

POETRY-MAKING AND POLICY-MAKING

PART II

Mutual Entrainment

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1. POETIC CONFIGURATION OF POLICY GUIDELINES

It is assumed here that any higher order of significance and coherence could only emerge if the conventional obsession with "reconciling" policy differences, through reducing or eliminating them, is resisted. The question is whether imaginative use of aesthetic skills can be used to configure strong differences to create a larger pattern of order. It is then the aesthetic properties of that pattern which hold essentially incompatible elements in relationship. This relationship is then to be seen in terms of complementarity, both aesthetic and functional. It is the aesthetic properties that ensure coherence and comprehensibility. It is the functional properties which ensure appropriateness, social relevance and operational sustainability.

But there remains the continuing challenge of the kind of configuration that would be meaningful and useful from both an aesthetic and a policy perspective. To be realistic this configuration would itself have to be structured on principles that reflected the inherent "opposition" between aesthetic and policy perspectives.

There is much scope for discovering and exploring suitable configurative structures. Approaching the matter from the aesthetic side, one might consider some patterning based on the nine Muses of Greek mythology, or on the eight Rasas of Indian aesthetics. From the management side, there are many clusterings of 5-10 functions, including team roles, hierarchical functions, and the like. Neither responds to the basic challenge of explicitly configuring both aesthetic and functional dimensions, although it could be argued that functional dimensions are implicit in the set of Rasas.

What then might be the dimensions important to any such configuration? Can they be worded so as to be meaningful both in aesthetic and management terms? Consider the following candidates:

(a) Thematic choice

Whether art or policy, an initial step common to both is usually a choice of theme. A poem has a theme which is developed and celebrated. A policy addresses a thematic concern which is defined in part by that to which the policy accords attention. The origins of the theme in each case are equally mysterious -- whatever the explanations after the fact. Both poets and policy-makers respond to tensions in their environment for which the chosen theme emerges as the most strategic resolution. The theme may spring "full-formed" into the mind of either or emerge as a unifying theme after much consideration of what subsequently become details.

(b) Appropriateness

Both poets and policy-makers are sensitive to some form of appropriateness which designers such as Christopher Alexander (1964) often refer to as "goodness of fit". Potential elements have to "feel right" -- a term also used by both managers and interior decorators. Appropriateness is a major consideration in the thematic choice. Both poem and policy may be termed "well-crafted" when completed. As the poet Osip Mandelstam declared: "*The consciousness of itself as being right is the most precious thing of all about poetry.*" Henry Gifford (1986) stresses however: "*The 'rightness' of poetry is not to be confused with the 'correctness' of party dogma, as Mayakovsky and other poets in the Soviet era found to their discomfort.*" (p. 27)

(c) Imagination and originality

Whilst creative imagination is naturally vital to poets as a key to rendering their work attractive, it is also important to policy-makers in seeking to move beyond tired programme formulae which no longer enthuse either those who implement them or those for whom they are designed. Policies are often criticized for being unimaginative. The dearth of useful new ideas

is currently deplored. It is not sufficient that a theme should be appropriate, in both cases it has to be characterized by originality.

(d) Challenge

Beyond originality, it is important for many artists and policy-makers to effectively challenge existing mind-sets and modes of response. In many ways both seek to reform and reinterpret - rather than simply to extrapolate and elaborate. Originality, however imaginative, does not necessarily carry such a challenge. In both cases the challenge may involve undermining or destroying cherished older patterns of response -- in order to create space for the emergence of the new. Unfortunately in the case of policy-making, the most challenged have been those in developing and former socialist countries, not those in the industrialized countries responsible for the elaboration of modern policy skills.

(e) Insight capture and control

Neither works of art nor policies are formulated in a vacuum. Both depend on "antennae" through which the rich variety of perceptions and understandings of others are sensed. They are the "material" with which, or on which, both work. Insight capture is therefore an important process. Artists are renowned for bathing in reality to soak up such insights. Policy-makers are renowned for the questionable procedures and consultations through which they derive their insights -- "from the people". In both cases requisite variety is an important consideration in being able to generate a product which effectively "controls" the experience of that external variety.

