

## **POETRY-MAKING AND POLICY-MAKING**

### **PART III**

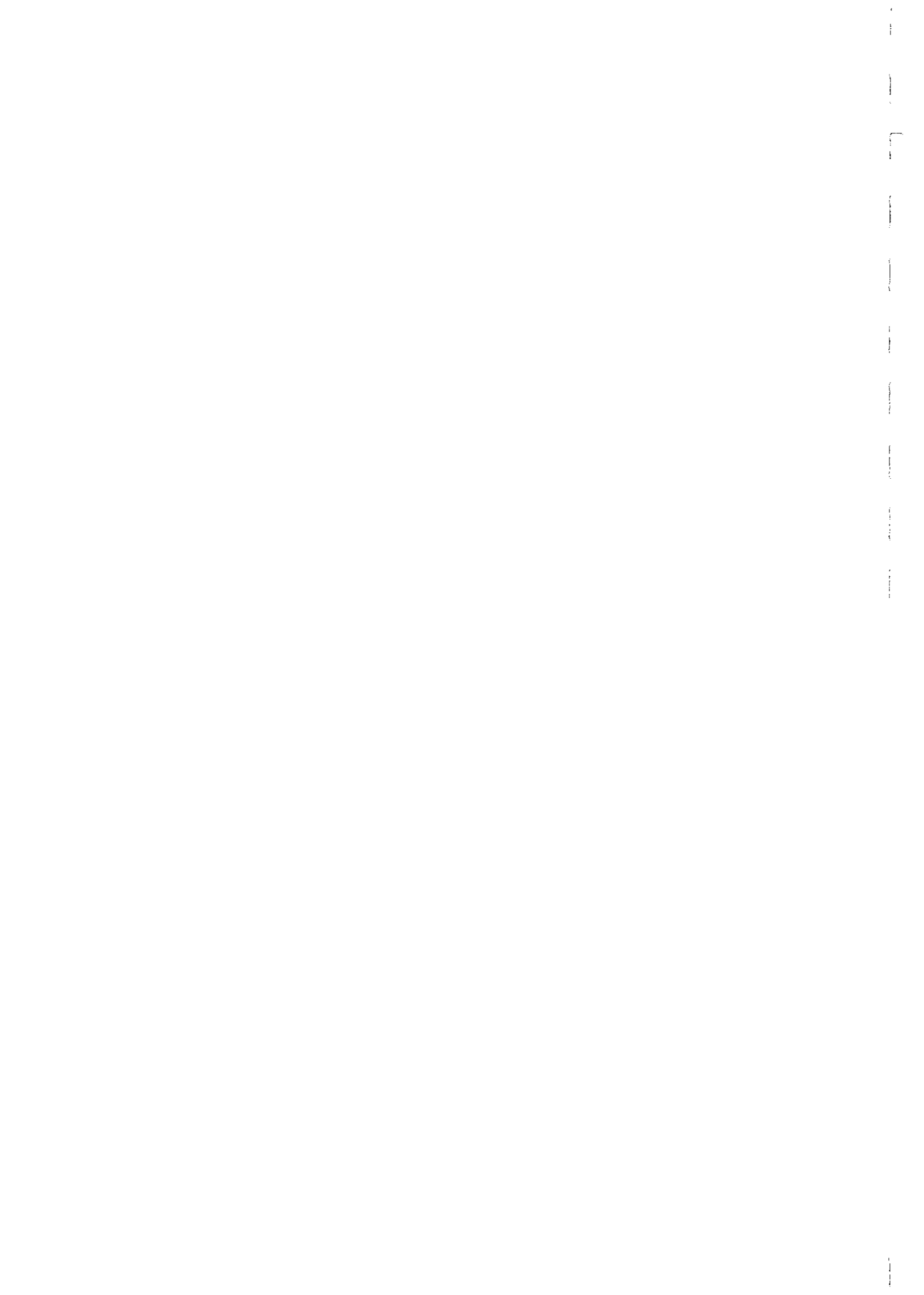
#### **Marriage Consummation and Progeny**

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## 1. VISION OF A POETIC POLICY PROJECT

Suppose there was a critical mix of people with two characteristics, which or might not overlap in any one person:

(a) sensitivity to the qualitative implications of the structural dimensions vital to poetry and music;

(b) sensitivity to the structuring principles vital to management and the policy sciences.

Could such people usefully meet to share insights into the possibility of composing/designing something that might be called a "poetic policy project"?

Such an initiative could be fraught with risks of misunderstanding and conflicting styles of work. There are fundamental differences of language. For example, as Part I indicates, those of poetic sensitivity would be called upon to lean towards the challenge of "design", whilst those with policy skills would have to lean towards the implications of "composition".

What could be the purpose of such a project? Again, for it to be of interest to those of aesthetic sensibilities, there would have to be some aesthetic challenge or inspiration for the individual. For those with policy interests, it would have to have some collective concrete objective. At each stage it would therefore be important to avoid pre-determining or over-determining the nature or outcome of the project. As a creative act, the fruits of such collaboration are as much emergent as pre-determined. They are co-created.

In 1965 Gyorgy Kepes proposed the formation of a closely knit work group of visual artists of a number of disciplines in collaboration with scientists in order to facilitate what he termed "interthinking". This was eventually established within the framework of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Much of the justification in relation to the "visual arts" with respect to "science" could be adapted to justify a similar project in relation to "poetry-making" with respect to "policy-making".

### **(a) New modes of discourse**

Perhaps one initial purpose could be the clarification of a new mode of discourse that would seek to interweave aesthetic and management principles. As such it could endeavour to establish the kinds of insights from each side that could be meaningful to the other. At the same time it would be important to identify the forms of contribution from one side which would be alienating to the other. Thus those reflecting the aesthetic perspective would naturally be repelled by unenlivened "bureaucratic" discourse that invited no imaginative involvement by the listener. Those from the policy side would be repelled by idiosyncratic contributions that failed to contribute usefully to some shared sense of a larger purpose of social significance.

There is clearly an immediate challenge from the limitations of language and communication. One possibility therefore is to make use of metaphor to clarify different understandings of discourse. This is done in a following section. Another possibility is to explore a new form of discourse which is actually conducted through metaphor. This is also explored below. These two perspectives constitute a vital complementarity -- between how a discourse is understood and what is conveyed through that discourse. At the frontiers of language, where the current challenges lie, improvement in one can only be achieved through equivalent improvement in the other.

### **(b) Templates, keystones and catalysts**

The larger purpose might be to imagine or envision the nature of a collective policy that would embody aesthetic principles of organization. Clearly "well-written" or "well-crafted" policy documents must necessarily already be based on aesthetic principles -- however crude from a poetic perspective. It is therefore a question of seeking ways to achieve an aesthetic organization of a higher order. This is not simply for "cosmetic" purposes, but rather to ensure that such aesthetic organization should be the carrier of a higher order of meaning. In addition, this higher order should enable meaningful policies of greater complexity and coherence to be formulated in response to the challenges of the times.

But in this encounter between poetry-making and policy-making, is the outcome to be better policies as such or is it the design of some new form that is "beyond" both of them? A basic distinction should perhaps be explored between an initiative to design policies and one which creates a new "working space". Such a co-created cognitive "space" might constitute a template on which policies could be designed. It could function as a keystone interrelating seemingly policies which, in the language of their formulation, would need and seem to be incompatible. The "space" would thus function as a catalyst for the emergence of policies.

### **(c) Envisaging meetings of the future**

Another purpose might be to envision the functioning of some governing body of the future -- whether of a local community or concerned with global issues and resources. Here the concern would be to articulate guidelines for the discourse between strongly opposed participants such as to reflect a balance between the constraints and opportunities of the aesthetic and policy dimensions.

