3 July 2003 | Unfinished

Planetary Challenge of 12-fold Strategic Marriage

Bonding "Empire" + "Alternatives", "Global " + "Local", and "Behavioural" + "Depth psychology"

-- / --

Introduction

This is a response to the emerging global drama associated with the potentially dangerous polarization between preoccupation with "Unity" (exemplified by the hegemonic aspirations of new American "Empire") and a continuing search for a coherent form of "Diversity" (the "Other Pole" exemplified by various understandings of "Alternative"). The former is partly articulated through the World Economic Forum (Davos) and the latter through the World Social Forum (Porto Alegre). The suggestion here is that there is a call for some form of strategic "marriage" between these two warring factions -- between protagonists of the unifold/unipolar and those of the manifold/multipolar.

To be viable however, any such marriage needs to be accompanied by a different marriage -- that between what is associated with "Global" and "Local". In a special sense, given the violent dynamics to which they give rise, both of these marriages need to be "made in heaven" for them to be sustainable in the many senses in which this is desirable. By this is meant that the "unions" fundamental to such marriages call for a conceptual framework that goes beyond that of conventional legalese now typical of global plans and their local articulatons.

The challenge is to find ways to understand this four-fold marriage as a basis for thinking about how its components might be "arranged". But few would deny that a mutually satisfactory marriage requires a degree of psychology. Surprisingly "psychology" does not normally figure in any formal discussion of Empire, Alternative, Global or Local. When there is any such awareness it tends to be in response to overt behaviours and their modification, namely behavioural psychogy -- lacking any reference to the subjective dimensions that might be the concern of depth psychology. The "thinking" required concerning the arrangement of the marriages above are here seen as calling for that which might emerge from a third marriage -- that between "Behavioural" and "Depth psychology".

These three marriages -- perhaps to be understood as a six-fold marriage -- are however considered impossible in the real world. As marriages of radical incommensurables, they indeed justify the need to be "made in heaven".

The approach here is initially to look tentatively at these "impossible marriages" by first exploring some fundamental contrasts between "Empire" and "Alternatives. This relationship is then explored first in relation to "Global" and then in relation to "Local". Finally these four are explored in relation to "Behavioural and "Depth psychology". A structured overview is sought through the use of a tabular presentation that clusters "baskets" of indicative terms..

A realistic approach to providing a viable bond between these 3 primary polarizations of incommensurables is then explored through their combination. This identifies a "zone of sustainability" that is normally torn apart -- and rendered non-viable -- when subject to the tensions between the individual poles. This configuration of relationships is presented as providing a "dynamic matrix" for what might metaphorically be termed the "renaissance egg". This approach offers a way of highlighting 12 secondary relationships -- as "feasible marriages" -- which indirectly provide a context to sustain viable relationships between the 6 poles of the primary polarizations.

This is necessarily a tentative, exploratory exercise. It follows partly from earlier work done on configuring strategic dilemmas associated with the many conflicting proposals for the 1992 Earth Summit (see *Configuring Globally and Contending Locally: shaping the global network of local bargains by decoding and mapping Earth Summit inter-sectoral issues*, 1992).

"Impossible marriages"

"Empire" + "Alternatives"		
·	**"Empire"** Unity, Unipolar, Unifold	**"Alternatives"** Diversity, Manifold, Mutlipolar
Common		
Pattern	Pattern of control (hegemony)	Pattern of connectedness (ecosystem)
System	Closed; finite	Open; emergent

	Construct / Artefact. Electro-mechanical. Dependence on measurement	Natural. Self-organizaing. Organic
	De facto	Ideal; belief
Denial	Denial of other, whether external or internal (challenged by dissidence and subjectvity)	Denial of internal other (shadow dynamics)
Symbol	Father(land)	Mother(land); Gaia
Metaphor I	Hierarchy	Network
Metaphor II	Dissemination	Ovulation??
Metaphor III	Yang	Yin
Metaphor IV	Domination	Accomodation / Negotiation

