principles they have professed.

Restorative Justice Principles and Practices: Beyond Dialectics

The author has determined to distinguish and contrast the core imperative of restorative justice practices with that of activist practices promoted by various current social movements that are informed by the dialectics of class conflict to accomplish social revolution. Rockwell (2004) writes of Herbert Marcuse and Franz Neumann defining the Hegelian dialectic "…as the basis for determining the role of revolutionary *thought* in social transformation" (Rockwell, 2004, p. 143). A complex and abstract concept often difficult to discern from Hegel's original writings, Marcuse and Neumann clarify.

> The dialectical conception of change was first elaborated in Hegel's philosophy.
> It reversed the traditional logical setting of the problem by taking change as the
> very form of existence, and by taking existence as a totality of objective
> contradictions. Every particular form of existence contradicts its content, which
> can develop only through breaking this form and creating a new one in which the
> content appears in a liberated and more adequate form. Full liberation and
> adequacy is only reached in the totality of all forms, when this totality is
> comprehended and made the realization of reason. Such realization is, according
> to Hegel, the result and good of the historical process, and is identical with the
> achievement of free and rational forms of state and society…. (as cited in
> Rockwell, 2004, p. 143).

The very operational principle of dialectics observed in the "historical process" that results in "full liberation and adequacy" is conflict and a potentially violent process.

Restricted in scope of historical and philosophical research, this presentation avoids an in-depth or expansive historical examination of the origins and historical evolution of the

concept of "class struggle" or "class conflict" as the imperative operating principle throughout the numerous iterations and mutations of Marxism. For "class struggle" the Merriam-Webster dictionary provides a sufficiently broad definition: "opposition of and contention between social or economic classes" ("class struggle," 2018), which in Marxist and neo-Marxist ideologies is a conflict struggle against the status quo. A cursory review of pertinent theories and associated prominent philosophers is provided for establishing recognized concepts that inform the strategic organized exploitation of conflict through practical activism as the means for resolving social inequities and injustices. By the very definition of "activism," the exploitation of conflict is intended: "a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue" ("activism," 2018), which would either be enacted through advocacy or protest in adversarial rather than cooperative processes. Consistent with the definition, if the vigorous action initiated by an organized movement supporting or opposing one side of a controversial issue intentionally evokes antagonism for promoting conflict to advance a political or social agenda, the principle and practice are consistent with the core imperative and strategy of Marxist dialectics.

The author does not intend to argue the merits of Marxist theories, ideologies or recognize beneficial contributions to social discourse on justice and injustice, such as narrative processes, nor to argue those of various positions opposing Marxism—neither of which are being advocated—but to distinguish the differential *modus operandi* of exploiting conflict in contrast to that of resolving conflict through restorative justice practices. Discernment of the distinct core differences preserves restorative justice practices and protects against the inadvertent assimilation of restorative justice into a retributive agenda and practices that in theory and strategy expressly intend to promote conflict.

Terms such as "social justice" and "fairness" and "equality," as responses to actual or perceived injustices of discrimination and oppression and exploitation, reflect fundamental values that all would share or would want to believe are shared. For their sensibilities, compassionate people would be most moved and become committed to standing for those values being realized. None are likely more concerned nor committed than restorative justice practitioners. The language itself, however, may exploit these concerns for appealing to the sympathy of those easily beguiled into retributive activism that would create or intensify conflicts for the deconstructive revolutionary purpose of destroying or displacing any considered offensive cultural institution rather than promoting action that respects and preserves restorative values and outcomes. The strategy manipulates those who may easily or unwittingly justify violating their own personal values for participating in practices that promote conflict for retributive ends. Succumbing to the temptation to justify the means by the ends results in blatant hypocrisy, compromises the integrity of the restorative practitioner, and can damage the credibility of restorative justice itself.