This exploration is outlined in detail in Part III. At this point it is however more important to find ways of articulating the "feel" of such meetings. This is a challenge to the imagination locked in the patterns of the past. A first effort in this direction is given below.

### **(d) Styles of aesthetic and policy endeavour**

In embarking on this exploration it is vital to be clear about the existence of many styles of aesthetic and policy endeavour. This question is taken up in Part IV.

## **2. ENVISIONING THE POLICY-MAKING EXPERIENCE OF THE FUTURE**

How can we go about creatively envisioning the poetic experience of policy-making in a time to come? If the marriage works, then any progeny could well be quite different from both parents. Our imagination must necessarily be stretched. It is important to recognize that the product of this union will not replace the parents. Rather it performs a new function reflecting a creative union of their concerns. Perhaps it should be thought of as a "keystone" or "arena of conversion" between two approaches to reality. Perhaps it is the place from which policies can be engendered and emerge. And perhaps it is the place from which poetic imagination can derive new materials vital to our collective future. In these senses it is not the place of policy-making itself but rather a new place at which "policy-precursors" are made -- perhaps to be understood as the templates on which policies are built and by which they are integrated.

### **(a) Paradigmatic courtship**

The environment for this conjoining would be one rich in metaphoric seeds which participants could trigger. In the early phases of this joining process the different factions would "struggle" with each other, perhaps in ways best comprehended as courtship. Each would use metaphors and other poetic devices (notably rhythm) to intrigue, ensnare, entrain and seduce the others. Perhaps the skill of a fisherman casting a net, or a sorcerer casting a spell, give some sense of the process. Entrancing through music gives another. But, as in any courtship, none of the

other factions is so "easily taken in". The response to "sweet words" has always been complex. Each has devices and ploys and the strength to resist those of others.

Much of what already goes on in policy-making environments can be described metaphorically in such terms. The vital difference from a future perspective may lie in their real appreciation of both the cognitive significance of the complex patterns deployed and a much heightened awareness of their aesthetic appropriateness -- or their "goodness of fit" in a design sense. These would be associated with a sense of their sustainability, viability and credibility. Is there not a desirable truth in the potential consonance between the sustainability of a favoured pattern of metaphors and the pattern of organized behaviour for which it might be a template?

#### **(b) Language creation**

And, again perhaps as in a courtship, these interactions would favour a particular language -- the special pattern of language and code words which courting couples develop for themselves in the light of their shared experiences. In this sense the factions at a congress in the future would weave together a new language through which their common concerns can be articulated. Many such groups already tend to develop their own jargons. But in the time to come this jargon would not just be characterized by a specialized vocabulary, but also by the aesthetics of phrasing and the manner in which metaphoric materials would be consciously woven into the discourse.

Again traces of such uses of metaphor (especially military and sporting metaphors) are already quite evident in the discourse of management and of computer specialists. It is indeed true that in such contexts the metaphors used carry a great deal of meaning. Computer software designers are heavily dependent on metaphor in developing the way in which computer languages work -- they endeavour to stretch the use of language just as poets do. Their work has had an immense impact on the thinking of young computer users ("windows", etc). But there is no aesthetic discipline to this creative use of language processes -- if "discipline" it is to be called. Future endeavours will call for a more disciplined use of such tools of the imagination -- if creativity and application are to be more effectively bonded. The challenge of marrying creativity and discipline is shared in different ways by poets and policy-makers. It is their respective "genetic" contributions to the progeny which call for imaginative exploration.

#### **(c) New forms**

Where present policy-makers make extensive use of point filled agendas, charters and declarations to express and order policies, those of the future will recognize the inappropriateness of these forms to the subtleties of what they are called upon to govern. To our times it would appear as though they had simply expressed their agendas in a strangely poetic form, of which their declarations and charters were more complex elaborations. This perception would be to misunderstand their achievement.

The apparently poetic form will allow them to interrelate insights and challenges which we only link mechanically or as "budget items" -- if they are linked at all. Rhyming and other poetic devices will be used to create links between otherwise unrelated policy elements -- and such links will be vital in the pattern of checks and balances that ensures the coherence of their policies. Where policy documents of today are weighted down with verbiage, they will be able to substitute aesthetic links which carry the same information far more "economically". Furthermore, this aesthetic economy "opens" the text to imaginative participation, allowing the reader to make it his own -- especially through associations to the metaphors used.

#### **(d) Engagement of attention**

Their use of such forms will immediately engage the attention -- people would not only be "moved" by them, but the articulation will focus understanding of how "being moved" could

be translated into implementation and what complex environmental relationships they needed to be sensitive to during that process. The metaphors used in the text effectively functioned like windows or doors through which readers could look or move to explore the links implied by the policy -- and vital to its sustainability. The metaphors will be explicitly crafted as frames for new cognitive insights. The interplay between the metaphors around which the policy will be patterned create challenging interference effects which will enable people to transcend the cognitive and operational traps associated with each metaphor. It will be through the insights of poets that these effects are appropriately configured to ensure this transcendence. The truth of the policy lies in this way beyond the text through which it will be articulated.

#### **(e) Mnemonic features**

The poetic and policy parentage would also be well expressed through the mnemonic attributes of the progeny. A prime concern will be to ensure that the product is memorable, as favourite melodies and poems are memorable and re-experienced with pleasure. But beyond that there will also be the concern to ensure that its elements carried codes and memory triggers which evoke much more information than is explicitly present. Crude steps in this direction have of course been taken with advertising jingles, corporate songs and political slogans, notably in China and Japan.

#### **(f) Beyond text to multi-media**

It would be a fundamental mistake to imagine the parental interaction as confined to expression in text form in the future. Recognizing the importance of imagery from a poetic perspective, and its importance to an understanding of complex policies, the complementary use of other media will be used whenever appropriate. Indeed policies might be expressed through an information package composed of a mix of text, imagery and music (as discussed below). It could be argued that this is already done in glossy media presentations of a policy. But this new form will be distinguished by the combination of aesthetic and cognitive concerns applied to, and rendered explicit within, the design of the product. The aesthetics would be composed so as to carry insights into a policy of a much higher order of complexity.

#### **(g) Learning from harmony**

One of the mysteries to that future time will be our reluctance, in our constantly declared search for social "harmony", to draw upon the articulation of harmony in music. Our excuse, in the midst of factional squabbles over concrete urgent problems, is that no serious person could imagine that music had anything to offer other than some pleasant distraction before or after the reception on the occasion of some such gathering. And yet music could be called the science of harmony. An immense amount of effort has been devoted over the past centuries to exploring the nature of harmony in music.

Where we have vainly sought for the keys to controlling our environment through systems science and cybernetics, they will marry such explorations to the science of harmony as articulated in music. In our era much has been written about the relationship of music and time -- music as time made audible. We have seen the efforts of systems scientists and "world modellers" to represent complex systems dynamics using equations, flow charts and sophisticated graphics -- denying comprehension by most of us. Our descendants will project such dynamics into musical relationships which could be played. The "business graphics" of that time will have musical variants. People will be able to hear the various harmonies which provided integration to any policy represented, and they will hear the dissonances which challenge that harmony -- whether as a stimulus to social growth or as a potential crisis. The only equivalent we have to this is the ability of any motor mechanic to listen to an engine as a means of diagnosing its state of health. One great advantage in the future is that everyone will be able to listen to such musical representations, irrespective of the sophistication with which they understand it. The major integrating features would be obvious to all, however little

they understood the detailed harmonic organization.

#### **(h) Musical organization**

Such representations of systems insights would not just be public relations devices. By listening to the musical representation it will become possible to identify and discuss features which could be changed and improved, in the light of musical insights, into richer or more challenging patterns of harmony. The musical perspective will highlight features which make a policy boring -- namely "monotonous" to their ears -- and thus uninspiring to those in whose interest it was being elaborated. We can get some understanding of this process from the way jazz and pop groups collectively develop a piece of music until the sound is "right".

