

Watchtower Coda – an Allegory: On Clarifying an Inter-Related Set of Necessary Conditions for Initiating a Lasting Peace

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Prologue

The following article makes an argument for an inter-related set of necessary – but not necessarily sufficient – conditions for the achievement of a lasting peace. The argument is unusual because it is encased in an allegory. However, the argument could be ascertained through a reading of the allegory alone, the endnotes alone, or the allegory in conjunction with the endnotes.

While this Prologue is meant to ‘set the stage’, the Epilogue extends the possible meaning(s) of the allegory and endnotes through the provision of a context that clarifies distinctions between allegory, prose, and poetics; it also reiterates and extends the consequences of taking the argument seriously.

Some Historical Precedents

“Watchtower Coda – an Allegory”, is inspired by Bob Dylan’s 1967 composition, *All Along the Watchtower*. While performed numerous times as a ‘cover’ by a variety of musicians since its original performance by Bob Dylan – Jimi Hendrix’s version is the most celebrated – *All Along the Watchtower* has also been interpreted endlessly. Such interpretations run the gamut from ambivalence regarding the Vietnam War, to the chaos and confusion of the prevailing cultural context of the 1960s and an impending Apocalypse (given the irreverent tenor of the times, and references found in the Bible, in particular, the book of Isaiah, with mention of watchtowers, princes, and two to four horsemen). I find the Apocalyptic interpretation to be the most provocative and intriguing, although the other interpretations are not incompatible with it.

Indeed, this was a principal reason that the musical piece was selected as one of the bases on which the present essay rests. By use of allegory, it presents an arresting though somewhat enigmatic set of the Apocalyptic conditions that provide the challenging context within which a new set of conditions can be

put into place. I wish to argue that these conditions increase the possibility of establishing a lasting peace on earth.

Before examining the allegory, I will clarify Dylan's piece in detail. The lyrics below were taken verbatim from the 'official' Bob Dylan website. What follows is a set of modified endnotes clarifying an Apocalyptic interpretation for each of the stanzas (if you view the piece as poetry) or verses (if you view the piece as a musical composition).

All Along the Watchtower
By Bob Dylan © 1967; Lyrics
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“There must be some kind of way out of here,” said the joker
to the thief. “There’s too much confusion, I can’t get no relief.
Businessmen they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth.
None of them along the line, know what any of it is worth.”

“No reason to get excited” the thief, he kindly spoke,
“There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke.
But you and I, we’ve been through that, and this is not our fate.
So let us stop talking falsely now, the hour is getting late.”

All along the watchtower, princes kept the view.
While other women came and went, barefoot servants, too.

Outside in the cold distance, a wildcat did growl.
Two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl.

Stanza/Verse 1. Almost an ideal *ironic* spokesperson, the Joker is not only a traditionally marginalized and untrustworthy character to be telling the truth, but the ‘truth be told’ is one that is far-reaching. Indeed, if what (s)he is saying in these several related exclamations is true, that *iconic contributors* to the community, e.g., businessmen and farmers, are really just taking the community for granted, doing what they want when they will – for their own gain is

the implication – then the community is in trouble. Moreover, they along with others, both present and future, have no idea of what is really important.

Stanza/Verse 2. In considering the second *ironic* spokesperson, the Thief, and his/her inter-related response to the Joker, there is an interesting reference to having been ‘through this before’ and thus they are no better than anyone else, although with the proviso that “this is not our fate” – perhaps there is yet hope. However, the last line uttered by the Thief, “let us stop talking falsely now, the hour is getting late” may well be the lynchpin of meaning for the Apocalyptic interpretation of the allegory, suggesting that none of us can speak with certainty about what will or will not happen at ‘the End-times’.

Stanza/Verse 3. Referenced here is the apocalyptic importance of the watchtower, biblically referenced in Isaiah, 21: 5-9, along with the traditional dichotomy of the roles of men – as princes – and women – maybe as handmaidens, along with both men and women – peasants, perhaps – comprising the servant class.

