

NEWLAMP 2023
Northeast Workshop to Learn About Multicultural Philosophy:
Latin American and Latinx Moral, Social, and Political Philosophy

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7/24-28/2023

NAHUA METAPHYSICS "CHEAT SHEET":
SOME KEY CONCEPTS

(I) DEFINING PROBLEMATIC: Why have a philosophy? Why do we need philosophers (sages, wise ones)? What problem do we need them to help us solve?

A Nahua mother advises her coming-of-age daughter:

Behold the road thou art to follow. In such a manner thou art to live. Thy lords, our lords, the noble women, the old women, the white-haired ones ... they gave one, they left, ... their words. "Take heed. On earth it is a time for care, it is a place of caution. Behold the word; heed and guard it, and with it take your way of life, your works. We travel, we live along a mountain peak. Over here there is an abyss, over there is an abyss. If you goest over here, or if thou goes over there, thou wilt fall. Only in the middle doth one go, doth one live.

The mother goes on to instruct her daughter regarding the proper way to live: how to speak, walk, dress, eat, bathe, have sex, treat others, etc. Her instruction would have undoubtedly included the Mexica *tlatolli* ("adage"), "*Tlaalahui, tlapetzcahui in tlalticpac*" ("The earth is slippery"), explaining that people say this of someone who has lived an upright, well-balanced life only to slip into wrongdoing, as though in slick mud. The consequences of improper behavior included imbalancedness, disequilibrium, and *disease*. (which were also the causes of slipping). The Mexica conceived these latter in terms of mind-body (since they drew no sharp metaphysical distinction between the two) and also in terms of the individual agent, her family, community, and ultimately, the entire world.

Nahua: "The slippery earth": The surface of the earth (*tlalticpac*) as treacherous, narrow, harpoon-like sharp, jagged path between mountain peaks, with steep abysses on both sides. BUT ALSO (and this is rarely acknowledged): *the earth is "slippery" because the earth itself moves!* Indeed, the entire 5th "Sun," "Era," "Age," or "Sun-Earth ordering" (of which the earth is one component) moves.

The motivating question is accordingly: "What/where/how is the path?", "How do we path (make a path)?" "How can we maintain our balance upon the slippery earth?", "How shall

we live (act, move, think, feel, eat, dress, etc.[?]), here on *tlalticpac* in the 5th Age, given the nature of the 5th Age existence and the nature of existential condition of humankind?"

ONE CRUCIAL WRINKLE: humans' balancing on the surface of the earth requires in addition balancing the path itself, that is, keeping the earth itself (*tlalticpac*) – and the 5th Sun-Earth Ordering -- in balance. The good (*cualli*) path not only consists of balancing ourselves (i.e., our defining relationships with other persons, both human and other-than-human) but also consists of balancing the path upon which we walk *itself*. Humans therefore do not find or discover a preexisting path upon which to walk; they construct their path as they go. The construct both a balanced lifeway and a balanced path-life-world.

Nahua philosophy as first and foremost path-seeking rather than truth-seeking philosophy.

Caveat regarding the applicability of modern Euro-American philosophical categories, distinctions, and concepts. (1) Nahua philosophy appears to make no clear distinction between moral philosophy, socio-political philosophy, and aesthetics. There is no distinction between ethics and environmental ethics. (2) there seems to be no distinction between myth-philosophy-history-religion. Does this represent a confused thinking, a failure to draw important distinctions; or does our modern drawing of these distinctions represent our confusion, making distinction where there is no distinction to be made. The sword cuts both ways.

Dominant themes:

(1) The centrality of maize:

(1a) The life cycle of maize: human~maize interdependency or symbiosis. The non-dehiscence of maize: maize cannot reproduce without human intervention, and humans cannot reproduce without maize. Maize must offer/gift its life-energies (sacrifice itself) to human beings in order to reproduce (continue living), and humans must offer/gift their life-energies (sacrifice themselves) to maize in order to reproduce (continue living). Neither can live without the other.

(1b) Ordering, arranging, and spreading out a maize milpa upon the earth's surface is the conceptual model for ordering, arranging, spreading out of a human way of life upon the earth's surface.

(1c) Human beings consist of maize, a sacred substance and "creator being" (male aspect = Cinteotl; female aspect = Chicomecoatl ["7 Snake"]). Maize is their sustenance, their flesh, and their blood. Consuming maize is a necessary condition of being genuinely human (as opposed to "a lump of flesh with two eyes").

