

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

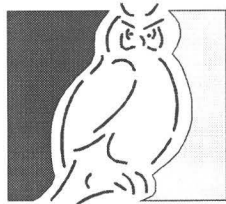
FORWARD STUDIES UNIT

European Commission Delegation
Library
2300 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Civilizations and Governance

Seminar organised by
the forward Studies Unit
of the European Commission
and the "World Academy of Arts and Sciences"

Working paper, 1998



Forward Studies Unit

C08: I/24

Working Paper

#19482

061.3 342.33 2, 420.5 330.2 44.

Contents

<u>Message of Mr Jacques Santer</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Seminar</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>I. Introduction</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>II. Shifting ways of thinking</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>III. Impact on religions and governance</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>IV. Synthesis</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>V. Some examples of transmodern view</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>VI. Conclusion</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Agenda</u>	<u>27</u>

MESSAGE OF MR JACQUES SANTER
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

To the Seminar on

CIVILIZATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

Brussels May 14-16, 1998.

I really regret not to be able to welcome you all for this Seminar on "Civilizations and Governance", organized jointly by the World Academy of Arts and Science and Forward Studies Unit. I especially greet Harlan Cleveland, the President of the World Academy and all of the Academy members some of whom have traveled a long way to be here with us.

I am also very glad to welcome several participants from the Foreign Ministries of the Member States of the Union and distinguished scholars interested in the matter. It is important that thinkers from all over the Union reflect together informally in order to understand what is going on and investigate new ways of governing in a changing World.

The Forward Studies Unit has the task to try to push the reflection ahead. This time the subject is a difficult one, but it corresponds to a basic intuition shared by many in Europe and world-wide : a clash of civilizations is not the scenario we would prefer for the future.

We believe on the contrary that it is possible for civilizations to meet to dialogue and to reflect together on the values and the visions which they can share in building a common future.

Indeed the very origin and the fundamental purpose of European integration is rooted in the belief that it is possible for different countries to convene as equals, in order to consolidate peace. France and Germany had for so long been enemies. Fifty years ago, their Governments accepted to sit around the same table with four other European Governments in order to solve together the problems they all shared. This was new because they were used to defend national interest *against* the others. A *common* approach to common issues was an innovation.

Perhaps the contribution of the European Union to this debate could be to show that it is indeed possible not only for nations but also for civilizations to sit together in order to face the common challenges of humanity in a changing world.

This presupposes that we dare to trust the others, and consider them as equals. This behavior in return allows others to trust us. It is not easy. The obstacles are many. But it is possible. Our history bears witness to that fact.

I wish this Seminar a fruitful discussion and look forward for a continuation of this informal transatlantic and world-wide dialogue on the future of governance in the XXIst century.

Jacques SANTER
President of the European Commission

Seminar

« The Impact of Culture and Civilization on Governance » Brussels, May 14-16, 1998

List of Participants

- Emmanuel ADAMAKIS, Bureau de l'Eglise Orthodoxe, Belgium
- Denise ALBRECHT, World Academy of Art and Science, Canada
- Walter Truett ANDERSON, President, American Division of the World Academy of Art and Science, USA
- Gilles ANDREANI, Director, Centre d'Analyse et de Prévision, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France
- Ragnar ÅNGEBY, Policy Planning Group, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden
- Teodor BACONSKI, Ambassador of Romania to the Holy See, Romania
- Lincoln P. BLOOMFIELD, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA
- Iri COATES BLOOMFIELD, USA
- Paul CLAIRET, Analysis and Coordination Unit, Council of the European Union
- Harlan CLEVELAND, President World Academy of Art and Science, USA
- Lois CLEVELAND, USA
- Robert COOPER, Minister, British Embassy, Bonn, Germany
- Arthur J. CORDELL, Special Advisor, Info. Technology Policy, Government of Canada
- James A. DATOR, Professor, University of Hawaii, USA
- Virgilio DASTOLI, General Secretary, European Movement, Belgium
- Pierre DE CHARENTENAY, OCIFE, Belgium
- Patrick DONDELINGER, Institut Catholique de Paris, France
- Mario GIRO, Community of San Egidio, Italy
- Susantha GOONNATILAKE, Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh, Cambodia,
- Albert GUIGUI, Grand Rabbin de Bruxelles, Porte-Parole des Rabbins européens, Belgium
- Carl-Göran HEDEN, World Academy of Art and Science, Sweden
- Georg HELLINGHAUSEN, Séminaire de Luxembourg
- Sohail INAYATULLAH, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
- Tony JUDGE, Director, Communication and Research, Union of International Associations, Belgium
- Valérie KANZA, Assistant, European Parliament, Belgium
- Tae-Chang KIM, Future Generations Alliance Foundation, Japan
- Edwin KOOLS, Assistant, European Parliament, Belgium
- Marc LENDERS, European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society, Belgium
- Francesco MARGIOTTA BROGLIO, Professor Florence University, Italy
- Avon MATTISON, President, Pathways to Peace, USA
- Magda Cordell McHALE, State University of NY at Buffalo, Center for Integrative Studies, USA
- Patrick MENDIS, Professor, University of Maryland USA (in Spain)
- Kostas MIGDALIS, Association of Orthodox Parliamentarians, Greece
- Jean-Louis MIGNOT, Belgian Consul in Barcelona, Belgium
- Graça MIRA-GOMES, Chief of Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Portugal