Restorative Justice Values and Principles in Conflict with the Conflict of Dialectics

Although seductively attractive for appealing to legitimate humanitarian concern for resolving social inequities of oppression and domination, activist movements induced by the various Marxist iterations that include critical theory, social justice, distributive justice, structural justice, and intersectionality characteristically engage in retributive practices that, consistent with Hegelian-Marxist philosophy, intentionally exacerbate conflicts and are incompatible with restorative justice principles and practices. The seduction for engaging in conflict appeals to the anger experienced in outrage that prompts participation in organized activism. Pertinent

comments from the conclusion of a thorough mixed-methods empirical study by Stürmer and

Simon (2009) are highlighted:

> the true potential of anger in social movement participation lies precisely in…the
>
> link between individual emotional experiences and the politicization of collective
>
> identity…. This process ensures that anger unfolds its energizing potential in
>
> mindful and purposeful actions in the service of the collective. …it is thus
>
> certainly an important task for entrepreneurs of social movements to direct the
>
> translation of feelings of anger about collective injustice into politicized collective
>
> identity…. (p. 704)

The study demonstrated the obvious intention and effort to more effectively elicit and

direct anger for organizing social movements to generate and exacerbate class conflict. The

material dialectic process or any formulation of Marxist dialectic exploits conflict itself. Conflict

provides the impetus for effecting change.

Activism Intentions and Practices

The strategic method developed for community organizing published in 1971 by Saul

Alinsky in *Rules for Radicals*, and whose thinking is aligned with Marxist ideology, is intuitively

aligned with the validating study much later conducted by Stürmer and Simon. "Alinsky became

a community organizer by seeking to remove power from those with it and transferring it to

those without…. Alinsky focused on developing and cultivating conflict between groups using

unconventional and often even controversial means" (Mackie & Liebowitz, 2013, p. 77), which

is recognized as the "conflict community practice model" (p.74). The "rules" consist of 13

tactics for community organizing considered "controversial" for being in distinct contrast to

conventional community organizing as guerilla tactics would be to traditional warfare. The

opposition is considered the "enemy" who is intended to be demoralized and whose resistance is to be rendered ineffective by engaging to "…create confusion, fear, and trepidation within their ranks and disrupt their sense of confidence" (pp. 77-78). With complete disregard and disrespect for the opposition, the model effectively creates and exacerbates conflict through deception, ridicule, persistent threat, and unrelenting pressure. The techniques of Alinsky's model represent the epitome of the most extreme exploitation of conflict for seizing and transferring power from the opposition, referred to as "the enemy."

Michael Eichler further developed an alternative approach known as the "consensus community practice model" (Mackie & Liebowitz, 2013, p. 74) in 2007 that initially had been developed by Beck and Eichler in 2000. Eichler, in contrast to Alinsky's ideology, asserts the following:

> Power does not have to be redistributed but it can be grown, mutual self-interest provides a powerful tool for change, people often behave in reasonable ways when given reasonable choices, and alliances that support social justice goals can be formed between people of divergent backgrounds. (as cited in Mackie & Liebowitz, 2013, p. 80).

Intending to align the "self-interest of community members to the self-interest of others in pursuit of a common goal" (p. 80), Eichler's model represents an approach consistent with valuing social capital, which Putnam (2001) paraphrases as the interconnectedness of individuals in a network of relationships (as cited in Wachtel, 2016, p. 1). The model also aligns with restorative justice practices that respect all interests and the common ground of shared values. "Eichler's consensus model for community organizing focuses on the shared experiences, needs, and desires of all stakeholders…" and "…on identifying elements of strength, value, and agreement among otherwise divergent constituencies to resolve conflict" (p. 81). Eichler

presents eight rules for negotiating a consensus that are directed by values also consistent with

those of restorative justice practices, which identifies the approach to community organization

activism as being distinctly restorative in respect of having rectified the offenses of injustices

rather than being retributive as is characteristic of the prevalent approaches intent on creating

conflict for revolutionary purposes. Mackie and Liebowitz conclude, "Although the conflict and

consensus models do not share much in the way of tactics and approaches, each possesses

postmodern concepts, and understanding this connectedness may help…more appropriately

apply strategies and tactics when engaged in organizing activities" (p. 84). Utilization of the

strategy and tactics of either the conflict model or the consensus model is considered contingent

upon either the unwillingness or the willingness of the identified oppressor; however, even the

discriminating use of conflict, regardless of the justification, remains retributive and in conflict

with the values, principles, and practices of restorative justice.

