

February 1994

A CONFERENCE TOWARDS SPIRITUAL CONCORD

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METAPHOR OF SPIRITUAL CONCORD

Towards a Language of Spiritual Concord

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TOWARDS A LANGUAGE OF SPIRITUAL CONCORD

Challenge

If the gathering is structured so that the value of a verbal or written contribution is judged by its length or by its origin, then reference should be made to the many gatherings that have gone this route. The weighty tomes gathering dust on library shelves suggest the need for another approach.

Could the challenge of the gathering not be reformulated in terms of discovery of the set of metaphors or images which best embody a higher understanding of spiritual concord at this time? What is needed is an imaginative response to producing a kind of spiritual "Rosetta stone", or spiritual "keystone". It is the spiritual traditions which have made most effective use of metaphors in the past to convey the subtlest of insights.

Can the contemporary spiritual challenge not be reformulated in terms of the development of images, metaphors or parables to embody the harmonies and discords between different spiritual insights? Culture is the principal resource in any such undertaking -- given the wealth of metaphor from the many arts.

Embodying insights by circumscription

Focus on such metaphors to carry subtle insight avoids the need for lengthy verbal presentations using the specialized jargon of a particular tradition. The need is to share insight and an "image is worth a thousand words".

The concern is with the subtlest insights into integrative experience. There is merit in using metaphors which circumscribe such insights, alluding indirectly to the nature of the experience. In contrast, efforts to describe or label such insights directly run the risk of caricaturing them in the eyes of others. This severely inhibits concord based on mutual respect.

Healing insights

If participants are called upon to offer suitable metaphors to capture the collective dilemma of spiritual concord, a new way forward may be explored. This is not an imposition on those of spiritual background, since they regularly use such devices to communicate understandings **within** their own tradition.

The request is to extend this skill to articulation of the relationship **between** the seemingly incommensurable spiritual traditions assembled at the gathering. The challenge is to discover "healing insights", namely to clarify in metaphoric form the wholeness which articulates the relationship **between** different spiritual insights.

For a Buddhist, for example, what are the metaphors or images which best clarify the relationship between non-Buddhist groups holding different perspectives -- a mandala perhaps? Can that image be usefully contrasted with that furnished by a Christian to clarify the relationship between non-Christian groups -- a rose window perhaps? And can this be challenged by an Islamic perception of a similar nature? etc.

Note how this approach avoids confrontation on points of difference. It calls for setting the differences **between** others within an integrative framework which can be understood as a whole -- preferably with a centre that is empty and open. Filling or occupying the centre precludes others from comprehending the subtlest insights through other possible frameworks, whether now or in the future. It is an assertion that the integrative experience can only be engaged in through a single framework. It makes the framework of greater importance than the fundamental integrative experience. This would then be a form of "spiritual colonialism" that is repressive of alternative insights.

This metaphoric approach recognizes that the challenge:

For the group supplying the integrative metaphor, lies in the meditation on the wholeness that keeps the pattern of differences intact. Quality lies in the pattern that connects.

For other groups "encompassed" in this way, lies in responding with their own metaphors that embody a greater sense of harmony and a greater respect for difference. Identity lies in contrast. Dialogue is assured through an exchange of perspectives.

Healing designs

Another metaphoric interaction could, for example, be based on the collaborative design of a shared place of worship. As a collective "thought experiment", the challenge for each tradition in making proposals is then to :

Ensure the presence of those features that guarantee its status as a space that can be held sacred by that tradition.

Sacrifice those features which are not essential to the sacredness of that space, and which are strong irritants to those of other traditions.

Tolerate features from other traditions, perhaps adjusting their location, such that these are only mild irritants to the sacredness of the space.

The collective art is to negotiate the design of the space, so that the aesthetic creativity and compromises both reflects the sense of integration between the different traditions and allows them to identify their own particular contribution to the overall design. The design process is then a metaphor for the process of achieving spiritual concord.

Traps

There are of course traps to be avoided. Metaphors and images that are helpful to some are experienced as constraining and simplistic to others. More challenging is that, as with cultural artefacts, people may appreciate or regret the quality of harmony or discord emphasized in a particular metaphor. There are some whose need for harmony is considered unrealistic and unmeaningful by others.

However, since the subtlety of the concord that is sought must necessarily transcend any articulation in a single metaphor, the challenge is to discover a set of complementary metaphors which together better embody that overarching insight. Perhaps the spiritual art to be discovered is that of dancing between the insights offered by such metaphors.

A metaphoric example: an ecology of spiritual insights

Using the ecological metaphor, for example, one may ask how each spiritual tradition fits into the spiritual ecosystem. What vital role does each spiritual tradition perform within that ecosystem?

Note that this is not an exercise in syncretism. Rather it is a recognition that there are people who, for whatever cultural or psycho-social reason, derive benefit from one pattern of spiritual insights rather than from another. However, there are other people who derive benefit from other patterns of insights.

And just as the artefacts of different cultures may be appreciated by some, under certain conditions an individual may articulate his or her spiritual understanding from different patterns of spiritual insights. For the integrity of the person, there must be some insight into ways of articulating the relationship between apparently conflicting spiritual insights.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERRELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

The following Guidelines have evolved from a set of eight "Proposed Points of Common Understanding Among the Religions of the World", drawn up by Father Thomas Keating in 1982. Since that time, the Points have been discussed and refined by a number of interreligious groups, including a sub-group of the First Assembly of World Religions (McAfee NJ, 1985) and the Snowmass Conference, which meets on a regular basis for contemplative dialogue.