Stanza/Verse 4. Dylan’s allegory finishes with a denouement with the references to the dangers of nature, being linked to the concerns of humankind – in the last two lines – solidifying the feasibility of the Apocalyptic interpretation especially with the mention of the two riders, again, biblically-referenced in Isaiah, 21, 5-9.

A Postmodern Take on Dylan’s ‘Watchtower’

I resonate most with the two major allegorical figures, the Joker and the Thief, but not necessarily only for an ‘end-times’ interpretation, but rather their serving to highlight the possible postmodern sensibility that was starting to emerge at the time of Dylan’s writing his allegory, to wit, an emphasis on *relativism* as opposed to modernity’s *universalism*, and on creating as opposed to modernity’s *discovering* truth. This qualitative distinction is reflected in Norris’ “Post-modernism” found in Honderich’s (ed.) 1995 *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, and in Cahoon’s (ed.) 1996 *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*.

The Joker and the Thief relativize in at least two ways: the first, insofar that rather than being marginalized and suspect voices, they are major voices – Intelligent? Prophetic? And the second – usually cast as ‘ironic’ by other commentators – is that the Joker is complaining about things being ‘stolen’ from

him, and the Thief is calling attention to ‘all of life being a joke’. But for me, it is more than just idle irony, given the fact the two characters, so different from each other, can show understanding of one another’s lament, through their taking on, to some degree, the way the other perceives the world.

From Modernity to Post-Modernity to
‘Truth as Discovery/Creation and
Truth as Universal/Relative’

While a postmodern take appears compatible with *All Along the Watchtower*, Dylan, however unwittingly, sets the stage for a world that goes beyond not only the modern, but the post-modern world; there are still elements of universality and truth discovery that are present, either blatantly or subtly, in the middle of, or alongside, relativism and truth creation. Indeed, by rhetorically couching the phenomenon in the language of the middle ages, it performs a singular service to its allegorical nature: enhancing the possibility of the reader appreciating timelessness in its melding of past, present, and future, but also the relativism of the two principal characters, the Joker and the Thief, both in isolation and in relation to each other. While more will be said about this in the Epilogue, given that there will be two (related) allegories at hand, suffice it to say at this point that the current piece, “Watchtower Coda”, pays more homage to both modernity and postmodernity than Dylan’s original allegory. In other words, it is as crucial to appreciate universalism as it is relativism, to embrace the discovery of truth empirically – through controlled studies, as it is to embrace the creating of truth – through the application of meta-analytics, pragmatics, and other rhetorical devices.

On Being a ‘Kind of Person’

It would seem most important in the affirmation of *hospitality* as a fundamental practice, that moves are made to develop and differentiate the superordinate category of Person. While some of the differences between ‘kinds of persons’ that we encounter, and indeed promote, are important to maintain, it is just as important to clarify the commonalities that all persons share. In short, can we move beyond the simplistic dichotomies of ‘men versus women’,

‘black versus white’, ‘rural versus urban’, ‘us versus them’, ‘good versus evil’? “Watchtower Coda” is offered, in part, with this goal in mind.

Taking off from the original *All Along the Watchtower*, “Watchtower Coda” begins with the arrival of the ‘two horsemen’ – as reconnaissance figures – inside the castle gates, working through a series of narrative twists and turns – actually ‘recommendations’ – that portray the events in a potentially positive and optimistic light. In other words, the impending Apocalypse – at least in its negative senses – is delayed – by the possible resolution of a serious and life-threatening conflict, whose consequences inaugurate glimpses of a new, and more positive view of the future of humankind in their relations with each other. More will be clarified in the Epilogue regarding implications of this possibility for traditional Christian understandings of the Apocalypse as laid out in the book of Revelation.

