

**Community is back – are we ready?**

**Soul, soul-force and ‘soul of the world’: community work with hospitality, hostility and holism**

**By Dr Peter Westoby, Senior Lecturer in Community Development,  
The University of Queensland, School of Social Sciences, 2015**

### **Introduction**

Following your acknowledgment of [Logan] country I also acknowledge Jagera and Turrbal country, where I come from, and particularly the Brisbane Council of Elders.

I am going to speak using stories and theory, so I hope I get the balance right; some of you will enjoy the stories, and others the theory, and some maybe even both. I’d like to avoid the practice-theory divide (as per Lynda’s address) – we desperately need both.

I would like to go on a brief journey of exploring how we, as social and community practitioners, or active citizens (for community work is a practice of both citizens and professionals), understand our work in the light of some of the key contemporary challenges facing us and the world. And I come to this challenge through the lens of being a community development practitioner and engaged scholar. My stories today also come from contexts I do both practice and research – Vanuatu, Uganda and South Africa.

I’ll start by reminding people that whatever the definition of CD (and I am not really into definition), the core movements within community development are:

- I to We

- From private pain to collective public action
- A feeling of powerlessness, being alone, to some sense of power through cooperative efforts.

This ‘fantasy’ or myth (one I’ve staked my professional and personal work on being true) is what makes our practice such a powerful, if also a humble methodology of social change. It is a process of weaving connections (that exist organically or by creating them through intentional work) and enabling people to make sense of what is felt to be private (a material need/a suffering of violence) but which is in fact a public, or social issue, and in that meaning-making process then organising to take collective action on that issue.

In recognising the base of those three core movements of CD today I want to use the language of soul (something I have been meditating on for some years and more recently have been writing about) and consider *three other movements*, also named in the title of this talk as three practices. Those key practices and movements include: (i) the practice of ‘hospitality’ – or the movement towards soul and ‘other’; (ii) the practice of ‘hostility’ – or the movement of ‘soul-force’ (a term of Gandhi’s); and (iii) the practice of ‘holism’ – or the movement towards what depth psychologist James Hillman called the ‘soul of the world’.

Each of these practices also represents a response to a contemporary crisis. Hospitality represents the response to an emergent social crisis in which people are deeply alienated from one another, more ever present to the *social factory of work and consumption* with less energy available to weave the *social web of community*. Hostility represents a response to a political crisis, which is in fact underpinned by an economic one in which the current vision for ‘the economy’ has few political opponents (that is, an era of what is known as ‘post-politics’) –

and yet desperately needs some. We live at a time where our Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull can say something like (and he did say this), “The goal of our economic policy is economic growth and an increase in our living standards” - a reasonable statement you might say, a common sense idea. However, this is not the case – it is highly problematic to think of the goal of economic policy having no relevance to public welfare, social goods and ecological realities; and the fact that such a statement can be made and elicit no public reaction reflects the lack of contestation or hostility in terms of public debate in policy making. We have settled for the liberal peace, one that certainly does not work for the poor, nor for many – and is actually a war against the margins (human and non-human). Finally, holism represents a response to the ecological crisis that threatens the possibility of any sustainable peaceful future as we consume the equivalent of 1,6 planets – and in Australia 3 planets.

However, in making a case for hospitality, hostility and holism I also engage the language, or idea of soul, because I do not think that our way out of these social, ecological and political crises is *just* more social/ecological/political activity or activism (albeit some ‘delicate activism’ is indeed needed). In fact, in some ways the crises require a careful and deeper look at the *source of the problem* – that is us – people – and the deeper issues at play within and without us. Hence the use of the idea of soul. Obviously even the language of soul might be met with unease by some of you, stirring memories of overly religious connotations of the word. But I ask you to hang there recognising that even Tagore noted in the mid last century that (and I quote): ‘I have not convinced a single sceptic that he has a soul, or that moral beauty has greater value than material power.’ So I’m certainly not here to try and convince you we have a soul.

## **Part 1: The practice of hospitality – the movement to soul and ‘other’**

For leading Jungian analysts and depth psychologists Thomas Moore and James Hillman, soul represents our individual and collective *depths*, what’s underground in our lives, what often trips us up, what is ‘lurking’ under the surface, what is latent. That’s how I’m going to use the term. It’s not a *metaphysical thing*, but a *metaphoric way of thinking about a perspective* of the world and life – that Michael Leunig most clearly embodies in his work.