1. The world religions bear witness to the experience of the Ultimate Reality to which they give various names: Brahman, the Absolute, God, Allah, Great Spirit, the Transcendent.
2. The Ultimate Reality surpasses any name or concept that can be given to it.
3. The Ultimate Reality is the source (ground of being) of all existence.
4. Faith is opening, surrendering, and responding to the Ultimate Reality. This relationship precedes every belief system.
5. The potential for human wholeness - or in other frames of reference, liberation, self-transcendence, enlightenment, salvation, transforming union, moksha, nirvana, fana - is present in every human person.
6. The Ultimate Reality may be experienced not only through religious practices but also through nature, art, human relationships, and service to others.
7. The differences among belief systems should be presented as facts that distinguish them, not as points of superiority.
8. In the light of the globalization of life and culture now in process, the personal and social ethical principles proposed by the world religions in the past need to be re-thought and re-expressed. For example:
 - a) In view of the increasing danger of global destruction, the world religions should emphasize the corresponding moral obligation of nations and ethnic groups to make use of nonviolent methods for the resolution of conflicts.
 - b) The world religions should encourage civil governments to respect every religion without patronizing one in particular.
 - c) The world religions should work for the practical acceptance of the dignity of the human person; a more equitable distribution of material goods and of opportunities for human development; the cause of human rights, especially the right to choose and practice one's own religion or no religion; the solidarity and harmony of the human family; the stewardship of the earth and its resources; the renewal of their respective spiritual traditions; and interreligious understanding through dialogue.

HAVE "RELIGIONS" THE MONOPOLY ON RELIGION ?

The following points arise from the Research Group on "Philosophy and the Study of Religion" of the World Congress of Philosophy (Varna, 1973) as articulated by Raimon Panikkar (Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 11, 3, Summer 1974, pp 515-517). They were unanimously approved by the entire congress which included atheists. Introducing the points, he notes: "Interestingly enough, we reenacted Heraclitus' words: "the concordant in the discord," a topic dear to Renaissance man, which revives a tradition ancient since Philolaus, the artioperiton."

1. Humans are non-achieved, non-finite, and (in this sense) infinite beings. They are in the process of becoming something which they are not yet, and which can be considered - though not always or necessarily - a better status.
2. Religions claim to be the ways leading persons to their fulfilment, in whatever sense this fulfilment may be interpreted, or the nature of the way envisaged. A religion is that set of practices and/or doctrines (orthopraxis and orthodoxy) which one believes will lead one to the liberation or fulfilment of one's being. A religion is thus defined by the function it claims to perform: to link present and factual human condition A with point B as humanity's final station - in other words, a way to salvation. Salvation is used here in its etymologically broadest sense: anything making one whole, healthy, free, and complete.
3. Many of the ways of the past seem obsolete today, and many are still quite alive. Further, new ways constantly emerge which intend to do in a more adequate and obviously different manner just what traditional religions claim to perform. Many of these ways would not call themselves religions, due to the many associations this word maintains with a certain type of "Way". It is but a question of semantics and also of cultural decision whether or not these new "ways" should be called religions. Nevertheless, they claim so strongly to be real substitutes for what (old) "religions" failed to bring about that there would be some point to calling all these sets of ways by one and the same name. Belief would then be an alternative to "religion".
4. Humanity finds itself in a "diachronical situation". What is the case for one section of humankind may not be the case for another. Some degree of awareness may be required for a particular way to function, without which that way is prevented from being a real one. This implies that there are neither ready-made solutions nor universal answers when even the questions fall short of being universal. Thus, a certain religiousness may be an adequate way to human fulfilment at a certain point in history and geography, and the same "religiousness" may have deleterious effects in another context, so that statements about religion have to take into account particular human situations and cannot be universalized by uncritical extrapolation.
5. No religion, ideology, culture, or tradition can reasonably claim to exhaust the universal range of human experience. Thus a pluralism distinct from the mere coexistence of a plurality of world views is a present-day necessity. Pluralism does not mean a super-ideology, or any super-system for that matter, but it implies an almost mythical confidence that other perspectives may also be plausible.
6. The encounter and dialogue between religions, ideologies, and Weltanschauungen is a human imperative for our time. The once "splendid" isolation becomes today a miserable encapsulation. This dialogue itself is a religious endeavour, in the sense of our second point.
7. All human enterprises of this kind, whether named religions, ideologies, humanisms, atheisms, or the like, are engaged in this struggle for human fullness, even if they understand this term very differently.

Panikar concludes:

"If human communication has a sense, if religion and atheism can come to a real confrontation, if ideologies and worldviews are to compete in a noble and honest emulation, they all must strive to speak a commonly understandable language, and to agree at least as to the problem with which they are dealing. Often - and the sessions at Varna once again confirmed it - the criticisms of religion made by "outsiders" are the same that insiders make, and the operative set of values is often the same, yet the conclusion of outsiders is to delete that religion, and that of insiders is to reform and purify it....Their discrepancy is not so much that they advocate different means for analogous ends, but that they envision different ends because they interpret differently the factual human condition....

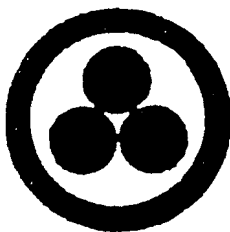
If traditional religions would give up any pretense to monopoly of what *religion* stands for, if modern "religions" would agree to enter a common effort, which is what contemporary representatives of religious traditions are also striving for, if, in other words, the common ground could be considered a "religious" one, if those "ways" which pretend to "better" the present human condition could come together in mutual struggle and without hidden, i.e., "unconfessed" weapons (intentions), we could perhaps discover one of the fundamental and enduring tasks of all *religion*: the rescue of humanity from the danger of perishing."

