Document 10.2.1.
Patterning Transformative Change
for sustainable dialogue, vision, conference, policy, network, community and lifestyle

This paper, prepared by Anthony Judge of the UIA, is part of a commentary on an exercise in metaphorical interpretation of the Chinese Book of Changes. *The original version (on networking with references) was published in* Transnational Associations, *1983, 4, pp 172-181; it was also published in* Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential *, 1994-5, vol 2 , pp 557-558. The on-line version of this paper can be found at http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/ching00a.php.*

There are 7x64 documents accompanying this paper. See http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/chingndx.php for an index and links to these documents. See also documents 10.2.2. and 10.2.3. in this volume.

Introduction

This exercise is concerned with identifying and representing patterns of change and with the development of better ways of responding to its possibilities in various forms of socially organized activity, such that developmental momentum is conserved within the pattern rather than being dissipated unusefully. It has been applied in seven distinct areas of contemporary concern in an equivalent manner. The areas are: dialogue, vision, transformative conferencing, sustainable policy cycles, networking, sustainable community, and sustainable lifestyle.

The focus is on moving beyond the inadequacies of single factor approaches in each case, in an effort to provide a richer and more adequate framework for sustainable development. Versions of this exercise, and this commentary, appeared in the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* (1986, 1991). The challenge identified there is to avoid single-policy weaknesses such as:

- single policies create the impression of being viable and successful by filtering out conflict and opposition. They are thus ill-equipped to interrelate a diversity of perspectives, many of which may involve fundamental disagreements (sometimes manageable by hierarchies in an "objectionable" manner);

- single policies may be used as temporary vehicles for enthusiastic response to problems, only to be abandoned as soon as unpleasant realities have to be faced;

- single policies are often geared to "positive thinking", negating the possibility of criticism and especially self-criticism, thus hindering collective learning.

The question is then whether there are any clues to ways of "tensing" policies to correct such tendencies. What can be done to prevent the energy from draining out of policies? One approach has been discussed under the heading of "tensegrity organization" as a hybrid "marriage" between networks and hierarchies (Anthony Judge. *Implementing Principles by Balancing Configurations of Functions,* 1979).

A related approach is to assume that policies fail to contain problems because they are effectively out-manoeuvred by the dynamics of such problems. As in the martial arts, a policy must swiftly re-order conceptual and organizational resources to keep up with shape-shifting and hydra-like transformations

of the problematique. The policy may need to alternate between several modes of action and conception in order to respond effectively (Anthony Judge, *Policy Alternation for Development,* 1984). If this is the case how can we come to recognize the pattern of transformation pathways to which a cycle of policies needs to respond?

Chinese insights

It is debatable whether Western-style organization has reached the limits of its ability to improve its "effectiveness". Even if this is not the case, it is possible that new insights can be derived from non-Western approaches, as is indicated by the current Western concern with the art of Japanese management. These would have the merit of breaking out of the currently criticized constraints of "eurocentric" modes of thought.

For example, the above challenge can be usefully clarified by an exercise in adapting the insights of the *Book of Changes,* otherwise known as the *I Ching.* This has been a major influence on Chinese thinking for 3,000 years, providing a common source for both Confucian and Taoist philosophy. As noted by R G H Siu (1968): *"For centuries, the* I Ching *has served as a principal guide in China on how to govern a country, organize an enterprise, deal with people, conduct oneself under difficult conditions, and contemplate the future. It has been studied carefully by philosophers like Confucius and men of the world like Mao Tse-tung."* For this reason the popularity of its (ab)use as an oracle should not be confused with the philosophy and insight embodied in its structure. With the benediction of C G Jung, it has achieved wide popularity in the West over the past decades.

Part of the merit of the book, as its title indicated, is that it purports to indicate complete patterns of changes, one of which has 384 **pathways** between 64 **conditions** that are recognizable both in an individual and in society. These insights have hither to been interpreted in terms of the needs of the individual (of whatever degree of influence in society). Although basically they are addressed to the condition of any social entity, they have not been applied to organizations as such. Thus even though R G H Siu, cited above as one of the commentators on the *I Ching*, has managerial interest in addition to his research role as a biochemist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), his commentary is addressed to the individual. It is interesting to note that not only did MIT publish his commentary, it also published a study by Siu on the nature of "Ch'i" (1974). This is the psychic energy that an individual can accumulate according to neo-taoist

philosophy. It may also be useful to conceive of it as the kind of "energy" which leaks out of policy frameworks when they fail to respond appropriately to the dynamics of change and development.