In this tradition I would like to suggest, as does Hillman, that we live in troubled times because we are living *manic* lives – (i.e. beyond fast lives). Manic means we lack interiorisation; we are moving so fast through the world caught in a world pool of wilful action, activity and activism that we are unable to ‘observe’ clearly and therefore see, and be present to what is unfolding (within, without, and certainly below – in those depths of our selves, our culture – let’s just say “we can’t see the duck”).

There are huge costs to this – a *quantity* of effort and work in contrast to *quality*; and an emphasis on *doing* rather than *being*. And with that cost, unable to be present, struggling to create an interior life as we are bombarded by exterior stimulation and a hyper info-cyber space, we are unable to come to our deeper selves, and in turn to others, *and especially the more invisible others*. In fact easily distracted from our deeper constellation of selves we become very vulnerable to the power of corporate advertising that directs desire towards grasping things, objects, and experiences, as opposed to nurturing relationships, and being the social creatures that we are.

This soul-fact brings us then to the practice of hospitality – a soul move towards ‘the other’ – a practice, along with dialogue, that is antithetical to the rationality

and manic movement that underpins modern, or hyper-modern capitalist life.

Hospitality is:

- the welcome, and being present to the stranger, the ‘other’, as the philosopher Levinas put it;
- the willingness to experience the disruption that comes from welcoming people who are profoundly different (and refuse to give up that difference – despite assimilative pressures), and to experience the curiosity about life that occurs through such disruption;
- the pause to ‘see’ those we are not seeing (because we drive fast past a shanty town or caravan park or block of public houses) – the invisible;
- the careful, purposeful and considered ‘lurking with intent’ nearby those who require solidarity and our comradeship but are burned by too much ‘help’, to trust does not come so easily.

This practice of hospitality, reflecting a movement of soul – towards slowness and depth, towards other and disruption, towards care and community – undoes our paradigm of busy ‘community-service’ and activism.

Hospitality also represents a particular vision of development practice, most clearly articulated by Mexican post-development thinker Gustavo Esteva, who works with the Zapatista liberation movement at the *Universidad de La Tierra* in southern Mexico. For Esteva, development is best understood as the ‘co-motion’ and ‘co-learning’ that occurs from relations of hospitality. He contrasts this with intervention, thereby undoing the kinds of logics and languages that are part of much professional practice (towards clients, consumers, expert knowledge and so forth). In fact, he argues for a kind of de-professionalised practice, whereby we understand our work more relationally and within an ethical frame that foregrounds deep respect. Of course, respectful relations

across class, gender and race divides are profoundly difficult to negotiate as Richard Sennett's most powerful book *Respect* gives us insight into.

This approach to development practice, as hospitality, co-motion and co-learning, has really been foregrounded to me this past couple of weeks having just returned from Vanuatu where I have been on a 10-year development journey with several local partners. I want to finish this meditation on hospitality by telling a small vignette from those ten years, focusing on the beginning of the work, because as an intriguing Chinese saying argues: "the end is determined by the beginning."

This work, with a focus on conflict transformation, community development, and community governance, started with an encounter between Dr Anne Brown and the National Council of Chiefs in 2004. At the heart of the story was a decision by Anne, whilst in town for a conference, to go and pay her respects to the customary chiefs of the nation – at their office in Port Vila. When she explained this to the chiefs they sat in silence and eventually Paul Tahi, the then Paramount Chief informed Anne that no Australian had ever done that. He asked what her work was (at the then Australian Peace & Conflict Studies Centre at UQ) and after her explanation, and some further conversation, suggested that maybe 'we could work together'. It's important to note that Anne had not visited with the intension of initiating work – her intention had been respect and relationships. Yet, something occurred in that first encounter that led to both of those things. There was a conversation, and energy was generated that initiated a journey of co-motion – us working together – the ni-Vanuatu Council of Chiefs wanting support in their communities to create more peaceful community-level governance (as globalisation processes undo customary processes of conflict arbitration etc.). And those of us from ACPACS started a journey of learning about our neighbours and about our histories as Australian's

in the Pacific (blackbirding etc.). The co-learning and co-motion was structured into what became known as the *Kastom* Governance Partnership Initiative which was the first time the National Council of Chiefs ever worked with outsiders, and was also the first time AusAID became partners, not donors in Vanuatu (and to non-state actors). It became ‘good/best practice’ and the model is being used in numerous other pieces of work in the Pacific, particularly focused on the work of non-state actors.

