Snoring of The Other

a politically relevant psycho-spiritual metaphor?

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Submission to the International Conference on "Engaging The Other": the Power of Compassion (Kalamazoo, October 2006)

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Preamble

The snoring of The Other keeps me awake -- preventing me from getting back to sleep

Political affirmation -- a metaphorical response to The Other

I, and my people, are suffering from an immense historical wrong -- whatever others may declare

I am defending the innocent -- and, by extension, my own family -- and their desire to live (and sleep) in peace

I therefore have every reason to believe I am right and honourable in my actions against others -- furthermore, all concrete evidence I receive supports my understanding

I celebrate the integrity, devotion, courage and heroism of my compatriots in that defence against others -- may our cause prevail

I deplore the consequent tragedy of unnecessary death and destruction amongst others -- most unfortunately in the case of innocents

The faith by which my identity is defined provides me with specific theological justification for such action -- theologians only appear to be misguided if it is the Divine Will that this be so

Bystanders question the appropriateness of what I do against others -- but offer no viable, concrete remedy for my situation

I believe that those amongst us with the greatest intelligence have explored every possibility of an appropriately peaceful solution -- despite their complicity in the development of weapons of increasing sophistication and destructive capacity (which I have duly acquired)

I do not believe -- despite the declarations of others -- that I am being used, unknowingly, by people with less honourable agendas

Learning

I have done all that is humanly possible to dialogue with The Other -- but the snoring continues

I never snore -- I do not receive any evidence to the contrary and assume that those believing otherwise are misinformed

How can I awaken The Other -- so that I can finally get some sleep?

The purpose of the "taoist" exercise below is to use the Middle East crisis as a metaphor to explore the challenge of responding appropriately to the disruption caused by snoring to the peaceful sleep of others -- whilst at the same time using snoring to indicate the value of disruption in awakening those who would prefer to "sleep" despite the severe challenges faced by some.
In a taoist context, both features of the image are limited complementary perceptions from a psycho-spiritual perspective. The Other is a variant of the Shadow according to the psycho-therapeutical understandings of Jungian psychology -- the disowned or unconscious self. As expressed by Lynne Forrest (The Dark Twin Within):

> It is a part of the unconscious mind which is mysterious and often disagreeable to the conscious mind -- although relatively close to it. And yet it is also often that orphaned part of us that holds the key to wholeness. We cannot learn to love and accept ourselves until we come to terms with this dark twin.

The shadow is our dark twin. It's the part of us that we have spent a tremendous amount of energy trying to repress, even exterminate. We believe it to be not only unacceptable, but despicable. Carl Jung defined the shadow simply as that in us that we most don't want to be.

The relevance of the metaphor can be further explored in the light of the work of Paul C. Rosenblatt (Two in a Bed: the social system of couple bed sharing, 2006) who devotes a chapter of his study to the challenge of snoring and sleep apnea in relationships between couples. Snoring is acknowledged to be a factor in divorce -- the third most cited reason for marital breakdown. Snoring is also associated with reduced frequency of sexual intercourse. Of special interest metaphorically in relationship to the challenges of the Middle East is that Rosenblatt's study extends to the challenges of "sheet stealing" whilst asleep.

It has long been recognized that, if only genetically, those in conflict in the Middle East are closely related as semitic peoples speaking a common language. In that geopolitical context they are confronted with the challenge of being "in bed together" metaphorically. As noted by Robert Sack (Sleeping Together, Sleeping Apart): For couples, sleeping togethe signifies a sexual bond. For political rivals, it is a metaphor for alliance.

### Tao of Snoring?

Rosenblatt's analysis of the difficulties of "sharing a bed" therefore offers a new frame through which to review the problem, especially if each partner is effectively deprived of sleep by the "snoring" of the other on occasion. Sack indicates that the most frequent reason for people sleeping separately is snoring (Global Strategic Implications of the Unsaid: from myth-making towards a wisdom society, 2003). This suggests that snoring, with the effects of which many are familiar, could offer a suitably complex means of exploring some of the unstated dynamics of separation between peoples. It has the merit of being universally associated with humour -- however much the suffering (Recognized Role of Humour: in politics, leadership, religion and creativity, 2005)

The symbol of the Tao can then be seen as such a "marital bed" within which each is obliged to discover a way of sharing with The Other under circumstances that may be less than ideal. Sharing then extends includes both the "soundscape" and the cover provided by "sheets".