While the more speculative nature of assigning meaning that has occurred with regard to Dylan’s composition as referred to above, especially – via the Apocalyptic exegesis in the ‘endnotes’ – the meaning of Watchtower Coda is sketched out in a series of traditional endnotes, which, by and large, clarify some ‘common-sense’, but most importantly, empirically research-based justifications for the recommendations.

Watchtower Codaⁱ

“Look, it’s them – along the horizon line – they’re coming!” cries the Sentry. “Open the gates, open them wide, we must hasten their entry!”

Horses hooves hit the gravel – the ground in thunderous roar. Two riders, one man and one womanⁱⁱ, dismount, their faces careworn . . .

“We must ready ourselves for their staying!” shouts the Prime Minister, “show them to their rooms! Give them time to compose themselves, as we end our fastⁱⁱⁱ, and all prepare for our collective repast^{iv}.”

Seated now at the table of their sustenance,
the woman begins, “from our position of greater
strength^v, we must convey to our nemesis, our under-
standing of what they’ve been through^{iv}.” Continues the man,
“and how we have both contributed to – the story of
mutual pain enveloping us^{vii} – that surely, forthrightly
but carefully – without haste^{viii} – we must do.”

Murmurs of both assent and dissent arise, wafting above the Assembly^{ix},
making the dialogue close and tight...the man responds, “the cause of
our stalemate is most probably the unquestioned belief, held by many,
of one and only one adversary being in total possession of what is right...”

Penetrating to the heart of the matter the woman suggests, “yes,
indeed, we should honor the openness of youth...seeing that which
we seek as being comprised of many viewpoints, of numerous
perspectives, out of which will eventually emerge – the truth...”

Articulating clearly, and carefully they discerned the
best way beyond the dilemma^{xii}, working far into the night...

yes – the night – into the night^{xiii} – after all, they had to be ready by
morning’s light^{xiv} – things had to be in the right^{xv}...had to be right...

- i A term usually reserved for the musical arts, ‘coda’ means a conclusion or finality to a formal composition. In the present context, it is meant to signal the end, or more realistically, the beginning of the end, of the necessity of having a ‘Watchtower’, both literally and figuratively; i.e., if the prescriptions identified in the text of this allegory are taken seriously, perhaps eventually a ‘Watchtower’, at least in its traditional senses will become obsolete. However, given that this allegory has been set to music, and takes off from where Bob Dylan’s piece “All Along the Watchtower” ends, it could be an appropriate title in the traditional sense of the term as well. A musical interpretation of both pieces is addressed a bit more in the Epilogue
- ii The importance of having gender equity in the diplomatic corps cannot be over-emphasized.
- iii Clarifying that the community has been fasting while their diplomats were in the first meetings of attempting to resolve a potential life and death conflict underscores the community’s appreciation of the seriousness of the event; it also suggests the positive influence that such a fast might have on the clarity of a community’s subsequent deliberations relating to a possible resolution.