Space limitations here preclude detailed explorations of the policy significance that the future will be able to attach to all the many attributes of musical organization. But, for example, where today international development agencies have a range of programmatic approaches on which they rely, in that era such approaches would be recognizable by what are effectively melodic signatures. Such signatures will become a way of communicating complex programmatic proposals. And whilst there would be many "old favourites", there will be greater sensitivity to those which had been superseded, and to the emergence of new melodies which address issues in a more interesting way. This will clarify the relationship between the fashionable programmatic melodies of the moment and those of more enduring quality.

#### **(i) Cyclic organization of policies and programmes**

Of special interest will be their use of insights from the temporal organization of music as it impacts on the programme and budgetary cycles which are the skeletal structure of any concrete action programme. A major concern in administering an organization is to ensure financial discipline. They will resolve this problem by using a musical discipline of far greater flexibility and more subtle articulation. The cyclic aspect of organizational life will acquire whole new dimensions, for in music there can be many cycles of different length and involving different instruments. They will also make intriguing use of rhythm and tempo -- partly as a way of dealing with urgency and the need for an appropriately timed response.

#### **(j) Adaptation of musical notation**

But perhaps of most interest to us are the insights they will gain from musical notation and the harmonic relationship between different chords and instrumental qualities. They will take the typically politicized factional spectrum around any issue in our time (which undermines any appropriate response) and will effectively code the spectral elements into musical notation. Interventions in any discussion would thus be comprehended within a musical framework, whether as isolated notes or chords, but above all in terms of their relationship to the emerging theme. The art of debate thus becomes one of contributing to the emergence of better music -- recognizing the role and limitations of the particular contribution any one perspective could make. The characteristic intervention of our time -- the frequent repetition of a single note, louder than those preceding it -- will be an obvious musical disaster to them (although see below). In this context, "note taking" acquired a whole new meaning in recording the proceedings of the gathering.

#### **(k) Differences and dissonances**

We would however be completely misunderstanding their achievement if it were taken to be a simplistic exploration of harmonies. Their society, like ours, will constantly be challenged by deep divisions of perspective. But, whereas we resolve these in the organizational equivalent of a gladiatorial arena, they will reinterpret such dissonance in musical terms. To our ears the music they will play would at different times have such qualities as: gothic immensity; the challenging intensity and immediacy of hard rock; the supportive, solidarity of folk tunes; the intellectual intricacies of computer generated music; as well as many others. They will have

a tool to work effectively with differences and to use those differences to enhance the dimensions of their policies.

### **(I) Group creativity**

Such approaches appear totally impractical to us, locked as we are into our schizophrenically dissociated roles. For us a poem is the work of an individual (often marginalized) making few concessions to the collective -- it is a voice crying in the wilderness. For them their highest achievements will be poems designed by groups (of inspired individuals) representing the aspirations of the collective -- faced with its own shadow. We can only laugh at such possibilities because we perceive in it various echoes of totalitarian art (just as we would question the collective function of martial music). Group creativity is the rare exception in the arts -- and then only in pop music, experimental theatre, and group murals, none of which are held to be of great long-term value. But from their perspective our charters and declarations will only be understood as primitive aesthetic abominations whose form distorts the spirit of collective action and ensures the reinforcement of precisely those problems which we deplore. For them, ironically, such forms will be considered conceptual totalitarianism par excellence.

## **3. POLICY DISCOURSE THROUGH METAPHOR**

### **Communication through metaphor and parable**

If ideological positions are not about to change to any significant degree, then there is a case for adopting a more imaginative approach to dialogue between political or religious factions. Such an approach needs to be able to reframe the dialogue so that intractable differences are expressed more creatively without endeavouring to subsume them within an unsustainable consensus -- however attractive.

One practical approach to exploring the potential relationship between poetic composition and policy-making is to envisage a new kind of discourse through metaphor. How might a meeting or congress function when the factions represent strongly opposed views and metaphor is the prime medium of discourse? The main interest here lies in the nature of that dialogue process, and how it may transcend the difficulties usually encountered in international congresses that bring together very different perspectives -- reflecting differences that may be considered quite intractable.

What form might metaphoric discourse take? What would be the guidelines for such discourse? Are there examples of cultures in which this mode of discourse is favoured relative to more technical forms? A series of guidelines for such a discourse might be envisaged. These could be revised and extended in the light of experience. Consider the following.

**Guideline 1:** *Doctrinal positions should only be expressed through parable and metaphor.*

The intention here is to free plenary discourse from dependence on well-developed cognitive frameworks and patterns of statements. Whereas the insights conveyed by such statements may well be widely appreciated, the form through which they are conveyed may however constitute a significant barrier to communication with those with different perspectives.

Set statements evoke set responses and inhibit the evolution of a dialogue. Presentation of insights through metaphor and parable involves the audience in a story which can evoke a variety of insights that can nourish and sustain a dialogue.

**Guideline 2:** *Parables and metaphors in inter-faith discourse should be developed using common experience and everyday roles rather than be structured around symbolic figures with complex*

*connotations not widely understood.*

Is inter-factional discourse about the primacy of particular symbols or about the insights and understandings to which they point? Can the two be separated?

For example, to the extent that religious insights are universal they should lend themselves to articulation through a variety of symbols especially those common to different cultures.

**Guideline 3:** *Differences should be expressed by questioning the aesthetic design of a metaphor or by creating contrast and perspective through the use of counter-metaphors.*

There are deep differences between political perspectives or between religions. Blunt statements of disagreement and opposition do not necessarily help the dialogue to move forward. However, an understanding articulated through a metaphor can be encountered by suggesting preferred alternatives to the structure of that metaphor or to the evolution of the story told by any parable. Alternatively, a counter-metaphor may be introduced which reflects a different pattern of insights.

Questions may be asked as to why a metaphor has particular features and not others which may be put forward as richer, more pertinent, or less restrictive. Efforts in this direction have been explored in metaphorical theology, for example.

**Guideline 4:** *The pattern of discourse is of greater significance than any particular feature of it -- although each such feature contributes to the pattern of the whole.*

It is not usually helpful to expect that an audience's attention will be captured by a single perspective. The many dimensions of discourse associated with the challenges of spiritual concord or of sustainable development constitute a greater challenge.

Differences can usefully be treated as challenges calling for reconciliation at higher levels of understanding. But these too have to be articulated. Such articulation should also be done through metaphor -- indeed this may be all that is possible.

The real challenges of a congress may therefore lie in using metaphor to hold many differences and provide subtle constructs to contain or bridge between them. But such metaphorical "containers" and "bridges" become increasingly subtle as the dialogue evolves. In effect they become temples of the insight. The work of the congress could then be seen in terms of the construction of such temples. Metaphors of this kind can be the most valuable and communicable product of the work of the congress.

**Guideline 5:** *The interplay between perspectives should allow for challenge.*

It is the encounter with seemingly incompatible perspectives that can often evoke deeper levels of insight. A meeting can usefully be seen as a place of challenge through which more subtle levels of insight are brought into play -- levels which may be concealed or implicit in more conventional political or religious discourse.

The opportunities for the development of such interplay is best seen in music where instruments and musical themes challenge each other and are driven to creative responses which move the collective work of the whole to a higher level of significance. In this sense the congress may perhaps be better understood as a symphony orchestra.

**Guideline 6:** The intention of plenary discourse should include the generation of a product significant to wider society.

Whilst much may be accomplished between congress participants alone, and through them in the inspiration offered to their constituencies, the world is both weary and impatient. Care should be taken to avoid the production of wordy declarations that many will perceive as empty of significance for their lives.