THE CHALLENGE OF SPIRITUAL CONCORD

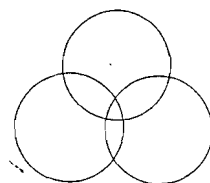
viewed through a playful meditation on the Banner of Peace



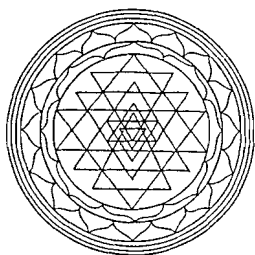
Prehistoric cultural symbol



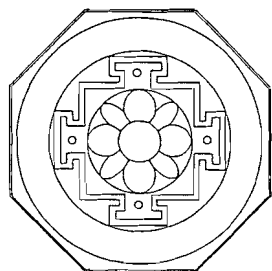
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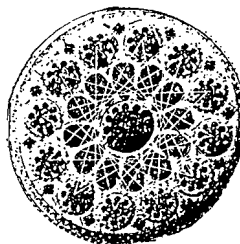
Logic diagram



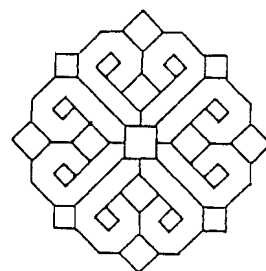
Hindu yantra



Buddhist mandala

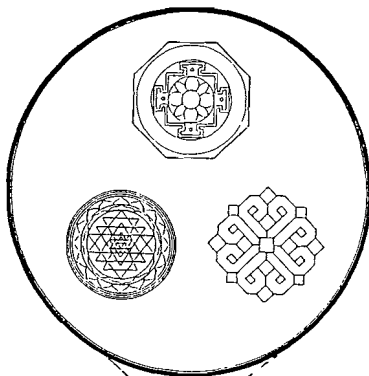
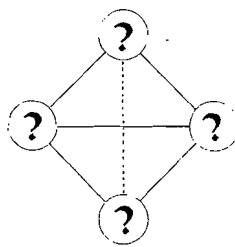


Christian rose window

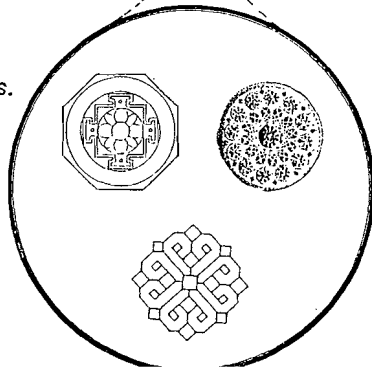
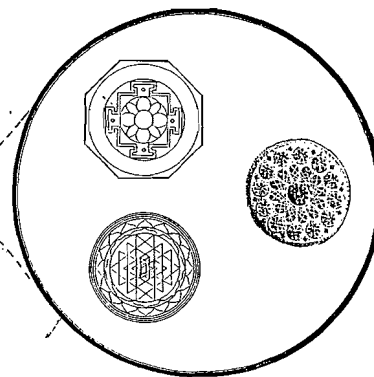
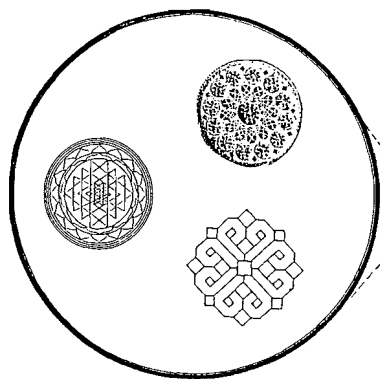


Islamic pattern

Interrelationship of the 4 above 2-dimensional symbols of spiritual integration through the fundamental tetrahedral form in 3 dimensions. This raises both the challenge of primacy and that of comprehending the fundamental concord uniting the different forms of spiritual integration.



Resulting pattern of 4 "views" through each symbol of integration -- across the empty centre of the tetrahedral form -- onto the integrations offered by the 3 others. From a holographic perspective, each "part" encompasses the "whole", and each "whole" constitutes a "part".



The names that can be named are not definitive names.
 Naming engenders ten thousand things...
 Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub.
 It is the empty centre hole that makes it useful...
 Therefore profit comes from what is there.
 Usefulness comes from what is not there.
 Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu)

CONVEYING INSIGHTS ON SPIRITUAL CONCORD

Challenge

Information overload: One of the characteristics of congresses on spiritual concord and peace is the quantity of information, whether governmental or nongovernmental -- and whether in the form of position papers, background documents, handouts, reports or declarations. Both policy-makers and the media tend to be subject to an unusual degree of information overload. Much of the information will be underused, both at the event and in its aftermath.

Shifting awareness: The real test of the such a congress as many have suggested, will however lie in its ability to "shift the level of awareness". Without a doubt, information is necessary to this process. But the shift will be anchored and given credibility by those few images which can give coherence to the complex insights that emerge to interrelate fruitfully the many powerfully conflicting interests.

Beyond consensus: Much hope is being placed in the emergence of a new consensus as the basis for a new order. It is readily forgotten that consensus is easiest when it is superficial. Beyond such consensus there is the continuing reality of the tensions between groups with incompatible goals and mind-sets. It is the imagery that reconfigures that reality which will open opportunities for appropriate action.

Penetrating power of imagery: It is the few key images -- "worth a thousand words" -- which will focus an imaginative approach to the wealth of information. It is around them that the media can build stories meaningful to a wider audience. It is these images which ensure that the insights are carried where information cannot penetrate -- whether into the interstices of industrialized societies or to the far corners of the Earth. It is the images which will be remembered long after the congress is forgotten by all but its participants.