Restorative justice, rather, focuses on resolving the destructive impact suffered from the

violation of social inequities and injustices as well as from criminal offenses committed and is

relevant for intervening in interrupting the cycle of retribution that perpetuates conflicts that is

characteristic of Saul Alinsky's methods. Beck (2012), acknowledging and paraphrasing John

Paul Ledrach (2003), asserted the following on transforming communities and community

building:

> Restorative justice supports the idea that transformation can occur when
>
> individuals interact with each other from a place of shared values. …what is
>
> needed is to change the structure of the relationship so that creative responses and
>
> solutions are found. (as cited in Beck, 2012, p. 397)

Ledrach reflects a key concept of restorative justice in the principle of engaging "with" people,

best accomplished in recognition of "shared values," rather than engaging people with retributive

intent and a spirit of revenge for exacting punishment to then either dominate and control or to

disempower and make dependent by usurping their personal responsibility. This dynamic is best

illustrated in the Social Discipline Window matrix of four comparative quadrants, adapted by

Wachtel and McCold from work developed by Glaser in 1964 and Braithwaite in 1984 (Wachtel,

2016, p. 3). The matrix depicts interactions as engaging "with" others, acting in doing "to"

others, and acting in doing "for" others, with inaction indicating disengagement and neglect (see

Appendix A).

In response to conflict, restorative justice establishes three fundamental principles as

"pillars": (a) "harm and related needs" of all the legitimate "stakeholders" that include victims,

offenders, and the community; (b) "obligations" resulting from harm caused, for which offenders

are responsible and accountable for reparation, and addressing the "causes" of offending

behavior also considering "offenders as victims"; and (c) "engagement or participation"

preferring "processes that are collaborative and inclusive" of all stakeholders with "outcomes

that are mutually agreed upon rather than imposed" (pp. 33-38, 42-44). Depicted graphically as

a wheel (see Appendix B), these principles best illustrate the overarching value of restorative

justice, according to Howard Zehr, the value of respect (Zehr, 2015, p. 49). Although restorative

justice acknowledges any number of potentially shared values, including "interconnectedness" as

well as "particularity," or "individuality" that also "appreciates diversity," the most significant

"attribute" of restorative justice is encouraging people to "explore" shared "values together" (pp.

48-49). Howard Zehr most eloquently expresses the importance of respect as the core imperative

of restorative justice:

If I had to put restorative justice into one word, I would choose respect: respect

for all—even those who are different from us, even those who seem to be our

enemies. Respect reminds us of our interconnectedness but also of our

differences. Respect insists that we balance concern for all parties. Respect can

help us to recognize and address unjust hierarchies of power.

If we pursue justice as respect, treating all equally, we will do justice

restoratively.

If we do not respect others, we will not do justice restoratively, no matter

how earnestly we adopt the principles.

The value of respect underlies restorative justice principles and must guide

and shape their application. (p. 49)

Diametrically opposed and distinct, then, from the core imperative of dialectical Marxism and

neo-Marxism in critical theories intent on deconstruction of established power structures by

employing strategies and tactics that exploit conflict for revolution, the core imperative of

restorative justice intends to construct resolutions to conflict in agreements respective of all

interests and positions.

If restorative justice initiatives are intended to be considered activism, then restorative

justice practitioners must be responsible for the prevailing perception of activist endeavors being

experienced as exacerbating conflict for accomplishing retributive outcomes. Websites that

claim restorative justice as focus may also promote activism that is definitively retributive for

espousing strategies and tactics that promote conflict ("Restorative Justice for Activists," 2018),

or engage in tactics that may occur as inflammatory ("Tag: Restorative Justice," 2018). The

common perception of activism must be redefined and transformed. Restorative justice activism

must be presented in a responsible manner to not risk alienating stakeholders who might be willing to engage in a restorative process. If not, practitioners risk violating the fundamental values of restorative justice and compromising the success of potential restorative works.

Historical Perspective

In the 1970s restorative justice emerged in North America as a faith-driven initiative for peace first in Ontario, Canada and then in Indiana implementing "victim-offender encounters" that eventually "became models for programs throughout the world. Restorative justice theory developed initially from these particular efforts" (Zehr, 2015, p.20). Precursor religious, predominantly Mennonite, and indigenous cultural traditions, including native peoples of North American and New Zealand contributed "important restorative elements" that "reach far back into human history" (pp. 20-21). These restorative elements are recognized as *shalom*, the Hebrew concept of "all-rightness," or wholeness and peace, in relationship with others, with God, and with the environment and as *whakapapa,* a concept of the Maori of New Zealand that recognizes the central importance of relationships, which is also recognized by the Navajo in the word *hozho*, by African peoples in the Bantu word *ubuntu*, and by the Tibetan Buddhists as *tendrel* (p. 31). "Restorative justice echoes ancient and indigenous practices employed in cultures all over the world, from Native American and First Nation Canadian to African, Asian, Celtic, Hebrew, Arab and many others" (Wachtel, 2013, p. 2). Applications have included the creation of "communities of care," "collaborative processes called *conferences* and *circles,*" the "family group conference" in New Zealand, known as "family group decision making" in North America, and, in Australia, the "restorative conference," "community accountability conference" or "victim-offender conference" in addressing criminal offenses (p. 2). The expansion of

restorative justice practices globally would indicate the effectiveness of the practices and demonstrates the satisfaction of all stakeholders in conflict being successfully resolved.