- Arnaldo NESTI, Professor University of Florence, Italy
- Andrea PACINI, Fondazione Agnelli, Italy
- Richard W. PALMER Esq., World Academy of Art and Science, USA
- Nancy PALMER, USA
- Six PERRI, Director « DEMOS » Foundation, London, United Kingdom
- Paul RAMONDT, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director of Strategic Policy Orientation Unit, Netherlands
- Eero SAARIKOSKI, Ambassador Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Alison SANDER, Boston Consulting Group, USA
- Ziauddin SARDAR, Professor, Middlesex University, United Kingdom
- Liz SPENCER, European Public Policy Adviser, United Kingdom
- William E. SWING, President «United Religions 2000 Initiative », USA
- Mrs SWING, USA
- Heidrun TEMPEL, Büro der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, Belgium
- Michel THEYS, Deputy Director, Agence Europe, Brussels , Belgium
- Noel TREANOR, COMECE, Belgium
- Willem VAN HASSELT, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Patrick VIVERET, Director “*Transversales Sciences Cultures*”, France
- Keith VARGO, World Academy of Art and Science, USA
- Liliane VOYE, Professor, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium
- Claude WACHTELAER, Fédération Humaniste Européenne, Belgium
- Peter WEIDERUD, Political Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden
- Christos YANNARAS, Professor, University of Social and Political Sciences, Greece

From the European Commission, Brussels :

- Sylvie BARES, Forward Studies Unit
- Julie BOLLE, Forward Studies Unit
- Agnès HUBERT, Forward Studies Unit
- Thomas JANSEN, Forward Studies Unit
- Notis LEBESSIS, Forward Studies Unit
- René LERAY, General Directorate I,(Foreign Policy)
- Marc LUYCKX, Forward Studies Unit
- Wolfgang PAPE, Forward Studies Unit
- Guy WILMES, Forward Studies Unit
- Xenophon YATAGANAS, Cabinet of President SANTER

Seminar

"The Impact and Civilization on Governance"

"CIVILIZATIONS AND GOVERNANCE"

By Harlan Cleveland and Marc Luyckx

*Working Paper for the Seminar on Governance and Civilizations
Brussels, May 14-16 1998.*

*This paper is resulting from research and does not represent the opinion of the European
Commission.*

Brussels May 98.

I. Introduction

Modern era separation of religion from government

In the modern era, the separation of religion from government has been a doctrine often repeated and as often ignored, bypassed, honored in the breach. That separation was in turn a subhead of the distinction between “private” and “public,” a dotted line fading fast as governments farm out to private entities a growing proportion of the public business, and private organizations play a more muscled part in making public policy.

Transmodern: “religion” will play a weightier role

In the postmodern era, however it comes to be described, we already use the word “governance” to suggest that the organized functions required for a people to govern themselves go far beyond what “governments” can effectively fund or cause to happen. Within this framework, it now seems overwhelmingly likely that “religion” (defined as “organized spirituality”) will play a weightier role in governance – and indeed, that individual spirituality will be an increasingly important element of leadership in every domain.

