SOME THOUGHTS ON CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION THEORY AS A TOOL IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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Abstract

Riane Eisler's cultural transformation theory challenges traditional approaches to historical interpretation. Her theory posits the view that history is the result of the interaction of two evolutionary trends. Firstly, there is the development of societies from primitive to complex organisational forms through phase changes. Secondly, there are cultural shifts between periodic attractors that are defined as *androcratic* (dominator) and *gylanic* (partnership) models which vie with each other for ascendance over substantial periods of time. The *gylanic* model appears to have represented the earliest forms of human social organisation. This theory provides a hermeneutical tool for investigating trends in history.

1 INTRODUCTION

History is replete with examples of human beings' inability to transcend their predilection for war and strife in favour of a world that is characterised by justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The evidence points to the conclusion that for many centuries human society has not been capable of transforming its *modus vivendi* or its *modus operandi*. Riane Eisler's (1998:xv) cultural transformation theory reminds us of a time when this was not the case. For example, she cites the harmonious state of existence in the prehistoric, mythical Garden of Eden prior to the Fall of humanity (Gen 2:1-25). This was a time when man and woman lived in a partnership relationship with one another and with their environment, which was marked by equal-

ity and interdependence. Eisler adopts a broad scale systems analysis of thousands of studies where archaeological, anthropological and historical evidence is drawn from ancient societies over a period of 25 000 years where the dominant image of the deity was female. In her cultural transformation cognitive map (theory), she challenges the linear, cyclical and random approaches to history (Eisler 2002:160) and asserts that history emerges from the interaction of two kinds of evolutionary movements:

> The first is the tendency of social systems to move from less to more complex forms of organisation largely due to technological breakthroughs or *phase changes.* The second is the movement of *cultural shifts* between two basic models[1] or "attractors" for social and ideological organisation which I have called the *dominator* and *partnership* models – or more specifically, *androcracy* and *gylany.* (Eisler 2002:160)

Hence, evolution refers both to the biological and cultural history of living groups and to progress from lower to higher levels of existence, but this progress has been interrupted periodically by substantial regressions. However, this does not seem to have conquered the indomitable spirit of humanity which has the capability to push onwards towards higher goals of truth, beauty, and ultimately justice and harmony.

Cultural transformation theory posits the view that the earliest models of societal organisation were established on the partnership model and that, following a period of turmoil during the prehistory of western civilisation, a new model emerged that was characterised by "the power to take rather than give life that is the ultimate power to establish and enforce domination" (Eisler 1998:xvii). This has recently been supplanted by a renewed societal disequilibrium whose main impulse is towards partnership. This approach to history is necessarily multi-disciplinary, draws from the entire period of history (including the prehistoric period) and is inclusive in terms of gender.

Eisler's research led her to the conclusion that two fundamental models of structuring societal relationships are basic to the enormous

cultural diversity of human societies: the dominator model and the partnership model.

1.1 The dominator (androcratic) model

This model has three main characteristics which reveal the rigid ranking of one segment of either patriarchal or matriarchal society over another, male (i.e. hierarchical and authoritarian) dominance and gender inequality, and a high degree of violence that is required to maintain the society through control and suppression. Because it is based on tension, fear and force (or the threat of force), it is morally insensitive and might be termed the "fight or flight" approach (Eisler & Levine 2002). Eisler (1998:xix) draws clear correspondences between such societies (in terms of both time and space) which are not peculiar to any specific period or location. Despite differences in certain fundamentals, the Samurai of medieval Japan, the Masai of 19th century East Africa, Hitler's totalitarian Germany, the Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran and Mugabe's Zimbabwe have all been predicated by a rigid approach to male dominance and institutionalised social violence (Eisler 2002:161-162). They resemble ancient Babylon, Judaea and Indo-European tribes with their characteristically hierarchical and authoritarian forms of organisation. These very qualities are elevated to give them significance as norms of social governance. While violence is normal in all societies, it is its idealisation and institutionalisation that serves to maintain fixed rankings of domination. The gentler qualities of caring and compassion are accorded lip service while they are, in fact, denigrated. This is demonstrated in Soelle's (1984:51) existentialist view of manhood which is characterised as follows:

- He functions well at work – but only at work.
- He simply *has* a body – which he uses like a tool or a machine.
- He does not live in and with his body.