(f) Acknowledging/Honouring/Dignifying

Much art is designed to recognize, dignify or honour some phenomenon or experience, whether renowned or exceptionally commonplace, whether person or object. Poetry continually strives to refine experience of ordinary events and make them extraordinary. Policies are themselves frequently articulated by specifically "recognizing" some hitherto neglected human or natural condition on which action is called for. They may also acknowledge previous initiatives and honour the foresight of those responsible for them (as with the Marshall Plan). It is a way of establishing historical continuity and precedent. This may of course be all they do.

(g) Coherence and integrity

It is perhaps debateable whether every work of art needs to be "coherent", but even if it is a celebration of incoherence, a measure of coherence is required for it to be appreciated. Coherence results from the parts integrating into some larger whole -- whether explicit or implied. It is an important feature of any policy. Policies can be severely criticized for containing any "contradictions" that detract from such coherence.

(h) Energy holding / Enthralling

For any work of art to succeed, it must hold the attention, often to the point of being enthralling -- in the best and worst senses of the term. The dynamics must work so as to be self-sustaining -- so that the work remains alive. In this sense it is often described as "having energy" or "being full of energy". This quality is a real challenge to policy-making. There is a need to create policies which are "alive" and attract support (and supporters) -- especially given the multitude of policies that are effectively "dead", and experienced as such (Judge, 1988). A policy that is alive evokes and channels collective energy, whether solely in the form of attention and directed concern, or also in the movement of funds and goods. Such notions have been reinterpreted for contemporary society by R G H Siu (1974).

(i) Focus

Many works of art have a focus, or may effectively build such a focus through the juxtaposition and dynamic of their elements. This may be described as the "point" of such a

work which may thus be said to "make a point". It might also be described as the "angle" from which the theme is approached. Policies too have a focus to the extent that they have a fundamental purpose or objective towards which the component elements are designed to work. Some are indeed designed simply to "make a point". The question "what's the angle" is a common challenge in the management world. Policies may be severely criticized for lacking focus and having no real purpose. A policy is effectively a focusing of the collective will. In management terms it needs to offer "leverage" to be successful.

(j) Resonance and relevance

Few of the above features are independent. In the case of a work of art, their interdependence is ensured by lines or patterns of resonance linking the component elements. In the case of poetry such resonance may be achieved by rhyming and metaphor. In the case of music many harmonic devices establish links between the different parts of the work. A policy is considered well-crafted when the different parts reinforce each other as part of a larger whole which may be described in system terms, and as flows of information.

(k) Rhythm and pacing

There is a rhythm to most works of art, whether in the movement of the eye or in the way in which the work is designed to be heard. Clearly this is most explicit in poetry, music and the dramatic arts. In addition to its role in ensuring the pattern of resonance noted above, rhythm ensures the entrainment of the passive observer into a role as active participant -- if only in its potential effect on the pulse. Policy-making tends to be insensitive to rhythm and to processes of involvement although the latter are increasingly a major concern -- and the notion of work rhythm has long been a vital concern to many. Most ongoing management processes are however firmly based on regular cycles linked to the calendar (yearly, monthly, etc) and with very few variations to this monotonous regularity. Timing is a major consideration in launching a policy and phasing its implementation. The standard business motto might even be adapted to "timing is money".

(l) Image building

Many artistic works strive to build and sustain an image through the variety of devices employed. This is notably the case with poetry. Policy-makers are also increasingly concerned with creating an image in the eyes of their publics, critics and rivals. Public relations at the service of managers is specifically concerned with "image building". In a world of media "sound bites" and "photo opportunities", policy-making may be essentially a process of building and sustaining an attractive image. The appearance of imaginative and appropriate approaches may matter more than the reality. For many political purposes, image building now creates that reality.

(m) Metaphor

It is unnecessary to comment at this point on the fundamental importance of metaphor to the arts and especially to poetry. Its importance to policy-making has also been noted above.

2. POESIS: ENHANCEMENT OF POLICY THROUGH KEY POETIC INSIGHTS

As noted above, the term poesis signifies ordering or organization. This is a concern shared by poetry and policy-making. What then are the insights and learnings to be obtained from poetics and poetry composition that might enhance the quality of policy-making? In part this exploration involves a recognition of what poetry seeks to accomplish with language -- since policies have to be articulated through language. In this connection it is worth noting that one director of a school of management summarized his task as "only teaching a new language".