Simple, and yet profound – full of wisdom directly related to hospitality and ethical relations that create the conditions for development as co-motion and co-learning.

## **Part 2: Practice of hostility – movement towards ‘soul-force’**

If Part 1 of this address foregrounds the relational component of community work – hospitality - then Part 2 focuses on the political dimension. For if hospitably is part of the first movement of community work, creating the ethical conditions for co-motion, then the next movements often requires collective action. I am aware that collective action can move in many directions – economic, cultural, or social, but today I want to focus on the political. I have also alluded to soul-force in the title drawing on that rich Gandhian tradition of truth and courage filled with love, although I should signal that in that my most recent writing on soul I’ve pushed more towards Tagore than Gandhi as offering a way forward that is filled with a ‘love of life’ rather than an ascetic ‘life-denying’ way of being. Like Allan Ginsberg’s poetic reflections on Moloch in the poem *Howl*, Tagore saw that ‘today the human soul is lying captive in the dungeon of the Great Machine’ and he wanted people to rediscover a life-giving vision of love, art, philosophy, conviviality, play, joy, dance, and music.

But in truth I neither want to spend much time with Gandhi nor Tagore – as many in this room are somewhat familiar with their work. Instead I want to turn to two other guides with whom we are less familiar – Hannah Arendt and Franz Fanon.

Arendt, the German, Jewish political philosopher, who fled Germany during WWII, and who spent most of her life in the USA, has a lot to teach us. **The big question Arendt asks us to consider is: Are we thinking?** (And this is also aligned to the core gestures of Esteva, who when I communicated with him earlier this year (knowing I was visiting Mexico) said to me, ‘Come to southern Mexico and let us have a “**thinking moment**”’. He explicitly said, ‘come for a “thinking moment”’. There is something here in this simple word that Arendt and Esteva remind us of. Their sense is that the biggest challenge of modern life is to cultivate a capacity to think (which is why an anti-intellectual posture by community practitioners is unhelpful). I like to think of the necessity of this thinking in the same way that Paulo Freire talked about needing to break through the ‘bureaucracy of the mind’ – that state where our imaginative literacy has shrunk so profoundly that we hardly think any more – we simply ‘go with the flow’, and can basically only imagine the world as it is!

Arendt then adds that to think is to ‘become hostile’, because inevitably the act of thinking leads to questioning of the status quo, the ‘common senses’ given to us – the kinds of drivel that our Prime Minister articulates as the goal of economic policy. And hence I have also named this second practice as hostility although I am also keen to add agility into the mix with hostility, suggesting that ‘thinking’ will probably lead to both agile responses and hostile responses (and I guess wisdom is knowing when to opt for which one – i.e. choosing which fight can be won).



Let me expand, and bring the Algerian anti-colonial psychiatrist/philosopher Franz Fanon, and author of the famous book *Wretched of the Earth*, into the mix. Fanon argues that the key way forward for any social movement dreaming of a better world is to bring together ‘the poor’ (let us settle on that term for now) and intellectuals (engaged intellectuals who have a relationship with the poor – many of us) into both a *deep dialogue* about the real conditions of society (which creates poverties and inequalities). And then alongside that deep dialogue there needs to be organisation – to sustain a struggle for change. His argument is that we often act *too spontaneously*, without (and aligned to Arendt) thought and then organisation that comes from deep on-going dialogue.

So obviously there is a challenge here because I am wondering if there are adequate platforms for deep dialogue over a period of time *along with* organising. Maybe there are – after all I seem to get daily invitations to participate in some meeting, some group, some activity - but I am not sure (although I suspect Saturday’s Coalition of the Board day of dialogue represents such a space). I certainly can see such dialogue and organising around particular crises – e.g. responses to the funding cuts for domestic violence related agencies, or the Tenants Union. And it has been a beautiful organising for resistance to see. But the risk is that now we have won those fights for particular social grants or social programs we stop dialoguing and organising.

Now let us be clear I am not advocating for hostility towards bureaucrats – many of them are as stuck in this ‘emergent complex system’ as you and I. Often we need to be agile and work in partnership with allies within that bureaucratic system. No, so what or who should the hostility be directed towards? Or more accurately where might our critical thinking lead us in terms of praxis?

