



laetus in praesens

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Happiness and Unhappiness through Naysign and Nescience comprehending the essence of sustainability?

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Introduction

This exploration is a response to the study by [Y. S. Rajan](#) (*In Pursuit of Happiness*, 2007) received at the conference of the [World Academy of Art and Science](#) (Hyderabad, 2008). As keynote speaker at that event, the author introduced the theme **Change and Change Agents**. What follows is not so much a commentary on the study as such but rather a reflection on the issues it evokes, notably in the light of conversations with the author on that occasion -- without in any way implying his agreement with what is suggested here.

Of particular interest is the context from which that study arose. Y. S. Rajan combines an unusual range of skills as a scientist, technologist, administrator and builder of organizations, diplomat, writer and poet -- with an emphasis on innovative thinking and implementation. These skills have been deployed in India in space research, notably as Scientific Secretary of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Perhaps appropriately, India launched its first [mission to the moon](#) immediately following the Hyderabad gathering.

In Pursuit of Happiness is divided into two parts: *Sustained Happiness: a real possibility in a knowledge society* and *Science, Technology and Economic Development: new tools of unity of matter and spirit*. The latter is understood as a yoga of a variety of forms. The study as a whole is an attempt to resolve the apparent contradiction between material and spiritual life.

Such a focus on happiness should of course be seen in relation of the creative initiative of Bhutan in developing [Gross National Happiness](#) (GNH) since 1972 as an attempt to define quality of life in more holistic and psychological terms than Gross National Product. While conventional development models stress economic growth as the ultimate objective, the concept of GNH is based on the premise that true development of human society takes place when material and spiritual development occur side by side to complement and reinforce each other. In 2007, Bhutan ranked 8th out of 178 countries in Subjective Well-Being, a metric that has been used by many psychologists ([Adrian G. White, *A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: a challenge to positive psychology?* 2007](#)).

Challenges

Rajan, as an Indian, is especially sensitive to the contradictions and dilemmas of life in a much-challenged Indian society exposed to the forces of globalization -- especially as perceived by the privileged and as experienced by the underprivileged:

So India is faced with poverty, poor nutrition, poor sanitation and health services, a number of human-made and natural calamities in addition to divisive conflicts due to caste, language, religion or political affiliations. There is a huge network of organized crime. Over and above these, terror and violence unleashed from actors outside India, add many gruesome happenings within the country.

His study is a development of his earlier work on *Empowering Indians, with Economic, Business and Technological Strengths* (Har-Anand, 2002). It is designed as an effort to find solutions to human happiness. within the framework of a knowledge society. extending

the earlier approach "to all forms of human knowledge, as science and technology is only a part of human knowledge".

In reviewing forms of human knowledge, Rajan notably makes reference to the seminal study of Susantha Goonatilake (*Toward a Global Science: mining civilizational knowledge*, 1999) who was also present at the Hyderabad gathering. Goonatilake specifically focuses on possibilities of how science can be with modern scientific methods and yet without Euro-centric blinkers. Rajan recognizes the importance of including traditional knowledge forms, knowledge derived from the arts, as well as the possibility of mystical insight that is so valued within the Indian culture.

A clear distinction is made between the possible forms of happiness to be derived from spiritual life and subjective reality whilst acknowledging that happiness cannot be achieved on an empty stomach by negating material reality. The author had himself been involved in envisaging the viability of responding to conventional needs and aspirations at the lower levels of **Maslow's need hierarchy** (A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and Y. S. Rajan, *India 2020: a new vision for a new millennium*, 1998). However he notes that many difficulties emerge in moving up Maslow's hierarchy of needs where mental processes play an important role in perceptions of happiness. As such he is specifically concerned with the "knowledge-happiness interface" recognizing that:

It appears that happiness at these levels (as perhaps in other levels as well) is never unmixed nectar. A process of pain accompanies pleasure; agony accompanies ecstasy ! Is it possible to transcend this dialectical process?

Rajan looks forward to a society where:

- the applications of science, technology, economics, business and organizational systems can lead to reasonable satisfaction of the lower level Maslow needs of all citizens
- the applications of legal, judicial, ethical, social, intellectual, arts and religious/spiritual systems for better handling of love and esteem for those who rise above the "minimum basic need level".