In a media-oriented world, there is much to be said for a congress whose product is in the form of images rather than words -- even if the images are verbal images.

Can the pressures of conference discourse engender powerful new metaphors that can empower new forms of action or that can reframe relationships across religious divides? It is such metaphors which will travel most effectively through the media around the world.

**Guideline 7:** *Intractable differences cannot usually be reconciled through a single insight. Rather they call for a pattern of complementary insights that respect those differences.*

Intractable differences emerge as a result of profound differences in understanding -- differences which may be reinforced by cultural, linguistic and historical factors. The diversity and reflected in such differences is vital to the richness of human understanding.

Such complexity in approaching a profound experience, acknowledged to be of the utmost simplicity, is a challenge to the form through which it is represented. A pattern of complementary forms may prove to be more appropriate to holding together the diversity of insights honoured by religious traditions in their diversity.

It is through the exploration of such patterns that an appropriate measure of reconciliation may be progressively achieved. Metaphor provides a flexible tool for this collective exploration.

#### **4. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF METAPHORS**

What approach should be taken to the possibility of choosing a metaphor to better articulate the diverse elements of spiritual concord in an international meeting? Five criteria could be considered:

**(a) Adequate to capture the variety of options**

Clearly a metaphor must be rich enough so that each may find in it the dimensions to which he or she is sensitive. There is therefore advantage in highlighting those which reflect the most advanced thinking of our civilization -- those touching the frontiers of aspiration to explore our potential and articulating our comprehension of the most complex domains. But, although of necessary complexity, these metaphors must allow for simple comprehension, preferably permitting clarification by rich and evocative imagery.

**(b) Opening options:**

A useful metaphor must avoid the problem of over-deterministic frameworks which leave no "free space" for the imagination to explore and make discoveries. Better than static metaphors, those which embody a dynamic reality open more possibilities to the imagination. They lessen the impression of exhaustiveness and determinism -- having less of a function of a conceptual straitjacket. Such metaphors "seduce" and enchant the spirit. Their meaning can be "mined" according to people's degree of need and curiosity.

**(c) Recognition of limitations:**

As with every framework, a metaphor can only give a partial image of a complex reality. And like a model, a given metaphor may not be to the taste of everyone. A metaphor has a limited audience (or a "market") which may be a function of culture, education or age. Consequently any effort to impose a single metaphor is therefore destined to failure (even though this may be disguised to the extent that there may be resistance to the meaning carried by the metaphor, which is then seen as a sterile dogma).

**(d) Dynamic system of complementary metaphors:**

The limitations of any given metaphor may be compensated, provided that it is seen as forming part of a set of complementary metaphors. Then the weaknesses of one are compensated by the strengths of others, and the dominating points any one metaphor is constrained or checked by the insights brought by others. In such a system of metaphors, each has more chance of finding an appropriate, and even seductive, perspective than through any single metaphor.

**(e) Recursive nature of metaphors selected:**

A complex belief system is always a challenge to comprehension. This is also true in the case of a system of metaphors. Such metaphors should therefore be chosen on the basis of their individual capacity to provide some comprehension of the system of which they are part. This criterion guarantees, to some degree at least, the integrity and the coherence of the system.

## **5. CULTIVATING NEW CONCEPTUAL LANGUAGES**

When a group of people successfully adopt a set of complementary metaphors through which to configure their relationships they are effectively cultivating a new language. This language may not be readily understandable to others -- or may create a false impression of being understandable. Selecting and cultivating metaphors bears a similarity to gardening in the attention that is called for and in the variety of gardens that may be so created. The garden may indeed be a "secret garden".

As noted above, there is a sense in which such language cultivation is already done within many groups, whether specialized disciplines, street gangs, student groups, or practitioners of particular sports or occupations. It can however be done more deliberately. At one extreme there are purely functional initiatives such as the international language developed for air traffic control. There is almost no aesthetic concern in such cases. More interesting are the languages that develop within spiritual cults and in many ways mould how people perceive their environment and act upon it. The emerging language of the New Agers might, for example, be considered as a kind of Esperanto of the alternative worlds. But although more aesthetic, there is little conscious attempt to give it a more integrative quality. And yet it can be argued that it does indeed enable people to work together in new ways and to make decisions in new ways. This is especially evident in California where this language has penetrated into many sectors, included the professional and business worlds.

Two groups provide interesting examples of more deliberate development of language and have been investigated by management researchers for that reason. One is the Hunger Project which has disciplined its use of language to exclude every possibility but the elimination of hunger in the world by the year 2000 (\*\*). Another is the Institute of Cultural Affairs which through the 1970s and 1980s cultivated a rich language of neologisms and unusual uses of existing words to articulate their spiritual experience and their work as a development organization (\*\*).

One very interesting application of metaphor to organization development has been described by Gib Akin and Emily Schultheiss (1990). Reporting on work with a "difficult" group of

managers, asked to share stories, they note:

*"As the stories were shared we began to see some similar language used to describe events. Successes were 'improvised' and depended on 'finding the beat' in the situation. Groups members 'play their own tune, in their own way'. It was a musical metaphor that made such a language meaningful, so the group...elaborated that image. Just what kind of music was this? For them it was clearly free jazz, with only the barest scores and no specified, required instrumentation. The sound of the group would change in character with any change in personnel, with new members being incorporated into the ensemble to make the most of the sound they brought with them. As an ensemble, players would respond to each other and also to the audience. Co-ordination was accomplished not by plan but by listening to one another. It was not expected that outsiders would see much that looked like conventional teamwork, but for insiders collective improvisation meant freedom, spontaneity, as well as defining the ensemble.*

*As the group came to adopt and then to elaborate this metaphor they were able to talk in new ways about some issues...they had new ways of seeing themselves and their special way of working together. This new image also gave the manager...a more benign way to interpret the sometimes dissonant harmonies, both for himself and as he might be required to portray the work of his group to others.*

*Likewise, group members now had a language for appreciating the unique styles and competencies of group members. One member was a bass player, laying in a steady low beat, a sort of punctuation. Another might be a soaring alto saxophone player, exploding with dazzling runs and clusters of notes. With this image each member could characterise his or her own contributions to the ensemble....*

*There is always a sense of irony in talking about organising people whose main value is their independence, but this group was able to transcend that with the jazz band image, an image that could portray organised freedom and improvisation. This group reported that this was the first time they had successfully come together to discuss how they worked."*

From the perspective of an avant-garde composer, Vinko Globokar, consider the implications, as a metaphor for group operation, of the following description of a piece of music generated through the improvisation rules provided:

*"Correspondences are based on the principle of mutual psychological reactions and attempts to 'join' the four participants with each other and to make them increasingly dependent on each other. There are four levels:*

- (a) The musical material is entirely fixed, but the choice of instruments is left open.*
- (b) Each musician possesses only incomplete instructions. In order to be able to play, each musician must search for missing material in the performance of the neighbour (pitches from the first, length from the second, etc) and react to it in different ways: imitate, adapt himself to it (if need be, further develop), do the opposite, become disinterested or something else (something 'unheard of').*
- (c) The composed material is completely substituted by the description of the possibility arising from the reactions of the performers to their neighbours.*
- (d) On the last level, it is left up to the performers whether to cease playing or to continue; for not even the selection of reactions is now necessary"*

Surprisingly there are strong similarities between this last approach and more recent innovations in organization design.

But none of these examples has been strongly influenced by the aesthetic discipline of poetry. It might be asked what kind of language poets use when they meet regularly together as in poetry circles -- and to what extent they endeavour to consciously craft that language beyond particular experiments. Clearly poets are able to make extensive use of common referents such as poems and phrases from well-known poems that carry common understanding. How do the particular understandings and contributions mould their shared space?