(1d) In order to speak properly, clearly and intelligibly, i.e., to the speak Nahuatl -- as opposed to say, *Nāhñu* [Otimí] or *Purépecha* (Tarrascan) – one must consume maize. Consuming maize enables humans to speak Nahuatl, i.e., to speak clearly and intelligibly.

(1f) Humans revere, feed, gift, care for, respect, love, worship, maintain proper relationship with, reciprocate with "creator beings" principally by means clear, well-formed, intelligible

speech (spoken and sung word). Speaking Nahuatl is a necessary condition of revering, feeding, etc., creator beings. Since consuming maize is a necessary condition of speaking Nahuatl, consuming maize is a necessary condition of properly and successfully “worshipping” creator beings. By virtue of enabling humans to speak Nahuatl, consuming maize enables human to worship, respect, care for, feed and re-gift to and reciprocate life-energy with creator beings successfully.

(1g) Humans eat creator beings, and creator beings eat humans. (More generally, everyone eats someone in the Nahua cosmos.) Humans feed their life-energies creator beings, and creator beings feed their life-energies humans. Creator beings are dependent upon humans for their continuing existence just as humans are dependent upon creator beings for their continuing existence. Humans and “creator beings” -- like maize and humans -- are mutually dependent or symbiotic:

“We eat the ‘gods’ and the ‘gods’ eat us.”

“We feed ourselves to the ‘gods’ and the ‘gods’ feed themselves to us.”

“We care for the ‘gods’ and the ‘gods’ care for us.”

The “gods” are “mothers, fathers” to humans, while humans are “mothers, fathers” to the “gods.”

Humans are said to be “warm, tasty tortillas” to be eaten by “creator beings.”

(1h) As a consequence of their mutual consuming of one another, humans become “divine” and “deities” become “human” – i.e., there is no in principle ontological difference between humans and “creator beings.”

(1i) Maize is a divine substance or life-energy (male aspect = Cinteotl [“Sacred maize,” “maize deity”]; female aspect = Chicomecoatl [“7 Snake”]). By consuming maize, humans thus become god-like (“you are what you eat”). By feeding their human life-energies to the gods, humans essentially regift the gods’ life-energies back to the gods; they participate in the recycling or recirculating of (cosmic) life-energy.

(2) *Nepantla* processes: weaving, sexual commingling, struggling/warring and reciprocating as defining movement of the cosmos.

(II) METAPHYSICS (nature, structure and ultimate constituents of reality)

Ontological (entity) monism: there exists one and only *thing*: *teotl*.

Constitutional (stuff) monism: there exists one and only one kind of *stuff*: *teotl*. The cosmos consists of one and only kind of stuff: *teotl*. The stuff *teotl* is neutral between mind and body, spirit and matter, seeing as it constitutes both.

Teoyoism: There is a single, dynamic, vivifying, eternally self-generating and self-regenerating, and self-transforming sacred energy, power, or force – *teotl*; *teotl* is amoral, non-personal, non-minded, non-agentive, non-intentional, and non-teleological; *teotl* continually generates and regenerates as well as permeates, encompasses, and shapes the cosmos as part of its own endless process of self-generating-and-self-regenerating, self-

unfolding, and self-emanating; *teotl* does not stand apart from creation (in the manner of god, etc.). *Teotl* is metaphysically *immanent*, not metaphysically *transcendent*. *Teotl* is *co-present* and *co-extensional* with the cosmos because identical with (one with) the cosmos. *Teotl* is *not supernatural*. Nahua metaphysics rejects natural vs. supernatural distinction.

Contemporary Huastec Nahuatl-speakers call this as *totiotzin* or *totiotsij*, "a kind of power or energy that surges throughout the cosmos and within every particle and being" (Sandstrom & Sandstrom). Contemporary Zapotec (*Binnigulá sá*) speakers refer to this as *pè-tào* which they conceive of as "great wind, breath, spirit" which gives life/existence (Sánchez-Antonio). Contemporary *Nuyooteca*-speakers of the Mixteca Alta refer to this power as *yii* (Monaghan), which they, along with contemporary Huichol (*Wixárika*)-speakers, liken to electricity flowing continuously through everything and throughout the cosmos (Neurath).