This is not an easy question to answer within a world of complexity. To illustrate the complexity I'd like to take you on a brief journey into some of the work I've been doing with Dr Kristen Lyons in Uganda for the past four years.

I'll quickly set the scene. First, Uganda, like many poorer countries has experienced about 40 years of structural adjustment policies combined with neoliberalism – which means many things – but of particular significance in this story means that in those 40 years the state has been 'emptied' of much capacity – it's literally been sold off. The state steers rather than rows. The rowing is now meant to occur via the private sector. So the correlate to 'emptying the state', is the 'privatisation of development' – the big actors in development are no longer the state or NGOs, but private actors – corporations. Second, like many places in Africa deforestation is a big problem – mainly due to the need for more land for agriculture, as well as the need for poor people to cut down trees for fuel. So the Ugandan state has a big challenge. On the one hand it needs to deal with deforestation; and on the other hand, it has less capacity - officers/staff/money – to regulate, enforce and so forth. Third, the world is trying to deal with carbon emissions and the 'big solution' is a market form of carbon trading – enabling people in countries like ours to keep consuming and emitting as always, but off-setting those patterns of consumption/emitting through trading carbon credits elsewhere.

Enter Green Resources (GR) – the focus of my story – the largest forestry company operating within Africa, Norwegian owned, and working in two significant sites within Uganda. Basically the Ugandan state (that lacks capacity itself) leases forests that have been gradually degraded by local people (who've been cutting trees so they can grow crops, or at least intercrop; or cutting for fuel) to GR. GR then 'locks' up these forests for 35 years so that it can trade the carbon captured by that lock up on the international carbon trading market. GR

has done this in Uganda selling its first carbon credits to the Swedish Energy Agency so that Swedish energy consumers can pay premium ‘green energy’ (and feel good that they’ve saved the forests of Uganda).

Now the problem is that in this process many 1000s of local people have lost access to what was ‘their commons’ – the forest, where they used to intercrop, find fuel, or visit traditional cultural sites. My research, with Dr Kristen Lyons, has been documenting this development induced forced migration, as people are dislocated from their land, or access to land that they could live on.

Furthermore, the company uses community development (explicitly) as a way of working with communities, offering scholarships to children, building some health clinics, fixing roads and so on. They also employ local people as security guards to ensure people are not accessing the forests.

So why this story? Well, let’s just say that I think it illustrates perfectly the complex emergent system that we are now apart of. The story represents a completely interconnected world in which the work of thinking and organising becomes very difficult. Some people in the communities like the companies – they provide jobs as security guards, and enable people, however precariously, to enter the cash economy. But many have fought – some have ended up in jail; others have simply moved to more marginal ecological zones to survive. Within this story where should action be directed, and on behalf of who? In a similar story to this one OXFAM took on a different company and was accused by the Ugandan state of ‘economic sabotage’, and very nearly had its license reneged. And what do we make of CD work that addresses some people’s needs (health care/education), but purposefully avoids the broader needs of people – in this case, their need for land/access, and food production?

Yes it's complex, and we need a lot of thinking – via dialogue – to know where to direct our organising. We need hostility because this complex emergent system is not working for the most marginalised, but where do we direct our hostility?

Without trying to offer a simple answer, I'll finish this meditation on hostility and politics with a story of South Africa's shack dwellers movement that was founded ten years ago by citizens frustrated by the ruling ANC's failure to deliver the promises of democracy in the “new” nation. I've been following this movement since its inception for it represents a powerful movement of politically-oriented community work. Their story offers community workers some wisdom in discerning a way forward in political action in complex contexts.

On 19 March 2005 residents of Kennedy Road [informal] settlement (a shanty town) in Clare Estate in Durban organised a road blockade because the ANC was failing to listen to their calls for land to live on (after many years of patient waiting). There were 14 arrests. This event triggered a process of discussion with residents of nearby informal communities and on the 6 of October 2005 a shack-dwellers movement was formed. During the last ten years they have survived serious repression, including assassinations, and won many victories.

And I now quote several thoughts from their leadership (and I'd ask you to listen carefully for lessons):

From the beginning it was clear that the ANC, the NGOs, most academics and various other forces were all agreed that we are people that can't think. All our meetings were open to all. Anyone who wanted to could observe our discussions and how we came to decisions. A

genuinely democratic government would welcome the self-organisation of the poor. However the ANC turned against its own people. It showed itself to be dishonest and without conscience. It is clear to us that the ANC will always try to crush what it cannot control.