Such a society can then also produce a large number of persons who can self-actualise in various fields of human endeavour. However the author recognizes that

The world and human knowledge pool are approaching a phase where super-specialized approach to individual knowledge bases alone would not satisfy the collective and individual needs of humanity. Therefore, we need to address the basic issues of human existence; the "truth" of human consciousness; and the actions which humanity has been taking so far with a naive realist approach to life and human existence.

He recognizes that it is not practical to wait for the scientific and analytical methodologies to provide the "right" answers, even though it is necessary to pursue such investigations.

If humankind has to be happy in the emerging knowledge society, it is essential that every human being -- every individual -- would have to grapple with the problem of values: being in harmony with nature, with society, with oneself, with ideas, with bio-diversity, with cultural diversity, and with continual changes. Nobody can afford to delegate these responsibilities to more learned persons and expect that solutions will come.

Possibilities

In the second part of the book Rajan explores *Science, Technology and Economic Development: new tools of unity of matter and spirit*. He argues that:

It is the interdependence between material wealth and value systems that should be understood and internalized....In fact the upper parts of Maslow needs require much greater injection of value systems or spirituality. In fact, life is a great continuum of existence and experience. As one learns more about it, one is able to "enjoy" more of it: this "enjoyment" is not the mere consumption as it is in the bottom scale of Maslow needs; but it is the sublime part of existence and experience.

This brings the author to the scientific and other understandings of the nature of reality -- concluding that, from a scientific perspective:

it is unlikely that human beings will arrive at the ultimate answer at any point of time now, in the near future or after centuries.... There is no scope for a digital answer of this or that or yes or no!

With respect to the possibilities offered by art, the author cites Nirmal Verma (*Concept of "Truth" in Art*, 1996):

All works of art in this sense are an attempt to recover the memory of divine. 'Beyond' in art is not something what is to be attained, but to remember that which has been forgotten.... Hence the critical role of memory in art which is to recover art what has been lost in life. To be able to do that art makes us return inwards, towards the depth of our own self. But it also makes us move in the opposite direction, towards the world outside...

Rajan sees science, technology and economic development as helping art to grow and spread thus enriching the understanding of reality

or truth in many other dimensions of art as well. Similarly they may also assist mystic approaches to truth.

In a concluding section on the maturity of collective human knowledge, Rajan returns to the unresolved contradiction -- particularly notable in Indian culture -- between the supposedly illusory nature of objective reality (that is the focus of knowledge society and its disciplines) and the supposedly valid nature of a transcendent subjective reality (accessible through mystical insight). Typically each sees the other as exemplifying ignorance. He however sees these perspectives -- respectively termed *avidya* and *vidya* in Sanskrit -- not as being as absolute alternatives.

They are at best technical definitions of different routes of epistemology. With reductionist -- empirical approaches of science, technology, economics -- at one "end" and "mystic" approaches on the other "end", there are many overlaps of artistic methods. Even for scientific creativity there are many flashes of intuition, reported by most scientists. Same is the case with many business entrepreneurs who take decisions contrary to many reductionist business management types of analyses...

Further commentary on their complementarity is indeed provided by Richard H. Jones (*Vidya and Avidya in the Ī+Sa Upanisad*, *Philosophy East and West*, 31, 1981).

In quest of a new methodology

Rajan's arguments may be used in what follows as the basis for more speculative explorations suggestive of a new methodology, potentially more appropriate to the challenge of managing the dilemmas and polarizations so characteristic of modern society -- and apparently inhibiting desirable social change. The approach calls into question conventional assumptions that typically go unexamined -- on the assumption that this is essential to any relevant innovation.

A useful indicator of such a possibility is offered by the pattern of prefixes in English and the manner in which they influence the appreciation of what is considered appropriate (*New Paradigms via a Renewed Set of Prefixes? Dependence of international policy-making on an array of operational terms*, 2003).

One example is provided by the "pursuit of happiness" itself. This is not only the title of Rajan's study but also figures as one of the most famous phrases in the United States Declaration of Independence: *Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*. It is recognized as one of the "inalienable rights" of man. In recognition of this, the web resources at pursuit-of-happiness.org stress "happiness is understandable, obtainable and teachable".