- iv This references the importance of ‘breaking bread’ together, and the subsequent literal and figurative bringing together of the members of the community, in the common goal of finding a satisfactory resolution to the conflict. Of course, at the same time, it might increase the insider-based view of ‘us against them’ – see the work of Pruitt and Kim in their 2004 *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*.
- v ‘From our position of greater strength’ indicates the importance of the party who is indeed the stronger (Militarily? Financially? Emotionally? Morally?) of the two taking the lead in initiating the resolution of the conflict. Such a move, if done in a sensitive way, can do much to increase the possibility of settlement, and reduce the possibility of escalation; again, see the work of Pruitt and Kim. Indeed, the kind of strength is important to discern: greater military strength might be the most obvious and least objectionable to each party, while greater moral strength is a judgment more difficult to justify. Of course, the importance of eventually coming to grips with the differing moral justifications for each party’s views and anticipated actions, cannot be over-estimated; of all the strengths listed above – and there are more – the moral ones are the most important to compare and contrast in terms of quality and quantity of the underlying moral principles that at stake for each party. With enough honesty and nuance, this analysis may yield an accounting of the ways each adversary’s principles may complement one-another’s, in terms of possible cause-effect, means-ends, part-whole, etc., relations. A feasible re-approachment may thus be initiated.
- vi One of the best ways to work towards conflict resolution for both parties is for the stronger to understand the circumstances of the weaker; and of course, for the weaker to know that such an attempt was made by the stronger to avail itself of this knowledge. In return, of course, the weaker will understand the conditions under which the stronger is acting. See Drolet and Morris’s allusions to these practices in their 2000 article entitled, “Rapport in conflict resolution: Accounting for how face-to-face contact fosters mutual cooperation in mixed-motive conflicts.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 36, 26-50.
- vii Seldom is a conflict due solely to the actions of just one party; thus, to clarify the way(s) which both have contributed to the current conflict can go a long way to resolving the conflict ‘equitably’ and ‘permanently’; see again the work of Drolet and Morris, indicated above.
- viii However, given the particular conflict at hand, this should *not* be done without a great deal of careful deliberation; indeed, sometimes, of course, one party may be the principal contributor to the conflict, or both parties may have contributed, and yet one’s portion of the contribution is a bit more than the other’s portion. Thus, the last thing one wants to be is hasty in the relative apportionment of responsibility for the conflict, if at all possible. Integrative solutions are difficult to achieve, but well worth the effort: see Pruitt and Carnevale’s 1993 *Negotiation in Social Conflict*, for a clarification of the nuances relating to this issue.
- ix Any such decisions, of course, should not be made by just one person: ‘due process’ should be followed, with all important stakeholders represented.
- x One finds this ‘suggestion’ in J.S. Mill’s 1859 *Essay on Liberty*. However, as Mill cautions, it is not in every case that truth is multi-determined.
- xi It is not just consensus that this community is after; rather it is the best possible decision that can be made. This requires the importance of not only allowing, but encouraging, *critical thinking*. Indeed, scholars have determined that having *being critical* as the goal, as opposed to having the goal of *achieving consensus*, will indeed result in the *best possible decision* being made. See the work of Postmes, Spears, & Cihangir’s 2001 article, “Quality of decision making and group norms,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 918-930. However,

the interaction of these two goals is what is crucial: achievement of *consensus via critical thinking* is the paragon here.

- xii '... discerned the *best* way beyond the dilemma' is meant in both specific and more general senses. The *general* sense is in terms of the three major prescriptions for conflict resolution coming together to form the centerpiece of this allegory, to wit: the view of truth as multi-determined serving as a default, and when combined with empathic inquiry and responsibility apportionment, could provide a *necessary* set of *specific* prescriptions for the establishment of a lasting peace. However, they are, of course, *not* sufficient. Even so, the fact that numerous examples of their insufficiency abound throughout these endnotes should not lessen their candor as necessary conditions.
- xiii '... into the night' suggests the urgency and importance of whatever is being worked on e.g., 'resolving conflict' should, more often than not, have priority status. Thus, this phrase might best be taken figuratively, as opposed to literally, but with the proviso that indeed there may be occasions that demand – literally – 'working into the night', given what is at stake.
- xiv This old cliché or adage, 'by morning's light' has a bit of truth to it in terms of the juxtaposition of a new way of looking at the conflict with the literal coming into being of a new day, along with reaching a decision that is timely – by the next day. Other meanings include subjecting the 'new way' to the 'light of day', 'of reason', and 'of emotion' so that all weaknesses can be clarified and corrected. See Ekman and Davidson's 1994 *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions*. Indeed, the proper negotiation of a conflict may include discerning which lens to apply first – reason or emotion.
- xv 'things had to be in the right' references the working and colloquial definition of justice in Plato's *Republic* 380 BCE being 'right action towards others'; whatever is decided must be 'just' in this sense. However, exactly what constitutes 'right action towards others' is, of course, debatable. For Plato, it was adhering to a division of labor grounded in a form of 'natural law': 'do only what you are meant to do given your natural gifts and inclinations and do not meddle in what others are meant to do'. This latter definition appears to presuppose the importance of non-violence in our dealings with others, from the least to the greatest of its senses. Given these considerations, a good case might be made for the prominence of *non-violence* in each of the party's attitudes and actions as a necessary condition for constituting 'right action towards others.' Perhaps such prominence – *especially in the party whose position is of greater strength* – will more likely promote and sustain manifestation of the aforementioned prescriptions, than if such prominence was not present. Of course, there are always extenuating conditions, e.g., those producing grave thoughts and needs for self-defense, which may suddenly attenuate the primacy of such prescriptions. Indeed, given the history of humankind's attempts to reconcile differences with one another before it is too late, e.g., before going to war (see the histories of WWI and WWII, for example), each side needs to exercise prudence and caution, not to mention a healthy skepticism, regarding the trustworthiness of the other side; the latter especially, of course, has to be earned. For other, but related and expanded views of these issues, please see Juhnke and Hunter's 2004 *The Search for Nonviolent Alternatives in United States History*; and Sampson and Lederach's (co-editors) 2000 *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding*.