There is a potentially interesting interaction between those using metaphors to guide the work of their organizations in new ways and those, like poets, whose prime interest in metaphors is their value in conveying aesthetic experiences beyond the scope of existing terminology. The former take a pragmatic approach -- if it works, then use it. But this statement might be made of poets too. The difference lies in the significance attached to "works". The argument of this paper would be that what works for organizations tends to lack long-lasting appeal for the individual. And conversely, what works aesthetically may lack operational value for organizations. But both are exploring new ways of organizing the reality of their environments.

Although the preoccupations of organizations may be distasteful to poets (and vice versa), there is a definite possibility that together they could create a "third space" -- a language that would be acceptable and challenging to both. Both need to listen, and both need to reserve judgement about what it may be useful to bring to such a space and what it may be useful to leave behind. It would have to be stressed that this language does not substitute for their respective languages, but it may prove to be a space in which the dimensions excluded from each may be intertwined in valued ways.

Many issues relating to such a project are presented in the form of checklists in Part III of this paper. Metaphor clearly emerges as the most powerful tool common to both parties. Many common concerns are identified in Part I of this paper and call for further amplification.

Perhaps what is sought as a characteristic of this third space is a cognitive and operational equivalent to what is achieved by interior decoration. At its best it gives rise to a space in which all the different features, whether decorative or functional, complement each other. There is a real sense that they "fit" together to enhance the experience of a larger whole. Colours, shapes, artwork and utility mirror or echo each other, moving awareness around the room so that it is experienced as a meaningful totality carrying its own distinctive quality. In this respect it is interesting how intimately disciplines associated with decoration are related to philosophies of being and action. The Japanese principles of ikebana are closely associated with those of strategy.

## **6. MAGIC, MIRACLES AND IMAGE-BUILDING**

Such are the dimensions of the crises faced by humanity and the planet that it is not uncommon to hear that "a miracle is required". Indeed, faced with the demonstrated incompetence and impotence of political leaders and their academic advisors, miracles seem just as likely to offer a way forward as conventional policy-making. At the same time, occasionally people experience gatherings which seem to offer hope because of the "magical" way they work -- without it being possible to identify how this happened. As a result some would say that "we need more magic".

Magic of course has a very bad press. Worse than that of poetry. Both are aspects of culture which the sciences have done their best to marginalize and ridicule -- and religion before them. Ironically, given the subtitle of this paper, even the Walt Disney movie *Beauty and the Beast* has been labelled dangerously evil by Christian fundamentalists -- together with fantasy games such as *Dungeons and Dragons* (Christian Broadcasting Network, 1993).

But the sciences and religions are now on the defensive. They have proven incapable of responding to the problems that they have helped to engender. In a sense they have provided a wealth of new tools to build a better house, but are incapable of using those tools to construct a house that it is a delight to live in. The qualitative keystone is lacking. Soulless "utility" dwellings and architectural monstrosities best describe the capacity of the sciences in metaphorical terms. And how are religions contributing to our current problems and our capacity to survive them?

**(a) Magic as an interface between poetry and policy-making**

Poetry of course has a long association with "magic". The best poetry is "magical" in its effects. Kenneth Slessor states: *"Poetry is the result not of reason, not of intellect. It is the flow of magic."* But what of the discipline of magic whose deep influence on the poet Yeats has been so frequently studied? Science and medicine have finally had to admit that there was some merit in traditional techniques and remedies (acupuncture, herbs, etc). Is it possible that there are truths buried in the clutter and superstition surrounding magic? Is it possible that these truths might provide clues to the interface between the "effects" of poetry and the "effects" of policy-making? From a cognitive perspective, of greatest significance is the declared purpose of magic to manipulate images and understanding. This is clearly a concern of poetry. But in doing so magic also aims to "effect" some kind of transformation.

**(b) Image-building, policy-making and science**

Effecting a "transformation" is clearly a central concern of policy-making -- itself increasingly dependent on moulding the image of that policy in the media and even of creating a policy which has an appropriate image. Ironically policy-making has become heavily image-dependent -- just like poetry. Image-building, as practised by public relations, could be considered as a "sanitized" version of magic. Guided fantasy, a technique increasingly used in organizational development, is another variant.

The sciences are also increasingly sensitive to their neglect of the role of images in understanding the evolution of knowledge and communication (Holton, 1978; Miller, 1986; Barlow, 1990; Pickover, 1991). The importance of "creativity" in research laboratories that have to make a profit has tended to brushed aside any persisting doubts concerning the importance to such insight of a subjective process such as "imagination".

**(c) How is magic to be understood?**

Magic, according to both scholars such as Daniel O'Keefe (1982) and practitioners such as R J Stewart (1987, 1988), is a set of methods for arranging awareness according to patterns; it is not a truth or a religion. Nor is it even a philosophy, in the strict sense of the word, although there are echoes of profound philosophy in most magical traditions. It is basically an artistic science in which the practitioner controls and develops imagination to cause changes in the outer world. The serious application of magical methods leads to transformation and it is the transformation which is of value and not the methods themselves. All magic derives from controlled work with the imagination.

In a major study by sociologist Daniel O'Keefe (1982) he explores 12 postulates concerning magic of which the first four indicate dimensions relevant to poetry-making and policy-making: Magic is a form of social action; Magic social action consists of symbolic performances -- and linguistic symbolism is central to magic; Magic symbolic action is rigidly scripted; Magic scripts achieve their social effects largely by pre-existing or prefigured agreements.

Magic (like advertising and poetry) does not "work" because its propositions are essentially real or true; it works because practitioners become imaginatively involved in these propositions. Thus for controlled periods of time under non-habitual circumstances, they behave as if they

were true. It is not a question of becoming habituated to falsehood but rather of the magician growing through the patterns, whether true or not, and emerging beyond them into a clarity of awareness that was not possible before the experience of transition and transformation.

**(d) Sharing metaphors towards transformation**

From the perspective of a magician, the propensity of people for engaging daily in activities which they know are fruitless or harmful, sustained by a pattern of values and habits, achieves its apparent coherence through a form of fantasy-sharing that holds the illusion together collectively and individually. This same propensity is used by magic to motivate inner transformation rather than outer identifications. When the awareness of values changes (in contrast to changes of values) the externally perceived world may be transformed by magical means.

This possibility is facilitated when the symbols used are those of the culture with which the practitioners are familiar. Once the perception of the external world can be transformed by such means, magic then enables changes within the individual through which further methods applicable to the transformed consciousness may be inwardly apprehended. Magic thus attempts to relate human consciousness to divine consciousness through patterns inherent in each. This is otherwise known as the Great Work.

**(e) Worldviews and transformations**

A major premise of magic is that access may be obtained to many worlds or worldviews. The transformations which occur within the magician enable access to such innerworlds of consciousness in ways which transcend the limitations of purely intellectual endeavour or the inspirations of folklore. Images are deliberately evoked and cultivated as part of this process:

- Initially magic alters the focus or area of attention, drawing the vital; energies together with the discipline of a tradition and its restricting vessel or matrix.

- In a second stage the energies are redirected and gradually amplified through attuning to richer, more complex and more encompassing patterns. These integrative patterns have a resonant effect on the psyche. They may take the form of simple symbols, or may be imaginatively recreated as complex scenes, beings or other patterns. As such they may be used to focus and direct a wide spectrum of personal and group energies on many levels of awareness.

- In a third stage, the awareness having been attuned to various patterns normally inaccessible to everyday consciousness, begins to operate in other worlds or dimensions through the effect of the magical patterns and key symbols.

- Finally the practitioner is projected into the alternative worlds of experience, often with considerable energy.