Clues

Meaning of "insightful imagery": To fulfil the function indicated above, such imagery needs to go beyond "description" or "prescription", beyond "naming problems" or "envisaging solutions", and beyond "blaming" or "exhorting". Clues to the "Factor X" which can catalyze more fruitful responses may perhaps be found in one or more of the following:

- **Parables**...for those of religious inclination, what are the "parables" of the congress?

- **Learning pathways**...for educators, what are the "learning pathways" and "journeys" opened up by the congress?

- **Wisdom stories**...for those aware of the power of the story teller, what "stories" or "fables" can carry the insights of the congress?

- **Case studies**...for those with a management orientation, what are the "case studies" which evoke the policy dilemmas and opportunities of the congress?

- **Proverbs**...for those recognizing their power, what are the "proverbs" which can guide initiatives emerging from the congress?

- **Myths**...for those touched by the power of myth, what "myths" or "legends" capture the dilemmas and opportunities of the congress?

- **Metaphors**...for those convinced of the fundamental cognitive role of metaphor, what are the "metaphors" which capture and reconfigure the challenge of the congress?

On the one hand, we seem to need "catalytic convertors" for our "exhausted imagination". But on the other, our cultural heritage constitutes a huge "gene-pool" of the imagination on which we can draw in response to the planetary dilemma.

Criteria

Catalytic imagery: Care must however be taken in finding appropriate images. Superficial images will not evoke new ways of acting. What indeed are the "images" which will catalyze more sustainable forms of action -- evoking and guiding appropriate programmes? How can such images best capture and carry the insights emerging from the sectoral and inter-sectoral concerns of the international community?

Multi-level imagery: The art of appropriate imagery is to permit people to derive different levels of significance from it (by unpeeling it like an onion). At its most superficial level it may offer succinct explanations, or it may provide a symbol or slogan exhorting political action. Much more is required of the imagery from the congress. Somehow it must also carry insights into the nature of the appropriate balance between conflicting priorities. But above all it must be the catalyst for creative insight into the way forward, both for the individual and for groups -- whether in policy-making or in concrete action programmes.

Complementary imagery: Conferencestend to be organized in terms of working groups. Imagery is required to carry the essence of each of these initiatives and the shift in attitude required to empower them. But that imagery must also render comprehensible the essential complementarity between these initiatives. Much more is therefore required than the sort of unrelated poster images traditionally produced by agencies with supposedly complementary programmes.

SOME CLUES TO SOCIAL HARMONY FROM MUSIC

A METAPHOR

In a group or gathering, music may be used as a metaphor to view each role or individual as a note, a chord, a musical instrument, or as a melody. The issues of group integration can then be interpreted as:

- **what kind of music can the group as a whole play** -- and what does "playing" mean?
- how do the group members relate to one another to ensure their **appropriate contribution to the music**?
- what of the distinction between **rehearsal** of classic or popular pieces as opposed to composition and **improvisation** of new music?

Hints of these possibilities are already evident in common use of: "the same old refrain", "his usual number", "blowing his own trumpet", "the note they are sounding", "singing the same tune", etc

MUSICAL DIMENSIONS

A tone is characterized by four attributes: pitch, timbre, loudness, and duration. Musical sound can be regarded as having two dimensions, vertical and horizontal organization.

A. Horizontal Harmonic Organization

Namely organization over time. Music structures time and this may be seen in terms of:

(a) **Tempo**, as the pace of the fundamental beat of the music or the rate at which tones are produced. Groups (and individuals) may also be perceived as having a tempo, some being "faced paced", etc

(b) **Rhythm**, as an ordered alternation of contrasting elements (of whatever tones) grouped instinctively by the mind into twos and threes, stressing every second or third as a beat to convert a monotonous series into a succession of strong and weak beats. There are six **principal rhythmic modes** or metres (also in poetry): trochee, iamb, dactyl, anapest, spondee, and tribarch. Rhythm unregulated by metre may be considered a seventh mode.

(c) **Melody**, as an organized succession of groups of musical tones, involving repetition (with the same phrases repeated), contrast (of a completely different phrase), or variation (such that despite the change its identity is conserved).

In the case of horizontal organization, the focus is on "where the music is going to". This is of course helpful in understanding how an integrative goal may be understood and how the status of different goals has been brought into question through the evolution of understanding harmonic possibilities.

How does a group endeavour to structure time? How are the different notes or melodies inserted into the meeting space and how is their meaning held over time?

B. Vertical Harmonic Organization

Namely the sum total of what is happening at a particular time. The emphasis here is on the vertical relationships, if any, between tones. This includes the results of notes that sound against each other in counterpoint. In the case of melody and accompaniment, it includes the underpinning of chords that the composer gives to the principal notes of the melody.

This can be broadly defined as the sound of two or more notes heard simultaneously (even if sounded one after another and so integrated by the hearer).

(a) It is the succession of harmonies that give a piece of music its distinctive personality. Harmony is an optional additional form of organization or integration. Rhythm and melody can exist without harmony and in fact most of the world's music is non-harmonic, using unharmonized melodic lines often with a sophisticated rhythmic organization.

(b) The concept of harmony is not an arbitrary creation. It is based on certain relationships among musical tones that the ear accepts almost reflexively, especially the octave, fifth and fourth. Are there natural harmonies between psycho-social functions, namely the "notes" sounded by individuals? Is it appropriate to accompany one note by another to create a chord which imbues the activity of the group with a higher quality?