The concept of dialectics, first identified as a form of argument used by Plato, was modified by the German idealist philosopher Georg Hegel for resolving contradictory positions in conflict, as the thesis and antithesis for deriving the synthesis. Hegel poetically illustrates the process:

> The bud disappears when the blossom breaks through, and we might say that the
>
> former is refuted by the latter; in the same way when the fruit comes, the blossom
>
> may be explained to be a false form of the plant's existence, for the fruit appears
>
> as its true nature in place of the blossom. The ceaseless activity of their own
>
> inherent nature makes these stages moments of an organic unity, where they not
>
> merely do not contradict one another, but where one is as necessary as the other;
>
> and constitutes thereby the life of the whole. (Hegel, 2005, pp. 2-3)

The dialectical method, whether material or ideological, was adopted as central to Marxist philosophy for effecting radical social and political change in society by the exploitation of conflict, as Marx and Engels observed, "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles" (Marx & Engels, 1848, p. 2). In 1845 Marx clearly had asserted that intention in "thesis 11" of "Theses on Feuerbach" stating, "…the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (Marx, K, 1969, p. 15). In 1976 French sociologist Lucien Goldmann acknowledged the enduring dialectic of Hegel in Marxism, "...Hegelian categories are all recovered in Marxism; and it is no accident that they were reactualized in Europe around, say, the years 1917-23: first by Lenin in the *Philosophic Notebooks*, secondly by Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness*, and thirdly, I believe,

somewhat later in Gramsci's concretely philosophical analyses..." (as cited in Anderson, 1993, p. 243). Significantly influenced by dialectics, critical social theory was developed out of the original and successive generations of the Frankfurt School, or Institute for Social Research founded in 1923, expanded, and evolved into various neo-Marxist criticisms of society by conceiving other critical theories and strategies for emancipating oppressed social classes. Members of the Frankfurt School included Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Friedrich Pollock, Erich Fromm, Otto Kirchheimer, Leo Löwenthal, Franz Neumann, Henryk Grossman, Jürgen Habermas, Claus Offe, Axel Honneth, Walter Benjamin, Oskar Negt, Alfred Schmidt, and Albrecht Wellmer (Corradetti, n.d.). Antonio Gramsci, an Italian neo-Marxist who promoted revolution through cultural exploitation rather than material, or economic, conflicts (Piccone, 1976), and Hungarian neo-Marxist György Lukács (Stahl, 2018), significantly influenced contemporary Western Marxism as well as did French philosophers Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault of the Frankfurt School.

Maravall (1976), writes on three predominant Marxist concepts most influential in Western culture termed Hegelian Marxism, introduced by Hegel, structural Marxism, introduced by Althusser, and Marxism of the superstructure, introduced by Gramsci. In the Gramscian theory of the "superstructure," the dominant classes maintain dominance and control through the cultural hegemony of "conformism and active consensus" induced by means of "a consistent dominant ideology as a factor of social integration" (Maravall, 1976, p. 25), a worldview reinforced as the cultural norm. The hegemony [\ hi-ˈje-mə-nē , -ˈge- ; ˈhe-jə-ˌmō-nē \] is defined as "the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group" ("hegemony," 2018). The "dominant classes" generate a "concept of reality" that legitimizes the societal institutions. Developing a "revolutionary consciousness" that questions and challenges

established ideologies perpetuated by institutions maintained by the dominant class drives

"revolutionary conflict" (pp. 25). The critical strategy employed by these theories intends to

deconstruct the "dominant ideology" represented in the normative institutions and social

structures of the status quo hegemony as manifestations of actual or perceived oppressive power

relationships.