Consider the following comments by Winifred Nowotny (1962) in *The Language that Poets Use*:

(a) Poetic language

She argues for the *"recognition of the part played by the corporeality of words, and by the structures which connect them, not only in determining lesser poetic effects but also in directing the larger mental and imaginative processes activated by the poem"* (p. 2). As stressed earlier, such concerns are relevant in order to move beyond the characteristically unimaginative articulation of policies which inhibits the activation of the "larger mental and imaginative processes" vital as carriers of the subtleties and complexities of richer policies.

This, she argues, could lead *"to a recognition of the fact that the various elements of poetic language interpenetrate one another with an intimacy which is of first importance in any consideration of how poetry 'works'"* (p. 2). The future desperately needs policies that 'work' in the sense that they capture the imagination in powerful ways. There is therefore merit in being attentive to how the various devices used to articulate it effectively "interpenetrate" to achieve this.

(b) Multiple meanings

Much effort has been invested by the sciences in developing unequivocal terminology. Nowotny suggests that a provisional distinction between literary and non-literary language might be: *"that a verbal structure is literary if it presents its topic at more than one level of presentation at the same time -- or, alternatively, if one and the same utterance has more than one function in the structure of meaning in which it occurs."* (p. 2). Such is the complexity of the policy challenges currently faced, that any text which endeavours to capture this complexity in the conventional linear mode can only fail miserably. It is virtually unreadable. Vital patterns of connections are lost. And, worst of all, it inhibits the vital imaginative response which would enable it to fulfil its function. The Maastricht Treaty is a striking example. Yet recent developments in communication hardware, faced with analogous problems, use a variety of techniques through which the same medium carries a large number of messages (optical cable, etc). Cannot techniques of multiple association be used to ensure the coherence and comprehensibility of patterns of relations vital to the integrity of any policy? This attribute is also vital in maintaining such integrity when the policies has to be expressed in different conceptual languages to audiences with different preoccupations, skills and backgrounds.

(c) Hidden effects of syntax

Nowotny continues: *"Poetry's means of imitating the thing it talks of...include the poetic management of linguistic necessities not peculiar to poems, as rhyme and metre are. Of all the elements necessary to make an utterance meaningful, the most powerful is syntax, controlling as it does the order in which impressions are received and conveying the mental relations 'behind' sequences of words...syntax is important to poet and to critic because it produces strong effects by stealth; these remain 'inexplicable' so long as the power of syntax goes undetected"* (p. 9). What indeed are the strong effects currently produced so stealthily by the kinds of syntax favoured in policy documents? Could it be that it is precisely these stealthy effects which are inhibiting favourable reception of policies?

Much has been said of the complexity of policy issues and its challenge to comprehension at every level of society. Enhancing the ability to comprehend dynamic patterns of relationships is therefore of vital interest. Nowotny states: *"because of the compelling syntactical relations in each passage, the reader's mind receives not only the information the passage may be said to communicate but also and at the same time the significance of that information...these significances proceed from the relations, apprehended in a flash by the reader's mind"* (p. 10).

To what extent can it be said that policy documents facilitate such comprehension in a flash? What opportunities for comprehension are lost?

(d) Perspective-orientation and context creation

Many resolutions through which policies are defined are formally structured under paragraphs headed by phrases such as "Recognizing...", "Considering..." and the like. These orient understanding of the substantive paragraphs and embed the resolution in a network of precedents and concerns. In the case of poetry, as Nowottny states: *"the poet must use in his poems the terminology that brings into play those particular mental structures or categories (scientific, historical, moral, religious, psychological, etc) in which it seems to him interesting to think or feel about an object. The poet is both free of context and bound to create it... The clarity and assurance with which the poet can direct us towards his own valuation of an object are often the result of his using a diction which, in the act of specifying the object, pre-selects the point of view from which it is seen."* (p. 43). The issue in democratic policy-making is how the view gets selected and how to engage the attention of those preferring other views.

Nowottny stresses that such context creation *"is one of the great functions of metaphor and simile -- to determine the reader's point of view by intimately relating the object to some area of experience capable of conferring value upon the object"* (p. 43). It could be argued that the tragedy of policy formulation is the failure to give value to the concerns articulated in a manner which is sufficiently intimately related to the concerns of those called to act upon it. Stating the obvious, or evoking the suffering of others, may deaden sensitivity rather than enhance it. This is the emerging challenge of "compassion fatigue".