The cosmos (reality) as *teotl*'s creative self-engendering and re-engendering, self-generating and self-regenerating, self-emerging, self-unfolding, self-transforming and self-retransforming.

Pantheism (neither polytheism nor theism): (a) everything that exists constitutes an all-inclusive and interrelated unity; (b) this unity is sacred; (c) everything that exists is substantively identical and hence one with the sacred; (d) the sacred is *teotl*. Hence there is only one thing, *teotl*, and all other forms or aspects of reality and existence are identical with *teotl*; (e) *teotl* is not a minded being possessing the characteristics of a person or agent (such as having emotions, intentional states, or the capacity to make decisions). *Teotl* is not a deity, god, or supernatural being.

The so-called "gods" or "deities" or "spirit beings" – e.g., Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca, Tlaloc, Tlazolteotl, Cinteotl, Chicomexochitl, and Chalchiuhtlicue -- are nothing more than aspects or facets of *teotl* qua life-energy; they are akin to the colors of rainbow refracted through a prism originating from single source of light. They are beings (agents, persons) (i.e., pooled or coagulated life-energy processes [Cordova]) that are more powerful than human beings but not ontologically (qualitatively) different from human beings. They are part of "nature" as they do not act against, over, outside of, independently of, or apart from nature. They are "in and of" "nature" ; in and of the world (5th Age). Each is defined by its own "personality" or patterns of behaving. What's more, they fuse, merge and *overlap* with one another as well as *fission* into multiple "beings" (Lopez Austin).

Corollary #1: Denial of the sacred vs. profane dualism. Tlazolteotl ("sacred excrement/shit," "sacred disorder") as sacred filth, humus, excrement, derangement. Ecological circulation of life-energy and the inter-relatedness of all things.

Corollary #2: Denial of nature vs. supernature distinction.

Corollary #3: Denial of nature vs. culture distinction.

Corollary #4: Humans are aspects of *teotl*; humans are fully *in and of* the world.

Corollary #5: The "gods" are aspects of *teotl*: they are fully *in and of* the world.

Process metaphysics or metaphysics of becoming: Reality is processive: i.e., defined by continual, dynamic transmutation, becoming, and motion-change. That which is real is that which becomes, changes, transforms, and moves. Process, becoming, motion, change, and transformation define *teotl* and all things. What appear to be perduring objects or entities – e.g., creator beings, humans, sun, mountains, lakes, animals, plants, pyramids, and statues -- are nothing more than transitory, stability patterns in and concentrations of *teotl*'s energy-in-motion. Because essentially processive, human existence and the existence of the 5th Age lifeworld are essentially unstable, evanescent, and transitory.

That which is real is that which makes things happen.

Nature follows function: i.e., what something *is* follows from *what it does* and *how* it does it.

Animism/Vitalism/Lifeism: *teotl* energizes the entire cosmos and its contents: e.g., time, place, sun, moon, earth, rocks, rivers, mountains, clouds, rains, humans, animals, corn, maguey, insects, excrement. Everything consists of energy, force, power. All things are animated, empowered, and vivified by *teotl*'s life-energy. The cosmos and all its inhabitants – from earth, lightning, rivers, mountains, caves, wind, and sun to roads, buildings, featherwork, “art,” weapons, cooking pots, farming implements, fishing nets, and musical instruments to plants, animals, humans, and ancestors (“the living dead”) to speaking (and ordered speeches), stories, dance, copal incense, ceremonies, and songs – are vivified, active, and powerful. (Brian Burkhardt (Cherokee): “lifeism”; Sanchez-Antonio: “vitalism.”)

That which is alive possesses wind and breath and is able to speak; and is able to be orally communicated with by means of speech. One simply needs to know how to do so.

Social Ontology / an ontology of persons/agents (personalism): the 5th Era is a *social* time-place, i.e., an interweaving of ‘deities,’ humans, animals, trees, plants, mountains, fire, water, houses, tools, etc., all of whom are persons possessing agency, personalities, sentience, volition, need for nourishment, life-death cycle, and the ability to gift and respond to gifts. Personhood is not confined to humans: other-than-human persons include ‘gods,’ sun, earth, rain, lightning, trees, tools, animals, plants, lakes, houses, temples, etc. Humans are born into this social universe: a social landscape or social weaving in progress; into a woven fabric of social relationships.