Understanding the changing dynamics in governance and spirituality

Both concepts, “religion” and “governance,” will carry into the 21st Century a great deal of cultural baggage, the heritage of long spiritual traditions and of theory, trial, and error in organizing human beings to work together toward common goals. It will be important to understand this inherited mix of wisdom and unwisdom, to analyze the changing dynamics of spirituality as they interact with the changing dynamics of governance.

II. Shifting ways of thinking

The premodern worldview

It may be useful to think of our time as a time of transition, from a **modern** way of thinking, still besieged by the backlash of **premodern** mindsets, toward a worldview that (because not even its advocates know just how to describe it) we will call simply **transmodern**.

The premodern worldview is an enchanted vision which evidently was functional in primarily agrarian societies of the past. There is one Truth, given to all people by a higher wisdom (“our God” or plural gods), the source of authority and the foundation of values. Spiritual authority is delegated to religious intermediaries; they, as surrogates for the spiritual authority, are responsible for making the rules of behavior for individuals and supervising the morality of political authorities. Authority of many kinds is exercised mainly by men, who in turn oversee the functions of women and children and are responsible for their behavior. The core values of society are stable; the sacredness of tradition is society’s unshakable foundation.

The modern view was a healthy reaction

The modern outlook began as a healthy reaction against religious authorities who feared scientific discovery, resented independent thinking, and resisted technological development. Modernity pushed the clerical authorities aside; in the resulting secular societies, it relegated religion to the “private” sphere – making it harder in “public” affairs to raise questions of meaning, ethics, intuition, or the spirit. If premodern society, asserting a sacred foundation for values, was “enchanted,” modern society was “disenchanted.” Rational analysis and empirical proof were in the ascendant; truth was what could be discovered, rationalized, and proved by the scientific method. Science was itself sacralized, and religious intermediaries were no longer required as channels to the Truth.

Crisis of the modern view

The pedestal of Reason has in this century been eroded by experience that scientific discovery and technological innovation can lead not only to miracles of change but also to unprecedented dirt, damage, and disease; by repeated demonstrations that rational planning can take us efficiently to where we don’t want to be when we get there; by new kinds of science, such as chaos theory, that seem to depend as much on intuition as on reasoning; by testimony of some scientists about how much they don’t know and can only guess, or pray to understand; and by the increasingly obvious limitations of the hierarchical, pyramidal, bureaucratic structures which had earlier seemed the rational way to organize human cooperation.

A transmodern way of thinking is emerging

A transmodern way of thinking is now emerging. It features a creative mix of rational and intuitive brainwork; an enthusiastic embrace of new information technologies; a tolerance, even celebration, of diversity; a conviction that protection of the physical environment has to be a central concern for every human being; a dawning realization that scientific discovery and technological innovation have made human beings the dominant actors in their own future evolution; a new openness to spiritual guidance as a basis for “private” behavior and “public” policy; and a

**Keeping the best of
modernity :
distinction NOT
separation**

move away from vertical authority systems toward “flatter,” more “horizontal” organizations, away from “recommendations-up-orders-down” management and toward more consensual decision-making.

It is important to observe that the very concept of “transmodern” indicates that the best of modernity has to be kept, but that there is an urgent need to go beyond. Modernity has brought us indeed excellent and indispensable progress. It has helped us to distinguish what was confused. As Ken Wilbert rightly explains, modernity has enabled us to create art, science and morals, in installing the distinction between those disciplines which were interrelated before. This “distinctio” has been crucial for the intellectual, artistic and ethical and religious progress of humanity. The problems began when an innovation became an excess: when the distinction became separation. It is indeed at this stage that the problems began to arise. Because the separation became exclusion. And as we have so greatly gained in civilizational level in shaping a space for ethics, esthetics and science to be able to develop, we also suffer from those distinctions which have become separations and even exclusion of ethics and religion from science and public life.

**A growing
minority...**

The transmodern way of thinking is still a minority mindset, but it can no longer be discounted as a neglectable fringe. In the United States, recent survey research suggests that it is gaining ground with astonishing speed. In 1996 *The Integral Culture Survey*, by Paul Ray, counted 24 percent of U.S. adults, or 44 million, as “cultural creatives,” who “are coming up with most new ideas in American culture, operating on the leading edge of cultural change.” Two-thirds of this large category are women. The cultural creatives are of course a statistical category, not a “group” and certainly not “organized.”