Reflection and commentary on the [nature of happiness](#) in the western tradition date back to classical Greece where it was held to be the highest good. As hedonism, the pursuit of happiness was condemned by St Augustine as "more fitting for swine than for men". For him pigs symbolized *daemones* or devils. Such symbolism was used by J. Stuart Mill in defining happiness: "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied". In the Christian tradition, following St Thomas, the happiness people seek is one that goes beyond anything that can be experienced in this life. Only a relative and incomplete happiness is to be experienced in this life. Again, Albert Einstein is quoted as declaring "happiness is for pigs". Other recognize it as a potential inhibitor of creativity.

Recent research on happiness by psychologists Daniel Gilbert and Tim Wilson, and by economists George Loewenstein and Daniel Kahneman has begun to question the decision-making process that shapes our sense of well-being: how do we predict what will make us happy or unhappy -- and then how do we feel after the actual experience? As reported by Jon Gertner (*The Futile Pursuit of Happiness*, *New York Times*, 7 September 2003) the research undermines:

a number of fundamental assumptions: namely, that we humans understand what we want and are adept at improving our well-being -- that we are good at maximizing our utility, in the jargon of traditional economics. Further, their work on prediction raises some unsettling and somewhat more personal questions. To understand affective forecasting, as Gilbert has termed these studies, is to wonder if everything you have ever thought about life choices, and about happiness, has been at the least somewhat naïve and, at worst, greatly mistaken.

In this way the "pursuit of happiness" has an illusory quality in which unhappiness is an ever-present reality. There is currently an academic debate as to whether unhappiness, especially when understood as depression, should be eliminated in some way. The debate has been helpfully summarized by Jessica Marshall (Woes Be Gone. *New Scientist*, 17 January 2009) notably with reference to the study by Jerome Wakefield, and Allan Horowitz (*The Loss of Sadness: how psychiatry transformed normal sorrow into depressive disorder*, 2007). The question is whether depression is a pathological condition and how its elimination (notably with the aid of medication) might in fact conflict with healthy processes of bereavement and accommodation to other losses.

A more comprehensive perspective therefore calls for relating happiness and ~~un~~happiness in some unforeseen manner. The "pursuit" over time, and its completion, might for example be more fruitfully understood in terms of such symbols of renewal as the [Ourobouros](#) or the poetic recognition of [T. S. Eliot](#):

'We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know it for the first time.'
T S Eliot, *Little Gidding*

This points to the vital importance of recognizing a four-phase approach to many terms that are conventionally only considered in a two-

phase, binary manner in which one is framed as "good" in some way and the other as therefore "bad". Recognized as a quadrilemma according to Kinhide Mushakoji (*Global Issues and Interparadigmatic Dialogue*, 1988), the four phases may be represented as:

- Condition A ("happiness")
- Condition Not-A ("unhappiness")
- Condition A-and-Not-A
- Condition Neither-A-nor-Not-A

It is the last two conditions, and the set as a whole, that is suggestive of further insight. The pattern of prefixes may be helpful in this respect. Such an approach is well-recognized through the Sanskrit adage *Neti Neti* (Not this, Not that). In that light, "happiness" as pursued is not adequately defined by any one of the above conditions.

Pursuing a Quest?

As suggested by the symbol of the Ouroboros, the above poem, and the quadrilemma, any understanding of the nature of any "pursuit" of happiness should not go unchallenged. Conventional understanding implies the pursuit of a visible, comprehensible but elusive target when it is not even clear that it is appropriate to understand that pursuit to be over a surface that could be mapped in three-dimensional space (as further discussed below in relation to a complex plane). There is even the possibility that such stalking of "reality" may be in some sense counter-productive, as with any woman of dignity (*Beyond Harassment of Reality and Grasping Future Possibilities*, 1996).

The term "quest" is more appropriate when much is in doubt -- as exemplified in the Arthurian tale of the vain pursuit of the [Questing Beast](#). Of greater potential relevance is the very nature of any quest and the questions which impel it. Is there a higher order and function to questions in relation to the answers sought as discussed elsewhere (*Engaging with Questions of Higher Order cognitive vigilance required for higher degrees of twistedness*, 2004; *Conformality of 7 WH-questions to 7 Elementary Catastrophes: an exploration of potential psychosocial implications*, 2006). A four-fold pattern of relationships between questions and answers may be usefully mapped as segments of concentric circles distinguishing three levels in each case (*Sustaining the Quest for Sustainable Answers*, 2003):

- outer circle: the appreciation of questions and answers as encountered in daily life
- middle circle: the framing of the conclusion regarding the encounter with questions and answers in daily life (in the outer ring)
- inner circle: the existential understanding of the insights of the outer and middle rings..