Epilogue

Allegory, Prose, and Poetics

The rhetorical framework of allegory has several advantages to that of prose alone, or to that of poetics alone, because it draws on each. It is like prose in its reliance on narrative, but because of its inherently metaphorical nature, it builds on narrative's usual developmentally time-bound quality by transporting the reader – back in time to the past, forward in time to the present, and beyond that to the future – *historically* – as well as developmentally. Simultaneously, it is like poetics in the use of phonetics, in particular, rhyme, in the choice of which words to use to convey the visual and auditory images, both of which go far beyond prose in the development of the allegory's meaning(s).

Watchtower Coda – an Allegory as Argument

However, the allegory at hand departs from the standard allegory in its being argumentative: it is an argument that is being made at a point in the conflict that both party and other have been through the various strategies of dealing with conflict, e.g., contending, avoiding, and yielding, and are now ready to consider that of 'problem-solving' (all of which have been outlined by Pruitt and Kim in their 2004 *Social Conflict*). This is a technique by which the needs, interests, and aspirations of both party and other are met in a way that is acceptable to both; however, it is also a technique that could reflect wisdom. Indeed, as Sternberg, et al., in his 1986 *Intelligence Applied* suggests, 'a decision that reflects wisdom is one that simultaneously meets the needs of self, other, and the community within which each resides.' Most importantly, it is an argument insofar as most of the prescriptions it clarifies are supported by empirical evidence. Given such a basis, one could add that it may well point the way ahead to a future more utopian-like community.

On Moving Towards a Utopia

Utopia, and its counterpart, dystopia, have a long history in the social and philosophical literature, e.g., Plato's 380 BCE *Republic*, and Thomas Moore's 1515 *Utopia*, both of which examined the principles which humankind should embrace, and those which humankind should eschew, in order to live life in the best possible way; in other words, in a way which supports all of humankind

thriving. The more recent classic statement, Kogler's entry entitled "Utopianism" found in Honderich's (Ed.) 1995 *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, has drawn on Marcuse's important distinction between "abstract" and "concrete" utopianism, as addressed in his 1969 *Essay on Liberation*. 'Abstract utopianism' is basically a dreamy fantasy of an ideal world more elusive than feasible, while 'concrete utopianism' is more practical and ultimately realizable. I would submit that "Watchtower Coda" is an example of how to possibly achieve, over time, a "concrete" utopia – if we are assiduous in our preparation and execution of diplomacy – in the several ways indicated earlier. However, I make this claim while also acknowledging the importance of the 'abstract', although in a different way than Marcuse; indeed, the possible utopia which could come about by taking this essay seriously, is one that includes a multifaceted conception of truth, in terms of both kinds of *ontogenies* (discovery and creation), and both kinds of *ontologies* (universalism and relativism), as clarified below.