The 5th Age lifeworld is a social world populated by human and other-than-human persons. Humans are born into this social world. Creator beings, earth, sun, rain, plants, animals, lakes, and mountains as well as houses, gemstones, archaeological remains, cooking pots, and farming tools are not only vivified -- they are also *persons*. Consistent with pantheism, *all* persons are nothing more than transitory, stability patterns in and concentrations of *teotl*'s energy-in-motion. While creator beings are certainly more powerful than humans, they are not ontologically *sui generis*. They are not “gods” in the Abrahamic sense.

An ontology of interpersonal relationships: The 5th Age is also a social world in the additional sense of being generated and constituted by a vast and complex fabric of

ongoing *interpersonal relationships* between persons. Humans are born into this social fabric of dynamic interpersonal relationships. Human and other-than-human agents are constituted by their interrelationships with other agents (human and other-than-human) within this fabric. They do not exist prior to or independently of their relationships with other persons. They only become persons within a network of interrelationships.

Holism and relationalism: Reality consists of a single, unified, all-inclusive, interdependent, and interrelated whole. The individual constituents of this whole are *essentially* interrelated, interdependent, and inter-defined. Existence itself is relational. All things are essentially inter-related within a woven cosmic fabric.

Hence: what Blackfoot elders refer to as “**comprehensive relational animacy**” (*Itsiipootsikimskai* [“where the water comes together as friends”], Blackfoot-settler writing alliance).

The interrelatedness of well-being: The well-balancedness and well-being of persons is *interdependent* with that of other persons. Person A realizes his well-being if and only if person B realizes her well-being (and conversely). Second, person A’s well-being is a *consequence* of his interrelationship with B (and conversely). Third, A’s and B’s well-being is a property of their *interrelationship*. Well-being is thus an *adverb*: it qualifies the ‘how’ of A’s and B’s ongoing interrelationship. Humans attain balance, well-being and the good life *not* in isolation from or at the expense of other persons but *only within* the web of their ongoing social relationships with other persons; *only* in their reciprocity-defined, well-balanced inamic partnerships with others; *only* in actively maintaining well-balanced, reciprocal relations with others; and thus *only* with the cooperation and help of others. In sum, well-being, like existence itself, is *relational*.

Horizontal vs. vertical metaphysics. Teoyoism embraces a horizontal metaphysics. Higher and lower layers of the cosmos are ontologically homogeneous and thus not ontologically superior and inferior (respectively). Corollary: Denial of the sacred (higher) v. profane (lower) dualism. Everything is sacred. Rejection of the notion of a “Great Chain of Being” (as Arthur Lovejoy characterized Western metaphysics starting with Plato.)

Agonistic Inamic Unity: Teotl’s ceaseless becoming and self-transforming are characterized by what I call *agonistic inamic unity*, i.e. the continuing cyclical struggle (*agon*) between paired dual forces. The Nahuatl term for the relationship between such paired forces is *inamic*. Agonistic inamic unity functions as the pattern *by which* and *in* which teotl weaves itself, reality, cosmos, and all existing things, and as such it defines the processing of the cosmos and all its inhabitants. This pattern emerges *immanently* from *teotl* in the way a pattern emerges in the weaving of a blanket. Nahua metaphysics conceives these paired forces as interdependent, interrelated, mutually engendering, and mutually complementary while at the same time mutually competitive and antagonistic. Neither is conceptually or temporally prior to the other. Neither is morally or metaphysically superior to the other.

Inamic pairs are neither contraries nor contradictories. Rather: (a) matched (polar) forces are mutually complementary, mutually arising, and mutually interdependent while also being simultaneously mutually competitive and alternately dominating. *Inamic* pairs *compete* with one another while also *completing* one another; (b) *inamic* pairs constitute two aspects or facets of *teotl*; (c) *inamic* pairs combine to form an ambiguous unity: a unified duality and dual unity. Hence reality is irreducibly mixed and ambiguous; (d) *inamic* pairs are non-eschatological, non-teleological, and wholly amoral. Neither good per se nor evil per se are among *teotl*'s *inamic* pairs; (e) these *inamic* pairs or partners include: e.g., being~non-being, life~death, male~female, hot~cold, dry~wet, above~below, light~darkness, feeding~being fed, gifting~being gifted. As aspects of *teotl*'s energy-in-motion, they are more accurately seen as processes: e.g., as male-ing (male-energizing)~female-ing (female-energizing); and gifting-energy~receiving-energy. Some *inamic* processes generate new (or destroy existing) *inamic* relationships. For example, a donor's appropriate gifting and recipient's accepting (gifting~receiving) generates a *tertium quid*, a new *nepantla*-defined *inamic* relationship: obligating~obligated or obligation-creating~obligation-incurring. *Inamic* relationships may also overlap: feeding~being fed overlaps with gifting~receiving, female-ing~male-ing, and obligating~obligated.