Science of "Unknowing": "Apophysis", or "Nescience"?

If understanding of the pursuit of "happiness" can be fruitfully enriched by associating it systemically with the experience of "unhappiness", the approach might be applied to a more fruitful understanding of "science" as presented by Rajan or indeed to its significance in the title of the World Academy of Art and Science. If indeed there are other modes of knowing, as Rajan argues, some may be better recognized through *unknowing* where this is indicative of a useful contrast to the scientific mode of knowing. "Unknowing" is of course a term that has been promoted by mystics (cf *The Cloud of Unknowing*).

The possibility of a "science of unknowing" has been recognized in literature, as in an example analyzed by Camille R. La Bossière (*Joseph Conrad and the Science of Unknowing*, 1979) who explores the principle of the *coincidentia oppositorum* as it underlies Conrad's fiction. He argues that an understanding of Conrad's dream logic, defined in its negative relationship to Aristotelian philosophy, and considered in a tradition traced from Cusa and Calderon to a number of 19th- and 20th-century writers (including Slowacki, Amiel, and Claudel) assists the reader in perceiving the subsurface unity of Conrad's thought and art without sacrificing the integrity of the separate tales.

"Unlearning" is notably promoted by an [Institute of Unlearning](#). The importance of the process is recognized in the case made by Trevor Pateman (*Lifelong Unlearning*, 2002). A new "science of unlearning" is noted by [Norman Doidge](#) in a review of neuroscience (*The Brain That Changes Itself: stories of personal triumph from the frontiers of brain science*, 2007):

Different chemistries are involved in learning than in unlearning....When the brain unlearns associations and disconnects neurons, another chemical process occurs, called "long-term depression" (which has nothing to do with a depressed mood state). Unlearning and weakening connections between neurons is just as plastic process, and just as important, as learning and strengthening them.... Evidence suggests that unlearning existing memories is necessary to make room for new memories in our network. Unlearning is essential when we are moving from one developmental stage to the next.... Walter J. Freeman... has assembled a number of compelling biological facts that point toward the conclusion that massive neuronal reorganization occurs at two life stages: when we fall in love and when we begin parenting. Freeman argues that massive plastic brain reorganization -- far more massive than in normal learning or unlearning -- becomes possible because of brain neuromodulation.

Chris Lucas (*Patterns of Unreality*, 1999) has argued for the need for "unlooking" the "unreal".

The acknowledgement of "not knowing" is recognized as a fruitful, if not essential, precursor to learning and discovery -- where "knowing" necessarily inhibits recognition of new knowledge. Clearly any "science" of unknowing would call for a quite different perspective than that of knowing, especially where it called into question the appropriateness of the methodology of knowing -- as in the case of the scientific method. One approach to such a possibility has been explored elsewhere (*Towards Conscientific Research and Development*, 2002).

Another approach to such unknowing was first identified in the western tradition by Aristotle as *apophysis*, namely as the deliberate avoidance of definitional closure through "not saying" in contrast with the kataphatic assertive mode characteristic of science (*Being*

What You Want problematic: kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity? 2008). It is a feature of apophatic theology (Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 1994). This contrast has also been recognized in eastern traditions (Robert M. Gimello, *Apophatic and Kataphatic Discourse in Mahayana: a Chinese view. Philosophy East and West*, 26, 2, April 1976, pp. 117-136). Whether "unsayable" or "unsaid", the significance of the latter has been explored elsewhere (*Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid": from myth-making towards a "wisdom society"*, 2003).

Patrick Laude (*Malamiyyah Psycho-Spiritual Therapy*, 2002) provides a valuable account of the importance of the science of unknowing in a Sufi tradition in the following terms:

The science of unknowing that is at the core of malamiyyah spirituality, can be defined as a way to place each reality on its own level. Thus, spiritual health consists in preventing confusion of the various levels. Such a confusion would be deadly since it would amount to a 'deification' of the human individual as such, or of one of his deeper layers of being. Now, this type of confusion is intrinsically connected, according to Sulami, to the very notion of inner 'consideration' or 'vision' of oneself (nazar). For the soul to 'see' is, in a certain sense, to 'appropriate' and therefore to 'bring down'. Spiritual progress presupposes a measure of 'unknowing', and any attempt at monitoring this progress amounts to individualizing what pertains, by definition, to the universal.