The interplay of consonance and dissonance is the very foundation of harmonic music:

(a) Consonance: This is the normal range of tone combinations accepted as implying "repose" by theorists and composers during a given period. Dissonance refers to any sound outside this range. Many attempts have been made to link consonant with pleasant, smooth, stable, beautiful, and dissonant with unpleasant, grating unstable and ugly. These may prove meaningful in a particular context, but generalizations to a broader contexts.

(b) Dissonance: This is recognized as the prime element creating movement in harmony. When the ear recognizes a certain harmony as unstable within the given musical context, it "demands" that this instability or tension be rectified by resolution to a stable harmony. Without dissonance music would be hopelessly static. The historical development of music can be seen as the exploration of different approaches to the treatment of dissonance so that the musical flow is an ordered alternation of tension and relaxation.

POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS

In a group, but especially in society as a whole, it is usual for advocates of a proposal, a model, a method, a cosmology or an ideology, to propagate it as though it alone should achieve dominance - effectively excluding alternative approaches. Within the musical framework this can lead to pieces which are either immediately monotonous and boring, or whose interesting characteristics quickly become an intolerable imposition unless balanced by other pieces in the musical diet (cf. the life cycle of a hit record).

There is of course no musical continuity between the succession of such separate pieces of music. The challenge lies in the way in which the **relationship between distinct "voices"** is approached. This is of course basic to polyphonic music and symphonic integration. In music such as the fugue however, the relationship between "competing" voices is explored within a musical continuum. This represents a new level of integration. In effect the concept (strategy, model, etc) is explored, inverted, countered, distorted, etc within the overriding set of rules which permit a **new level of freedom**. The rules ensure a **more exciting balance of tension and harmony**.

The key to such **integration lies in the time dimension** which music effectively organizes. Somehow the potential for organizing the time dimension in which competing perspectives are presented and countered needs to be better understood. Perhaps it is linear time which is the trap, as many have argued. There is the possibility of a **new level of integration in the interplay between competing alternatives**.

On the one hand **the theory of harmony provides a script which could be decoded** to provide insights into new relationships between opposing views. But on the other hand there is a need to learn to treat the interplay between such views as a pattern which could be represented in musical form.

In the case of a group meeting there is some merit in seeing it as a "broken pattern" or cycle, vainly trying to get together a coherent tone or harmonic pattern. It may also be seen in terms of polyphony and the challenge of competing voices. But in the light of the historical evolution of harmony, the value of moving the gathering through a series of consonant and dissonant "chords" to a tonic goal may be viewed as somewhat simplistic -- although perhaps only achieved in rare cases. The closing phases of most conferences reveal the superficiality of that goal. **The possibilities of integration need to be "liberated" from the simplistic understandings of social "harmony" which prevail.**

EVOLUTION OF HARMONY

For Western music, harmony has evolved over the centuries

Vertical harmonic organization (the moment)

(a) Ancient Greece: **Harmony based on the succession of tones within an octave.** Scales were used as a basis for singing in unison. **Melody was synonymous with harmony.**

(b) 6th to 9th century: Use of any 12 such modes (**scale patterns of tones** and semi-tones) in which the notes also had characteristic functions.

(c) 9th century: Only the **simplest "perfect" harmonic ratios were accepted:** fourth, fifth, octave. This allowed the **addition of one or two voices** which exactly paralleled the original melody. Later these voices acquired melodic **independence**, possibly **moving contrary to the original melody.**

(d) 12th to 15th century: Inclusion of **other intervals**, thirds and sixths, and in some cases, seconds and sevenths. This was associated with the **development beyond 3-part scoring** to 4-, 5-, and 6-part scores, thus further enriching the harmony of voices.

(e) 15th century: Introduction of **additional notes outside the mode**, thus breaking down the distinction between the 12 classical modes and foreshadowing the major/minor mode system.

(f) 16th century: The **tonic, or keynote**, triad then became the point of departure and of arrival in a composition and in its component phrases.

(g) 17th century: Greater emphasis was then placed on expressive **melodic line harmonically underpinned by a base line as the generating force upon which harmonics were built** (often by improvisation) -- contrasting markedly with the interweaving of parts of equal importance.

(h) 19th century: Deliberate use was then made of **unresolved harmonies** (unstable chords used as self-sufficient entities) and of **ambiguous chords.** Although rooted in tonality, every possible device is used to complicate or obscure the tonal sense.

Horizontal harmonic organization (over time)

(a) Up to 15th century: In the use of 7 to 12 harmonic modes, the **harmonic goal was governed by the given scale pattern.** Although chants were sung unharmonized and in a rhythmically free manner, there were constraints and there was a **proper final note** for a modal melody.

(b) With the development of melodic independence between voices (polyphony) and the use of dissonances within the composition, emerged an emphasis on the **resolution of such tensions through consonances** at the end of compositions as the point of arrival. This reinforces the idea of the **cadence, or the finality of the keynote of a mode on which pieces normally ended.**

(c) From the 16th century: Devices such as the suspension were used as a way of **enhancing, through dissonance, the resolution to consonance and the sense of completion** of the final chord. In a suspension one note of a chord is sustained while the other voices change to a new chord. In the new chord the suspended note is dissonant. One or two beats later the suspended note changes pitch so that it resolves into, or becomes consonant with, the chord of the remaining voices. This reinforced **awareness that harmony moves through individual chords towards a goal.**

(d) 17th century: The concept of a key was developed as a group of related notes (belonging to either a major or minor scale), plus the chords formed from those notes, and the hierarchy of relationships among those chords. The keynote, and the chord built on it is a focal chord towards which all chords and notes in the key gravitate. Given **chords assumed specific functions in moving toward or away from harmonic goals, the main goal being the tonic key or keynote** - of which there were a total of 24 possibilities. These derive from the 12 major key scales and 12 minor key scales (each of 7 tones). The most **common movement from chord to chord is through "strong" intervals** (fourths, fifths, seconds) which have the fewest notes in common.