The two "eyes" of the traditional Tao symbol are then understood here as functioning as "nostrils". David Chadwich (The Sound of Both Nostrils Snoring) offers a loan-like anecdote concerning the encounter with a Zen master. This evokes reflection on the counter-intuitive challenge of a meaningful relationship with The Other -- by allusion to the classic Zen challenge of understanding "the sound of one hand clapping" -- perhaps then to be understood as the Tao of Snoring!

Many spiritual disciplines, including Taoism, are indeed extremely attentive to techniques of breathing, whether through one or two nostrils -- but only while the practitioner is "awake". One such yogi exercise, termed Bhramari, is actually a form of nasal snoring. But with respect to The Other, or any "bed sharing" relationship, the challenge here relates to the situation when one or other party is "asleep" -- the unconscious dimension of relationship.

### Higher dimensionality necessary for sustainable sharing?

As a very common symbol, that of the Tao (above) may tend to minimize the challenges of sustainable relationship, reinforcing any failure to envisage dysfunctional inadequacy of awareness (cf Comprehension of Requisite Variety for Sustainable Psychosocial Dynamics: transforming a matrix classification onto intertwined tori, 2006). There are at least four pointers to further understanding -- which may be of significance in moving beyond the simplistic binary logic that has so long been the limiting framework for discussion of the Middle East topology:

**Terrestrial day and night**: As a sphere, parts of the Earth are successively exposed to sunlight -- due to rotation on its axis -- in a manner that is widely understood. However, electronic communication between two people on the seemingly horizontal surface -- at
different locations, one experiencing daytime ("being awake") and one night ("being asleep") -- can only reconcile the difference in awareness by understanding the spherical nature of the Earth. This is of higher dimensionality than the horizontal surface they each directly experience. Understanding the dark and light parts of the Tao symbol -- together -- needs to be reframed in these terms. Could the psycho-spiritual relationship between the parties endeavouring to "share a bed" be usefully projected onto a sphere?

**Klein bottle**: As discussed elsewhere (*Symbolic relationship between positive and negative*, 2005), the classic depiction of opposite yin-yang complementarities in the Tao symbol can be understood as a two-dimensional projection of the topology of a Klein bottle (as suggested to the author by Nadia McLaren). Melanie Purcell (*Imperatives for unbiased holistic education: the Klein bottle, a universal structure: an archetypal image*, 1999; *What are The Relationships Between Infinity and Zero?: the diagonally woven single joined thread Klein bottle, and the implications of a cyclic universe*, 1998; *Looking at the Universe through the belly of a Klein bottle*, 1999) has explored this as follows:

> Truth is relative to the perspective of the observer, and the nature of the perception of reality will determine the nature of the truth expressed. In this presentation I want to explore the relationships between opposed world views and how these oppositional perspectives will determine the nature of truths held. Most models used to describe relationships create an exclusive domain that exteriorises that which is outside or marginalised by the structure.

> The Klein bottle is one structure that creates no exclusive domain as it is a modality that, through a structural twist, unifies the inside and outside surfaces into a continuous surface. Through the use of such a structure, seemingly opposed perspectives can be illustrated as aspects of the whole where seemingly paradoxical environments necessitate a decisive shift from an ‘either / or’ critique to a pluralistic ‘and / both’ scenario. This structure allows for the relativity of truths to be realised as expressions that are inextricably linked to relative world views, and therefore creates a focus for a holistic approach to information generation.

Whereas Purcell has focused on understanding topological manipulation of the lines used to represent yin and yang, and the associated classic symbolism (notably of a pelican pecking at its breast), the symbol of the Tao above can itself be understood as a two-dimensional representation of a Klein bottle (and as a stylized approximation to that of the pelican):

- the small black circle (within the white zone) is to be understood as reduced to a "cognitive singularity" through which the black surface is to be seen and by which access to it is obtained
- the small white circle (within the black zone) is to be understood as reduced to a "cognitive singularity" through which the white surface is to be seen and by which access to it is obtained
- effectively these two circles are the same singularity seen from the different surfaces, one "inside" and one "outside" the higher dimension Klein bottle
- the white and black surfaces are then continuous through the "cognitive singularity", such that there are not two surfaces but a single surface that is readily seen as of two kinds, depending on from which side of the singularity the surfaces are viewed.