Given the common metaphoric use of "light" in recognition of "knowing", whether with respect to scientific/secular or mystical insight (as with [enlightenment](#)), it is appropriate to note the process of endarkenment that precedes such insight in many traditions as discussed elsewhere (*Enlightening Endarkenment: selected web resources on the challenge to comprehension*, 2005).

The play of prefixes also suggests the possibility of using "nescience" as an indicator of such a science of unknowing. In an extensive comment, however, Ramjee Singh (*From Nescience to Omniscience: a perspective in Jaina philosophy and religion*) identifies this as the "force which prevents wisdom shining from within, that is that which holds it in latency." Curiously, in the confusion of terms and significance, it might be argued by some that this is one definition of "science" and that it is the negation of that (reductionist) science which would then be more appropriately termed "nescience".

Understood more generally as a condition of ignorance, or absence of awareness, the question is how such ignorance can be understood operationally and creatively -- rather than simply as an obstacle to enlightenment, as is typically the case in many Eastern traditions. From a Bahai perspective, as argued by John Taylor (*On Nescience, Bahais Online*, 2006):

Nescience is not the same as ignorance, which is a bad thing. Nescience is not necessarily bad or good. It is not the same as innocence, though. Innocence is always a good thing. Nescience is neutral.

Alexander Schatten, et al. (*Closing the Gap: From Nescience to Knowledge Management*, 2003) proposes to enhance knowledge management processes by accentuating the importance of nescience in information and knowledge-centric processes. "Nescience", used as suggested, does of course raise the question of the nature of any "nescientific method" perhaps notionally implied by the "negative capability" of the poet [John Keats](#):

... it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously -- I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.

Further possibilities are suggested elsewhere with respect to a "school" of ignorance (*The International School of Ignorance ? an ongoing experiment in dialogue meeting design*, 1996; Anthony Blake, *A Self-Organizing Group in Dialogue*, 1994). The relationship of nescience to agnosticism, and the negation of beliefs of orthodoxy, have ensured its use in the [International University of Nescience](#) ("leader in agnostic education since the Second Millennium").

Unsigned, "Nart", "Nelegance", "Nesign", or "Naysign"?

In contrast to what is conventionally understood by "science", Rajan appropriately sees "art" as a distinctly valuable way of knowing -- as noted above. Art may also be understood as intimately related to "design", especially where prominence is given to aesthetic rather than technical criteria.

The challenge in both cases lies in their conventional (and traditional) meanings and the manner in which these are too readily understood, thereby inhibiting access to larger meanings with which creative reinterpretation comes to be associated in their future development. The case of "design" is especially interesting because of the faith-inspired debate regarding "intelligent design" by a transcendent "creator" -- and the threat it is perceived to constitute for conventional science (*End of Science: the death knell as sounded by the Royal Society*, 2008).

The approach advocated here might be more fruitfully applied to "art" through the neologism "nart". The latter term offers an aesthetic resonance to the [Nart Sagas](#) a set of folk tales originating from regions of the North Caucasus currently of great political sensitivity, namely the Ossetians and the Circassian peoples, closely followed by the related Abkhaz and Abazin people. Nart sagas are also present in Karachay-Balkar and Chechen-Ingush folklore. Some motifs in these sagas are shared by Greek mythology. It has also been speculated that many aspects of the Arthurian legends are derived from the Nart sagas

A sense of the larger significance of art and design is evident in certain psychoactive symbols which directly evoke a distinctive intimate

mode of knowing (*Topology of Valuing: psychodynamics of collective engagement with polyhedral value configurations*, 2008). This evocative "direct" mode contrasts with the "indirect", detached mode characteristic of science. This may be especially evident in certain forms of poetry such as *haiku* as described in the light of a meeting of the World Academy of Art and Science (*Ensuring Strategic Resilience through Haiku Patterns: reframing the scope of the "martial arts" in response to strategic threats*, 2006). A description of this mode is provided in the much-cited classic taoist tale by Chuang Tzu (*The Dexterous Butcher*):

All I care about is the Way. If find it in my craft, that's all. When I first butchered an ox, I saw nothing but ox meat. It took three years for me to see the whole ox. Now I go out to meet it with my whole spirit and don't think only about what meets the eye. Sensing and knowing stop. The spirit goes where it will, following the natural contours, revealing large cavities, leading the blade through openings, moving onward according to actual form -- yet not touching the central arteries or tendons and ligaments, much less touching bone.