(i) 20th century: Use of chords seemingly conforming to classical practice but which are **resolved in unexpected directions**. Tonality exists in the sense that there are extended stable areas that give the impression of being in some definable key, but the intense use of notes outside the scale of the basic key (chromatism) makes it nearly **impossible to group the unity of a work in terms of its adherence to a clear tonal plan**.

(j) 20th century: Use of atonality, abandoning the traditional duality of consonance and dissonance (eliminating the concept of a single predominant key as tonic). **Break away from traditional scales** in recognition of the **power of context** and the **sense of a continuum between consonance and dissonance**.

(k) 20th century: Emphasis on performer improvisation/interpretation catalyzed by indeterminacy procedures making any **concept of overall harmonic direction irrelevant**.

Musical composition is currently in a phase of intense experiment. Although concepts of classical harmony have lost their importance, it is not a question of the dissolution of harmony but rather of the uses to which such harmonies are put, and the changing relationship of harmony to musical structure -- and the emergence of a new, fundamentally different harmony.

(e) 18th century: Modulation, or **change of key**, became an important factor because it allowed the composer to exploit the listener's ability to sense the relation between the keys. **Modulation was usually to a "dominant" key** which was a "strong" interval" apart. After the modulation there is a process of return to the initial key. During this process the harmonic movement tends to pass rapidly through many chords and often with momentary diversions into many new keys thus dramatized as unstable -- and in this way lending **greater impact to the eventual return to the stability of the original key**. This modulatory scheme from tonic to dominant key and back to tonic key formed the basis of large-scale musical forms, although often with additional refinements (such as secondary dominants) to strengthen the **sense of completion of the tonal journey**.

(f) 19th century: There was increasing disavowal of modulation, in terms of any tonal goal. By **deliberately failing to resolve dissonances**, or by **creating ambiguity** so that it was unclear whether resolution had been achieved, the **status of the harmonic goal was redefined**. The listener was called into an active role to **respond to the "questions" raised by the unresolved elements and to define the unity to be supplied**. This blurring was also counter-balanced by an emphasis on continuous, goal-less melody. Two simultaneous tonalities (polytonality), neither dominating the other as a tonal goal, were also used.

(g) 20th century: With the advent of serialism, **no single note could any longer serve as a harmonic goal**. Whereas melody, from being synonymous with harmony (Ancient Greece), became the surface of underlying harmonies (16th century), and then bore its own harmonies (into the 19th century), serialism provided a **melodic sequence out of which harmonies were generated**. Such harmony effectively became the surface, or final result, of melody.

Contemporary music may be said to be "goal-free", or to call upon the listener to be responsible for any goal he chooses to derive from the music. The emphasis is very much on: the response of the individual listener, the context to which performers respond (including audience response), and increasingly the process of improvisation. The goal lies in appreciation of the moment whatever the range of sounds which define it.

TOWARDS AN ECOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS AS ARTICULATED BY A DYNAMIC SYSTEM OF METAPHORS

Towards an image-based language: the current socio-political function of metaphors

The implications of a pattern of spiritual traditions are more and more a challenge to comprehension. In order to clarify understanding of such complexity, use is made of notions which are both simple and symbolic. "The House of Europe" and "European Space" are examples of this approach in the political arena. Such metaphors serve as vehicles to suggest approaches with many strategic implications. They fulfil the function of codes to communicate among cognoscenti and as key phrases in the interaction with public opinion.

The fundamental problems of spiritual concord raise the question of the extent to which metaphors currently used are of adequate richness to articulate strategic options which are both useful and viable. The dilemma remains the necessity, on the one hand, to reflect the richness of the complexity of which any spiritual concord must take account, and, on the other, to make available an integrative image capable of "enchanted" people seeking some sense in the development of their personal and professional lives. This dilemma is made all the more problematic by the multiplicity of spiritual traditions and schools of thought, as well as the diverse marginal groups.

Media communicability has become increasingly important to the life of political and social initiatives. It is the ultimate constraint in social and political transformation. It is therefore useful to note the developing role of metaphor in articulating or opposing social transformation. Boris Yeltsin chose to describe Mikhael Gorbachev's compromise reforms as a "marriage between a hedgehog and a snake". Such imagery, of which there are many examples, easily undermines the best of initiatives.

It would seem that the struggle has shifted from the world of ideas to the world of images. Commentators everywhere remark on the sterility of proposals in the eyes of the general population, and especially of voters. Instead of the "power of imagination", there is a bankruptcy of imagination.

The cognitive function of metaphors

Recent research has demonstrated the cognitive function and influence of metaphors in the most disciplined and rigorous thinking. Examples in the natural sciences, and even in fundamental physics, are cited. The same is true in the social sciences and notably in understanding of organizations and their management. It appears that metaphors, whether explicit or implicit, are essential to the ordering of cognitive elements. Furthermore it is now almost impossible to extricate them from the language of many disciplines. As examples the following may be noted: a "field" of study, the "direction" of research, a "line" of argument, a "target" audience, "mobilization" of resources. It has been shown that, beyond its rhetoric functions, the choice of a metaphor may be crucial to the kinds of communication which become possible or impossible. A recent study of the metaphors underlying the Gulf War even suggests that "metaphors can kill".