Purcell clarifies the relationship of the Klein bottle to the more readily understood Möbius strip. A Klein bottle can be produced by gluing two Möbius strips together along their edges; this cannot be done in ordinary three-dimensional Euclidean space without creating self-intersections. The symbol of the Tao might then be usefully be understood as a Klein bottle as represented by Picasso!

The pelican symbolism is common to Christianity [more] and to 18th Degree Freemasonry (Knight of the Rose Croix which was also known as the Knight of the Pelican). The pelican is an alchemical symbol for the stage known as mortificatio or nigredo, the breaking open of the outer shell to reveal the inner person (cf *Enlightening Endarkenment: selected web resources on the challenge to comprehension*, 2005). As the mother pelican was believed to feed her young from blood pecked from her own breast, she is also sometimes used as a general symbol of self-sacrifice. From a depth psychology perspective into alchemical symbolism, Craig Chalquist (*Cooking For The Collective Unconscious: An Alchemically Enlivened Recipe*) points out:

> ... the whole secret is in knowing the vessel. It must be thick so its boiling contents won't get away (projection, symptoms, psychosis). It must focus its heat on its center, aided by reflux condensers and the retort called the pelican, in which the distillate runs back into the belly. Put psychologically: in the sturdy vessel of an ego purged of personal issues, the contained nonego self can undergo transformation.

For further comments see Remo F. Roth (*The Seal of Solomon and the Pelican of Alchemy*, 2003) in the light of his study of *The Wheel Image of Nicholas von Flue as Symbol of the Subtle Body*.

Again, does this suggest possibilities for reframing exploration of unexplored pathways in the Middle East situation?

**Basque Lauburu symbol**: This 4-fold symbol offers interesting relationships to the Tao symbol, and the dynamics between opposites, as discussed elsewhere (*Playful exploration of ecospsychological embodiment of climate change pathways*, 2005). Note also: G Burton, *Successor states in a four-state ambiguous figure*, Psychon Bull Rev. 9, 2002 Jun (2), pp. 292-7)

**Multidimensionality of Tao symbol**: Dennis Goldwater (*Evolution through the Dimensions of Time and Space*, 1998-2005) offers an insightful discussion of the 5-dimensionality of the symbol (*5th Dimensional Symbol of the Tao*). Exploiting the metaphor, what are the challenges of "sharing a bed" in a 5-dimensional framework -- and by what form of "snoring" might "sleep" then be challenged?

**Mirroring and mixing metaphors**

The argument above, with respect to The Other, implies a high degree of mirroring -- as is comprehensible in the 2D symbol of the Tao.
above. It is suggested that, through this superficially visual symbol, the challenge of the snoring of The Other can be reframed by transforming the visual symbol into one of sound. This mixing of metaphors is consistent with the traditional Zen challenge of "the sound of one hand clapping".

The question is whether more can be understood from mirroring, namely whether:

- the complex challenges of relationships call for understandings of mirroring in more than the represented 2-dimensions? Are there forms of mirroring that are more subtle, or more radical in their implications, in 3-dimensions or more? There are good arguments pointing in this direction, notably:
  - those of Ron Atkin (Multidimensional Man; can man live in 3-dimensional space?; see review);
  - the issue of mirror symmetry is extensively explored in relation to the mathematics of higher dimensional spaces;
  - movement synchronization between individuals has been explored in terms of mirror symmetry by Steven M. Boker, et al (Symmetry Building and Symmetry Breaking in Synchronized Movement, 2001). They focus on the mirror symmetry between individuals as a commonly observed behavioral phenomenon in conversation -- where individuals tend to mimic each other's postures and gestures as a part of a shared dialogue. Spatial and temporal symmetries are found. It is to be expected that analogous behaviour occurs in relation to the content of dialogue positions.

But the question is how a relationship between two parties can be sustained in more than 3-dimensions? Does this then point to more realistic imaging of The Other?

- there are interesting challenges to sound "mirroring", notably exemplified by an echo? Are there forms of echo that can only be understood in a context of higher-dimensionality? How is such an "echo" to be understood in relation to comprehension of The Other?