This is confirmed by Keillor:

In advanced industrial societies men are in trouble: whereas years ago "manhood was an opportunity for

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achievement", now it is just "a problem to overcome" (Keillor 1994).

The "guy trouble" stems from the decline of patriarchy – not "of sexism, or misogyny, or even male domination …" (in Volf 1996:185).

The issue here is that this man becomes a victim of the oppression which he metes out to others and he sacrifices his ability to demonstrate his feelings (Soelle 1984:52). Soelle describes this as "technocratic machismo … Denoting the culture of the hypermasculine man whose relationships with women are based on feelings of male superiority, on domination and submission" (Soelle 1984:53). Man in this context is devoid of the ability to express himself through intimacy.

1.2   The partnership (gylanic) model

This model is characterised by partnership relations and reveals linking (but diverse) elements in society with no predisposition to either superiority/inferiority or equality of gender, race and leadership through "hierarchies of actualisation" of human potentials which nurture and empower. It might be termed the "tend and befriend" approach (Eisler & Levine 2002). Diversity in no way implies any sense of superiority or inferiority. In this model there is a high correlation with peace and harmony in society. It is morally sensitive: "a partnership model is the *sine qua non* of an equitable, peaceful society" (Eisler 2005:12) and relationships are founded on "mutual benefit, mutual accountability, mutual empathy and caring" (Eisler 2005:15). This is a holistic inclusive model where women adopted the roles of priestess and craftsperson. Strong correspondence is attested within societies that adhere to the partnership model (e.g. BaMbuti, !Kung, contemporary Scandinavia [Eisler 1998:xix] and the Masai).[2] Clearly, "these models transcend such important differences as time, place, religion, ethnicity and technological development" (Eisler 1994:33) and age. Eisler and Levine (2002:25) have noted how in societies (citing the Papago Indians of Arizona, USA) where both parents have loving relationships with their children and where there is an absence of physical punishment, the children develop into caring children. Two key factors are: (1) the extent to which the socially prescribed

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childrearing relies on empathy and non-violence, and (2) the socially determined roles and relationship of women and men (Eisler & Levine 2002:41). Recent archaeological discoveries, coupled with linguistic and mythological studies, have revealed that these societies embraced a partnership model of society which were characterised by peace and harmony (e.g. Hesiod's poetry which refers to "a golden race" that existed prior to a "lesser race" whose god was Ares, god of war) (Eisler 2002:163). Although it is important not to give too much weight to such evidence, it offers clues to the age and structure of prehistoric society. Eisler has demonstrated that in Minoan Crete the influence of the feminine can be seen in archaeological discoveries in art and a nature-based spirituality giving evidence of "a scale and ideological organisation oriented primarily to a partnership model" (Eisler 2002:164). Archaeologists Mellaart (1967) and Gimbutas (1989a, 1989b) indicate that Neolithic European societies were not male dominated; women played equal and significant roles and were particularly creative. This is reinforced in Gnostic writings of the Common Era where:

> Several gnostic groups describe the divine Mother as part of an original couple. Valentinus, the teacher and poet, begins with the premise that God is essentially indescribable. But he suggests that the divine can be imagined as a dyad: consisting, in one part, of the Ineffable, the Depth, the Primal Father; and, in the other, of Grace, Silence, the Womb, and "Mother of the All" (Pagels 1982:72-73).

Despite their frequent ambivalence to women, the Gnostics tended to support the spiritual equality of women. Also, they tended to honour feminine qualities. Picknett (2003:80) refers to Jung's assessment of the Gnostics that "they expressed the 'other side of the mind', celebrating and encouraging the more spontaneous and emotional reactions to life that conventional Christianity sought to suppress".

However, prior to this and contrary to what we might expect in the Old Testament, images of partnership emerge in the Hebrew concept of *ezer* ("helper/help") which emphasises a relationship of mutuality and complementarity rather than patriarchal domination (Oden

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1983:42). This is further exemplified in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9, where women and men

> are equally necessary to each other, and God is equally necessary to both. If, in the case of one man, woman was made out of man, it should also be remembered, notes Paul, that all other men radically depend upon woman for their being, their very coming to be (Oden 1983:42).