This traditional understanding is presumably comparable to the notion of **flow** as the mental state of operation in which the person is fully immersed in action through a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity -- also phrased as "in the zone". This has been extensively articulated by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (*Creativity: flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*, 1996; *Finding Flow: the psychology of engagement with everyday life*, 1998).

On a larger scale, there are many explorations of the "art" of living, whether or not they reflect such understandings (for example, *Art of Living Foundation*; Tom Morris, *The Stoic Art of Living: Inner Resilience and Outer Results*, 2004; Mary Catherine Bateson, *Composing a Life*, 1990; *Organization and Lifestyle Design: characteristics of a nonverbal structural language*, 1978).

It is appropriate to note that any such "art" is of a nature distinct from that which can be "signed" or subject to intellectual copyright -- as with "patent art" or "prior art". As such it is essentially "unsigned". Appropriately it is then necessarily impossible to appropriate in contrast with proprietary metaphors (*Future Coping Strategies: beyond the constraints of proprietary metaphors*, 1992).

Applying the suggested method, the question is to focus attention on that which is (or may be) "not art" or "not design" in these conventional senses. In the case of "design" a possible neologism to this end is "nesign". With respect to the World Academy of Art and Science, this is of potential value given a workshop under its auspices with the theme "Who is designing the 21st Century?" as described elsewhere (*Designing the 21st Century through integration of the arts and sciences*, 1995). One of the contributions explored the importance of "de-signing" (*Definitional Boundary Games and De-signing the 21st Century*, 1995):

Designing can be understood as removing the significance of the underlying experience of nature. In this way architects and planners have eliminated the experience of nature.... In this way it may be understood as de-signifying. However design may also be understood as removing the architectural graffiti imposed by architects and planners on nature. Production of graffiti is a way for some to impose their tag or sign on any available surface. In this way de-signing may be understood as the removal of such defacement, namely of the artificial signs imposed upon nature rendering it invisible.

Pronouncing "nesign" as "naysign" -- implying the absence of sign or trace -- offers another sense, as indicated in that same contribution:

A comparison has been made between French and Japanese cooking in the following terms. The most eminent French chef is known by what he does to the food. He is recognized by the tastes he adds to it in the form of sauces -- in which his hand is to be experienced at every turn. By contrast a Japanese chef is known by the impossibility of distinguishing his hand in the food that is offered. His work is to reduce the interface between the eater and the food to the strictest minimum -- allowing the flavours of the food to emerge of their accord. The question is whether the designers of the 21st century are to be of the first kind or of the second.

Representation of cognitive challenges on a complex plane

It would seem fruitful to take reflect the complex oppositions explored above on a surface of appropriate complexity such as the **complex plane**, as understood in mathematics. This is a geometric representation of the complex numbers established by a real axis and an orthogonal imaginary axis. This can be thought of in terms of a conventional Cartesian plane -- but with the real part of a complex number represented by a displacement along the x-axis, and the imaginary part by a displacement along the y-axis. The complex dynamics of any quest, as an inherently **dynamical system**, might then be represented in terms of movement over such a plane.

Application to axes of a complex plane

-- the width of the band around the vertical axis

and the height of that around the horizontal axis would then be of significance

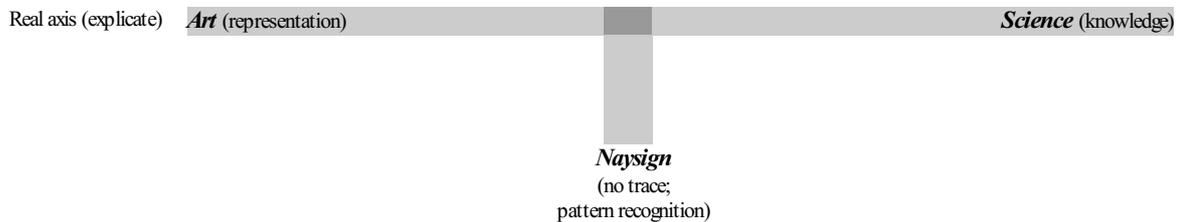
-- the variety of composite experiential resultant (de)satisfiers are then defined by coordinates on the axes