A new inspiration: the spiritual function of metaphors

All the religions use metaphors to render comprehensible the most complex and subtle notions. It is with the help of metaphors that people are most profoundly touched in relation to those hopeful factors which give meaning to personal and social life. And it is with the assistance of certain metaphors that new inspiration has been given to spiritual traditions fatigued by old formulas and received ideas.

The importance of keystones

It is not that conceptual are ineffective or inadequate. The difficulty is rather in the incompatibility of such frameworks, however useful in different specialized domains, and in the weaknesses which emerge as a result in any supposedly integrated strategy. Suspicion concerning integrative frameworks has become a wise precaution.

Beyond any structural modifications, the key to the success of future strategies appears to lie in the imaginative manner in which valid, but incompatible, initiatives are woven together. The challenge is highlighted by the absence of frameworks adequate to the reconciliation of "centralized" and "market" economic strategies in the countries of Eastern Europe. There are no available frameworks because the challenge to the imagination transcends the world of model builders by which strategies have been so influenced. It could be concluded that new and richer possibilities for spiritual concord are to be found beyond the incompatibilities between frameworks in which visions of its future tend to become entangled.

It is metaphors which provide the imagination with "keystones" to balance the tensions between tendencies which, without such integrative elements, would appear incompatible. World governance in this sense is a question of "imagination building" rather than "institution building". Collective spiritual development at the highest level should therefore focus attention on the emergence and movement of appropriate metaphors -- that are capable of rendering comprehensible the way forward through complex windows of opportunity. The challenge lies in marrying new metaphors to existing frameworks to ensure the embodiment of new levels of insight in appropriate organizational form.

A transcendental spiritual identity

The nature of spiritual concord is thus closely associated with the "gene pool" of metaphors. From this the spiritual community may draw fruitful metaphors in the formulation of responses to new opportunities and crises. Culture may be understood in terms of this gene pool.

This vision of spiritual concord does not call for radical transformation of religious traditions and institutions. Rather it calls for a shift in the way of thinking about what is circulated through society's information systems as the triggering force for any action. At present spirituality in the international community is haunted by a form of collective schizophrenia -- a left-brain preoccupation with established religious frameworks and traditional procedures and a right-brain preoccupation with the proclivities of people avid for "meaningful" spirituality (even if "sensational"). This quarrel between frameworks and metaphors could be transformed by focusing more effectively on the metaphoric dimensions already so vital to any sustainable motivation of public opinion.

Spiritual concord should not be so closely linked to the seemingly impossible task of maintaining a consensus on particular responses to dilemmas as appropriate, and therefore "correct". The collective insight to cultivate could well be detached from this level of short and medium term preoccupation. This focus favours tokenism and unimplemented resolutions which in turn reinforce cynicism, alienation and loss of credibility. In these times all simple solutions eventually become problems, just all problems are in effect unpleasant solutions. The creative opportunity is to cultivate instead an understanding of how incompatible solutions can be woven together as phases over time in a cycle of policies. It is metaphors -- such as crop rotation -- which make comprehensible and credible such a complex approach. It is at this level of conservation and generation of metaphors that may be found a dynamic spiritual identity appropriate to a sustainable development.

How to proceed ?

What approach should be taken to the possibility of choosing a metaphor to better articulate the diverse elements of spiritual concord in such circumstances? Five criteria should 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.

In search of an adequate system of metaphors

In the advertising and media worlds, considerable sums are invested in research on the image of for a corporation or a brand. The choice of political or strategic metaphors is usually done with much less effort and without any "market research". What follows can only be considered a first selection of possible metaphors, with all the reservations that implies:

(a) Spiritual concord as an ecology of options: An ecological metaphor implies a dynamic interplay of species, some in symbiosis others in competition for available resources. The "species" in this case may be understood as the political tendencies, factions, pressure groups, or strategic options -- from the most conventional to the most marginal. There may be thousands of species, from the largest to the smallest. It is up to each person to understand the nature of this ecology and its cycles of energy, to find in it the niches which can be occupied, and the appropriate dynamics with respect to partners and competitors. Of course an ecosystem can be enriched or impoverished by dynamic effects resulting from disequilibria in the shorter or longer term. The system of metaphors, or ways of thinking, may itself be understood as an ecology. This metaphor is better understood by those sensitive to the environment and to the management of its many aspects.

(b) Spiritual concord as a physiology of interdependent organs: Religious institutions have often been compared to the human body. This metaphor may be applied to spiritual insights in their entirety. What are its component organs -- the different spiritual traditions, cultural or religious institutions? Should the notion of an organ not be extended to belief systems? It is clear that what makes them interdependent is the circulation between them of different forms of energy and resources (notably information). The study of the physiology of this body, its respiration, its digestion, the elimination of its waste products, and even its development, may all be explored in terms of its regulatory systems (nervous system, hormonal system, etc). The system of metaphors, or ways of thinking, may itself be understood as a body of knowledge with its organs and physiology. This metaphor would be most fruitful for those sensitive to the notion of health, and especially to the health of the body as a whole rather than of its organs taken individually.