(e) Metaphor and enhanced perspective

Metaphor is so central to poetry that it might almost be said that poetry is the science of metaphor, especially as an applied science. The fashionable belief is that metaphor is the language of poetry (Nowottny, p. 67). This is not the place to comment extensively on metaphor although some clarifications are necessary. First between simile and metaphor, Nowottny points out that: *"some critics would hold that metaphor embodies deep truths whereas simile merely suggests an aspect under which one might temporarily look at a thing or an idea one might toy with but not care to fully assert. But not infrequently it will be found that in poetry an analogy is expressed first as a simile and then as a metaphor, so there can hardly be much difference between the two, with respect to truth-claims or imaginative depth."* (p. 51) In the world of policy-making it is important to note that "metaphor" is very frequently used to clarify a point in political debate. This is however quite different from the manner in which a particular set of metaphors may come to condition the way in which policy issues are conceived over months or years.

Nowottny notes that whilst metaphor is often used to extend language, particularly apt metaphors tend to fade into a literal sense. It is therefore difficult to fix the meaning of the terms "figurative" and "literal" except by reference to general usage at a particular time. This is especially important when much of the value and impact of metaphor or the **similarity** stressed depends on the **distance** between the phenomenon discussed and the terms in which it is discussed. Citing Ullman, she notes, that *"If they are too close to one another, they cannot produce the perspective of 'double vision' peculiar to metaphor."* (p. 53) It is perhaps one of the misfortunes of the policy sciences that they work so much with literal forms which originally functioned as metaphors. These may still have undetected conditioning effects at least for some. The challenge is to enhance for policy-makers the "double vision" (basic to any sense of visual depth) to enable them to work with a deeper sense of perspective.

The value of "linking extremes", as Nowottny puts it (p. 53-57), to achieve powerful insights has its parallel in astronomy which is much concerned with achieving a "long base line" in

order to be able to "resolve" distant astronomical objects. Ironically much of the effort to achieve unambiguous terminology in the world of management inhibits ability to take creative advantage of strong differences. Every effort is made to reduce policy differences rather than welcoming the insights that emerge by working with such contrasting perspectives.

(f) Liberating images and comprehension

Metaphor is deliberately used in poetry to link extremes and produce a powerful sense of liberation. Nowotny cites Ezra Pound's description of a poetic image as: "*that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time....It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation*" (p. 57). She comments: "*We have of course to distinguish between metaphors in which the linking of extremes is ham-fisted, and the result is boring or embarrassing, and metaphors in which the linking of extremes gives a 'sense of sudden liberation'...But the linguistic form of metaphor as such is what makes it possible for the 'complex'...to enter the mind in an instant of time.*" (p. 57)

It has been argued that most institutional policies are based on implicit metaphors -- and often very crude ones at that (Judge, 1993). The US "Star Wars" project and Operation "Desert Storm" are examples. There is much public relations effort to give policies a positive image. But there are few policies that are both instantaneously comprehensible and offer a sudden sense of liberation. Could there not be greater attention to the metaphors through which they are articulated?

(g) Evoking imaginative involvement

A poem might be said to work by catalyzing the imaginative involvement of the reader/listener. In a sense it is a kind of conceptual martial art in which the poet "tricks" the reader into using his or her own resources in building its full meaning. Metaphor is vital to this process. As Nowotny argues: "*Metaphor indicates how to find or to construct the target but it does not contaminate the mental image of the target by using any one of the literal terms available in ordinary language...The reader pieces out the metaphor by something supplied or constructed from his own experience. This is why the metaphor has physical immediacy.*" (p. 59).

Is it really necessary for policy articulation to depend so heavily on forms of literal expression which effectively exclude any imaginative participation whilst often appealing for support? Might it not be possible to articulate policies where the "participation" and support, so desired by politicians, was a consequence of imaginative involvement evoking insights from those who encounter the policy? In this sense the meaning of the policy is supplied as much by those involved in its implementation as by those who originally conceived it. Some would argue that this already occurs in practice through "interpretation" of policy guidelines.

(h) Handling complexities beyond ordinary language

Poetry is renowned for its ability to work with subtleties for which terms are not available in ordinary language -- especially as yet unnamed experiences (Nowotny, p. 60). Metaphor is a key to facilitating such insights. It vastly extends the language at the poets disposal. It is for this reason that it has been so extensively used in both religion and education -- and why it is so important to any creative process. In the case of education, it is a matter of communicating an insight when an individual as yet lacks the "ordinary language" descriptors available to the better informed.