Over the last ten years some of our members have left the movement to work for parties and NGOs but we are very much proud of the fact that our movement has retained its autonomy from all NGOs and parties for ten years. We have collectively refused all kinds of offers of money and many of our members have refused all kinds of individual offers of money and jobs. We remain committed to a bottom-up system in which leaders must facilitate democratic decision-making and in which neither a leader, nor the movement as a whole can, at any level, act without a mandate from the members.

After ten years of struggle we remain committed to the principle that there should be nothing for us, without us. We don't want people to talk for us, or to decide for us, in our absence. Our concern in this regard is not only with the government and the developmental NGOs that work with the government. We are also clear that we want people who wish to be in solidarity with us to think *with us, not for us*. Support for NGOs that claim a right to speak for the struggles of poor while having no mandate to do so from any credible organisation that has emerged from within the struggles of the poor is not the same thing as solidarity with the struggles of the poor.

After ten years of struggle we remain committed to a living politics. A living politics is a politics which everyone can understand, that is close to people's daily lives and begins from the situation in which they find

themselves. It is also a politics where people represent themselves, leaders are expected to obey members and a bottom up approach is encouraged in the struggle and as an aim of the struggle.

After ten years of struggle our organisation remains a learning organisation. We continue to educate ourselves in discussion.

(<http://www.pambazuka.net/en/category.php/features/95673>)

Do we want to listen to the people?

<https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/video-interview-lindela-figlan-abahlali-basemjondolo/>

Maybe that's the lesson about forging a way forward for directing our hostility – our way is the way offered *by the analysis of the organised poor* – it's not our analysis at all, but theirs, and our solidarity in their work.

### **Part 3: Practice of holism – movement to 'soul of the world'**

In Part 1 I have talked of hospitality. In Part 2 I have argued for thinking and the inevitable hostility that arises from that, along with the kind of political solidarity required of us from the organised poor. In this third part I meditate on what could be understood as a renewed hospitality towards those or/and that which are not human – animals, plants and the earth – requiring hostility towards the kind of economic world we are creating. But instead of talking about such hospitality and hostility I focus on bringing a new holism to our lives.

It is clear that we now live an era known as the Anthropocene – understood as an historical era in which humans are the main driver of geological and climatic change. This Anthropocene era represents a shift from the Holocene, which

provided a sustainable climate and conditions for human civilisation to flourish. These sustainable conditions appear to have changed. Animal and plant life and the sentient planet itself are being destroyed by human activity at an unprecedented rate. This destruction is incontestable – they are social, ecological and scientific facts.

I have spent a lot of time reading about and thinking about this destruction. I'm not an alarmist by nature – I love life, going bush, hanging about, and assuming the best. But I am alarmed. It would appear that the path we are on is one of suicide. And there are only two possible options for avoiding suicide – a technological one, and a behavioural one (or you might say a third, which is a combination of the two). My understanding is that currently there is no technological solution to the crises (believe me, we cannot produce enough renewables – and even solar panels require precious metals that we don't have enough of, and require huge energies to create; nuclear won't cut it – even if we started mass production now.. and I could go on – about water usage and over-fishing). So the only way forward is a profound behavioural shift – requiring a substantive shift in *our* life-styles, consumption habits and so on. I am talking substantial/profound. Of course the 'our' refers to the wealthy world consuming 80% of the world's resources. Some people in the world need to consume more (water, food, energy etc.)

Hence, I'm not really sure more activism alone will cut it, even though it is essential. It is something *about us, the source* that needs to profoundly change.

There seem to be some fundamental reasons we are on this suicidal journey. Maybe it is because we are not able to engage with hospitality towards animals, plants and the earth – the modernist project of humans separating and mastering nature has been powerfully successful. We simply see planet, animal and plant

as something to be acquired, used (as a resource), and learned *about* (as opposed to learning *from*). We do not recognise the ‘otherness’ of these phenomena – we are not in a living relationship with them. They are just there *for us*.

Of course within Australia we have indigenous Australians who have a different kind of relationship, both in terms of community but also in relationship to country. They sing to country, care for it, and it in turn cares, and creates human community. There is a mutual relationship between country and community. The soul of humanity is made by the soul of the world and visa versa. Within this relationship between community and country the planet has a chance. Without it, well, we are already way beyond the planetary boundaries, so who knows?