The ministry of Jesus of Nazareth promoted a gylanic model of human relations: he represented "a startling, and unifying theme: a vision of the liberation of *all* humanity through the replacement of androcratic with gylanic values" (Eisler 1998:121); of spiritual equality, mutual responsibility, compassion, gentleness and love. In essence this was "the gospel of a partnership society" (Eisler 1998:121; cf. John 4:7-27, Luke 10:38-42). He certainly "would oppose the cult of the masculine" (Soelle 1984:56).

Patai (1990:25) suggests that "[i]n view of the general human psychologically determined predisposition to believe in and worship goddesses, it would be strange if the Hebrew-Jewish religion, which flourished for centuries in a region of intensive goddess cults, had remained immune to them". This would appear to have been the case in ancient Israel where even in Solomon's Temple an array of shrines to male and female goddesses had been erected:

> Asa did what was right before Yahweh, just as his ancestor David had done. He rid the land of male prostitutes and removed all the idols and burned it at the brook Kidron; he did not, however, close down the high places (1 Kings 15:11-14).

It has even been suggested that Asherah was Yahweh's female counterpart:

> Recent archaeological discoveries provide both texts and pictorial representations that for the first time clearly identify "Asherah" as the consort of Yahweh, at least in some circles in ancient Israel … We cannot avoid the conclusion

that in Israel Yahweh could be closely identified with the cult of Asherah, and in some circles the goddess was actually personified as his consort (Denver 1984:21-27).

This may account for the antipathy towards women as priests in ancient Israel in contradistinction to New Testament practise where women occupied leadership roles in the nascent church (Russell 1993:60 ff).

While Eisler operates from a feminist approach, she eschews any suggestion that feminism is related to matriarchy; she considers this another expression of domination, but from a feminine perspective. She (2005:15) cautions that we should not confuse partnership with collaboration because evil forces can collaborate even within a Christian context (e.g. the Inquisition; the Crusades; burning heretics at the stake during many periods, including the Reformation). However, although it should be noted that no society is devoid of violence, we have to adopt a more inclusive definition of violence which is more pervasive than the crude use of physical force:

> Violence includes all actions and everything that restrict, damage or destroy the integrity of things, living beings or people, or of cultural and social entities through superior power (Haring 1997:266 in Punt 1999:263 n.2).

> … the "violation of personhood" (Brown [quoted in Desjardins 1997:99] in Punt 1999:263 n.2).

> Violence is not understood here as an abstract concept, but in practical terms: to damage, humiliate, torture, kill and destroy with intent … (Punt 1999:265 n.7).

Neill (1976:93) agrees in general:

> Violence involves the exercise of constraint upon a human person to ensure that he does what of his own volition he does not wish to do, that he accepts a situation in which he does not wish to be, or that he endures loss or suffering to which he has not himself consented.

Historically, much of the violence that was done to women by men has been psychological and physical. The issue that is at stake is the idealisation and institutionalisation of violence as a norm of society; common to the dominator model of society (Eisler 2002:162). We will now consider the different historical periods in which the models predominated.

1.3   Technological phase changes and cultural shifts

The changes did not take place accidentally. They were the result of "*cultural shifts* and *technological phase changes*" (Eisler 2002:164). This is clearly reminiscent of Kuhn's (1970) paradigm theory which is given expression in religion and theology by Bosch (1991) and Küng (1995):

> [a] few individuals begin to perceive reality in ways *qualitatively* different from their predecessors and contemporaries … The small group of pioneers senses that the existing scientific model is riddled with anomalies and is unable to solve emerging problems. Then they begin to search for a new model or theoretical structure, or … paradigm … ready to replace the old … As the existing paradigm increasingly blurs, the new one begins to attract more and more scholars, until eventually the original, problem ridden paradigm is abandoned (Bosch 1991:184).

Much earlier in the 20th century, Dodd (1938:24) put it rather more crudely: "History consists of cycles of growth and decay." This is reflected by Eisler (2002:165) as "rather than consisting of a series of abrupt and discrete developments, each phase change is itself a gradual process where at first isolated new nucleations eventually culminate in a qualitative system change". There may well be a considerable period of overlap before the new paradigm is firmly established and the former completely disappears, as we shall see in a summary of technological phase changes in the course of history.