The increasing ability to change worldviews follows from a reassembly and redirection of the practitioner's energies. Such changes enable the practitioner to gain a more accurate understanding of the shared world. The value of such transitions to other world realities is that they contribute to the overall liberation from the particular illusion of the coagulated consensual worldview. They also ensure fruitful exchanges between such distinct realities and the entities that inhabit them.

The intent is therefore not to escape this world but rather to transform it. The transformation begins within new directions of awareness sought in early training. It finally permeates the practitioner through to the physical body. Whereas religions seek to save the world, the

magical disciplines affirm a particularly subtle aspect of this insight, namely the possibility of transforming all worlds.

**(f) Magical arts**

There are five fundamental magical arts: concentration, meditation, visualization, ritual pattern making, mediation. Although each of these disciplines of consciousness may be developed separately from the others, they are in fact harmoniously interwoven in any well balanced magical work. These all lead consciousness to change its direction, moving inwards rather than fixating outwards as it does in daily habitual life.

Through the practice of these arts during magical development, the individual progressively learns to balance the reality-worlds within individual consciousness through ritual and planned activity by which life becomes attuned and rhythmic rather than random and chaotic. At the same time the individual endeavours to energize the imaginative constructs and the contacts established through transformative rituals and powerful mediation. The spiritual power of the practitioner is directed outwards towards material ends, flowing through the psychic body complex, transforming the awareness of the practitioner before it reaches any other defined goal. These two processes may be integrated in one harmonious living pattern, a magical life of enlightenment, in which the practitioner seeks a continual interaction between the individual and the worlds occupied by his awareness.

Magic makes extensive use of the body as a set of metaphors to which the individual has ready access. This is not irrelevant to policy-making as classic Taoist guides to governance of a society indicate (Cleary, 1990). The eminent social scientist and author of *"Image"* (1961), Kenneth Boulding (1978) teasingly remarks: *"Our consciousness of the unity of self in the middle of a vast complexity of images or material structures is at least a suitable metaphor for the unity of a group, organization, department, discipline, or science. If personification is only a metaphor, let us not despise metaphors -- we might be one ourselves."* (p. 345).

**(g) Spell-casting**

Charismatic leaders have been studied as "spellbinders" by A R Willner (1984). Like it or not, spells as an aspect of magic seem to be closely associated with this overlap between poetry and policy. Concern is expressed at continuing popular interest in spells and the related persistent practices in many countries. But commercial advertising may be seen as using many of the techniques previously confined to spell-casting. There is a lot of "magic" in public relations and in what the "spin doctors" of political campaigns endeavour to achieve (Maltese, 1992).

Janet and Stewart Farrar (1990) indicate: *"A spell can be as simple or as complicated as the occasion demands. But be it simple or complex, three factors are essential: precise visualization of intent, concentration and will-power"* (p. 31). Many of the spells and incantations to which they refer take poetic form, including two embodied in the Kalevala, the Finnish national epic. Many are of course designed to "solve problems".

**(h) Guided visualization**

As one of the five basic arts of magic, visualization is used to contact and develop subtler levels of consciousness. This discipline should be distinguished from recent initiatives in mental therapy to use relaxing guided fantasies in some forms of therapy. For more challenging experiences, several conditions should be fulfilled: the symbolism needs to be coherent and related to a specific tradition; no attempt should be made to complete the visualization or render it all-inclusive since this inhibits imaginative participation; the sequence of symbols should include challenging and even disturbing phases, and not be simply supportive and comforting; opportunities should be made for silent meditation to explore any insights that are

triggered by the sequence; traditional symbols are more effective than those from popular culture; the visualization should bear some structural relationship to magical pattern-making. Visualizations should be characterized by intellectual, psychological, topological and cosmological clarity through which related realms of consciousness merge, dissolve and re-emerge in a master pattern. A complex visualization moves through several levels of consciousness or magical worlds.

**(i) Ritual pattern-making**

A ritual of any kind sets up specific conditions (or a specific context) in both the operator and the "real" world as it is intended that it should be perceived. The main function of ritual in the magical tradition is to set up some particular state of emotion or awareness. Pattern-making through ritual is one of the five magical arts. The pattern acts as a matrix for energies arising within the consciousness of participants. Under specific conditions it can involve the bio-electrical energies of the body and psyche. The consciousness which merges with and consists of such energies is both individual and collective. It is expressed as a sequence of integrative insights shared by the group within its imagination. One interpretation is that traditional rituals of speech, movements, consecration conjure spirits and by means of their services bring about magical results which may be beneficial - exorcism, healing, knowledge, prosperity.

Contrary to a widespread assumption, powerful rituals may be quite simple in form and language, even though they have complex effects and relationships upon awareness. Mystique, romanticism and pseudo-learning are unnecessary, especially when deliberately designed to obscure and impress in lengthy, repetitive rituals. But curious words, chants, vocal tones and other verbal symbols may be used when these have significance for all participants. Magical operations generally employ a combination of expressed modes of communication: words, music, dance, formal movement, scents, colours, sounds, objective symbols and implements. These are only of value when they complement each other so as to enhance a pattern which captures the imagination. Hours of complex ritual may often be more effectively replaced by a simple ceremony or a basic meditation.

**(j) Magical perversions**

Advertising "magic" can be misused as can the skills of the political "spin doctors" (Maltese, 1992) and the expertise in disinformation and negative image-building.

The term magic is frequently abused and separated from a spiritual foundation. In any historical period, as with religion, magical arts are taken up in fashionable and often bizarre forms, by various groups and movements as continues to occur at this time. The enduring magical tradition is derived from perennial philosophy, sustained by myth, legend, visionary cosmology and poetic insight. In some cultures many perverted forms of magic continue to be practised for ignorant or selfish ends. Trivial, resource-consuming, or ultimately sinister practices are degraded forms of the enduring tradition that can lead to dangerous forms of imbalance.

In early magical training there is an extended period of confusion in which personal weaknesses and problems (especially self-inflation), become highly amplified before they are destroyed and the energies in question are absorbed into a balanced inner pattern.

Magic is frequently associated with the occult as the preoccupation of secret cults in pursuit of secret powers in order to manipulate others. As with other disciplines, it can attract self-centred individuals of extremely dubious motivation. Through their efforts to draw attention to themselves, wider understanding of magic as a discipline is distorted. The potent powers to which magic offers access are the common energies and properties of humankind and are not the monopoly of any conspiracies that may endeavour to exploit them.

Magic has frequently been considered evil, especially by organized religion and as a result of the actions of those who exploit the gullible. As a neutral set of artistic and scientific techniques for controlling the imagination, magic (as with any set of methods), may indeed be employed by those who are imbalanced to enhance their own image of themselves. Evil may then be considered as associated with that imbalance, but not with the principles, however they are abused. Many modern religions, especially Christianity, make use of magical practices identical in principle to those of the pagan religions they displaced. Such religions also exhibit special concern at the evocation of gods and goddesses as being a completely regressive spiritual tendency. However this reservation should now be seen in the light of the insights of archetypal psychology in which the imaginative value of such symbols for the psyche is recognized as one way of facilitating individuation. Just as some religions make specific use of icons and other images as an aid to prayer, magical traditions use specific images of deities to gain specific results with the imagination and its effects upon the outer world.

## **7. PATTERN, CONFIGURATION AND "DEEP EPISTEMOLOGY"**

Both hierarchical and network approaches to organization have been extensively explored over the past decades. Their strengths and limitations are increasingly recognized. Networks have not proved to be a panacea. Neither has proved adequate to the challenge.

As design and the art in general have demonstrated, there is another approach which has hardly been explored in social organization. It is on this approach that the strengths of magic and ritual rely. Ironically it is also vital in any military campaign. It may be described through terms such as pattern or configuration. Contrasting elements are held in complementary positions in order collectively to create an effect which transcends the significance or capacity of any part of that configuration.