**Global
consciousness
change**

Duane Elgin’s study of *Global Consciousness Change*, also published in 1996, finds five recurring themes as defining “the emerging worldview:” global networks of information technology; global ecological awareness and concern; a shift in social values (toward environmental sustainability, toward greater tolerance for ethnic, racial, and sexual differences); a new interest in and practice of “lay spirituality;” and “shifts in work, diet, consumption patterns, transportation, relationships, or other areas that express a desire to live more sustainably.”

**World values
survey**

The most ambitious effort, so far, to measure shifting values worldwide was the 1990-91 *World Values Survey*; it collected and collated a mountain of data from 43 countries containing almost 70 percent of the world’s population, “covering the full range of economic and political variation.”

Ronald Inglehart, its global coordinator, found what he called a “postmodern shift” well under way in about a dozen countries, all in North America and northern Europe. As summarized by Duane Elgin, people in these countries “are losing confidence in all kinds of hierarchical institutions” and in traditional institutions as well, “placing more emphasis on personal authority or the authority that comes from an inner sense of what is appropriate.” They feel materially more secure, so they value “more meaningful work and the quality of the work experience, and tend to rank environmental sustainability over economic growth.” Declining

participation in organized religion is “linked with a growing interest in discovering personal meaning and purpose in life.” In these countries especially, there is “a greater tolerance for ethnic, sexual, and political differences. And new roles for women are emerging “that allow for greater self-realization.”

Generalizations such as these cannot draw a neat picture of so complex a moving target as shifting ways of thought by millions of individuals. Anything said in this mode is likely to overstate the shifts where they are most prominent, and understate similar shifts of thinking among smaller proportions of people elsewhere.

Impact of the changes

Some of the “global mind shift” that is obviously going on can be attributed to opportunities stemming from quite recent technological change – the marriage of computers and electronic telecommunications, the stunning developments in genetics and biotechnology, the new choices opened up by space exploration and the chance to observe our home-planet with a genuinely global perspective.

Tools do not guarantee mind shifting

Tools for thinking and communication don’t guarantee mind shifting. The spread of knowledge in our time is quite as much the result of social choices and political leadership – expressed in the starvation or feeding of quality schooling, vigorous or tepid support for higher education, protections or violations of the freedom to question and explore and invent and create.

...citizens have been slow to change

Many countries’ citizens have been slow to change their minds because their leaders fear the consequences of “many flowers blooming” – as Mao Tse-Tung did, even though he popularized the phrase – in gardens they wish to control. But it’s dangerous not to take full advantage of new learning technologies; the breakdown of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union bears witness.

III. Impact on religions and governance

"Unorganized spirituality."

The transmodern mind-shift – still far from dominant even where it is noticeable – has important implications for religions and their impact on governance in the early part of the 21st century. One of these is that organized religions will be sharing their turf with "unorganized spirituality." Another is that their leadership, traditionally monopolized by men, will be increasingly shared with women. Yet another is that in the emerging worldview, the rigid separation of "us" from those professing other faiths will no longer be saleable doctrine or feasible politics; the acceptance of variety, the protection of diversity, and doctrines of tolerance seem more and more essential to security and survival. A fourth result of the transmodern worldview is this: the pervasive and continuing impact of globalization on every human activity is reinforced by the growing *acceptance* of globalization by those "coming up with new ideas . . . on the leading edge of cultural change."

Toward the end of our current century, one of the striking current trends is the large number of people who, professing a belief in God by whatever name, are moving away from the institutions which have traditionally intermediated divine worship and provided blessings on births, deaths, and everything important in between. In so doing, many of these people have by no means abandoned spirituality; they have found outlets for their spirituality in small-group practices that "search for God" in ways that are genuine alternatives to traditional practices in churches, temples, mosques, and synagogues.

Decreasing membership in mainline religions

In the U. S., the membership in "mainline" religious denominations is already down by some 25% from earlier peaks. Some of this certainly counts people who drop out of "organized religion" while actively searching, in New Age or other environments, for personal or small-group ways to express their natural spirituality. There may also be more "shopping around" and switches of allegiance between organized religions than ever before; the growth of Islam in the United States is one example.

These trends thus do not betoken a veering away from "spirituality." Human beings often seem naturally to reach out for more satisfying belief systems. In the absence of settled certainty, every organized religion is bound to be a "temporary home" to a good many restless spirits in its constituency.