Interpretative exercise

The structure of the *I Ching* is based on 64 conditions (dynamic situations, perspectives, challenges, phases, or modes of action or conception) with which an entity may be faced. The underlying scheme is based on sets of 2 or 8 more fundamental conditions. The series could be expanded geometrically to 128, 256, 512 or more conditions. But as Siu (1968) notes: *"The originators of the* I Ching *judiciously stopped at the practical limit of sixty-four. This number constitutes a classification sufficiently fine so as to provide useful types of situations, against which specific cases can be matched. Yet the subdivisions are not so numerous as to be too cumbersome for a single scheme."* For each of the 64 conditions there are six possible sub-conditions (behavioral responses) on which statements are also provided.

The text of the *Book of Changes* is often written in a notoriously subtle and poetic style. This in no way precludes an interpretation of its significance for organizations or, more specifically, for the policies of organizations. Such an interpretation has therefore been undertaken as exercises with respect to network (1986) and to policy cycle (1991) in the 2nd and 3rd editions of the above mentioned Encyclopedia. By making the interpretation specific to a sustainable dialogue (vision, conference, policy ..), there is clearly a loss of generality, but this is compensated by a reduction in ambiguity. Subsequent evaluation will show whether this constitutes an unfortunate degree of distortion of the original insights.

The interpretation given is as faithful to the spirit of the texts of the Richard Wilhelm translation (1950) as seemed feasible. Some of the condition names have been adapted from those suggested by Siu and others. Hopefully this exercise will encourage others to produce a more helpful interpretation. No extraneous insights have been introduced. In elaborating each statement the basic constraint was that it should be **briefly** formulated with respect to a dialogue (vision, conference, policy ..) and that any terms used should be credible in such a context.

The formulation of the statements in the accompanying documents can be criticized because the orientation is not always consistent. In some cases they are formulated as injunctions as to what the dialogue (vision, conference, policy ..) "should" do. In other cases they are formulated in terms of explanations as to the probable consequences of the dialogue (vision, conference, policy ..) acting in a certain manner. Or else they are expressed in terms of what the dialogue (vision, conference, policy ..) "could" or "might" do. The original texts place the burden of choosing between such interpretations on the reader.

It is important to recognize that the **original text permits a complex of interpretations, encouraged by the metaphorical nature of the Chinese language**. For each condition the central meaning is underdefined, although clearly delimited by a complex of connotations based on

terms that "alternate" subtly in meaning between emphasis on: abstract or concrete; operator or operand; noun or verb; action or actor; problem or opportunity. Any word can often be beneficially replaced by a synonym or an alternative grammatical form. Quite distinct conditions may acquire apparent similarity as a result of the specificity of the words finally chosen - a choice that amounts to a "frozen" distortion of the connotation dynamics by which the underlying meaning is embodied.

The (undeterministic) significance in fact emerges through alternation of attention between the possible (deterministic) interpretations - in sympathy with the theme of this commentary. Note also the concept of chemical molecules which can only exist as a "resonance hybrid", namely a dynamic combination of several alternative structures, when none of them individually is stable.

An exercise of this kind is therefore rather like attempting to "tune" a "semantic piano" in order to distinguish meanings effectively, even though no one tuning system can satisfactorily bring out all the possible relationships between the connotations. Valuable insights into the nature of this semantic problem, given the possibilities of alternative tuning systems, can be found in the works of E G McClain (1978). An earlier experiment focused on "tuning" interrelated cross-cultural concept sets having from 2 to 20 statements each. Longer interpretations may offer greater clarity, as in those of Wilhelm (1950) or Siu (1968). Needless to say, as an exercise by one person, the results given here for dialogue (vision, conference, policy ..) call for further "tuning" and should therefore be viewed with reservation. Furthermore, it should be noted that the presentation given here does not do justice to the more sophisticated relationships embedded in the structure of the *I Ching*.

Transformation pathways

It is the network of 384 transformation pathways between the 64 conditions into which an entity can supposedly get "trapped" that is perhaps the most interesting feature of this exercise.