Policy-makers are faced with a major dilemma in this area. Policies need to be of sufficient complexity to deal with complex dynamic situations. But the more complex they become, the more difficult it becomes for even the most motivated to comprehend their integrative dimensions. They therefore appear decreasingly credible and are vulnerable to rejection. On the hand if they are designed to be simple and readily understandable for political reasons, they

quickly become inappropriate. Can metaphors be used to carry insights into complex policies? Without such a facility it will always be difficult to articulate policies that could then be called "profound" -- precisely because they endeavour to respond to issues and paradoxes in ways which escape ordinary language.

(i) Handling contradictions

As Nowottny notes: *"poets on the whole seem readier than the average man to recognize that conflicting or 'contradictory' feelings can be simultaneously entertained; one does not in all cases either love or hate, for there are some cases where one does both at once, cases where feelings fight a battle with one another"* (p. 60).

Again policy-makers have to respond to intractable differences. In principle, if these cannot be "reconciled", then no policy can emerge -- or the policy becomes totally superficial and cosmetic. Poetry suggests the possibilities of holding such differences within a common framework. This "framework" could well prove impossible to articulate within the common language currently favoured by policy-makers. In other words, there is the possibility of kinds of policy more appropriate to the real challenge of intractable differences -- provided a more poetic language is used to communicate and "anchor" it.

(j) Modelling patterns of relationship

Metaphor by its very nature describes a pattern of relationships. As Nowottny notes: *"metaphor by its very form tends towards the diagrammatic"* (p. 61). The challenge in policy articulation is that if all functional relationships are rendered explicit, the text becomes too complex. But in poetry, as Nowottny remarks: *"the drawback of naming both members of the relationship is that there is then a tendency towards stereotyped linkages and diffuse explanation"* (p. 61). These are diseases from which management texts tend to suffer and which render them quite alienating to the human imagination. Ways are needed to imply functional relationships without needing to over-describe them and thus effectively denature them.

(k) Suggestive associations

As noted above, there is a need in articulating a policy to leave appropriate freedom for imaginative exploration of the pattern of actions suggested -- at least if creative people are expected to grow through their own contribution to its implementation. Metaphor has powerful abilities to bring associations and suggestions with it. As Nowottny notes: *"The figurative words bring with them a diffused aura of their literal use... The poet can to some extent control the aura, by being careful what analogy he chooses and by carefully selecting the other words he uses..."* (p. 64). It is such facilities which are required in the articulation of policies.

(l) Higher forms of order

Nowottny stresses that: *"the chief difference between language in poems and language outside poems is that the one is more highly structured than the other"* (p. 72). It might be argued that a text based on mathematical equations could be even more complex, but the great merit of poetic structure is that the higher order is conceived so as to be comprehensible. It is thus an appropriate compromise between complexity and comprehensibility -- which equations are not, except to the mathematician.

What indeed makes a discourse cohere? Nowottny argues: *"There is a puzzle here, in that we seem to be concerned with two very different things at once: in thinking of the poem as a whole we are thinking about vastness of meaning, whereas in thinking of its parts...we are thinking of vividness of meaning, and it is not easy to explain how vivid meaning may exist without precision and definiteness. So in pursuing the idea of 'the structure' of a poem we seem to be pursuing something with the extraordinary capacity of being able to confer, on its*

parts, meanings that are somehow palpable, individual, concrete...whilst at the same time this... 'structure' brings about a spread of this meaningfulness...of the poem as a whole" (p. 74). Policy statements are faced with a similar challenge in ensuring their own coherence and relevance. There is a paradoxical conflict between conveying the societal significance of the whole in relation to the operational implications of the parts.

(m) Avoidance of polarization into excess detail or over-generalization

The importance of this paradoxical relationship to poetic language is stressed by Nowotny: *"there is something unsatisfying about our criticism if this paradox of vastness-in- the-whole and particularization-in-the-parts cannot be resolved. If it is not resolved, we shall find ourselves, in talking about the parts, going into endless particularization of the niceties of contextual meaning, without being able to show how those niceties got there...and in talking about the whole our criticism may collapse into rhapsodic general tributes to the complexity and simultaneity of the mental processes activated by the continuum of the poem...without being able to say how they were activated"* (p. 75). She argues that this is the point at which the workings of poetic language are at their most characteristic and *"where we realize that the inner circle of vivid meanings has to be related to the outer circle of vast significance. If poetic language can indeed close its own circuit so as to individualize the meanings of individual phrases, and yet at the same time so successfully expand the significance of what is said...there cannot be anything more important for us than to find out how this can be"* (p. 75).

