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12 Complementary Languages for Sustainable Governance

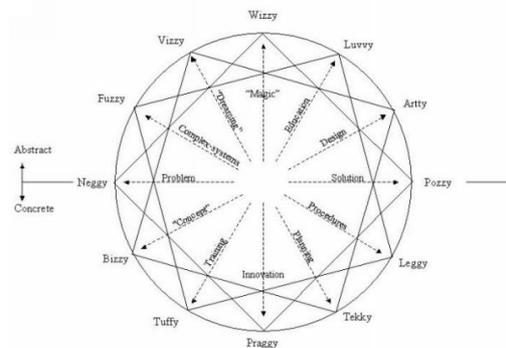
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This is the development of a theme articulated in a earlier paper:

Four Complementary Languages Required for Global Governance (1998)

Introduction

12 Complementary Languages for Sustainable Governance



The above diagram interrelates 12 complementary "languages" that may prove to be essential for sustainable governance. The languages are named using caricatural abbreviations -- partly for mnemonic purposes. The selection of "languages", and the names given to them, are extremely tentative. The purpose is to evoke discussion of the different conceptual modes in which governance of any kind might be discussed. The diagram benefitted from insights of Nadia McLaren.

As described in the earlier paper (*Four Complementary Languages Required for Global Governance*, 1998), the rationale for this kind of approach to strategic and management thinking and "operacy" has been notably developed by Edward de Bono (*Six Thinking Hats*, 1987); *Six Action Shoes*, 1991; and *The Six Value Medals*, 2005).

Focus of languages

The 12 languages -- grouped in pairs, positioned across the circle above -- may therefore be tentatively understood as follows:

- **Pair A: Positive vs Negative**

- **Pozzy:** This is the language in which everything is expressed positively with a focus on **Solutions**. Great for political correctness. This is the language of hope-mongers -- unfortunately also the direct cause of the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster (the manufacturers, as in many modern organizations, discouraged upward reporting of problems).
- **Neggy:** This is the negative, critical language characteristic of newspaper reporting and general cynicism, typically focused on **Problems**. The language of doom-mongers. Useful to have around if you want to fix infrastructure problems (pipe-leaks, broken-legs, etc) where a good diagnosis is essential to rapid remedial action. Does not seem to be able to deal with wider global challenges.

- **Pair B: Love vs Toughness**

- **Luvvy:** This is the language in which everything is based on love and being lovely. Implicit and unquestioning belief in brotherhood, sisterhood, solidarity, community and the like. Great as a basis for initiating relationships. Any lapse is seen as a call for **Education**. Tends to be at an extreme loss in recognizing or dealing with nasty situations (Saddam Hussein's, etc). Poor at sustaining relationships through their bad patches.
- **Tuffy:** This is the tough language of the corporate, military and gang worlds -- the bulldozer language of "empire" and getting things done. Typically this calls for a degree of **Training** in "enforcement". Certainly achieves things, including the need for other styles to compensate for its insensitivities.