In accompanying documents, accessible via a summary page, each of the 64 numbered conditions is briefly described, accompanied in each case by descriptions of 6 possible transformation pathways from that condition. These may also be understood as the possible "levels" of skill with which that condition can be faced. The number following each transformation possibility indicates the new condition into which the dialogue (vision, conference, policy ..) is then purportedly forced. It should be emphasized however that these are merely the high probability transformation pathways. Another set of pathways given is that of the actual sequence of the numbered conditions. The "a-causal" reason for each such transformation is given at the end of each condition (as the "Transformation sequence") on the basis of one of the classic commentaries on the sequence. Read separately, the transformation sequence constitutes an interesting acausal cycle, with many links of immediately comprehensible relevance to current world conditions (*eg* progress-decline-community, adversity-basic need-revolution, or liberation-deficiency-aid).

If in a particular condition the dialogue (vision, conference, policy ..) engages in lower probability multiple transformations

the result is not apparent here, although the *Book of Changes* does employ a binary coding system from which this can be determined without ambiguity. Leibniz is reported to have been influenced in the 17th century by the binary code of the *I Ching*, which could therefore be said to have influenced the design of modern computers. The striking relationship to the genetic coding system has also been explored (Martin Schönberger, 1977).

The range of possible transformation pathways encoded in this way is of great value in the light of contemporary efforts to grasp the nature of change in relation to human and social development.

Contrasting exercises

As a work of political philosophy, it is useful to contrast interpretations of the *I Ching* with an early Western equivalent, namely Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Both provide **recommendations to rulers**, but the *I Ching* also adapts its recommendations to the initiatives of the ruled. *The Prince* has been severely criticized (often inappropriately, given the instabilities of its historical context), because of the distinctly undemocratic values of the princes for whom it was designed. In contrast, built into the *I Ching* is the progressive discovery of "superior values", however these are to be understood by the user. As with Machiavelli's advice, the policy cycle precepts from the *I Ching* could prove as valuable to the "ill-intentioned" as to the "well- intentioned".

It is worth noting that another set of 394 Chinese precepts, in Sun Tzu's classic *The Art of War*, has received considerable attention in modern military academies. It is based on the principle that it is the supreme art of war to subdue the enemy without fighting. Contemporary students of organizational life have also benefitted from an adaptation of Machiavelli's insights by Antony Jay (1968) to the management of corporations.

Organization sociologists do not appear to have had the ambition (or the presumption) to attempt such a transformation map. Although in 1958 March and Simon published a study, now a classic, tracing parts of what might have become such a map. This does not appear to have been followed up. Literature reviews have since resulted in the production of "inventories" of concepts for organization effectiveness, as in that of J L Price (1968) with 31

propositions, or more recently in that of D H and B L Smith with approximately 400 concrete suggestions, especially for voluntary associations (1979).

Of special interest is the exercise of Edward de Bono who has produced an *Atlas of Management Thinking* (1983). This identifies 200 functions or "complex situations" which bear a striking resemblance to those derived from the *I Ching*. The Western managerial sciences have given rise to many treatises on problem solving in organizations. One of the originators of systems science, Russell Ackoff, has condensed his understanding of the art of problem solving into 34 "fables" (1978). Semi-humorous insights have also emerged in the form of numerous "laws" (Parson, Peter, *etc*), culminating in their synthesis in John Gall's 32 "axioms" in *Systemantics* (1978). Another semi-humorous approach, inspired by the holds and positions in the martial arts, is that of Thierry Gaudin (1977) who has identified 21 institutional "katas". It is appropriate to note that the control of "ch'i", mentioned earlier, is basic to the Eastern martial arts.

Western efforts to provide (world) systems models of the interrelationships between socio-political conditions of societies (as opposed to socio-economic conditions) have been modest and of limited success. For a recent general review, see J M Richardson jr (1981), reporting in a special issue on "Models - tools for shaping reality", (as well as reference 36), compared to the preferences for lengthy textual discourses of which Machiavelli's is an early form.

It is surprising to note that in the East a number of societies have produced religiously inspired board games with squares denoting value-based psychosocial conditions, linked by a variety of transformation pathways, in a manner similar to systems flow charts. Precepts (possibly embodied in chants) are associated with the definition of each condition and the developmental challenge it constitutes. Examples are: a Tibetan game (72 conditions) with a Bhutanese version (64 + 13 conditions) and a Nepalese version (25); a Korean game (169 conditions) and a Hindu equivalent (72 conditions), supposedly the prototype of Western "snakes and ladders". It has been argued by Stewart Culin (Games of the Orient, 1985) that the similarity between such games provides *"the most perfect existing evidence of the underlying foundation of mythic concepts upon which so much of the fabric of our culture is built."*

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http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs00s/taote5.php

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