This highlights the core problem for policy-makers. How does the significance of the policy as a whole become accessible through the implementation of its parts, and how does the appropriateness of the parts enhance the significance of the whole? The niceties of paragraph phrasing can indeed be debated at length, as is done during negotiation processes (cf the Earth Summit in Rio). Leaders, press communiqués and enthusiasts can indulge in necessary rhapsodic praise of the policy as a whole -- stressing its exemplification of human values. But there is a terrible gap in understanding that quickly emerges in practice.

(n) Meter and rhythm

As Dana Gioia (1993) notes: *"Meter is an ancient, indeed primitive, technique that marks the beginning of literature in virtually every culture. It dates back to a time...when there was little, if any, distinction, among poetry, religion, history, music, and magic. All were performed in a sacred, ritual language separated from everyday speech by its incantatory metrical form."* (p. 32-3). Gioia adds: *"Meter is essentially a preliterate technology, a way of making language memorable...Trained poet-singers took the events and ideas a culture wanted to preserve...formulated them in meter, and committed these formulas to memory. Before writing, the poet and the poem were inseparable, and both represented the collective memory of their culture"* (p. 33).

Gioia regrets the lack of formal innovation in recent years. He notes that poets who looked to popular culture for perspective found that "discredited" traditionally forms were still actively used and appreciated: *"Innocent of theory, the general public had somehow failed to appreciate that rhyme and meter, genre and narrative were elitist modes of discourse designed to subjugate their individuality. The poor fools actually found such outmoded artistic technology interesting and enjoyable. The gap between what the academy declared represented democratic art and what the demos itself actually preferred was imaginatively provocative."* (p. 253)

Gifford (1986) clarifies the key role of rhythm in poetry in the following terms: *"One is led to suppose...that the words and images, until their articulation in final form, cannot be received and secured except under the direction of rhythm.... The inner ear of the poet is first awakened*

to an insistent rhythm, an emerging pattern of sound through which his perceptions, as yet unformulated, will find their relation to one another.... The mind is concentrated on a signal that almost eludes it, as the words seem to be within grasp and these, if they are seized, may still prove to have made only an approximation to what was meant."(p. 26-7)

(o) From explication to motivation

Nowottny argues that a poem can successfully communicate understanding of a ground-plan of clear relations between abstractions. But the essential contrast between poetic and non-poetic structure is that poetic structuring consists of more than such understanding. In discussing a particular poem she states: *"If that is all, who cares? We care because of the way in which these examples are particularized. The ground-plan, continuous and clear, permits the particularizing but it does not of itself effect it.... The ground-plan relates the particulars to one another by provoking us to abstract from them a common formula and so it makes us relate all three metaphors to one another as examples of the same thing. But while the ground-plan says that the metaphors exemplify 'the same thing', the particulars of the metaphors themselves hang together in such a way that they say something else..."* (p. 77-8).

A policy statement is also usually designed to communicate a clear ground-plan of relations between its elements. This necessarily permits "particularizing" through their operational implementation. But this is as far as it goes. Explication is not sufficient. It does not "effect" or motivate. In a real sense the policy is then still-borne. Who indeed really cares? Slick public relations may be used to exhort people to action, but who really cares to listen? Is it truly not possible to learn how poetry embodies life into a text to carry people forward? Arguably this is exactly what characterizes the policy presentations of great leaders and such texts as the Gettysburg Address.

(p) Interlocking lines of significance

As Nowottny notes: *"In ordinary discourse we expect that the discourse will hang together in one main way; that what it means as a whole will come to us if we see its ground-plan. But...the ground-plan is only one element in a larger organization, a larger organization by virtue of which we derive from the poem as a whole a verbal experience more exciting than, and not reducible to, a reiteration of a common idea..."* (p. 83). She continues: *"To say that a poem has a higher degree of organization than we find in ordinary discourse, is, then, not a rhapsodic tribute to the excitement we have on reading poems but a sober statement of fact.... With the very particulars...there is a continuous process of change, of multiple relationships undergoing multiple transformations; the sense of vastity of meaning in the sonnet derives from these many transformations..."* (p. 83).