Imaginary axis (implicate)

Nescience

(unknowing

embedded knowing)



Using such a framework, the nature of a complex cognitive dilemma -- as experienced as a composite under particular conditions -- might then be positioned appropriately in any of the quadrants. This could be used for dilemmas such as:

- happiness/unhappiness (enabling representation of the many forms of "bitter-sweet" experience of happiness)
- western/non-western (notably as in the debate regarding the "clash of civilizations")
 - *Enhancing the Quality of Knowing through Integration of East-West metaphors*, 2000
- belief/unbelief (notably as in the debate regarding faith-based governance and science)
 - *Future Challenge of Faith-based Governance*, 2003
 - *End of Science: the death knell as sounded by the Royal Society*, 2008
- sustainable/unsustainable (notably as in the environment/development debate)
 - *Configuring Strategic Dilemmas in Intersectoral Dialogue*, 1992
- hope/despair (notably as regards "positive" vs "negative" and hope-mongering vs doom-mongering)
 - *Being Positive Avoiding Negativity: management challenge of positive vs negative*, 2005
 - *Credibility Crunch engendered by Hope-mongering: "credit crunch" focus as symptom of a dangerous mindset*, 2008
- global/local (notably as regards the globalization vs localization debate)
 - *Configuring Globally and Contending Locally: shaping the global network of local bargains*, 1992
- unity/diversity
 - *Dimensions of Comprehension Diversity*, 1986
 - *Creating a Context for More Meaningful Dialogue*, 1996
 - *Living Differences as a basis for Sustainable Community*, 1998
 - *Planetary Challenge of 12-fold Strategic Marriage: bonding "Empire" + "Alternatives", "Global " + "Local", and "Behavioural" + "Depth psychology"*, 2003

The framework might then also be understood to represent:

- conventional thinking (the horizontal axis)
- imaginative thinking (the vertical axis)
- "in-the-box" thinking (the cross-over zone of horizontal and vertical axes)
- innovation (through efforts to broaden the horizontal axis -- "pushing the envelope")
- design (through efforts to broaden the vertical axis -- "pushing the envelope")
- Maslow's basic needs (the zone defined by the horizontal axis)
- Maslow's higher needs (the zones above and below the horizontal axis)
- the contrast between experiential (horizontal axis) and existential (vertical axis) forms of knowing

Of relevance to the above framework is the exploration by Chris Lucas (*Glimpsing Heaven, Oh So Close*, 2006) of the ideas of Buddhism in relation to complex systems science and those of Maslow. Elsewhere (Chris Lucas, *Metahuman Science*, 1999) he emphasizes Maslow's values in relation to science. He has also argued (Chris Lucas, *Connecting Synergistically*, 2000) that such a vertical (imaginary) axis is more closely associated with a feminine perspective.

Two key requirements of innovation indicated in a presentation in Hyderabad by [Ramesh Mashelkar](#), President of the [Global Research Alliance](#), may also be associated with the above framework:

- that the innovator should not know that something is impossible before engaging with the challenge it represents (a condition usefully to be associated with the nescience axis)
- that the innovator should not use a conventionally accepted mode of knowing (a condition usefully to be associated with the naysign axis)

The most radical innovation is well illustrated in the case of the craziness of [Theories of Everything](#), as illustrated by the much-quoted statement by Niels Bohr in response to Wolfgang Pauli: "We are all agreed that your theory is crazy. The question which divides us is whether it is crazy enough to have a chance of being correct. My own feeling is that it is not crazy enough." To that Freeman Dyson added:

When a great innovation appears, it will almost certainly be in a muddled, incomplete and confusing form. To the discoverer, himself, it will be only half understood; to everyone else, it will be a mystery. For any speculation which does not at first glance look crazy, there is no hope! (Innovation in Physics, *Scientific American*, 199, No. 3, September 1958)

The framework bears an interesting relationship to one previously elaborated *Interrelating problematique, resolutique, "imaginative" and "irresolutique"* (in *Imagining the Real Challenge and Realizing the Imaginal Pathway of Sustainable Transformation*, 2007). Possibilities of combining them might be considered as a further extension of the associated *In quest of mnemonic catalysts for comprehension of complex psychosocial dynamics* (2007). .