Growth of "unorganized spirituality"

The growth of "unorganized spirituality" certainly complicates the interaction between organized religions and the institutions of governance (governments, but also corporations, associations and the many other elements of "civil society"). Among the people who don't feel the need for spiritual guidance from large established human institutions will be a good many activists on secular issues -- such as human rights, environmental protection, or economic fairness -- who will nevertheless present their case as motivated by spiritual concerns with wide political appeal.

Women's role

As we move toward the changes implied by the transmodern worldview, it appears that women are often quicker to understand and more open to adaptation than men. That is, for example, the lesson of Paul Ray's finding that two-thirds of the subset of Americans he calls "cultural creatives" are women. Why would this be? And what does it portend for the nature of the coming changes and for the leadership in bringing them about?

Less identified with patriarchal

First, why? One reason that leaps to the eye is that in every modern society women are on the average less identified with or beholden to the patriarchal structures, pyramidal management, and vertical leadership styles characteristic of modern industrial society. Women are also typically more intuitive than men. If moving toward "transmodern" ways of thinking and acting implies a new openness to spiritual guidance, women can be expected to be among the frontrunners. Even in traditional religious institutions, a majority of congregations have been women, and the same seems to be true – anecdotally but observably – of communities where "unorganized spirituality" is strong.

Improving their situation without having to dig up the roots...

The transmodern mindset gives promise of dialogue that avoids trying to persuade the not-yet-modern first to "modernize" (a goal now freighted with cultural baggage from the industrial era, including vertical authority systems and super-rational thinking). If women in other cultures can see a possibility of improving their personal situation (in terms of subsistence, rights, equality, and love) without having to dig up the roots of their cultural identity, the resulting dialogue might well be more fruitful than if it starts with "modernization" as the first requirement. Within non-Western cultures, there seem to be a growing number of women who are reinterpreting their scriptures (the Koran, the Bible) in post-patriarchal ways – to produce a softer, more tolerant approach that doesn't threaten the basic faiths themselves. Such a dialogue might best be initiated by Western women accustomed to the uses of indirection in improvising on a general sense of direction.

Diversity and tolerance

The emerging transmodern image is a round table, around which people of both genders and all races, cultures and faiths sit to consider how to manage our common planetary home in a way that is responsible not only to its current inhabitants but to their grandchildren's grandchildren as well. There is plenty of room in this pluralistic scene for striving toward an ultimate, universal Truth – but the search requires tolerance of other peoples' chosen paths to the elusive goal, and of the differing liturgies with which they celebrate the goal and describe their search. And it doesn't require any seeker to concede that any of the other seekers has already found the Holy Grail – or that the universal/pluralistic search can now be called off.

This image is a far cry from today's reality, either in secular governance with its mostly two-sided processes for resolving conflict, or in the mostly exclusivist politics of organized religions.

Indeed, just when individual human rights have achieved superstar status in political philosophy, just when can-do information technologies promise what the U.N. Charter calls "better standards of life in larger freedom," distortions of cultural difference have scattered big, ugly boulders in the road called Future.

no overenthusiasm

Cultural diversity is not the villain, but “culture” is being used -- as *Kultur* has been used in other times and places -- as a reason for repression, exclusion, or extinction. The trouble lies in overenthusiasm for cultural loyalties, which can create something akin to a runaway nuclear reaction. Without the moderating influence of other enthusiasms in civil society -- acting like fuel rods in a nuclear reactor -- the explosive potential gets out of hand. What’s needed is the counterforce of wider views, global perspectives, and universal ideas. Equality is not the product of similarity; it is the cheerful acknowledgement of difference.

“The goal,” as John Gardner says about communities large and small, “is to achieve wholeness incorporating diversity. That is the transcendental task for our generation.”

Globalization

The rapid spread of knowledge through global networks has already required business and finance, and the news and entertainment media, to adapt their workways, their marketing, and their planning to appeal to worldwide audiences. And this is only the front end of a long-range trend; the so-called “global networks” are still far from global in a world where some two-thirds of the people don’t yet have a telephone.