1.3.1 The prehistoric age

Eisler's model defines several paradigms and begins with an initial hominid Palaeolithic period that was distinguished by the production of the first tools and artifacts produced by humans, along with the development of language. This was an age of human co-evolution where the woman emerged as the food gatherer in a largely vegetarian culture. She also emerged as the source of the powers that determined life and death. Eisler (2002:165) cites Zihlman (1978) and Tanner's (1981) research to demonstrate that the earliest technologies were developed in the form of containers to gather and store food, and to soften or mash food in the early form of the mortar and pestle. Hence, we can note the development of a smaller jaw and teeth; a larger cranium for a larger brain; and larynx for a larger voice box that was necessitated by the facilitation of language. In religious terms, there was no trace of a father figure in any of the Palaeolithic periods. The major deity was the "Great Goddess whose core functions were 'life-giving, death-wielding, regeneration and renewal'" (Gimbutas 1989a:316). Furthermore, we should note that "[t]he persistence of the Goddess worship for more than 20,000 years from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic [ages] and beyond, is shown by the continuity of a variety of a series of conventionalized images" (Gimbutas 1989b: Preface).

1.3.2 The agrarian age

The prehistoric age was followed by a Neolithic or initially intensive agrarian age which emerged around 10 000 BCE for which there is evidence of developed religious, political and artistic imagery that focused on feminine anthropomorphic characteristics and provides a link between the Palaeolithic (25 000 year old) and early Neolithic ages with their transformation of motherly pregnant goddess images into a Great Goddess whose womb is the source and destination of all life. Life was holistically discerned and "pre-industrial agricultural rites show a very definite mystical connection between the fertility of the soil and the creative force of woman" (Gimbutas 1989a:141). The concept of the "fruitful womb" developed "[b]ecause [since] the Neolithic Goddess had the ability to bring forth all life from her own body, she must have been also endowed with the power to nurture the

seeds of the earth" (Gimbutas 1989a:141). These were not matriarchal cultures but peaceful, creative, co-operative and life-enhancing ventures between men and women who worked in a partnership. This was a period that was marked by the further cultivation of agricultural stability with the husbandry of domestic animals rather than hunting, the development of trade and communications and also complex religious and democratic governmental organisations. The Turkish settlements at Hacilar and at Catal Hayuk offer evidence that male dominance was not the norm; rather, men and women worked together to further the common good. However, "the one thing which is clearly indicated in the religion of Hacilar is the predominance of woman" with "the ability to procreate life, sustain and nourish it" (Mellaart 1970:170). In religion the feminine represents "two aspects of the deity, that of a nubile girl and that of the mother". Statuettes that were discovered in archeological excavations reveal and represent aspects of the life of the goddess: "the maiden, the mature matron, the pregnant mother, the mother with her child, and the Mistress of Animals, the goddess of nature and wild life" (Mellaart 1970:170).

This approach was not sustainable in less fertile areas where nomadic pastoralism became the norm. The resulting mass migrations of the marginalised that was caused by drought and desertification produced a significant change in cultural and technological evolutionary patterns. A Cretan civilisation developed from around 6 000 BCE as the result of a migration from the area of modern Turkey. This early period of Cretan civilisation was distinguished by a Goddess religion and an agrarian technology. During the next 4 000 years a distinctive civilisation grew in technology, arts and trade. Another significant feature of this period was the equality that existed amongst the population. There is no evidence of a poor sector of society: "the standard of living – even of the peasants – seems to have been high. None of the homes found so far have suggested very poor living conditions. No doubt the long period of 'peaceful co-existence' benefited the country" (Platon 1968:178). There was a unity of spirit and sensitivity towards the environment and others that contributed to ecological survival, and power was exercised in terms of the responsibility of motherhood and social trusteeship. By the Bronze Age or middle Minoan period, the Goddess was being supplanted by ag-

gressive male deities – except in Crete where it survived into the Mycenaean period in the 14th century BCE:

> [T]he Minoan deities seem to have been confined to a few figures personifying the creative and ruling forces in nature … There probably were two chief creative figures, the powerful male god and the fertile mother … who personified the cycle of death and rebirth in nature … Goddesses as the productive deities, were considered the most important (Mellaart 1970:182; cf. Gimbutas 1989a:152).