"Global": "Empire" + "Alternatives"		
.	"Empire" Unity, Unipolar, Unifold	"Alternatives" Diversity, Manifold, Mutlipolar
"Globalization"	Primarily defined in socio-economic terms ("objective well-being", meaning GNP)	Primarily defined in psycho-cultural terms ("objective well-being", meaning "quality of life", identified by "human development" indicators)
Universality	Scope and complexity of whole reduced to comprehensible dimensions and tangibles	Transcendent universals of a nature unconstrained by a single mundane language or framework
Values	Explicit shared universal value frameworks to which all reasonable people should loyally subscribe	Variety of tentative value frameworks eluding explication but assumed to be indicative of collective expresssion of common values
Reliance	Explication and pragmatic recognition of common interest. Strong leadership.	Implication and assumption of pattern of fundamental altruism. Strong followership.
Comprehension	Oversimplification of complexity; reduction of diversity; diversity ordered within an explicable unity ("doing global")	Oversimplification of psycho-cultural complexity
Coherence	Arrogation to" imperial" project the sense of unity (to be) achieved.	Perfection of what is ("It does not need to be put together -- it is necessarily already together")
Illusion (vision)	Imposable, comprehensible order ("need for a firm hand")	Universal commitment to discord-free world ("if only people were given a proper chance"). Somebody else will enforce any tough decision that need to be taken.
Experiential surrogates	Media circuses distributed worldwide (games, movies, etc); international drug rings	Charismatic leadership
Metaphor I	Everyone "singing from the same hymn-sheet"	Interweaving "polyphonies"
Metaphor II	Egg (with an egg's view of sperm for which it is an attractor)	Sperm (with a sperm's view of egg to which it is attracted)

"Local": "Empire" + "Alternatives"		
.	"Empire" Unity, Unipolar, Unifold	"Alternatives" Diversity, Manifold, Mutlipolar
"Localization"	Primarily defined in socio-economic terms ("objective well-being"): local franchise outlets for global corporations (fast food, gas stations, clothing, etc); field-level projects	Primarily defined in psycho-cultural terms ("subjective well-being"): "mom-and-pop" stores, local idiosyncracies; local culture/mindset/tradition
Aspiration	Local implantation of "imperial" principles around the world	Local activism and mobilization as exemplification of universal principles
Values	Explicit shared universal value frameworks to which all reasonable people should subscribe. "Top-down" values	Variety of tentative value frameworks eluding definitive explication but assumed to be indicative of collective expresssion of common values. "Bottom-up" values
Coherence	Unity's view of diversity (as tolerable provided it does not overstep the bounds); a degree of uniformity. Implementing the model ("ensuring the trains run on time")	Emergent local cultural coherence (diversity's view of unity); celebration of diversity. Enhancing community collective expression
Recognition	Normally accorded from elsewhere	Normally accorded by local peers
Illusion	Local importance within global framework; regulation will ensure suppression of disruptive influences	Challenges elsewhere can be safely ignored; disruptve influences can be creatively contained by dialogue
Experiential surrogates	Local substance abuse challenges (alcoholism, pushers on streets, etc); gambling; prostitution ("work hard, play hard")	Community activity. Nature

Metaphor I	Sperm (sperm's view of egg to which it is attracted)	Egg (egg's view of sperm); multi-egg

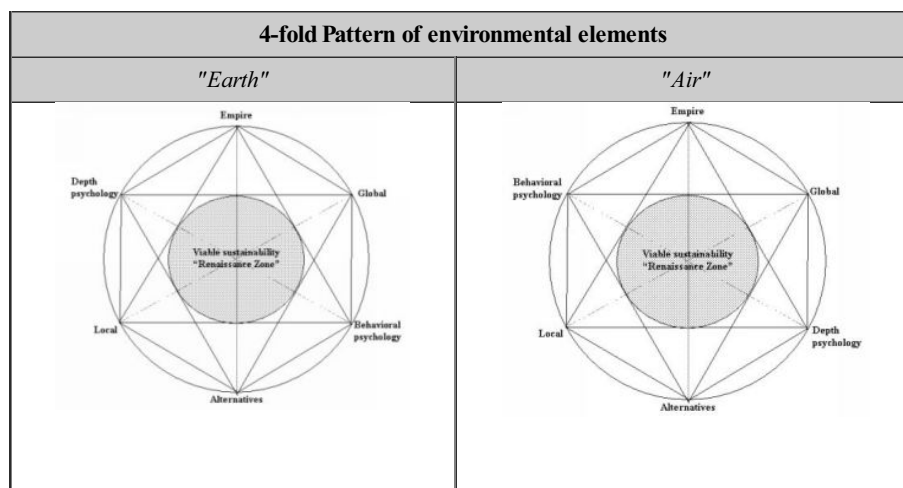| "Behavioural" + "Depth psychology"		
.	**"Behavioural psychology"** Conscious / Overt / Extrovert / Explicitly stated reality (*Tatemae)*	**"Depth psychology"** Psyche / Unconscious / Covert / Introvert / Implicit / Unstated reality (*Honne, Non-dit*)
"Empire"	Propaganda, manipulation of opinion, psychological operations (psyops), spin. Crusades. In depth analysis of opponents for weaknesses. Denial relevant only to the extent it affects performance. World Leaders ("Davos")	Imposing coherence on the perceived world. Making one's mark. Making a difference. Universal values / mindset. Symbols of world unity (United Nations, Pope, etc). Father image. "As above so below".
"Alternatives"	Changing patterns of consumption. Integrative symbols ("dove of peace"; pandas and whales; "Earth"). Denial relevant only as an affliction of the other. "Good guys do not have shadows" that distort their contribution. Heros. Right Livelihood Leaders ("Porto Alegre")	Evocation of potential. Celebration of diversity. Attribution of significance and authenticity. Mother image. "Diversity without mirroring that within".
"Global"	Forming world public opinion. Media branding and brainwashing. Mobilizing and influencing. Marketing; salesmanship; teamwork; unconscious influences on consumer motivation. Media circuses (games, shows, etc). Campaigns. UN Awards. Denial relevant only to the extent it affects performance	Collective unconscious. Sustaining symbols ("Earth", etc) and myths (*Mahabarata*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, etc). Esoteric work (worldwide prayer, Nazi occultism, etc). Saints and gurus.
"Local"	Secular ceremonies. Mutual help ("barn-raising", etc). Local politics ("door to door", "kiss the baby", etc). Group animation. Group dynamics; personal growth; "self-help". Denial relevant primarily for personal growth (and rarely for community enhancement)	Group spiritual rituals and symbolic celebrations. Sense of place and wilderness. Vision quests. "Sect" psychodynamics. Self-immolation. Community exemplars (elders, wise, wicca, shamans, *puja*, etc). Community particularities ("you were not born here")