Maintaining the Integrity of Authentic Restorative Justice Practices

The perspective of restorative justice practices has provided a paradigm for breaking the

offense-retaliation retributive cycle of conflict at every level of society, from the interpersonal to

the community, whether introducing alternative approaches to the state-sanctioned revenge of the

traditional penitentiary system, intervening in issues of bullying in schools, or for resolving

conflicts between classes in inequitable power structures in society. Any purported restorative

justice initiative that promotes the use of force or coercion or justifies conflicts between classes

or against dominant power structures would eventually corrupt and render the restorative intent

impotent and indistinguishable from the intention of retributive justice to reestablish equity by

punishing and shaming. Refocusing attention upon the intended outcome of conflict resolution

as the essential objective for the possibility of restoring *shalom* in all human relationships

reinforces the distinction between restoration and retribution in practice. McAlinden (2008)

distinguishes four "common aims" of restorative practice that can be distilled as "…engaging

with offenders to help them appreciate the consequences of their actions and the impact they

have had on their victims; encouraging appropriate forms of reparation by offenders toward their

victim…or the wider community; seeking reconciliation between the victim and offender…; and

the reintegration of the offender within the community" (p. 300) The wording utilized by

McAlinden identifies operational strategies of "engaging with," "encouraging," "seeking

reconciliation," and "reintegration," neither of which compel coercion by threat of sanction or fear of punishment for attaining the restorative objective. Wachtel (2016) encapsulates the intention of restorative practices, of which restorative justice practices are included in his writing, "The aim of restorative practices is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships. This statement identifies both proactive (building relationships and developing community) and reactive (repairing harm and restoring relationships) approaches" (p. 4). Community can neither be restored nor developed by inciting division and distrust with further conflict. Society will neither be restored nor built upon distrust for fearing the threat of harm. Harm cannot be repaired by inflicting further harm in retributive retaliation.

Managing personal bias and reactions to witnessed trauma and injustices that each restorative practitioner unavoidably experiences becomes paramount to the practice of restorative principles being authentic and not becoming a pretense for engaging in retributive practices that perpetuate the role-reversal cycles of conflict. When the oppressed subjugate the oppressor, then the oppressor becomes the oppressed, and the cycle of revolution continues as history again repeats itself—even if not in a generation, it shall eventually in future centuries as it has in the past. Stillwell, Baumeister, and Del Priore (2008) assert from a credible two-part qualitative study that revenge is a reactive attempt at "restoring equity" when an offense or injustice has been committed or perceived. "Each seeks a fair and equitable solution, although what one party believes to be fair, the other party sees as excessive. The result, then, may be an escalating cycle of revenge, stemming from ongoing and spiraling attempts to restore equity" (p. 253). Because the original perpetrator or offending entity may perceive the retaliation, or retribution, as excessive or unjust, "…disputes can persist through many cycles" (p. 254). Because of this

identified dynamic, the term "restorative activism" can conjure fear for the threat anticipated in confronting the antagonism of an adversarial process. Given the current definition and the commonly experienced connotation of the term "activism" as adversarial contrasted with the core value of respect and imperative of conflict resolution in restorative justice, the term occurs as an oxymoron. Activism that intends to increase awareness may inadvertently create the perception of impending conflict and retribution. Established interests judged as guilty or invalid or offensive would increase resistance to perceived potential conflict in preparation to defend the cultural institutions constructed upon longstanding values, to protect livelihoods and the familiar ways of life, and to even secure survival of a now threatened existence, of which the movement for forced reparations in South Africa is exemplary of retribution in the name of restoration.

Unjust and inequitable "power structures" are inhabited by human beings as much in fear of their threatened existence as are those whose suffering disenfranchisement and deprivation are endured as intolerable. As human beings in the practice of restorative principles inspired by the core value of respect, practitioners appeal to shared values as the common ground. The author has facilitated numerous workshops for organizations in which the priority for establishing common ground to resolve conflicts and negotiate agreements for creating new futures required every participant expressing, and having captured in public view, the personal values experienced as most important to each. Invariably, after some considerable time, the values expressed were recognized as commonly shared and most important to all. With respect to potential terms of an agreement, the work in earnest became that of deconstructing the practices driven by values contradictory to those professed by all to be most important for either being misaligned or in conflict. That created accountability without fear of threat. A similar approach that illustrates a dramatic restorative intervention was undertaken in South Africa at the Lonmin

Plc mining company in 2004, located two hours northwest of Johannesburg and west of Pretoria between Rustenburg and the community of Marikana.