In the Kurgan or Indo-European context (4 000-2 500 BCE), the cultures were aggressive and male-dominated and were based on the power to dominate and destroy. These cultures were patriarchal, stratified, mobile and war-oriented; and came to be superimposed on all Europe, with the exception of the southern and western extremities. The female deity (Goddess Creatrix) was replaced with male divinities. During the Bronze Age, the partnership model was co-opted into the new cultural system and became exploited. It acted as a "periodic attractor" (Eisler 2002:167).[3] The appearance of bronze weaponry (no longer used primarily for tools, religious and ornamental purposes; but for destructive purposes) marked a significant transition from a partnership mode of existence to a dominator mode (Eisler 1998:47). This coincided with the violent incursions of the barbarian Kurgans[4] from around 4 300 to 2 800 BCE. The role of women underwent a fundamental and virtually permanent transformation. The situation can be summarised as follows:

> While the attractor of the partnership model becomes even stronger, the scale of violence of androcratic regressions also vastly increases – largely due to bigger populations and more "advanced" technics of destruction (Eisler 2002:167).

1.3.3 The industrial age

An industrial age followed (from the 18th to the mid-20th CE) and the emergent advances in technology and machinery served to bolster the dominator paradigm through weapons of destruction. Eisler

(2002:167) cites the studies of cultural historian Theodore Roszak (1969) and social psychologist David McClelland (1975) to suggest that during this era there was a renewed emphasis on violence and domination (particularly with regard to men over women) that foreshadowed a time of war and aggression. This was accompanied with developments in technology which would support or advance such warlike motives. Thus linked to the dominator model of social organisation, its intrinsic injustice is viewed as both natural and moral. The origins of this model can be traced back to the Babylonian myth *Enuma Elish* in which the male god Marduk creates the universe by dismembering the body of the female goddess Tiamat. This model is characterised by colonialism and racism, which are related to considerations of power in relation to knowledge because:

> Knowledge can be applied in order to achieve power, or power may be used to prevent the acquisition of knowledge, or knowledge might liberate us from the effects of power, but power cannot contribute constructively to the achievement of knowledge. This view rests on three features ascribed to the notion of power: that it is possessed and exercised by specific agents; that it operates on our representations but not on the world represented; and that it is primarily repressive (Fitzsimons & Smith 2000:29).

Here we should note first that, in essence, power is neutral. In this instance, the authors are referring to a negative use of power by the strong over the weak, particularly by men over women. The withholding of education from women for centuries was premised on the male assumption that they did not need to be educated to fulfill the limited roles which were assigned to them by men in a male-dominated world. The beginning of the liberation of women and poor people was the result of education being made available to them.

However, it was during this period (i.e. from the Enlightenment) that the same technological advances were beginning to destabilise entrenched patterns and structures. A succession of social movements began to challenge the stereotyped patterns of domination, including social and economic injustice, colonialism and the assertion by women of their full humanity.

1.3.4 The nuclear/electronic/biochemical age

The nuclear/electronic/biochemical age began in the mid-20th century. This is a highly technological era which equals, and may even surpass, the power of natural forces. Its ability to subdue the environment and destroy any opposing forces is frightening and has led to renewed efforts to reintroduce a partnership paradigm. The emerging new paradigm has challenged colonialism, racism, totalitarian and communist ideologies and threats to the environment; and is marked by a new scientific model which emphasises the linking of all forms of life on earth. It rejects institutionalised intimate violence such as family murder, rape, wife beating and child abuse. This has put tremendous pressure on the ubiquitous dominator model which is responding through the escalation of violence at intra- and international levels. There is a concentration of economic and political power in the hands of right-wing male elites and a resurgence of right-wing theologies which bolster and justify crude demonstrations of power. The rise of so-called fundamentalism is a classic expression of the dominator model.