Suicide bombing is an example of the unstable nature of the marriage between behavioural and depth psychology.
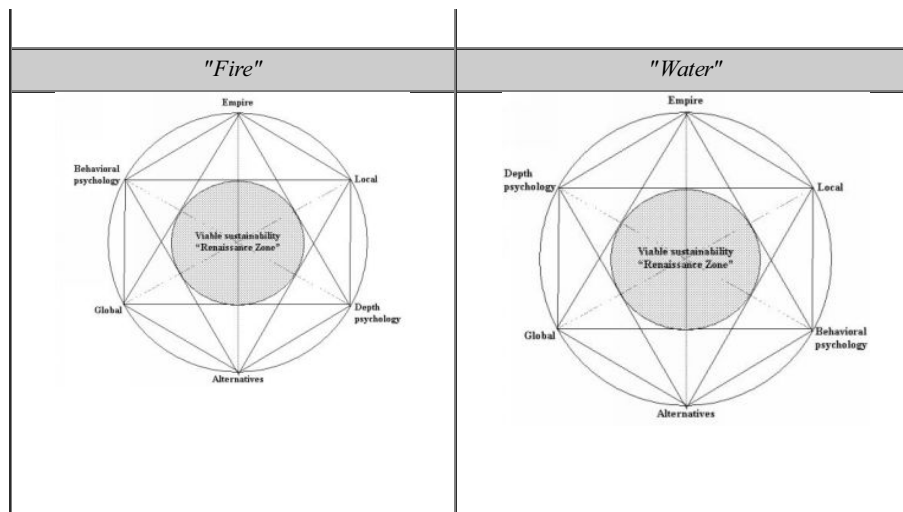
Dynamic matrix for the "renaissance egg"

The figures below position the 3 polar relations (Empire+Alternatives, Global+Local, Behavioural+Depth psychology) in various ways in relation to one another. These are the "impossible marriages" across the outer circle indicated by dashed lines through its centre. The less challenging, "feasible marriages", are then highlighted in neighbouring positions around the outer circle. Each such feasible marriage is discussed in the next section.

More interesting potentially are the three-way triangular connections across the circle. Together these combine to create a space for -- and encompass -- an inner circle. It is this that can be usefully understood as the zone of "Viable Sustainability" or as a "Renaissance Zone". Metaphorically it is the "egg" that is held and nourished within the matrix of the other relations -- a theme explored in an earlier paper (see *Evoking Authenticity: through polyhedral global configuration of local paradoxes.* 2003).

The four figures below merit exploration in the light of their respective configurations of proximate elements -- and the scenarios that each implies. For mnemonic purposes, the figures are tentatively named for the "elements" that were such a focus of Renaissance concern -- and are now a focus for environmental concern, whatever symbolic significance they also carry.

4-fold Pattern of environmental elements	
"Earth"	*"Air"*

"Fire"	"Water"

The above figures might be usefully considered as a challenge to "reading". How might such information be "read"? What can the diffrent configurations be held to signify? Do they effectively map certain the features of particular worldviews? In this respect it is valuable to recall the kinds of distinction made between conceptual models favoured by various cultures (see *Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases: with notes on facilitation in a multicultural environment*. 1993).