**New opportunities
for the organized
Religions**

It is not, therefore, surprising to find each of the Great Religions operating in a more and more global context. They proselytize beyond their traditional geographic regions. They become more eclectic as they try to appeal to more and different kinds of people. And, since religious experience depends heavily on how it is expressed and received, they are interpreting or modifying their stories to make them more understandable in more languages.

Moreover, world religions are more and more universally available. Pilgrimages to Mecca or Rome or Jerusalem -- or China or Tibet or India or Sri Lanka -- have been speeded up by jet aircraft; and their virtual equivalents are now coming into homes by television and into personal computers via Internet.

**New opportunities
for unorganized
spirituality**

The opportunities are also enhanced for “unorganized spirituality.” Teachers, preachers, and therapists representing hundreds of varieties of specialized inspiration are spreading wherever freedom of speech, freedom of communication, and freedom of peaceable assembly are protected.

In other domains the globalization trends illustrate an ambiguity of outcomes: global standards coexist with global diversity. In matters of cuisine, for example, the standardization of healthy hamburgers and tasty fried chicken is spreading in every world city, but no faster than the proliferation of ethnic restaurants in those same cities. The new information technologies helps exclusive faiths to spread beyond traditional jurisdictions; they also may amplify the voices of those reaching for a wholeness that incorporates the religious diversity. “No one can speak for the world of faiths,” says the Episcopal Bishop of San Francisco, William Sweet, in his forthcoming book about a United Religions. “But someone must shout to hear an echo. I do believe that an echo will be coming from the indigenous, from women, from spiritual margins, from the restless pious, from children, from refugees of religious intolerance, even at last from religious leaders. . . . I have an utter urgency because of the squandering of the treasure chest of spirituality which religions could offer the world if they could grow beyond mutual hatred to a place of mutual respect.”

IV. Synthesis

The wall between religions and governance becomes porous

This paper is prepared in preparation for the Brussels Seminar, May 1998; to draft now a strategy for Europe's approach to "Religion and Governance" would be presumptuous and premature. But some synthesis is in order.

It is clear that the wall between religion and government is so porous as to be an unreliable guide to attitudes and actions. "Governance" describes a scene in which decisions about public policy are formulated and carried out by multiple organizations, "public," "private," and (mostly) mixed. "Religion," organized and unorganized, is therefore likely to play a growing part in the making of public policy and carrying it out.

Important role of Religions in the future?

If, in the early part of the next century, world religions come to play the important role that André Malraux foresaw and others are forecasting, what kinds of conflicts are most likely to occur?

Conflicts are more likely inside every religion and culture

Based on our analysis, it seems likely that conflicts will *not* mostly be either (a) because organized religions collide in the historic "clash of civilizations" envisaged in the recent writings of Samuel Huntington, or (b) because politics inside and between nations reverts to another historical precedent, the clash between clerical and secular authority (i.e., between "premodern" and "modern").

Premodern against modern

But a third kind of clash, increasingly visible both in internal and international politics in recent years, is now making its way to center stage. It is the split between "fundamentalists" of many varieties who see their traditional scriptures and teachings as so absolute as to divide humankind into irreconcilable believers and infidels, and others who see their ancient traditions or new spiritual insights as raw materials for wider human reconciliation, as the basis for an intensified search for common purpose among people of differing races, creeds, and national origins. In short: the split is between "premodern" and "transmodern."

Premodern against transmodern

Who is intolerant?

"Fundamentalists" of many faiths -- in Eric Hoffer's language, "true believers" -- often feel threatened by modern society and modern worldviews. The reverse is equally true. Huston Smith suggests that we are all both absolutist and tolerant -- but about differing beliefs. "Conservatives" often fear the messiness and disintegration that tolerance of pluralism can produce. "Liberals" often do not understand "the wholeness that certainty can bring" to the human psyche; because humans are fallible, some absolutes seem required as the glue that holds communities together.

Active tolerance

The "transmodern" way of thinking outlined in this paper is *actively* tolerant. It acknowledges that it's important for all civilizations to be receptive to that which is alien, whatever form this may take. It is open to the transcendental, while resisting any authoritarian imposition of religious certainty. The Truth is at the center of things; each person converges toward it with his/her own culture, along his/her own path. Nobody has a monopoly of the Truth any more -- yet it does exist.