1.3.5 The human actualisation or extinction phase

At the present time, the human race stands at a critical juncture of history:

> Today, we are at a level of technological development that guided by a partnership cognitive cultural map could lead to an era when the culminating use of human creativity and technology could be the realisation of our unique human potentials. But there is another possibility: that a dominator cognitive cultural map will at our level of technological development lead to the human extinction phase, the end of our adventure on this earth (Eisler 2002:170).

> People are using … new opportunities to make their own global connections and are no longer satisfied with second-hand experience of the wider world. This is accompanied in Western culture by disenchantment with large, formal institutions and a lifestyle which finds social expres-

sion in informal and transitory networking. Concomitant to this is suspicion and fear of long-term commitments and a clear preference for direct experience and immediately demonstrable results (Ross 2001).

In other words, as history has revealed, dominator systems have limits of tenure before they disintegrate. While it is impossible to determine what the outcome will be at such a juncture of "intense systems disequilibrium" (Eisler 2002:170), it is possible to predict which factors might produce desired outcomes and which might arrest the movement towards global destruction. Eisler's theory depends on the rectification of unequal gender relations (it is gender-holistic, cf. Eisler 1995:33), but more factors than these will have to be taken into account. For example, the current move towards including more women in senior government, administrative and judicial positions is only part of addressing the problem of forging a new society (as can be seen in South Africa). Racism and colonialism were the result of more than the male domination of females. There are certain institutionalised systemic problems that will have to be addressed if unequal relations are to be dealt with in their entirety. An important contributor to the possibility of transformation is the development of systems stability and systems change. However, Eisler (1998:137) sees hope for

> … all through recorded history, and particularly during periods of social instability, the gylanic model has continued to act as a much weaker but persistent "periodic" attractor.

An example of a contemporary experiment which seems to accord with the partnership model can be seen in modern Scandinavian countries (such as Norway, Finland and Sweden) which have attempted to evolve a more just economic system, the creation of the first peace academies through a conviction in the value of non-violent conflict resolution and a more gender-balanced society. The partnership model is exemplified in the Norwegian Industrial Democracy Project (Eisler 1994:34, cf. Eisler 1987). Also, there are men's groups in the USA (which have modelled themselves on the consciousness-raising approach of the women's movement) where men are analysing their personal lifestyles, experiences and histories in a political

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context and are developing alternative lifestyles that challenge the traditional roles assigned to both men and women (Soelle 1984:57).

2   EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The differentiation of the dominator and partnership models might be too neat in the context of reality. As we have seen, there may be differences in time sequence and geographical location with regard to phase changes. For example, the Industrial Age may have occurred in Europe and North America during the 18th century, but did it have the same impact globally (especially in African nations)? Recent work (Duncan 2003; Scott (1990); Comaroff & Comarrof [1991] 1997) has demonstrated that even when a particular model is in the ascendant, there may well be pockets of resistance which defy simplistic interpretations. These resistors might indicate the beginning of a phase change or they might just constitute one response within a phase to a particular occurrence or development. Furthermore, the issue of the exercise of power is not the preserve of those who adhere or conform to the dominator model. Power can be exercised effectively within the partnership model; although, in this case, it is negotiated through relationships rather than imposed. This form of power does not depend on crude force but is more subtle in that it can be exercised imperceptibly by being distributed (shared out) among all the role players in a particular context, giving each an investment in a positive outcome. This can result from the actions of people who are acting in freedom.

However, there is a lacuna in Eisler's thinking because, while the gylanic model can act as a periodic attractor for societal change, she does not sufficiently emphasise the conditions which provide for a resurgence of the dominator model. This can occur when a society that is based on the partnership paradigm becomes susceptible to corruption, weakness, vulnerability and insecurity. History yields many examples of these (including Kings David and Saul, and – much more recently – President Mugabe in Zimbabwe).

If this can be achieved by producing new cognitive maps of the past, present and future which takes into account all the members of humanity and every aspect of our lives (political, economic and per-

sonal), then we will have a greater understanding of a systems approach to the study of cultural evolution with less emphasis on violence and exploitation and more on fulfilling harmonious relations which will the liberation of human potential. Eisler has adopted a feminist approach in her work to demonstrate the inclusive nature of human societal existence. This resonates with a feminist theological approach which offers opportunities for inclusivity.