Of particular interest is the manner in which they hold reversal of polarity -- potentially of significance in relation to any process of enantiodromia. In this respect there is the possibility that the configurations may be considered as four conditions in a single pattern of alternation resulting from such reversal of polarity. This would suggest that the "egg" of viable sustainability is held **dynamically** by the four together -- rather than statically by any one of them. Through this introduction of the time dimension -- any such reanissance zone must necessarily be understood in terms of how conditions change in relation to one another. This perspective relates to an earlier paper (*Interrelationships between 64 Complementary Approaches to Sustainable Development*. 2002).

Feasible marriages

Feasible marriages (involving dimensions above)						
.	Empire (Unity)	Alternatives (Diversity)	Global	Local	Behavioural psychology	Depth psychology
Empire (Unity)	--	.	.	.	.	.
Alternatives (Diversity)	"impossible"	--	.	.	.	.
Global .	see	see	--	.	.	.
Local .	see	see	"impossible"	--	.	.
Behavioural psychology	see	see	see	see	--	.
Depth psychology	see	see	see	see	"impossible"	--

Marriage dynamics and preoccupations

In searching for another way of thinking about any such socio-political marriages, a useful approach is in the light of the kinds of marriage between two people -- with which most are necessarily all too familiar. Dimensions of concern often explored by marriage counsellors include:

Illusion and reality: The relationship in any such marriage is in large part dependent on a dynamic interplay between illusions about the other -- which may be positive (evoking attraction) or negative (evoking repulsion). These derive from projections and assumptions. The dynamics are complexified by experienced reality which may be cause for admiration (reinforcing the bond) or dismay (possibly forcing a realistic compromise). Denial on the part of one partner with respect to attributes and behaviour may be a very significant factor both in sustaining the relationship and in ensuring that it remains dysfunctional.

Over-simplification through conflation: Typically distinctions of significance to one party will be blurred and collapsed from the perspective of the other party to a polarization.

Mutual demonization: It is useful to ask to what extent the relationship between Empire and Alternatives is characterized by the kind of mutual demonization typical of that between husband and wife in dysfunctional families. Each has well-formulated reasons for blaming the other as the cause of such dysfunctionality. They may form the basis for complex dialogue games identified by family therapists, notably in the light of transactional analysis. Terms typically used include:

- insensitivity

- excessive desire for control
- manipulative reframing of the relationship
- domination, brutality
- lack of space, freedom, independence
- etc

It is typical, for example, that over-simplification and mutual demonization is so characteristic of the perceptions of the American "Evil Empire", notably by civil society in other countries and cultures. This perception is matched by the increasing inability to distinguish between civil society bodies opposed to the American agenda (and who are prepared to manifest their concerns) and those who give expression to this antipathy through terrorism.

Alternation: Typically a sustainable marriage calls for a degree of "give and take" that may be challenging to one or both parties. This dynamic is in many ways rehearsed in patterns of dancing in which both participate. Dance is also a useful way of exploring the patterns of relationship in the four-fold marriage described here. The alternation involved in the varieties of intercourse between partners, including role reversal, also offers insights. The implications of alternation for development policy have been explored in an earlier paper (*Development through Alternation*. 1983)

References

Challenges of Renaissance: suggestive pattern of concerns in the light of the birth metaphor. 2003 [text]

Complementary Patterns of Meaningful Truth and the Interface between Alternative Variants. 2003 [text]

Evoking Authenticity: through polyhedral global configuration of local paradoxes. 2003 [text]

Renaissance Zones: experimenting with the intentional significance of the Damanhur community. 2003 [text]

Interrelationships between 64 Complementary Approaches to Sustainable Development. 2002 [text]

Psychology of Sustainability: Embodying cyclic environmental processes. 2002 [text]

Enhancing the Quality of Email Dialogue using Artificial Intelligence. 2001 [text]

Sustaining a pattern of alternative community initiatives: based on their differences from the conventional economic rationale. 1998 [text]

Future Generation through Global Conversation: in quest of collective well-being through conversation in the present moment. 1997 [text]

Sacralization of Hyperlink Geometry. 1997 [text]

Spherical Configuration of Categories to Reflect Systemic Patterns of Environmental Checks and Balances. 1994 [text]

Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases: with notes on facilitation in a multicultural environment. 1993 [text]

Configuring Globally and Contending Locally: shaping the global network of local bargains by decoding and mapping Earth Summit inter-sectoral issues: inter-sectoral Dialogue. 1992 [text]

Policy Alternation for Development. 1984 [text]

For further updates on this site, subscribe here