- **Pair C: Vision-speak vs Tech-speak**
 - **Vizzy:** This is the language of envisioning the future, of "vision"-- which is central to the coherent articulation of collective strategy and as the outcome of personal "vision quests". The call is typically for appropriate "*Dreaming*" possibly as articulated through collective brainstorming procedures. Tends necessarily to be constrained by visual metaphors, thus failing to integrate equivalents of foresight based on other senses (sound, touch, taste, and smell) that may have greater importance to some cultures or segments of the population (eg role of music for youth).
 - **Tekky:** With all its joy in gadgets, technical fixes and scientific explanations, and yet more monitoring. The green's have their own variants concerned with recipes for permaculture, composting toilets, eco-housing, and the like. Tends to assume, as with architecture, that right human relations follow from right technical solutions to environmental problems. Typically focuses on the need for *Planning* -- a step-by-step approach. The result has tended to be soulless environments.
- **Pair D: Art-speak vs Business-speak**
 - **Artty:** This is the language of art, decor, music and crafts. A major emphasis is on *Design*. Can be great for look-good / smell-good / vibe-good environments that are nice to hang out in. However this language is notorious for its inability to handle conflicting tastes and for the maneuverings to impose particular tastes and marginalize others. Fickle in its blind response to fashion and other rules of taste.
 - **Bizzy:** This is the language of business and commerce subject to economic and resource criteria -- and the profit-making bottom line. The creativity of successful entrepreneurship and an exciting deal tends to be based on a guiding "*Concept*", notably when dealing with the intangible constraints of the world of art (as with media events and design studios).
- **Pair E: Wisdom vs Pragmatism**
 - **Wizzy:** This is the language of wisdom and gurus -- emulated to a high degree by consultants and therapists. Also used as a vehicle for personal aspiration, prayer and relating to the cosmos ("Godly"). Great for wise sayings and recommendations -- things one ought to do. May be associated with mysterious transformative moments that can be experienced as "*Magic*". Best appreciated, in its subtlest forms in relation to the pragmatic realities of the world, through the classic Zen phrase: "*Before Enlightenment, Chop Wood, Draw Water; After Enlightenment, Chop Wood, Draw Water*". Amazingly inept when several speakers of it get together to articulate action in response to a concrete situation or an opposing perspective -- hence the limitations of the "Councils of the Wise" used by some governments.
 - **Praggy:** This is the language of pragmatism and *realpolitik* ("Reelly"). It is the language that handles, and is responsible for engendering, fragmentation of collective effort ("Fraggy"), incoherent action ("Skatty"), and the divisiveness of the world. Its creative focus is on *Innovation*. Focused on the here and now. Tends to be insensitive to consequences elsewhere and elsewhere.
- **Pair F: Fuzziness vs Legalese**
 - **Fuzzy:** This is the language of the conceptual approach to incommensurables, whether in the form of creative tolerance of ambiguity, fuzzy logic, or the complexity sciences and chaos theory. Hence the generative reframing of rigid rules through *Complex-systems* thinking. Unsuitable to any need for a clear answer.
 - **Leggy:** This is the language of law and legislation. Basic to any bureaucracy governed by rules and regulations -- hence the focus on *Procedures* in response to fuzziness. Typical of the language of how-to manuals. Most efforts at global organization are formulated in this language -- as well as the articulation of human rights and responsibilities. Easily takes over mentalities as an end in itself. Quite insensitive to its own limitations and absurdities -- and the pain it can cause in dealing with unforeseen exceptions.

Four-fold systems have long been a feature of psychometric testing of individuals -- based on the work of Jung, Myers-Briggs and Hermann. Most recently attention has been given by the Cognosis Consulting Group to a "Four Worlds" framework extending such approaches, and applying them to the "personality" of organizations (see Alex Benady. *Organisations, too, can be put on the couch*. *Financial Times*, 20 June 2003). This recognizes the critical importance of the "culture" of an organization -- none of which is considered better than another, although possibly one may be better suited to a particular style of challenges.

Mediating role of languages

Whereas each of the paired languages above is essentially in opposition with the other -- to the point of being incommensurable -- this relationship is mediated by a second pair. The second pair is orthogonal to the first in the diagram. Thus:

- **Cluster A: "Leadership" dynamic?**
 - **Pair A: Positive vs Negative** (Pozy vs Neggy) is mediated by **Pair E: Wisdom vs Pragmatism** (Wizzy vs Praggy). It takes the language of **Wizzy** to transcend the dualism and polarization of Pair A. Failing that, the incommensurables may be treated pragmatically through the skills of **Praggy**.
 - Similarly **Pair E: Wisdom vs Pragmatism** (Wizzy vs Praggy) is mediated by **Pair A: Positive vs Negative** (Pozy vs Neggy). It takes the selective ("glass half full") insight of **Pozy** to see the opportunities of situations in which wisdom and pragmatism are interacting in an unfruitful manner. Failing that, the incommensurables may be critically, if not cynically, handled with the skills of **Neggy** ("glass half empty").
- **Cluster B: "Social contractual" dynamic?**