Termed "mirror self-recognition" (cf J B Asendorf, 1993; M W De Veer, 1999; Julian Keenan, 2003; Sue Taylor Parker, 2006; Theresa Schilhab, 2004), recognition in an ordinary reflecting mirror is a common psychological test of both intelligence and of maturity:

- intelligence: some animals are not able to recognize themselves in a mirror at any age. The reflected image, if recognized, is then typically understood to be a rival. This leads to responses to The Other that involve threatening and aggressive behaviour that may well escalate in response to the corresponding behavior of The Other -- "cycles of violence" with no resolution other than exhaustion. Efforts may even be made to get behind the mirror to see where The Other is located. [NB: This raises the question of how animals respond to their image when drinking water from a pool]

- maturity of development: human children, as with some animals, are only capable of recognizing themselves in a mirror after some months or years of development.

A similar situation may well apply in the case of snoring. People may be woken by their own snoring and may not be able to confirm (or affirm) whether it is their own or that of The Other. It is necessary to be adequately awake to make the distinction. Similar challenges occur with echo effects -- especially when the topology of the space ensures that there is a significant delay. There is a long tradition amongst indigenous peoples of treating an echo as the product of mysterious others. The name derives from that of a nymph in Greek mythology whose role was to distract the wife of Zeus.

The capacity to detect mirroring effects evokes interesting questions in the case of the parties in the Middle East endeavouring to "share a bed". Are they of such intelligence that, like many animals, they are constitutionally unable (as collectivities) to detect such mirroring at any age? Or is their maturity such that they are as yet not sufficiently "developed" to do so?

This question is of course only meaningful as an analogy to the challenges of higher dimensional mirroring. These challenges are central to the process of individuation explored in the psychoanalysis of Carl Jung and his successors. The inner structure of the dynamics of interpersonal therapies may be described in terms of mirror symmetry between early at later therapy sessions asshown by Zbigniew J. Kowalik, et al (Psychotherapy as A Chaotic Process II: the application of nonlinear analysis methods on quasi time series of the client-therapist interaction, Psychotherapy Research, 7, 1997, 3, pp. 197-218).

The psychotherapeutic process struggles with the possibility of recognizing The Other (termed The Shadow) and achieving a degree of integration with it. Typically this process is undertaken in adulthood, although the challenges of The Other may be evident much earlier. Indeed it might then be said that it is such challenges which are the "snoring" of The Other -- provoking a state of wakefulness.

**Mirror symmetry within the semiosphere**

The concept of a semiosphere was developed by Juri Lotman to describe the sphere of semiosis in which the sign processes operate in the set of all interconnected Umwelts. The above argument could be taken into the realm of dialogue by treating each "bed sharing" party as an Umwelt. In a summary of his argument, Noga Shemer (Lotman, The Semiosphere) comments:

Substructures of the semiosphere interact and only work with mutual support. These dynamic interrelations form the behavior of the semiosphere. All of these communicative processes are based upon one invariant principle: symmetry vs. asymmetry,

'\textbf{the bisection of some unity by a plane of symmetry as a result of which mirror-image structures are formed - the source of subsequent growth in diversity and functional specification}'

The diversity and similarity created by mirror symmetry (enantiomorphism) enable dialogic relations to be constructed:
'the systems are not identical and produce different texts, but...they are easily converted one into the other, making texts mutually translatable.'

Lotman elaborates on the example of reading palindromes to demonstrate how the mechanisms of text formation and consciousness change in the process. He argues that the mirror-image mechanism is universal for phenomena defined by the term 'text' and these pairs of symmetry-asymmetry generate meaning.

Examples include parallelled plots, diagonal axes in paintings, and globalization and localization. Lotman concludes:

'Since all levels of the semiosphere, from the human personality or an individual text to global semiotic units, are semiospheres that have invested in one another, so to speak, each of them is a participant in a dialogue (part of a semiosphere) and in the space of a dialogue (the entire semiosphere) at one and the same time, and each displays the property of being left or right and contains right-handed and left-handed structures at a lower level.'

In repositioning the challenge of the "bed sharers" into such a complex dialogical context -- perhaps commensurate with that of the Middle East -- the status of "snoring" is brought into question. But perhaps it is to be recognized in figurative descriptions of the significance of the boring speech-making of each -- if not in the tendency of some to literally fall asleep when exposed to monologues of a particular style!

Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead... (Ephesians 5:14)

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