

"Put it all together, it spells Mother" or something:

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## CONVERGENT SPIRITUALITIES AS CORRUPTIONS ENRICHMENTS

We're having to dinner today the codirectors of a Center for Spirituality West & East and I've given some thought to the menus visible & invisible. As you can see by the fact that in the title, "enrichments" is in a type larger than is "corruptions," I'm mainly hopeful about the current global convergence of spiritualities, & somewhat skeptical. I'm hopeful because I believe in "the Nameless," that God is beyond our naming powers, indeed beyond our languages, beyond the nets of human utterance itself; & accordingly I am open to whatever light may reach my soul via whatever Name: I am a **receiver**. But also I have closed down on, & become a **giver** of, "the Name that is above every other name" (Eph.1.21, Phil.2.9, Ac.4.12, Heb.1.4; Ex.3.13-15 & 34.14).

1. I'm **hopeful** for the East/West marriage of spiritualities (with the world's other spiritualities thrown in, as it were, as concubines) because I'm "evangelical RADICAL," "orthodox OPEN." But I'm **wary** & skeptical because I'm "EVANGELICAL radical," "ORTHODOX open." Like a tree, I have both roots (my commitment) & reach (my will to comm/union). This is normal for trees & people. It's healthy. The extremes are sick: (1) Dogmatism, which is deaf to unfamiliar sounds; & (2) Syncretism, which (to return to the marriage metaphor) "plays the field" & sings "You can't love one." DANGER: Every institutional effort at converging spiritualities I've ever known has gone syncretistic & become intolerant of "the scandal of particularity," vigorous commitment to historic roots, especially Christianity. (In such institutions, distaste for Judaism is less outspoken, for fear of being called "antisemitic": being antiChristian is as safe as being against white males--both true also of the media.) When, in the words of the children's song, you "put it all together," its more apt to spell "Whore" than "Mother." (Sorry about that, & on Mother's Day!)

2. "Bloom where you're planted," master the roots in the ground on which you were natally "thrown" (Heidegger). Then, if you transplant yourself--convert to another deity & paradigm--you'll consciously take your roots with you (which Salman Rushdie's THE SATANIC VERSES rings the changes on). (NOTE: I did transplanting today from seedbed in greenhouse to intermediate to garden: the secret is in knowing the roots & how to handle them.)....The psychoparadigm of the said Center for Spirituality is Jungian, & Papa J. is famous for his double saying that (1) you should know your own roots first (eg, don't imagine you can become a Buddhist without understanding biblical religion) & (2) you never can "go native" completely in a culture you weren't born into.

3. How complex the human heart, so how complex is religion, the heart of the human heart! But I'm writing this Thinksheet as a half-hour, and therefore grossly oversimplified, setting forth of the different spiritualities (which are the inner of which the religions are the outer), to prepare the hearer-reader for getting some grip on what their convergence may involve. If I'm going to paint, I distribute the needed basic colors around my palette, then proceed with the mixing and applying. The basic colors, or components, of spirituality are displayed here in the first two ranks; and the mixing, in the third. The terminology is far from fixed: I'm using the words that pop into my mind for this rough sketch. My words for the third rank are embarrassingly rough & inadequate: so much comes to mind that's now in being or just over the horizon!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EAST	STATIC	MEDITATION	CONSCIOUSNESS	NATURE	MYSTICISM	MYTH	COMMUNITY
WEST	DYNAMIC	PRAYER	JOURNEY	HISTORY	MEANING	HGR*	INDIVIDUALITY
	dynamo- static	reflective prayer	journey in consciousness	ecologi- cal recon- ciliation	critical intuition	psycho- history	intentional community

For conversation & group discussion, I've numbered the columns. How tempted I am to run a commentary on p.2! I could challenge myself at almost every point before you get a chance to. Did I leave off the palette a color you think should be there? Would you make diferent mixes? Colors & mixing depend on what **you** want to paint.