Unfortunately policies are designed to be articulated in "one main way" with a minimum of ambiguity. There is no effort whatsoever to articulate other relationships between their parts. Some may well be implicit. However if they are worked on during policy formulation (through "under the table" or "behind the scenes" compromises), their potential influence increasingly arouses the deepest suspicion. This is the case despite increasing recognition of both systemic feedback loops between the elements of any organized system and the related stress on the need for non-linear approaches. As yet policy debates are essentially linear (where they are not totally amorphous) and their products are the epitome of linearity of the most unexciting kind.

(q) Creative confrontation of differences

The energy and excitement of a poem derives from the manner in which differences are confronted. For Nowottny: *"In so far as one can isolate and report on the controls built into the continuous procession of meanings, one finds that these controls have to be discussed in terms of their interaction with one another; the purpose of the controls is to bring about at the end of the sonnet a confrontation of those strains of feeling which at the beginning were only*

diffusely suggested." (p. 81). Diffusely-suggested and mixed strains of feelings are progressively articulated. They may then be *"brought to the point where they challenge one another to a verbal duel"* (p. 81). A poem may therefore progressively, even "stealthily", build up a configuration of strongly contrasting elements -- possibly *"properties of meaning whose diversity we find it even shocking to have to admit"* (p. 83). The language thereby becoming such *"a network of figures, is able to reconcile, in figurative terms, feelings whose co-existence and interpenetration of one another could not in literal language be expressed"* (p. 81).

This points to an important defect of policy articulations. They are the finished end-product of a negotiation process but the vital learning process is in no way embodied in the product. Others are not then offered the possibility of tracing through the confrontation of differences and appreciating the final reconciliation as their own. People cannot experience what brought the policy into being -- it is deliberately non-participative. Indeed the emphasis is on the reconciliation and the degree of initial difference is disguised. And yet it is precisely from the energy of the contrast that the significance of any reconciliation emerges -- the significance may lie in understanding the dramatic truth of that reconciliation. In this sense policies as currently understood are not appropriate to a learning society. They resemble more the answers at the back of an exercise book to which "cheats" immediately turn.

The unforeseen problems of the future, the unknown unknowns, also call for a creative preparedness, namely an ability to learn rapidly when confronted with the problems "waiting in the wings to leap out at us". Fundamental differences can, like binary chemical weapons, combine under certain conditions to present radically new problems. Response to such social synergisms depends upon an ability to deal creatively with differences.

(r) Integrative comprehension

The continuing challenge for policy-making lies in being able to envisage, comprehend, articulate and communicate a rich pattern of operational relationships -- beyond what the language of past problem-solving may have to offer. How are insights into relationships to be "captured" and "harnessed"? From Nowottny's perspective: *"Intellectual relationships are not verbal statements; they shape, and are apprehended as shapely, but they do not enter into the fixity and limitation of verbal statement. The particulars, however definite in themselves and however definite in the analogy they build up, bring into play an aura of suggestions, the 'feeling tone' of their adhesions in the world of non-linguistic reality..."* (p. 84). She attempts to restate the paradox noted above: *"Perhaps the sense of vast meaningfulness derives from the numerosity and the tensions of organized relationships, whilst the sense of vivid individual meanings derives from the power of those particulars which are used...to focus our seeing at those successive points in the poem where knots of relationships are most tightly tied and most expertly untied, or where feelings most notably collide, argue, negotiate, and shake hands."* (p. 84).

Just as many have regretted that the life of society has been so dismally influenced by the insights of economists, it could be argued that policy articulation has been excessively influenced by legal perspectives. The much criticized "legal jargon" has advantages -- but its disadvantages are those to which poets are especially sensitive. For whilst lawyers are skilled in highlighting the "successive points" in a policy "where knots of relationships are most tightly tied and most expertly untied", the operational result is more often obfuscation rather than illumination -- where the matter is complex. Like literary critics, lawyers relish the process of "interpreting" such texts. But just as policy-makers seek to reconcile differences, lawyers seek to avoid tensions between meanings in a text. Are there not ways to benefit from the ordering of tensions to which poetry points? As Nowottny indicates: *"the 'vastidity' of meaning in poems depends on the setting-up of tensions between the various meanings....there are, at*

every level of poetic organization, features of language which can be structured in more than one way at a time, so as to set up tension between the various structurings" (p. 97)

(s) Challenging paradigms

The language of policy-makers is often the language of complacency. It is readily assumed that the language and procedures of the past are adequate to any new challenge and that the language used is itself is not the source of the operational difficulty. But, as Nowotny notes: *"Metaphor shakes our bearings on the question of how we stand in relation to 'objective reality'....Metaphor metaphorized -- the double jump outside the convention -- breaks the hold of the convention and enables us to become aware of the subjectivity of objects and the objectivity of subjective processes."* (p. 86)

Given the mess with which policy-makers are faced, and which their favoured approaches continue to perpetuate, is there not a case for exploring modes of language through which paradigms can be challenged? After all, in many management environments today, stranger means are used to evoke creativity.