In *The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of your Organization and Your Life*, endorsed by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan (2009) describe the most extreme of conditions at Lonmin. Working conditions in the darkness were deplorable for safety with frequent debilitating injuries and numerous deaths. Employees lived in squalor among the nearby communities of shacks. The platinum mining operation was not only failing but was fraught with the despair of hopelessness, violence among unions and the threat of escalating violence from unheard and disenfranchised workers, and death from an HIV infection rate that was 25% among the 25,000 employees. Lonmin was a ticking timebomb. In the face of antagonism and animosity, a two-day meeting was convened in the heart of the worst of the community of Wonderkop for the hearing of all grievances from all those deemed to be leaders in the company, among the tribes, from the labor unions, and from the surrounding communities. The worst of the worst was aired—and heard and acknowledged. Eventually, in the presence of such profound respect and willingness to collaborate, a new future began to emerge as people began to spontaneously create what they wanted for the company and for their mutual success as stakeholders. The mission and values statement (Lonmin Plc, 2018) crafted by the community of engaged stakeholders inspires and illustrates the potential of implementing the values and principles of restorative practices without resort to exploiting conflict for change. Lonmin Plc has become transformed as a model mining company ranking third in the world.

Unlike a fundamental assumption that differences are irreconcilable for which conflict and subjugation are considered to provide the only viable solution, characteristic of Marxist ideologies, engaging in collaborative efforts that alter the "structure of the relationship" allows

for "creative responses and solutions" (Beck, 2012, p. 397) to recognized problems of inequities and injustice. Collaborative efforts based upon shared values produce results of resolved conflict, reconciliation, and restoration of harm and damaged relationships whereas threatening retribution further polarizes stakeholders. Only division and hostility result from the disrespectful impugning, mocking, and disparaging of those with differing perspectives, whose values and interests at stake are thereby invalidated. For the restorative justice practitioner who would claim to adhere to restorative values and principles, such inconsistent conduct, whether public or private, constitutes a transgression that betrays hypocrisy. The claim becomes a pretense for promoting class conflict rather than a beacon light for engaging all stakeholders with the respect and positive regard required for seeking resolutions in respect of all interests voiced regardless of presumed legitimacy. Howard Zehr was asked whether he saw as compatible or incompatible the undergirding values of restorative justice practices and those values inherent in the strategies and practices employed by social justice activist groups that intend to create or exacerbate conflict as the means to effecting societal change. Dr. Zehr responded, "I believe there is a place for confrontation if, as Dr. ML King advocated, it is done in a spirit of love and with the goal of building a healthy community" (H. Zehr, personal communication, April 28, 2018). At the heart of the challenge, then, becomes, in Zehr's words, that of acting in "a spirit of love" equally in regard to those occurring as offenders or as the opposition in a conflict and with the "goal of building a healthy community," whereas, the natural human emotional response to witnessed trauma and injustice, according to Stürmer and Simon (2009), is outrage and anger, which would be channeled for recruiting participation in the activism of an antagonistic social movement. Restorative activism, then, unless rigorously, clearly, and explicitly defined as being non-adversarial, could create cause for confusion and concern.

Distinguishing retributive intent from restorative intent in any action is of crucial importance. Restorative practitioners must approach and intervene in conflicts from a perspective of respect for the voices of all concerned, both with acknowledgment and validation of all concerns expressed. Respectful acknowledgment authenticates a concern. Validation does not endorse a concern but, rather, recognizes the concern as valid to the stakeholder and encourages engaged participation. Advocacy for either one or another of parties to a conflict or engaging in activism on behalf of one and against another may promote a cause of social justice but not restoration. Even reparation sought in the name of restorative justice, if forced and not negotiated by willing participants not under coercion, essentially constitutes a threatened assault against the interests of one on behalf of the other as retribution, which has occurred, such as in South Africa, and compounds harm with increased conflict and unresolved resentment.

Coerced reparations without willing collaborative negotiation perpetuates conflict and the multiplication of harm done regardless of the justification. In simplest terms, the act constitutes retribution as "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Matthew 5:38, English Standard Version). Restoration may not mean reparation but rather reconciliation and creating a new agreement for the future in which the needs and interests of all affected are accommodated. Such situations are more complex than may so easily and best be disentangled. Even a one-time offender is likely to have been victimized in the past, which is often never considered. Just as in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth, who, while sleepwalking, continuously tries to wash imagined blood from her hands and mutters, "what's done cannot be undone" (Shakespeare, trans. 1904, 5.1.74-75), neither can the past of history be unraveled to undo the first offense at the beginning of time. Rather than creating more conflict and harm in reversing roles and victimizing the offender or providing the victim the sanctioned revenge that is never

acknowledged as sufficient to have restored what has been lost or damaged, the best option is creating a new future established in new negotiated agreements as was accomplished at Lonmin Plc. That occurs as restorative.