Truth telling

To begin a constructive dialogue with societies immersed in cultures different from our own, we might do well to start with a moment of truth-telling, along these lines:

We, for our part, are products of a secular industrial society. But we realize that we can no longer discuss political futures without also discussing questions of meaning, spirituality, and cultural identity. We are therefore asking you to join us in a serious effort to project mutually advantageous futures for our societies. In order to do this, we will all have to set aside our superiority complexes, our intolerances whether based on scientific rationalism or on spiritual tradition, and our dreams of having our views prevail in the whole world.

V. Some examples of transmodern view

From a bipolar view to a tripolar one...

The majority of our political analysts have a bipolar vision of the world. They consider the existence of only two visions of the world, a good one and a bad one. The good one is the “modern” one. To be modern is to accept the rule of (Western) law and the superiority of rational and linear thinking over intuition, poetry or spirituality. Time is framed by the concept of linear progress. Law is framed by the Western “universal human rights” definition. The paradigm is best translated in the concepts of “progress” and “development through economic growth and free trade”. Those key concepts are the supreme values to be accepted worldwide if one wants to be “modern”. Naturally, it is not just anybody who is able to accept those truths. An important group of humans are not able to live up to such high standards of civilization. They are considered underdeveloped. They are “backward”. They are in the other paradigm, the bad one : underdevelopment or backwardness.

If one accepts this clear distinction, the aim of politics worldwide is rather clear and does not need much discussion. We all agree that we should encourage by all means a maximum of people to leave the bad vision in order to embark on the good one. This is what the industrial paradigm calls progress.

The transmodern point of view is different. One accepts that there is a third paradigm, a third vision. This simple fact means that we are no longer in a period of stability. We are in a rather unusual period of historical change. Such periods are not frequent in history. It is thus normal that politicians are reluctant to embark on such a hypothesis. Politicians are not accustomed to manage change. Nobody is. And it is frightening.

Relations with Turkey

In a modern vision, it is evident that Western Governments must defend the secular concept of government and help the forces which strive in that direction (e.g.: army). They must oppose a return to any kind of religious State.

But in a transmodern vision, we should ask ourselves if we really are certain that the fate of Turkey is to follow the path of a secular State which Attaturk imposed on the Turks at the beginning of the century? Why not listen to the growing new interpretation of Islam in Turkey and to the growing group of transmodern Turkish women? Perhaps we could help them to revive the tradition of tolerance of Ottoman Muslim history. Perhaps Turkey could then shift to the side of the tolerant “Asian” Muslim block, which constitutes a majority of the Muslim world.

Israel

The peace advocates in Israel, on both sides, are strictly “modern”. They must limit themselves to explaining that peace is a reasonable choice, a “rational” one. This position is logic and understandable. In no ways the peace advocates have to be activating any kind of religious war.

In fact, Religious motivations are left to the opponents of both sides, because modernity has not and should not have anything to do with those religious arguments.

Asian values and Human rights

In the new vision, there is a distinction between religion and politics but not a separation. This means that political leaders could use religious arguments if they really believe in them. They could for example say publicly that: *"if there is only One God, He is certainly not so cruel in giving the same land to two different nations at the same time, in exclusivity. If God exists, He certainly wants the people to live in peace on the same land."*

In a transmodern view religious even theological arguments are eventually usable arguments in politics. The taboo on religions (separation) is over. Is it not important to counter the exclusivists on their own battlefield?

Madeleine Albright (US Secretary of State) is totally right in opposing any discussion of U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights are universal and the core of modern vision of politics. *"She does not think that countries have the right to reconsider the UN Human Rights Declaration"*¹. She is, like us all, in a modern view.

In a transmodern view, we could say : Yes Human rights have been a creation of Western culture. Yes Western culture and more precisely Christianity have invented the concept of "person". And this is definitely a positive contribution to the world. But why not to listen to other cultures (Asian) who insist on other crucial aspects of life like the "community" aspect? Would it not be wise to get rid of our superiority complex? And if we are going towards a new tolerant paradigm open to a transcendental dimension, why not accept to sit together with the other cultures on an equal footing around a table? Why not trust and value the different cultures of the world? If we then really dialogue on human rights with the other cultures we will be probably confronted with real differences and oppositions. We will probably have to use non-linear logic. But is there another way out?