- **Pair B: Love vs Toughness** (Luvvy vs Tuffy) is mediated by **Pair F: Fuzziness vs Legalese** (Fuzzy vs Leggy). It takes the language of **Leggy** to articulate a stable framework to balance the pulls of "Love" against those of "Toughness". Failing that the complexities of the situation can be handled through the tolerant skills of **Fuzzy**.
- Similarly **Pair F: Fuzziness vs Legalese** (Fuzzy vs Leggy) is mediated by **Pair B: Love vs Toughness** (Luvvy vs Tuffy). The proactive empathy of **Luvvy** may be used to encompass and supercede the dissonance between Legalism and Fuzziness. Failing that the situation may be "resolved" using the forcefulness of **Tuffy** -- possibly using "tough love".
- **Cluster C: "Innovation" dynamic?**
 - **Pair C: Vision-speak vs Tech-speak** (Vizzy vs Tekky) is mediated by **Pair D: Art-speak vs Business-speak** (Artty vs Bizzy). The contrasting pulls of technique vs vision can be resolved through the insights of Artty. But failing that, the economic criteria of Bizzy can be used to force resolution of any disagreement.
 - Similarly **Pair D: Art-speak vs Business-speak** (Artty vs Bizzy) is mediated by **Pair C: Vision-speak vs Tech-speak** (Vizzy vs Tekky). The incommensurable demands of Business vs Art can be clarified in terms of the integrative insights and foresight of Vizzy. Failing that the feasibility constraints identified in the language of Tekky may be used -- the art of the possible.

Multi-lingual roles

The previous section stresses the mediating relationships to various incommensurable ("bilingual") language pairs. The 12 languages may be grouped differently -- into four sets of three languages -- to avoid such challenging dynamics. Each such multi-lingual group (eg Wizzy-Leggy-Bizzy) is indicative of a particular style of action open to those who can master them as a set.

It may also be useful to explore situations in which the languages of a set are **not** equally mastered by someone who nevertheless has some competence in all three languages in the set. **Within each set**, three possibilities are therefore indicated below by changing the order to suggest that the **first is a dominant** or favoured language and the last is one in which competence is diminished (perhaps seriously so). The term by which the set as a whole is tentatively named may then be understood generically. The attribution of exemplars is also very tentative.

- **"Entrepreneur": Wizzy-Leggy-Bizzy:** This is the language set of the creative statesman-cum-businessman -- the archetypal CEO:
 - Wizzy-Leggy-Bizzy: Leader of a religion (eg Pope, Dalai Lama, etc)?
 - Leggy-Bizzy-Wizzy: Chief justice. Leader of a country?
 - Bizzy-Wizzy-Leggy: Financial genius (eg George Soros, Anita Roddick)?
- **"Explorer-discoverer": Luvvy-Tekky-Neggy:** This is the language set of the archetypal explorer or scientist enthralled by the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, attracted to challenges and to the excitement of new technical problems:
 - Luvvy-Tekky-Neggy: Development assistance, Intermediate technologist (eg Marc Nerfin)?
 - Tekky-Neggy-Luvvy: Scientist (eg Richard Feynman)?
 - Neggy-Luvvy-Tekky: Detective? Investigative journalist?
- **"Empire-builder": Pozzy-Tuffy-Vizzy:** This is the language set of the tough-minded visionary intent on making his/her mark on the world whatever the opposition.
 - Pozzy-Tuffy-Vizzy: Alexander the Great?
 - Tuffy-Vizzy-Pozzy: Revolutionaries? Fidel Castro? Joseph Stalin?
 - Vizzy-Pozzy-Tuffy: Cecil Rhodes? Mother Theresa?
- **"Designer": Artty-Praggy-Fuzzy:** This is the language set of the designer responding inventively to complex challenges, whether in the realm of art, engineering or social change -- often highly motivated by the search for an elegant solution.
 - Artty-Pozzy-Fuzzy: Richard Wagner? Bob Geldorf?
 - Pozzy-Fuzzy-Artty: R Buckminster Fuller?
 - Fuzzy-Artty-Pozzy: Princess Diana?

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