On the Relationship of Watchtower Coda – an Allegory to the Apocalypse of Revelation

Given the original Apocalyptic exegesis of Dylan's *All Along the Watchtower* laid out earlier in this essay, it is not an unreasonable stretch to think about the relationship of the Watchtower Coda – an Allegory, to the Apocalypse as addressed in John's book of Revelation in the New Testament (King James Version). I suggested that by following the Watchtower Coda's prescriptions as laid out, the impending Apocalypse *may* be delayed. However, the operative word is *may*. Indeed, I can appreciate the difficulty that Christian practitioners have in saying with any certainty at all just when the End-times will be upon us – whether sooner or later – much less just what will be transpiring during those times. Will the Apocalypse be upon us when our society with one-another becomes dystopic, or more dystopic than utopic, or does that even make a difference, i.e., as long as there are some of us acting in a dystopic manner, would that be enough? While Revelation does not seem clear in an answer to this question, the Synoptic Gospels suggest that the move towards a complete dystopia, in human action, thought and emotion which express extreme portent and forboding, is a condition which immediately precedes the Apocalypse (Matthew 24; 21, 29, 30; Luke 18: 8; and 21, 24, 26; etc.); candidates that

come to my mind *would* have been World War I and World War II. However, the more specific conditions of its occurrence, and what will actually happen, are things decided by God, and/or Jesus alone – not humankind – as the ardent Christian practitioner will insist.

Even so, Revelation provides many stunning images, both beautiful and horrifying, as to what will be happening, just whom ‘the chosen ones’ will be; although even more important for the present purposes, there are found strong suggestions regarding the bases on which one is chosen to experience everlasting life: for example, those who are willing to *repent* (by acknowledging their sins and asking for forgiveness, etc., Revelation, 1,2,3), and those who have already been *written into the Book of Life* (by having patterned their lives after that modeled by Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, not to mention taking Jesus as a personal savior, etc., Revelation, 20, 21, 22), would appear to more likely be saved from experiencing ever-lasting hell-fire, among other things, than those who have not.

If one reviews the prescriptions within the Watchtower Coda, it would appear that suggestions as to the importance of *repentance* are present – maybe not in the strong religious connotations of Revelation – but at least in terms of acknowledging how each of the parties have contributed to the conflict, and pledging to work out a resolution that contributes to the thriving of each, and of their common community. It would also appear that following the numerous prescriptions would *not*, at the very least, put you at variance with the prescriptions of Jesus as clarified in the Synoptic Gospels. So, while aligning oneself with the more general and specific thrusts of Watchtower Coda in conflict resolution would *not guarantee* a positive Apocalyptic outcome, it may well enhance it; at the same time it might reduce experiencing a negative Apocalyptic outcome – but again, only Jesus can determine that in the end, as the Christian apologist would admonish.

However, the strict literal interpretation above should be qualified given that *time* for God, as it is for Jesus, is not as it is for humankind (e.g., ‘a year can be as a thousand years’ – II Peter 3:8; Psalm 90:4). Thus, it is not difficult to imagine that Jesus is here, now, assisting humankind in their attempts to become as Jesus Himself, in emotion, thought, and action. In other words, the nature of the Apocalypse, in terms of just whom will have been written in the *Book of Life* can be altered in the future, by virtue of being altered in present time,

through an omnipresent and visual sensory-hidden but quite effective Jesus, acting in relationship with humankind for the ‘God-given’ good and against the ‘Satan-given’ evil. I would maintain that this is not an assertion that many practicing Christians would argue against. However, I might go farther than this, at least within a Christian apologetics of the Apocalypse: that the End-times – or at least its start – may already be here. Of course, such a possibility does not preclude its culmination with the visually-salient appearance of Jesus.