Russia

For the moment the European Union and the West are sending to Russia a message of "modernization". And this is necessary. It is also a fact that Russian culture wants to assimilate the best acquisitions of modernity, but perhaps not the defects. Has "orthodox " culture to pass through the same path of secularization and laicization as us ?. And could the orthodox culture not become a enriching partner in the building of a transmodern global culture open to transcendence and tolerance? Has orthodox culture not a rich mystical and contemplative tradition to offer which is so needed today? And so have they not a indispensable contribution to make to the new global civilization?

If we were shifting to this policy, would the whole dialogue with Eastern Europe not change pattern?

VI. CONCLUSION

More questions than answers

As the reader will understand we are only in a stage of reflection and research. We are still at the stage where we try to identify the good questions. Those questions which are usually not asked.

We are certainly not pretending to know the future neither the solution for the world policy.

The more one looks at the future and at the change the more an acute sense of humor is needed, but also a vision and active reflection on new ways of thinking.



AGENDA

THURSDAY MAY 14

- 18.30** Departure from Hotel Dorint to Breydel building (+/- 10 minutes walking)
- 19.00** Dinner - Welcome speech by Xenophon YATAGANAS, Member of the Cabinet of the President of the European Commission ("Breydel" Building, 45 avenue d'Auderghem, 12th Floor)

FRIDAY MAY 15

Changing dynamics inside the global Religions

- 08.30** **Departure** from Hotel Dorint to Borschette Building (+/- 15 minutes walking)
Chairman: Thomas JANSEN
- 09.00** Introduction: Marc LUYCKX
- 09.30** Keynote speech: *Changing dynamics inside the religions*: Harlan CLEVELAND, President World Academy of Arts and Science.
- 9.45** Introductory remarks on different religions
- *Buddhism*: Susantha GOONATILAKE
 - *Islam*: Ziauddin SARDAR
 - *Judaism*: Grand Rabbi GUIGUI
- 10.30** **Coffee Break**
- *Christianity*: Bishop William E. SWING
 - *Confucianism*: Tae-Chang KIM
 - *Unorganised spirituality*: Avon MATTISON
- 11.30** Discussion Lead-off comment
- 13.00** **Lunch** at the Borschette Building, 5th floor

**Changing dynamics IN politics and governance.
New Conflicts ? New Solutions ?**

Chairman : Walt Truett ANDERSON

- 15.00** Panel "*Dynamics in Politics and Governance*": Robert COOPER, Arthur CORDELL, James DATOR
15.00 Discussion
16.30 **Coffee Break**
16.45 Dialogue and comments by: Patrick VIVERET, Lincoln BLOOMFIELD
17.15 Discussion
19.00 **Departure** of the bus from the Hotel to Brussels Centre
19.30 **Dinner** at the Grand Place of Brussels ("Maison du Cygne") followed by a free-wheeling discussion introduced by James DATOR: "*Impact of the Information Revolution on Civilizations and Governance*"

SATURDAY MAY 16

Making a mesh of things

- 08.30** **Departure** from Hotel Dorint to Borschette Building (+/- 15 minutes walking)
Chairman: Harlan CLEVELAND
09.00 *Can Religions cooperate?* Lead-off comment by Bishop William SWING
09.30 Discussion
10.00 *Spirituality in a time of change?* : Lead-off comment by Avon MATTISON
10.30 **Coffee Break**
10.45 *Conflicts between religions or conflicts between paradigms. How to solve them? Some Political consequences?:* Lead-off comment: Marc LUYCKX
11. 30 Discussion
13.00 **Lunch** at the Borschette, 5th floor

Conclusion and follow up

Chairman : Paul CLAIRET, Council of Ministers of the European Union.

- 15.00** Free Discussion : *What we have learned and what needs to be the subject of further research and analysis ?*
- 16.30** **Coffee Break**
- 17.00** Continuation of the Discussion:
-
- 17.30** "Envoi" by Harlan CLEVELAND
-
- 17.45** Concluding remarks by the Chairman
- 18.00** **End**
-

Hotel Dorint: Bd Charlemagne 11-19 , 1000 Brussels
Tel: +32.2.231.09.09
Fax: +32.2.285.41.78

Place of the seminar: entre Borschette (Room 3C)
ue Froissart 36
ruxelles.

Languages: English and French

ⁱ See INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE : July 29.1997. p. 1. "Albright warns Malaysia US. will fight for rights".