(c) Spiritual concord as a nuclear fusion reactor: The great challenge for the technology of the future is to master the energy resulting from nuclear fusion. For many years all efforts have been focused on the way in which to constrain the energies released in order to create the most propitious conditions for the processes of nuclear fusion and the extraction of the excess energy engendered. The challenge lies in the appropriate configuration of elements which act as a container for the plasma -- a special form of energy facilitating the fusion process. As for the configuration of spiritual and cultural structures and processes, the difficulty lies in the fact that if the new form of energy makes contact momentarily with the elements constituting the container, it is denatured and completely loses its force in an unuseful discharge. The spiritual identity, sought as a generator of new social energy, suffers from similar constraints. It can only emerge in all its force to the extent that it is not subject to this or that national or Latin American structure -- structures which are, paradoxically, designed to create the conditions propitious for its generation. The system of metaphors, or of ways of thinking, may itself be understood as a configuration of elements, of which each is necessary but is also capable of completely denaturing (or "quenching") that form of comprehension which can only be based on the whole.

(d) Spiritual concord as an organic molecule of variable geometry: The notion of variable geometry is part of the cultural discourse as a way of reconciling acceptance of different institutional structures. There are some organic molecules, notably benzene (key to organic life), whose stability derives principally from continuous alternation between a limited number (two to five) distinct geometrical forms. This phenomenon of resonance permits the existence of molecules in situations where the component structures are impossible, or require a level of constituting energy which makes their creation improbable. Such hybrid molecules, based on distinct geometries in resonance, require less energy to ensure their stability than their component elements. Is it not possible to envisage for Europe and identity, or its structuring, based on an analogous form of resonance between component structures which would otherwise be completely incompatible? After all, the spiritual movement is based on the notion a structure appropriate to the whole would be more stable and more "economic" than the disorderly interactions between totally independent States. But such a structuring could only emerge through the dynamic between more limited structures. The system of metaphors, or ways of thinking, can itself be understood as based on a dynamic resonance between more limited metaphors. This metaphor is more readily understood by those sensitive to the apparently improbable structures recognized by the natural sciences.

(e) Spiritual concord as a pattern of circulating traffic: It is perhaps the network of roads and railways which represents the spiritual and cultural identity of any region in the most concrete and experiential manner. Most of the population has acquired familiarity with traffic. Each is obliged to integrate, even at a neuro-muscular level, certain rules and behaviours necessary to survival in this network and in order to benefit from it. The movement of meaning throughout the cultural community may be understood as a movement of vehicles in a complex network linking both central points, known to all, and positions known only to specialists. From this perspective the main spiritual schools of thought and action take the form of major motorways with provision for traffic in both directions, not to mention the so-called national or secondary roads. Each road thus represents a "preoccupation vector" or a form of collective action. But it is clear, in the light of the number of "accidents" and "collisions", that people are far from having achieved the insight appropriate to intersections and a "highway code" for the psycho-cultural equivalent. This is despite the rich range of possible models, experienced on a daily and habitual basis: red lights, stop signs, traffic circles, priority systems,

tunnels, etc). The system of metaphors, or ways of thinking, may also be understood as a configuration of distinct comprehension pathways. This metaphor offers insight to any user of the road.

(f) Spiritual concord as a crop rotation cycle: Every peasant farmer understands the necessity of crop rotation in a field in order to avoid the accumulation of the negative consequences resulting from planting of an one species. The farmer knows that, to ensure the sustainable development of his field, he can grow one crop in that field for a period but must then replace it by a different crop to remedy the defects to the soil caused by the first. He may have to grow a third and a fourth species before finally returning to the first in his crop rotation cycle. It is the cycle which guarantees sustainability, not any particular crop.

This well-tested approach suggests the possibility that no one spiritual approach in a given domain can be maintained beyond a certain period without accumulating negative side-effects. And it is therefore with a distinct and complementary approach that these effects may be partially counter-acted. Thus to guarantee any form of sustainable spiritual concord, a cycle of distinct spiritual approaches is necessary in which each compensates for the action of others. This is of course the implicit message of democracy -- but what political party would publicly recognize the need for the policies of others to compensate for the negative side-effects of its own? Any sense of spiritual and cultural identity must necessarily emerge beyond the concepts and positions of factions which each contribute to its definition. It is at the level of the appropriately balanced cycle that the nature of such an identity may usefully be understood. The system of metaphors, or of ways of thinking, may itself be understood as a cycle of metaphors, each with its strong and weak points. It is clear that this metaphor will appeal most to those with agricultural concerns -- and especially those concerned with so-called organic agriculture.

Conclusion

How many complementary metaphors are necessary to sustain insight into the rich subtleties of spiritual and cultural concord? Would it not be natural for a major metaphor to be associated with each domain with which a major spiritual tradition is associated -- or with each "general directorate" of cultural or religious institutions? It would of course also be possible to understand spiritual and cultural concord: as a system of navigation; as a collection of temples or ministries; as an interplay of cultural spaces; as a system of learning and development environments; as an olympiad of competitions; and as a building (as a way of exploring the positive implications of the notion of a "European fortress").

The challenge may involve not so much the use of one or more such metaphors but rather that of recognizing an appropriate set of metaphors such that each offers necessary and appropriate insights that the others may be unable to carry. It is designing such a set of metaphors, rendering it widely comprehensible and ensuring the appropriate checks and balances between the insights they imply, which is the concern. This "design" problem is itself an inter-cultural challenge.

Our verbal articulations of the situation we face are failing us. There is a need to draw more deeply on our cultural insights to reframe our windows of opportunity. In effect we need to design a new language that is more sensitive to appropriateness -- a language that more clearly protects diversity and facilitates fusion, as and when each is called for. There is a need to enable people to play more freely with the images of the world to which they are exposed, empowering them to reinvent their environments in ways which allow new forms of development. The clash, symbiosis and fusion of spiritual insights can usefully be understood in terms of the possibilities of the emergence of new forms of order through cultural self-organization. A richer metaphoric language would enable all to participate in this process to the fullest.