Christopher Alexander (1977), an architect, has undertaken the audacious task of identifying a "pattern language" of 256 elements through which individuals and groups may design their physical environments. His aim was to enable people to create spaces which held the elusive quality of being attractive to be in. His language may itself be seen as providing a set of metaphors for non-physical patterns, whether for the design of social space, of conceptual space, or even of a person's private psychic space.

It is also useful to consider the mandalas of Buddhist tradition as efforts to portray configurations of complementary forces of psycho-social significance (Chögyam Trungpa, 1991; Anagraika Govinda, 1976). Within that tradition, much effort is devoted to the aesthetics of such structures of which some 725 exist. The magical configurations, important to the poet Yeats in triggering his imagination at a particular stage in his development, also merit consideration. Some would argue for the relevance of the zodiacal pattern (Trevelyan, 197) or the enneagram (Palmer, 1988) or a combination (Von Keyserling, \*\*). But these traditional approaches could be considered to lack a fresh connection to current aesthetic and policy concerns. They and others (Judge, 1988) are perhaps best used as metaphors to suggest the nature of such a configuration.

Configurations can of course acquire an overly mechanical quality which poetic instincts can usefully resist. The organic dimensions of "deep ecology" perhaps call for a corresponding "deep epistemology" to distinguish the nature of organic configurations to which poets more readily resonate. There is an increasing number of studies which might be considered from this perspective. They include the work of Gregory Bateson (1979, 1987), Humberto Maturana (1987, 1988), Francisco Varela (1987, 1988), Douglas Flemons (1991), Willim Irwin Thompson (1987, 1989), and others including those concerned with neurolinguistic programming.

Kathleen Forsythe, as information scientist and poet, articulated one pattern of relationships around such a deep epistemology in an paper on *Cathedrals of the Mind: the architecture of metaphor in understanding learning* (1986):

*"The fundamental differences in this new view of learning is to see analogical thinking as the architecture and analytical thinking as the engineering of our mind's view of the world. Thinking and learning become a dynamic 'open' geometry (Fuller, 1975-9) characterized by increasing complexity and transformation as a dissipative structure (Prigogine, 1984) based on a kinetic, relational calculus (Pask, 1975). The meta design is not built on inference and syllogism but on analogy and relation thus allowing form to develop from an underlying logic -- the morphogenesis of an idea (Sheldrake, 1983). Knowledge is seen not as an absolute to be known but always in relation to agreement and disagreement, to coherence and distinction in terms of individual, cultural and social points of view. The language we use to communicate then takes on a heightened importance (Wittgenstein, 1972) whether that be the language of words or the metaphor language of pattern (Alexander, 1977)."*

Much more could be done in refining such initiatives through dialogue between poets and policy-makers.

## **8. INVENTING REALITY: "TALKING IT UP" THROUGH CONFIGURED IMAGERY**

The phrase "talking it up" is now commonly used to indicate one of the strategies open to a government minister of finance faced with loss of confidence in the value of the national currency. The minister makes statements to increase the credibility of the currency on the international markets. The phrase "psyching up" is commonly used by individuals or teams in sporting competitions. It indicates techniques whereby they can strengthen their attitude to respond to opponents. This technique has long been used in preparation for battle. Opponents may even be said to "psych each other up" -- "winding up" is also used. Variants are used in management team building exercises. Some religious groups use testimony meetings to this end.

Of similar interest are techniques used to "create an ambience". The techniques may range from interior decoration, choice of music, and pre-structured scripts or events -- or even choice of language. Creating such intangible environments can be vital to the appeal of a community, a club, a social occasion, or a work environment.

Such techniques result in a shift in the ways in which reality is understood. In its simplest form it "increases the flow of adrenalin". In the light of the previous sections however, what is of interest here is the possibility of configuring more complex realities. Clearly advertising and public relations endeavour to do this through image-building -- using a configuration of mutually reinforcing initiatives. But this is often done against the interests of those towards whom it is targeted. Magic and spell-casting may be subject to the same fundamental criticism. Like advertising, especially in the form of political propaganda, they may deliberately seek to "enthrall". Some community-based cults have gone furthest in co-creating realities and can be legitimately criticized for the ways in which they enthrall.

Policy scientist Yehezkel Dror (1987) expresses concern at the way top decision makers succumb to illusions which they cultivate for their environment. *"Ostensibly, all decisions are based, at least in part, on facts and predictions of facts. This is an illusion, and an exceedingly dangerous one: no one can get at the facts. What one regards as facts are only images, often highly distorted, of reality. Understanding the limits of these images, reducing distortions as far as possible, and adjusting modes of decision-making to irreducible ambiguities and doubts*

*are imperative....Recognizing what causes image distortion is a daunting task. A leader may easily overreact by putting his faith in his own personal intuition...But unaided intuition is even less trustworthy".* Dror provides a valuable summary of causes of image distortion. Elsewhere he examines the challenges faced by leaders with a vision (1988, 1991).

Nevertheless are there clues in the possibility of collective dialogue through metaphor -- inspired by the aesthetics of poetry-making and disciplined by a sense of configuration? It would seem that many techniques have been explored -- but each in ways that fail to respond to the present needs for co-creating sustainable realities.

There is of course a burgeoning literature on invented realities and inventing realities. These include studies such as: Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment; the meaning and importance of fairy tales* (1976); Ellen Winner's *Invented Worlds; the psychology of the arts* (1982); Roberts Avens' *Imagination is Reality* (1980); Paul Watzlawick's *Invented Reality* (1984); Joseph Campbell's *Myths to Live By* (1985); Marilee Zdenek's *Inventing the Future* (1988); Alan Wallace's *Choosing Reality* (1989) and William Irwin Thompson's *Imaginary Landscape; making worlds of myth and science* (1989).

Such studies are of direct interest to social constructivists as usefully summarized in Walter Truett Anderson's *Reality Isn't What It Used To Be* (1990). But they seem to be simplistic in their approach -- often using single generative metaphors -- despite the apparent need for more complex reality construction. But in poetry-making, where multiple metaphors are skilfully used, they are not developed within a group setting nor are they designed to help the group reframe the pattern of its actions in the light of subtler insights.

A principal weakness seems to lie in the rhetorical use of a single metaphor. Like a spell it is cast upon the listeners. As with a tennis ball the "service" may be so devastating that it cannot be "returned". Each may contribute to the dialogue in this way without making for interesting tennis. On the other hand even when the service is returned and the participants are able to engage in a volley exchange, this too may only make for uninteresting "ping-pong" tennis as in many parliamentary exchanges. However something quite special happens when the exchange is such that the quality or tone of the dialogue shifts and builds so as to generate new and unforeseen patterns -- and new levels of enthusiasm. The secret lies in this mutual enhancement, as it does in non-mechanical love-making through which a shared new reality is created for the lovers. The challenge in each case is to learn to act through and out of this new reality.

Possibilities of this kind led physicist David Bohm to initiate dialogue experiments in a number of places. His work is currently being followed up through The Dialogue Project (Organizational Learning Center, MIT). For Bohm (1985), through the kind of dialogue he sought to cultivate:

*"a new kind of mind thus begins to come into being which is based on the development of common meaning that is constantly transforming the process of dialogue. People are no longer primarily in opposition, nor can they be said to be interacting, rather they are participating in this common pool of meaning which is capable of constant development and change. In this development the group has no pre-established purpose, though at each moment a purpose that is free to change may reveal itself. Thus the group begins to engage in a new dynamic relationship in which no speaker is excluded, and in which no particular content is excluded."*

Unfortunately, precisely because of the free-floating, open-ended, judgement-free nature of Bohm's process, it seems that qualities essential to policy-making are lost -- at least according to the present state of practice. Such experiments need new ways to discipline and focus

themselves, rather than cultivating the abandonment of discipline and focus -- and the avoidance of judgement. The challenge is to distinguish "non-judgementally" between the incestuous self-indulgence of participants in the intellectual joys of "going meta" and the kinds of experiential transcendence that may occur on occasion and be experienced by some participants. This is a "magical gate" -- the so-called "gateless barrier" of Zen tradition (Aitken, 1990).