Neither *inamic* pair is ontologically, conceptually or epistemologically prior to the other. There is neither beginning nor end to their becoming. Hence the absence of *ex nihilo* creation and absence of *ex nihilo*-style cosmogony (cosmic creation story). There is simply "always becoming" (Nora Naranjo-Morse [Santa Clara Pueblo]).

Conspicuously absent from this list are Good (goodness per se) and Evil (badness per se). Nahua metaphysics conceives neither *teotl*, cosmos, nor human existence in terms of a struggle between Good and Evil. Indeed, Good and Evil *as such* do not exist. This notwithstanding, sun, thunderstorms, rivers, humans, animals, and houses, e.g., may act benevolently or malevolently towards humans – i.e., in a way that is balancing or imbalancing.

***Teotl*, reality, and cosmos consist of a grand, all-inclusive woven fabric of ongoing agonistic inamic interrelationships.** Everything in the cosmos is defined in terms of a complex web of *inamic* interrelationships and interdependencies that eventually includes the entire cosmos. The cyclical, back-and-forth tug-of-war between *inamic* pairs combined with the alternating, temporary dominance of one *inamic* over its opposite both constitute and explain the genesis, diversity, movement, and momentary ordering of the cosmos.

Pattern is emergent, bottom-up, and immanent -- not super-imposed, transcendent, or top-down.

Three major kinds of transformation or motion-change: *olin*, *malinalli*, and *nepantla*. *Teotl* circulates throughout the cosmos in these three patterns.

Weaving the 5th Age: the cosmos as *nepantla* process (grand weaving/sexual commingling/struggling) in progress.

'Cosmogony' (genesis of the cosmos): Ometecuhtli~Omecihuatl (two-lord~two lady) or Ometeotl (two-teotl) or Tonacatecuhtli~Tonacacihuatl (Lord-of-our-flesh~Lady-of-our-flesh): **(a)** as bisexual progenitor/progenetrix continually engaged in sexual intercourse with him-herself; **(b)** as cosmic weaver continually engaged in self-weaving, in weaving the cosmos out of her-himself -- the consequence of both is the continual engendering, processing, becoming and unfolding of the cosmos. Hence the **(c)** unified twoness and dual oneness of cosmic/world becoming.

Neither inamic pair is ontologically or conceptually prior to the other. There is neither beginning nor end to their becoming. Hence the absence of *ex nihilo* creation. Hence the absence of cosmogony (cosmic creation story) properly speaking.

The Five "Suns," Eras or Sun-Earth Orderings.

The present Era is the Fifth. Its Sun is 4 Motion (*Nahui Ollin*), whose essence is motion-change.

The shape of time-place: *tonalpohualli*, *xiuhpohualli*, and *xiuhmolpilli*. See Codex Fejérváry Mayer, folio 1. http://www.famsi.org/research/loubat/Fejervary/page_01.jpg

Ontological monism & the multiplicity of things

The multiplicity of things (apparently discrete and independently existing entities such as tables, insects, humans, rocks, rivers, cooking pots, hailstorms, etc.) is real since one and all are aspects, facets or self-presentations of teotl; aspects of teotl's own self-unfolding. One and all are reducible to the teotl's own process of continual self-presenting, self-creating and re-creating. This parallels Nahua pantheism's reduction of the multiplicity of "gods". The multiplicity of ordinary objects things like the polytheism of many gods are equally reduced to the oneness of teotl (pantheism, ontological monism).