Eisler's model offers useful insights into an interpretation of history. While we might wish to challenge some of her generalisations, there are a number of interesting features in her approach. It might be difficult to apply her macro-paradigmatic theory to all historical periods of a shorter duration (although we may not discount the appearance of periodic attractor micro-phase changes within macro-phase changes); yet there are possibilities of applying it as a hermeneutical tool nonetheless. Her model basically focuses on how power is used – over or with others. It is gender-holistic, thus making it more inclusive; it is consistent with other work in the field (e.g. paradigm changes). Perhaps, more importantly, it offers insight into how destructive our patterns of behaviour can be in a time of potential self-annihilation (especially if we note how quickly periodic attractors arise as a society becomes more technologically sophisticated). It is often easier to discern the characteristics of models than to discern total phase changes.

In terms of mission history, it is difficult to know how far Eisler's model can apply since her studies have covered millennia (and therefore cover the long view of history). However, we can make some preliminary remarks. Modern mission history has a history of little more than 200 years, so the time scale involved is minimal. It falls within Eisler's industrial, nuclear/electronic/biochemical and human actualisation or extinction phases. During this period the *androcratic* model has predominated; however, the *gylanic* model has acted as a "periodic attractor" and persists as such. Consequently, it is not possible to discern long-term trends or changes.

If we consider the modern missionary movement as having begun at the beginning of the 19th century, we note that this was during the Industrial Age when the dominator model predominated. We can see

this in the early approach to missions and indigenous peoples, where traditional cultures were destroyed along with traditional societal leadership structures and western education and religious forms were imposed. We can also note the imposition of western technological innovations. From the beginning of the 20th century, with the genesis of the ecumenical movement at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, we note attempts to replace this model of missionary operation with the concept of "partnership". Although there are significant and interesting similarities, this should not necessarily be seen to imply an adoption of Eisler's partnership or *gylanic* model. Research indicates that the commitment to partnership was more apparent than real in terms of achievements throughout the 20th century (although there was particularly strong support from those who were committed to both the missionary and ecumenical movements).

The evidence shows that "younger" churches were more committed to the partnership ideal than "older" churches which had more to lose, especially in terms of power and control. This is clear in an in-depth examination of the Church of Scotland's response and approach to mission work. However, recent experience shows that the greater the degree of vulnerability and insecurity of the older church (in this case resulting from falling membership and reducing resources of finance, i.e. substantial regressions), the greater the tendency for the dominator model to act as a periodic attractor against the partnership model and to impose western solutions on partners throughout the world without consultation. This militates against and actively prevents the achievement of human actualisation on the part of the younger churches.

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ENDNOTES

1   We are cautioned concerning the use of the term "model" because it refers to an abstraction: "Models are not a real, literal, or complete depiction of the world. It [sic] is a theoretical construct, a conceptual tool for ordering experi-

ences and interpreting the world. As such they do not provide the researcher with information that can lead to "historical certainties". They do, however, create scenarios that help the scientist to draw informed conclusions on a linear scale of ascending probability, or increased plausibility. The use of models has indeed become indispensable … Our choice … lies in deciding whether to use them consciously or unconsciously" (Reinstorf 2005:398, cf Eisler 1995:33).

2   "In the Masai [mythical] story the present unhappy state of affairs, with animals and women subject to men, is contrasted with the good old days when those animals belonged to the women who were thus independently wealthy. All over the world we find these stories of the fall of woman, because the subjection of women is very widely thought to be strange and anomalous, so that it needs some explanation and/or justification. Women's present state is contrasted with her original equality or even, in some cases, superioirty" (Cupitt 1980:152).

3   E.g. "… the growth of early Christianity based on the partnership teachings of Jesus gave way to the rigid male-dominated authoritarian and violent androcratic model characterized by the Inquisition and witch-hunting. In another context (inferior) Maori cultural transformation implies transformation of the dominant Pakeha societal context as well" (Fitzsimons & Smith 2000:26).

4   These were steppe pastoralists who swept across prehistoric Europe. They were not the original Europeans; they were an Indo-European or Aryan people. They followed a patriarchal form of culture exemplified in heroic warrior gods.