Restorative justice, if true to its own principles, occurs as necessarily advocating for the resolution of the conflict itself, respective of the interests and needs of all stakeholders, and simultaneously requires accountability for any offenses recognized to have been committed, according to Zehr (2015). Authenticity demands of practitioners the acknowledgment of personal biases and positions without permitting either the endorsement or the condemnation of the perspectives and positions involved, which requires an objectivity that can only be achieved by self-management, absolute clarity about restorative principles and values, and an uncompromising commitment to the multilateral resolution of experienced harms.

Implications for the Restorative Practitioner

The natural human response to the distress of witnessing injustice or trauma is outrage. As would affect most, such distress subjects the proponents of restorative justice practices to the risk of compromising the integrity of both values, principles, and practice by espousing the principles or engaging in the practices of movements that are retributive in intent and effect. With the foundation of restorative justice compromised in practice, "restorative practices" itself, in name, would become a pretense for the same historically cyclical dynamic of retribution. Perceived as a pretense for justifying and promoting conflict for social and political revolution, the credibility of both practitioners and the social science is risked.

Regardless of personal political or social beliefs and the corresponding biases, the restorative practitioner must be rigorously honest in self-examination to remain true to restorative principles if the practices are to remain authentic. The future of restorative justice

depends upon the clarity practitioners develop and maintain about the relevancy of restorative principles as the singular alternative to other social models that do adequately and accurately describe the condition of human behavior throughout history but perpetuate retributive responses and provide nothing to resolve conflict. Regardless of the context in which conflict occurs, restorative action necessitates demonstrating explicit respect for the relevance of concern expressed by all voices. Facebook posts impugning one political party or disparaging public or private persons, labeling or name-calling in conversations that may be overheard, or public statements issued that occur as disrespectful not only damage a practitioner's credibility as being restorative but may demoralize and discourage those whose encounter with the values and principles of restorative justice had been inspiring. Nothing occurs as more discouraging than witnessing the spirit of such animosity and malice expressed by those respected as restorative practitioners. Without a spirit of love, or at least that of respect, separating the deeds from the doers is most difficult if not utterly inauthentic. The spirit of restorative practices stands to resolve conflict for realizing justice. Negotiated agreements that accommodate future interests for all stakeholders will advance restorative justice practices and provide the needed answers for transforming the inhumanity of humanity.

Summary

Conflict and the threat of conflict saturate society with a magnified consciousness of inequities and injustices whether actual or perceived. The dialectical paradigm for effecting revolutionary change intends to exploit conflict, as its core imperative, for resolving social injustice. Intrinsically violent, the process employs retributive means for accomplishing retributive justice outcomes through deconstruction of the institutional and cultural status quo, regardless of ensuing damage and harm. The core imperative of restorative justice demands

respect for all stakeholders that facilitates participation for developing consensus rather than deconstruction and revolution through exacerbating conflict. Practitioners represent the values and principles of restorative justice in all contexts, both public and personal, if the paradigm is to have credibility. If not, restorative initiatives shall be construed as a sham and pretense for advancing retributive agendas that would evoke fear and hostility. The resulting provoked resistance would sabotage the declared restorative intention to fulfill on successfully addressing harm and the needs of all affected in a conflict, securing accountability for the obligations that ensue from offenses committed, engaging in collaborative processes that are inclusive, and involving all stakeholders in the spirit of love with respect for all.