Dylan’s Original Watchtower Compared with Watchtower Coda

Dylan’s original allegory may well reflect modernity’s universalism and the discovery of truth, given its capturing what has long been experienced by humankind of its relationship with each other throughout history. However, as stated before it also has the beginnings of post-modernity’s emphasis on relativism, as exemplified by the prominence of the two usually marginalized figures of the Joker and the Thief, and their inter-relationships, along with the creation of truth through the application of an Apocalyptic meta-analytic. Watchtower Coda more explicitly combines modernity and postmodernity in the discernment of the community in response to the intelligence communicated by the figures of reconnaissance, the two riders; by contrast, Dylan leaves the identity and the purpose of the two riders ambiguous. This is a crucial difference because it sets the stage for the argument of Watchtower Coda as displayed in the dialogue of the two riders as they clarify the initial points governing the subsequent discernment of the community.

Comparing the Joker and the Thief of Dylan’s piece with the two riders of Watchtower Coda is instructive in highlighting not only similarities and differences but inter-relationships between the two allegories. While the Joker and the Thief can be considered iconic marginalized voices of a past human condition – or at least one that is hopefully on its way out, the male and female riders can be considered iconic non-marginalized voices of a future human condition – indeed one that is already making its presence known.

The strong suggestion is that if we treat each other as indicated – as empirical research has supported via the discovery of truth – we will be aligning ourselves with a universal stretching across time and space. However, at the same time, there is deep appreciation for the things that matter to each party, locally – truth as discovery, but also truth as relativizing. Truth as creation,

comes through universally via the Apocalyptic meta-analytic, and relatively via the different yet equally important values of each of the parties – whatever they may be.

Even so, this allegory is not just showing possibility, but also necessity. The necessity it shows is tightly tied to a purpose; that purpose being to adopt an attitude and practice aimed at resolving conflict in such a way that the idea of a watchtower itself increasingly becomes an anachronism, at least connotatively – and perhaps, denotatively as well. In other words, by virtue of how adversaries treat one another in situations of conflict, distrust can eventually diminish to the point that neither has to constantly be on guard, in the strong way – in terms of meaning – that a watchtower has always suggested. Indeed, making decisions with not only ourselves and others, but community in mind makes such an outcome a living possibility instead of a distant fantasy.

Concluding Comments

Watchtower as Allegorical Metaphor: Of course, we may never be able to completely let down our guard, but as our adversaries become increasingly human to us, being comprised of hopes and dreams, promises and perils, competencies and vulnerabilities, just as we are; being looked at as important players in the creation of a productive and affirming collective, just as we look at ourselves; we may come to view the very idea of a watchtower as just a step to something better. Rather than as a means to protecting ourselves, or as an end in and of itself, it becomes a means to assist others who are in need. Denotatively, the watchtower exists; but connotatively it has done almost an about-face.

Performance Notes: Of course, the meanings of each of these allegories (All Along the Watchtower and Watchtower Coda) would be enhanced and/or extended, with being performed via recitation, but especially being performed musically. I myself perform both Dylan's original piece and the Watchtower Coda piece in open D major tuning, which provides an opportunity to configure chords, multiple note runs, and single notes both above and below the fretboard; this creates greater flexibility for musical stylings than just working below the fretboard, as is usually the case with pieces composed in standard tuning. However, I perform the two pieces quite differently, not so much in terms of the kinds of chords and notes played, but rather in terms of chord and note sequence, and of tempo. While I perform Dylan's piece in a *moderato*

to allegretto tempo range, Watchtower Coda is performed with a tempo that is from allegretto to allegro. This is meant to suggest that time is limited, so we had better make, and implement with dispatch, the changes in just how we attempt to resolve a conflict.

Commentary Solicited: What needs to be further clarified are the attitudes, events, situations, etc., that together with the postulated necessary conditions form a set of both necessary and sufficient conditions that will more than likely bring about the desired ends.

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