It is questionable whether the bonds created and the insights gained can be successfully communicated beyond the bounds of the group that meets in such dialogue -- which necessarily develops its own identity and story. Especially dangerous is the manner in which non-judgemental practices may be misused to inhibit any evaluation or the exploration of alternatives. Both poetry-making and policy-making have insights to contribute to the clarification of the conditions under which this gate can be approached and the manner in which its wider significance can emerge.

The suggestion is therefore that there is place for experiment. It is probable that the results will offer possibilities for new forms of policy-making in smaller groups, organizations or communities. Even so it will be of great value if it enables subtler coalitions of forces to acquire stability -- especially in situations where factionalism prevents the formation of any such structures. Hopefully this will indicate new ways of working creatively with differences rather than vainly endeavouring to eliminate them.

## **9. POTENTIAL ROLE OF COMPUTER AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNOLOGY**

In the case of poetry, technological innovations have led only to some explorations of computer generated poetry -- and to the use of wordprocessing with its advantages of direct access to dictionaries, including rhyming dictionaries. Much poetry is now available on CD, and this will soon be associated with visual information. Such a medium will permit sophisticated explorations of text, whether or not it encourages "better" poetry.

Music has made much more extensive use of such technology, including aids to experimental composition using libraries of sounds and melodies, combined according to previously unforeseen rules. Music can also be combined with dynamic patterns of light in usual ways. In this respect, colour and pattern manipulation has developed enormously with the use of computers, notably with the possibility of selecting and controlling literally thousands of colours.

The relevance of such technology to the arguments of this paper lie in its potential for holding complex relationships between patterns whose parts may be selectively associated with text, colour, shape and sound. Those in the computer world have not been reticent in acclaiming the value of computers as tools of the imagination and for the exploration of new patterns (\*\*Clifford A Pickover, 1990, 1991)

The interactive possibilities are important because of the potential for offering a multiplicity of alternative representations of the same collective work. Just as a piece of sculpture can be viewed from various angles under various lighting conditions, so too can a complex pattern of relationships between elements of text be selectively perused. This allows alternative aesthetic perspectives to be held together by relationships that obviate the need for discordant experience. Or rather the level of discordance experienced becomes a matter of choice and ability to integrate it.

It is possible therefore to envisage a group of poets, musicians and policy-makers, such as that envisaged above, working together on the same information structure. Each may then be

"protected" from whatever degree of exposure to the "incompatible" perspectives of others is considered excessive. The software could allow them to "compose" together in unusual ways. Specifically it might:

(a) facilitate development of the underlying or fundamental pattern of the information structure, from both aesthetic and functional perspectives. Subsequent revisions could also be facilitated.

(b) provide a form of conceptual or aesthetic "scaffolding" to hold initial possibilities in tentative relationship in anticipation of definitive arrangements (Judge, 1992)

(c) permit the addition of "annotations" to different parts of the information structure. Like decorative artwork in a building, these could be made more or less visible. They might take poetic form or they might be of purely functional significance -- or one might be linked directly to the other as an illustrative metaphor.

(d) permit experimental reconfiguration of the information structure to bring into juxtaposition selected aesthetic and function features

A related graphic technique of great interest is that of "morphing". This is best known through the video-clips, seen by millions, showing the transformation of one human face into a series of others, or possibly into some other form. This is a powerful visual metaphor for what could result from establishing the stages in relating a turgid policy text to one which embodies a pattern of aesthetic relationships of a much higher order.

What might be involved in such a transformation of texts? Clearly the initial stages would require the elimination of obscurantist legal jargon, and correspond to the "rewriting" which is increasingly called for -- possibly leading to a form acceptable for "public relations" purposes. But it is the subsequent stages which are really of special interest. Are there ways of experimenting with such morphing techniques to obtain computer assistance in building in aesthetic features? These might lead to a variety of alternative presentations of the original document -- possibly with associated graphics. The challenge would be to use the technology, as suggested above, so that the "original" document did not have to derive from the policy side, but rather from some intermediary stage of creative collaboration. The legalistic version would then be but one of the alternative presentations.

Perhaps of most significance is the potential of virtual reality technology. As yet in its early crude development stage, the focus is on the display and interaction with imaginary objects of little aesthetic or policy significance. However there is little to prevent the substitution of patterns and relationships of a high order of aesthetic complexity as a means of carrying information of functional significance to policy-makers. There is every possibility that dialogue between poets, musicians and policy-makers may, in the not too distant future, take place in virtual reality spaces. For example, the possibility of virtual reality dance clubs is already envisaged. These would enable physically isolated individuals to dance "together" in a simulated space complete with audio-visual effects. Currently computer graphics are greatly independently of the music and then merged, spliced and edited into synchronization. As compositional tools become more advanced, visuals will become more intimately linked to sounds (Brian Evans \*\*). Some artists will work simultaneously with voice, text, music, shapes and colours. Poetic initiatives will surely have a place in this context.

Like it or not, a sign of the times is that priests can now purchase a CD-ROM disk containing a large array of sermon texts, with related hymn and liturgy proposals. By choosing a theme for the week, a busy priest can now have access to a series of relevant proposals for his

weekly duties.

## 10. THE PROCESS OF CONCEPTION AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE MOMENT

The concern here is with the processes through which a well-formed poem or policy comes into being rather than the manner by which it is subsequently appreciated by others. In a sense, for the conception to have wider merit, the creators must effectively anticipate and rehearse the reception and appreciation of their work as part of the design process. In this way the response is effectively pre-figured as a constraint on the process of creation. The concern is therefore with how the processes of creation are experienced.

In the spirit of the metaphor of marrying Beauty and the Beast, the concern here should also be contrasted with the creative processes of each in isolation. For this purpose these might be pejoratively labelled as being characterized by "inbreeding", whether or not this derives from "immaculate conception", "incest" or a dubious programme of "eugenics". Having argued above that they are genetically compatible, despite appearances, the concern here is to achieve a richer genetic mix in the progeny.

Clearly any creative process precedes any possibility of definition. There is a "circulation" of something in ways alluded to in the language of Taoist alchemical texts. In the management world the closest is what is described as brainstorming -- although ideas are different from actual creativity. There is some form of "alternation" between opposing perspectives, again alluded to in Taoist breathing metaphors. Perhaps the closest policy equivalent is that of dialectical interaction through which perspectives are challenged and a new synthesis emerges.

More striking is the sense of a "magical moment" in which a wide variety of elements are recognized as having a consonant relationship. In musical terms there are resonances and harmonies which change the feel of the space in which they are perceived. A version of this can be understood when considering internal decoration of a room and a creative solution emerges. Such transformative moments also occasionally occur in meetings.

Such moments can really only be described through metaphor. There is a need for poetic skills to articulate understanding of such moments so that they are more readily recognized and can exert a pull on collective endeavour in meetings. What is it that gets "held" in such moments, and which the Taoists refer to as "chi"? (R G H Siu, 1974) In the policy world there is a rather desperate effort to identify these moments with "conflict resolution" and "reconciliation". But this excludes qualities of integration in which tensions are not resolved but held in a very dramatic manner well known to poets and dramatists -- hence the importance of pattern and configuration. It is perhaps that dramatic truth which needs most to be "harnessed" to collective policy-making.