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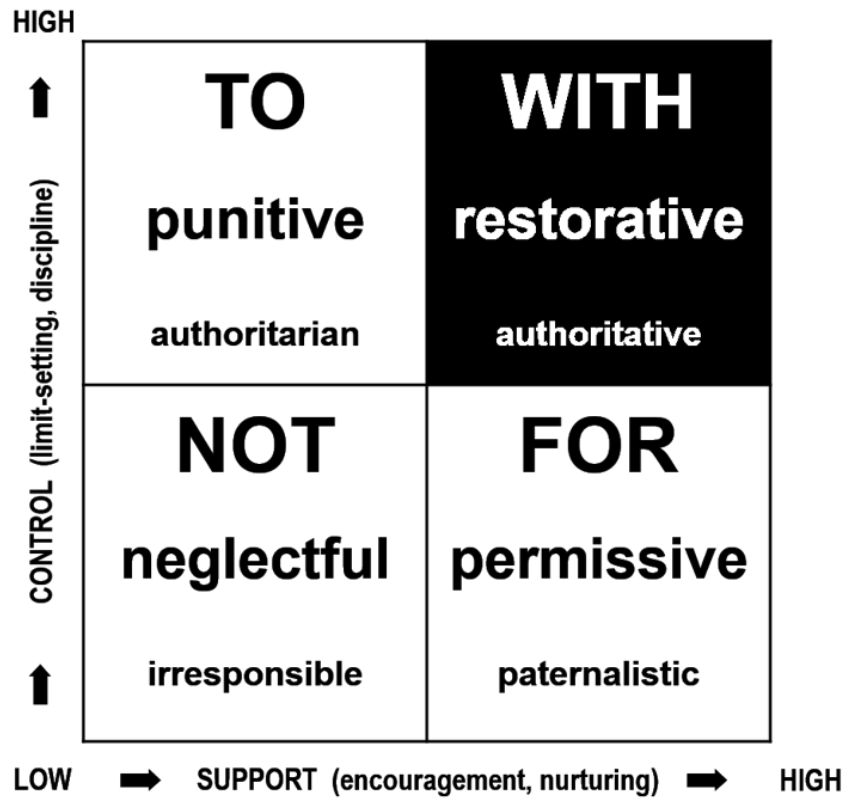New York, NY: Good Books.

Appendix A

Figure 1. Social Discipline Window. Adapted from "Defining Restorative," by T. Wachtel, 2016

(https://www.iirp.edu/pdf/Defining-Restorative.pdf). Licensed under the Creative Commons

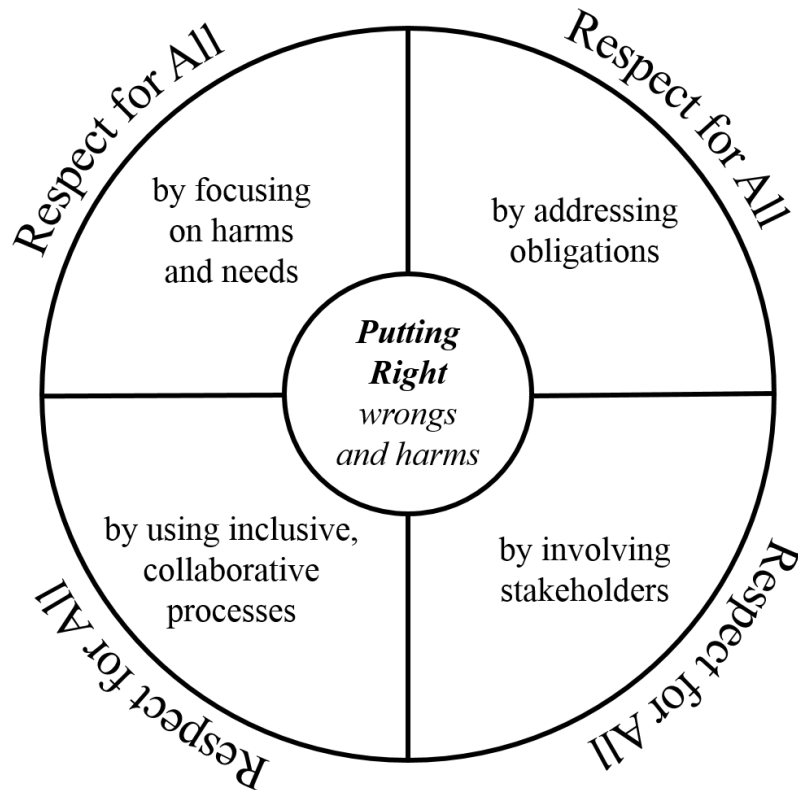Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 License.

Appendix B

Figure 2. Restorative Justice Depicted as a Circle in the Context of Respect. Adapted from The

little book of restorative justice: Revised and updated. In *The big book of restorative*

justice: Four classic justice & peacebuilding books in one volume (p. 46), by H. Zehr,

2015, New York, NY: Good Books.