(t) Working with polarizations and irrationality

Conventional policy-makers fear ridicule from the more dogmatic and blinkered disciplines if their work appears to have any "irrational" features. Ironically (and notably from a Taoist perspective) it is perhaps the very "rationality" of the policies based on this attitude which has ensured that in practice they result in the most absurdly irrational contradictions (of which even the humblest are unfortunately aware). Again as Nowotny notes: *"At this level poetic language can speak convincingly despite the 'irrationality' of what it says; its 'irrationality' is the obverse of the falsity of ordinary language. The paradoxical or irrational features of ordinary language are a means of short-circuiting the détour of consciousness through the polarized concepts of normal language -- or perhaps we should rather say that they are a means of revealing the alternations of that current which runs from subject to object and from object to subject."* (p. 86).

It would not be unfair to say that policy debates, even of the wisest, are frequently trapped in sterile polarization. The escape most often used is to blacken or condemn one extreme and to extol the merits of the other. This has obvious short-term benefits but the phenomena associated with the scapegoated pole sooner or later return to undermine the policy based on its complement. Is there so much to fear from exploring the alternative to which poetry offers pointers?

3. POETIC DISCOURSE AS A METAPHOR OF FUTURE POLICY-MAKING

The influences of policy-making on poetry-making are difficult to trace. They are presumably detectable in the classics of Chinese and Japanese tradition where such influence would be honourable. Perhaps it is the apparently dishonourable qualities of present-day policy-making that inhibit and obscure such links.

One classic Chinese example of the use of poetry to articulate doctrinal differences is that dating from the 7th century. Two fundamentally different perspectives were presented in verse form. Well-known to Chinese Buddhists, each of the mutually contradictory verses continues to reflect the perspective of a distinct school of thought within that tradition and continues to be the subject of commentary. Philosophically both perspectives were based on a belief in the intrinsic purity of mind, which, while pure in its self-nature, is soiled by adventitious passions. One, the gradualist approach, insists that effort is necessary to rid the mind of these foreign impurities, expressed through the metaphor of wiping and polishing a mirror. The contrasting sudden approach to awakening considers only its essential purity, to the point of refusing to

recognize the existence of any impurity to be removed (cf Paul Demiéville. *The Mirror of the Mind*. In: Peter N Gregory (Ed) *Sudden and Gradual; approaches to enlightenment in Chinese Thought*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1991). When it is recalled what influence such subtle distinctions have had (and continue to have) on the incidence of religious war, it is appropriate to see them as the articulation of policy differences. The mutually challenging verses are:

*The body is the tree of the awakening;
The mind is like a clear mirror.
Be unceasingly diligent in wiping it and polishing it
So that it will be without dust.*

*Awakening entails no tree at all,
Nor does the clear mirror entail any material frame.
The Buddha-nature is eternally pure;
Where could there be any dust?*

It could be asked whether there is not scope for using the poetic framework to further explore such extremes to provide a context in which they can effectively coexist.

With respect to the influence of science, Umberto Eco (1989) quotes a critic of the past century, Francesco de Sanctis (1817-83) concerning the death of art: "*What is the point of complaining about the state of art and wishing for this or that? Science has infiltrated poetry and is here to stay, because this fact corresponds to the current condition of the human mind...Unfortunately faith is gone, and poetry is dead. Or rather, since both faith and poetry are immortal, what is dead is one of their particular ways of being. Today, faith springs out of conviction, and poetry out of meditation. They are not dead; they are only different.*"

One might hope that, as noted with respect to Gioia's businessmen-poets, a new class of poetry will emerge that will address the fundamental issues of the aesthetics of policy-making. An exercise in envisioning these possibilities was undertaken in an earlier paper (Judge, 1991). Could a new form of poetic discourse serve as a metaphor through which new forms of policy-making could emerge?