The *Popol Vuh* (Quiché Maya): Breath on the mirror: humans' cognitive (epistemic) faculties are breathed upon like fog on a mirror and thus delimited or befogged or dimmed. What does this mean? The breath on the mirror separates the visible from the invisible aspects of teotl, but not the real from the unreal, the exterior from the interior, objective from the subjective, the physical from the mental, or the material from the spiritual (as we understand these notions). Both visible and invisible are equally real. It just so happens that some aspects of teotl are accessible to the five senses, some are not. Both visible and invisible are equally real -- just as for us, both visible middle-sized physical entities (e.g., tables, rocks, mountains) and invisible micro-sized entities and forces (e.g., electrons, bosons, quarks, gravity, electromagnetic radiation) are equally real. So visible vs. invisible does not signal an ontological difference but rather an epistemological difference. What humans are and are not able to access using the five senses.

Participatory cosmos: the 5th Sun-Earth ordering is "open" to human intervention, contribution and participation. In addition, and more crucially, very continuing existence the 5th Sun-Earth ordering positively *requires* human intervention, participation, and contribution. Human participation and intervention is essential to its continuing balance,

processing, and hence continuing existence. As a consequence, **humans co-engender (along with the “gods”) the future of humans but also the future of the 5th Sun-Earth Ordering itself.**

The Human Existential Condition:

(1) The Earth’s surface (*tlalticpac*) specifically and the 5th Sun-Earth Ordering generally are defined by continuing change, movement/motion, birth~death, being~nonbeing, transformation, “cyclical” agonistic inamic processing, becoming and processing.

(2) This continual processing is patterned immanently by the *tonalpohualli*, *xiuhpohualli*, and *xiuhmolpilli*. These offer humans practical resources for living in balance.

(3) Humans are in the world and of the world.

(4) Life for humans is “slippery”; i.e., it is easy to become imbalanced. The evanescence, ephemerality, and fragility of human life and all things earthly. “The slippery earth”: The surface of the earth (*tlalticpac*) is likened treacherous, narrow, harpoon-like sharp, jagged path between mountain peaks, with steep abysses on both sides. Living consists of walking down this slippery path.

(5) Participatory cosmos: the 5th Sun-Earth ordering is not only “open” to human intervention, contribution and participation; its very continuing existence *requires* human intervention, participation, and contribution. Human participation and intervention is *essential* to the continuing balance and hence continuing existence of the 5th Sun-Earth Ordering. Humans therefore co-engender (along with the “gods”) the future of humans but also the future of the 5th Sun-Earth Ordering itself.

(6) The slippery earth”: The surface of the earth (*tlalticpac*) is likened treacherous, narrow, harpoon-like sharp, jagged path between mountain peaks, with steep abysses on both sides. In light of the necessity of humans contributing to the continuing existence of the 5th Sun-Earth Ordering, it now seems more accurate to say that life for humans consists of making or constructing a path between mountain peaks, not following (discovering) a preexisting path. The future is not guaranteed, and humans must act in order so as to help engender the future.

(7) Humans are unique in that they alone have the obligation and burden to keep the 5th Age going. They are *not* unique in the sense of: being ontologically or morally different from or superior to other creatures; being made in the gods’ image; being give dominion over “nature.”

(8) Humans’ principal obligations are to creator beings who are in and of this world. Mesoamerican “spirituality” concerns this world. Philosophy and religion do not float free from any connection to the world, to place-time.

(9) Humans eat creator beings, and creator beings eat humans. Humans feed creator beings, and creator beings feed humans. Creator beings are dependent upon humans for the continuing existence just as humans are dependent upon creator beings for their continuing existence. Humans and “gods” are mutually dependent or symbiotic:

“We eat the ‘gods’ and the ‘gods’ eat us.”

“We feed ourselves to the ‘gods’ and the ‘gods’ feed themselves to us.”

“We care for the ‘gods’ and the ‘gods’ care for us.”

The “gods” are “mothers, fathers” to humans, while humans are “mothers, fathers” to the “gods.”

Coatlicue (“serpent-skirt” or “earth mother”) as great “womb and tomb” (Nicholson) of human beings: see photograph of statue of Coatlicue in Museo Nacional de Antropología <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C5%8D%C4%81tl%C4%ABcue>

BALANCE

Balance (equilibrium) is neither harmonious, static, nor peaceful. It is not a state of unchanging, timeless, and peaceful cooperation, agape, idyll, or quietude.

Balance is a process – balancing. It is achieved dynamically, diachronically, dialectically, and agonistically (as in walking, bicycling, sexual coupling, weaving, etc.).

Balancing is emergent and immanent (like rings in cross section of a tree trunk) – not top-down imposed.