Dynamics of any quest: the learning/action cycle

The "pursuit" of the final resolution of any quest -- as with happiness -- may be usefully represented on the above framework as a cycle centred on the origin of the axes. The movement around the cycle may then be understood in terms of the learning/action cycle explored by [Arthur Young](#) (*Geometry of Meaning*, 1978) and described and adapted elsewhere (*Characteristics of phases in 12-phase learning / action cycles; Typology of 12 complementary strategies essential to sustainable development*).

Elsewhere the dynamics of such cycles over a complex plane have been related to the emergent order associated with the [Mandelbrot set](#) (*Sustainability through the Dynamics of Strategic Dilemmas -- in the light of the coherence and visual form of the Mandelbrot set*, 2005 and its annex *Psycho-social Significance of the Mandelbrot Set: a sustainable boundary between chaos and order*, 2005). With his systematic, cross-cultural focus on nonduality [Kent D. Palmer](#) (*Is a Science of Nonduality possible?* 2005) provides a very useful articulation of the challenge in terms of [dissipative systems](#) (*Steps to the Threshold of the Social: the mathematical analogies to dissipative, autopoietic, and reflexive systems*, 1997) which seem the clearest and most relevant for the above purpose. For him (pp 587-588):

Dissipative systems hold two strands of illusory continuity together. They concern the situation where there are two orders that are in imbalance so that one order is displacing the other. Notice that if there is only one order there cannot be a dissipative system. Also if the two orders are in balance or stasis there cannot be a dissipative system. A dissipative system is when there are two different orders or ordering mechanisms that are out of balance with each other so that one ordering mechanism is disordering the other and creating a boundary between the two ordering mechanisms where one is dominant and the other is being dominated.

The operation of the "circular quest" was also explored in relation to the coaction cardioid handled through a coordinate system originally developed by [Edward Haskell](#) (*Full Circle: the moral force of unified science*, 1972) to map pairs of interacting biological species in terms of the nature of their transaction or "game" (*Cardioid Attractor Fundamental to Sustainability: 8 transactional games forming the heart of sustainable relationship*, 2005).

Such considerations clarify the mystical intuition that "true happiness" is indeed "not of this world" and is only to be achieved by transcending the significance attached to a learning/action cycle. This is presumably to be related to the cycle of *samsara*, namely the cycle of reincarnation or rebirth in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and other related religions. However, given the use of the complex plane in this representation of cognitive dilemmas, the resolution of the other dilemmas -- including those understood in terms of sustainability -- may also call for an analogous form of cognitive transcendence. This may be what is implied in the circular processes in the taoist classic *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (*Tai Yi Jin Hua Zong Zhi*) -- a book on Chinese meditation.

Such considerations may be related to a corresponding necessity for identity to be associated with the cyclic processes in contrast with conventional understanding of it -- as argued elsewhere (*Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psychically" defined*, 2007; *Psychology of Sustainability: embodying cyclic environmental processes*, 2002).

Local Diversity of Naysign and Nescience?

For an organization like the World Academy of Art and Science, in quest of a more appropriate role and sense of purpose for the 21st Century, the exploration of opposites seemingly negating its current identity may be seen as a way of opening up a richer understanding of its possibilities -- consistent with the more complex logic of the quadrilemma. The organization might then understand itself as a World Academy of Naysign and Nescience.

Using the suggested method however, the other terms might also be reframed. The Academy originally had an interest in establishing a "World University" and is continuing to reflect on that possibility. Its motto was long "Unity in Diversity". But both "Academy" and "University" may be fruitfully reframed as "Diversity" to challenge simplistic understandings of the elusive understanding of how knowledge is to be appropriately "unified" in a complex evolving knowledge society. This consideration also applies to "World", or "Global" as an alternative, suggesting the merit of a new and more focused understanding of "Local". These concerns have been explored in more detail in the case of another body (*In Quest of "Meta-Union"? Interplay of generic dimensions of any "union of international associations"*, 2007).

The "shadow" cognitive or epistemological challenge to a "World Academy of Art and Science" of the future would then be represented through a "Local Diversity of Naysign and Nescience"

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