So what is the way forward? I am arguing here for the practice of holism – seeing the world in all its parts but as a whole, or what we are a part of, not a-part from.

I pose a question in terms of getting to the core of holistic practice: ‘How do we see and experience the world in a way that might shift our relationship to the earth/planet?’ And secondly, ‘What might this new seeing and experiencing mean in terms of how we live?’ From a holistic perspective we are too caught up in an analytical way of seeing and being in the world, focused on the parts, the separate bits; and we therefore lack a cultivated holistic viewing capacity, one informed by the intuitive rather than the analytical, and one that is also able to observe clearly enough to understand the complex adaptive life that sit at the heart of our ecological-social world. To help us understand this holistic and intuitive approach, I’m drawing on what is understood philosophically as phenomenology (representing a disrupting tradition of Cartesian western



philosophy), and I will take us into this space with a short story of a reasonably recent learning process that focused me on this challenge of seeing holistically, which enabled me to experience the ‘soul of the world’ - that is, ‘the world made alive’. (And my apologies to those who have heard me tell this story before).

The story comes from a five-day conversation that I participated in at a property called Towerland, 400km east of Cape Town, in South Africa, last November (2014). The conversation was between twenty-six practitioners from around the world reflecting on the question, ‘Can a social practice that foregrounds observation contribute to healing in the world?’ Sitting behind the question was awareness that the world is at work in polarities, as is our practice. One key polarity is intervention-observation. And of course in our practice we are very disposed towards the intervention end. We love to take action. We’re not good at observing.

Within the exploration of that question about foregrounding observation, and in our attempts to pause and learn how to see, one of the exercises the facilitators Allan Kaplan and Sue Davidoff invited us all to do was, in groups of three, to spend an hour each day observing a particular natural phenomenon. My group chose to observe the succulents that covered much of a garden bed that I had walked past dozens of times over the past few years.

As I observed, and as the group of three of us entered into dialogue about what we were observing, what struck me were a number of things. Firstly, the awareness of my blindness in seeing – I saw so little – or more accurately I thought I had seen, and then as dialogue opened up, I realised how many different ways there were to see. That awareness of blindness humbled me at a profound level. How much do I not see of the world, or myself, or of social

situations I am immersed within? Secondly, the daily exercise of seeing and conversation with the other two in my group gradually awakened within me an intimacy with this garden that I had walked past so many times. Previously I had hardly noticed this garden – it was dead in my world, it was alienated from me, and me from it; it didn't feature in my imaginative world, other than in the abstract (as a 'garden'). I posit that maybe, just maybe, if you had destroyed the garden I might not have noticed, or if I had noticed maybe I would not have protested. But now, having observed, having seen, I have an intimate relationship with that garden – I care about it; I can see it now if I do some memory work. I could almost, not quite (not yet) draw it. This seeing and this intimacy then opens up a new participatory relationship between me and the garden, myself and the world – what I am calling an experience of 'soul of the world' (the hidden dimension of life). It is a relationship that is founded or grounded in a sense of the whole (not seen *only* by stepping back and getting an overview – although this need to 'step back' is partly true, but by firstly 'stepping in' and getting close to the parts, and in being intimate with the parts, and the relationships and patterns connecting the parts, allowing the whole *to be revealed*) and is experienced intuitively.

And the wisdom from this is maybe what I am hinting at as the crux of this address – my theorising of a way forward? My glimpse, or this awareness of my previous alienation from the garden, draws me into an awareness that I spend so much of my life separated, a-part, lacking intimacy with other, or with the world, or the manifestations of the world that are all around me, and within me - soul. Something is then missing – call it connection, and an anticipatory and participatory relationship! And the consequences for me and the world are profound – violence is then easy to do, abstractions flourish, exclusions expand, and interventions proliferate.

## **Conclusion**

And so here we are, at the end of this address. And what will you go away with? I don't know. I'm simply inviting an on-going meditation on those three words, those profound practices for community development work – hospitality, hostility and holism. My sense is that they represent an undoing of our familiar ways of being and doing in the world and our work. In turn I invite a re-imagining of how to be and do – one that in many ways represents an orientation towards depth, ethical relations and clear analysis. We live in exciting times – and yet dangerous times. We need to think my friends, as citizens, practitioners, and scholars - the people, leaders and experts. And then we need to organise. And within those processes of thinking and organising let's pay attention to the self – as source, and soul – the depths, the other, the mysterious life at work in our work and the world.