



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

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Living as an Imaginal Bridge between Worlds

Global implications of "betwixt and between" and liminality

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Introduction

This is an imaginal exploration of living between conventional sides, modes or choices -- living on the bridge between them, or as that bridge. It conflates significance potentially associated with the [Bridge of Sighs](#) (Ponte Sospiro) and the [Ponte Vecchio](#) -- both of them variously covered. Both are iconic "musts" for tourists travelling to Venice and Florence. Both have offered inspiration elsewhere and down the centuries. The Ponte Vecchio dates notably from the Renaissance period and its historical origins in Florence.

The question here is whether they together point to a context through which to explore the possibilities of living "in between" the divisive choices by which society is currently faced -- at a time when there are many calls for new thinking and reflections on a "new Renaissance". A concern is whether the requisite cognitive nature of such collective emergent insight might well be "missed" in some way, as previously discussed (*Missing the New Renaissance?* 2010; *From Changing the Strategic Game to Changing the Strategic Frame: missing cognitive possibility in changing the system not the planet*, 2010)

The need for bridges is typically obvious. They provide a means of traversing from one "side" to another across a modality which cannot be readily traversed otherwise. The essentially binary cognitive mode associated with walking, which is natural on either side, cannot be used on the medium which separates them. Furthermore each side is typically associated with a different perspective. The bridge is the means of transition between such perspectives across what may well be a psychosocial discontinuity -- a boundary with even a price to pay, as in toll bridges. There is an element of choice in being on one side or the other. Typically one cannot choose to be in the "middle" -- between them. Such considerations have all been exploited through metaphor.

The quest for integrative new thinking has variously focused on interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, on a global ethic, or on the potentials of the complexity sciences. These aspire to offer bridging explanations transcending conventional modes of understanding. However, whatever such efforts at "transcendence", they significantly fail to address the existential confusion which characterizes the lived experience of many, irrespective of the value attached to such possibilities. That experience is associated with the need in practice to live "in between" such explanations (even despite them) to the extent that they fail to address the experiential complexity of daily life. It is the cognitive quality and potential of that "in between" space which is of concern here, especially in the light of the suffering and creative stimulus which may be associated with it.

For many, especially the young, **the challenge to be faced is the sense of going nowhere and with no sense of when one might get**

there -- of being "betwixt and between", neither here or there. Reference may also be made to living in a "twilight zone". This condition is exemplified as much by massive confusion at airports in a weather crisis as by crises of personal relationship, neurosis, unemployment, or the experiences of the marginalized, the so-called indigenous peoples, or issues of inequality and injustice. The pattern is also to be detected in global governance in response to a crisis of crises -- any insightful plot having seemingly been lost, despite claims that remedial efforts have been redoubled. Deliveries on promises, like flights from such airports, have been "delayed" or "cancelled" (*Abuse of Faith in Governance*, 2009).

Here the reality of such existential confusion is addressed and reframed -- notably in terms of **liminality -- as offering a potential that is the cognitive antithesis of what have been promoted in many domains as integrative, universal panaceas.**

Bridges: iconic, archetypal and otherwise

The covered Bridge of Sighs exemplifies the transition from one condition to another, given its traditional association with the movement of those convicted of crimes from the place of judgement on one side to the place of condemnation across a canal. The "sighs" derived from the last sight offered to the criminal before being finally restricted in cells, possibly never to emerge.

As a metaphor, this construct offers a means of holding and distinguishing the place of judgement, or of any informed choice, from the place where the consequences of that choice must necessarily be lived out with little possibility of recourse. In traversing the bridge there is indeed a brief opportunity for reflection on the relation between the two -- a kind of timeless meta-perspective.

This timeless perspective has long been echoed in the romantic associations of that bridge for couples passing beneath it in a gondola -- an experience possibly catalyzed and enhanced by song. The gondola moves along the waterway between the two original conditions, essentially orthogonal to the perspectives they represent. The song may enable the experience to be subsequently recalled. Neither on the bridge nor on the gondola is there any realistic opportunity for tarrying. Both are moments in time variously to be recalled -- whether with the sigh of the condemned or the sigh of the romantic

By contrast the iconic Ponte Vecchio in Florence offered space for some to live. It was also a place of exchange and trading, notably in the shops located there. The question is who is able to live and work in such a place and how -- a middle place in which living is otherwise unsustainable?

This construct offers a means of holding the sense of a meta-stable place where it is potentially possible to be -- contrary to the conventional expectations typically associated with living at either end of the bridge. It is a construct offering a kind of "container" for living the experience of polarization, without requiring identification with either "side". The cognitive significance of "container" has been stressed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (*Metaphors We Live By*, 1980).

Beyond "Us" and "Them"

Metaphorically both archetypal bridges offer understandings of the relation between "us" and "them" and between "here" and "there" (*Us and Them: relating to challenging others*, 2009).

The Bridge of Sighs transmutes the relationship into an atemporal experience -- to be recalled across time. The Ponte Vecchio suggests the existence of a "space" between "us" and "them" -- a strange space effectively nourished by the ambiguity which typically undermines any conventional decision-making or strategic mindset. This space is not supposed to be a place in which it is possible to be. In principle it is the essence of unsustainability. Strangely too it has connotations of age -- it is the "old bridge" from "a time before" and as such perhaps readily (if not too readily) to be deprecated as obsolete. However it has also become a central symbol of the Renaissance to which Florence gave birth.

Such a "space" raises questions about how it is distinguished from more conventional spaces and how "who" can survive and thrive there. Such questions evoke both mythical dimensions as well as the strangeness envisaged by the multi-universe of physicists and celebrated in science fiction (as with the *Stargate* series or *The Time Zone* series). It is the stuff of imagination and as such is effectively a "strange attractor" notably celebrated in some forms of art (as noted below).

The argument can be developed by enlarging the discourse space offered by the binary logic of "us" and "them" through the quadrilemma articulated by Kinhide Mushakoji (*Global Issues and Interparadigmatic Dialogue*, 1988):

- A (as with "us")
- not-A (as with "them")
- both A and not-A (as expressed to a degree in arguments for "tolerance")
- neither A nor not-A (a characteristic of "betwixt and between", as discussed below)

These can be related by the bridge metaphor in that a conventional bridge enables a degree of traffic between "A" and "not-A" -- as with the Bridge of Sighs (potentially one-way traffic, as in many other situations). However the sense of "both A and not-A" is better conveyed by the Ponte Vecchio in that people can dwell on that bridge and can conduct their business there. It is a place for exchange. More intriguing is the case of "neither A nor not-A" which, through its emphasis on "otherwise", suggests an orientation that is not adequately encompassed by any flows across the bridge, having significant associations to what flows beneath of a different orientation and disassociated from such conventional flows. This flow may acquire a surprising degree of significance when the bridged "river" rises and "floods" over its "sides", possibly even destroying any conventional bridge in the process -- or rendering it impassable.

In the latter case, the unconventional nature of any associated cognition is a theme of **apophatic discourse**, and "unsaying", as discussed separately (*Being What You Want: problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?* 2008). This could be understood as related to the concern of **Eric Voegelin** that a more fundamental sense of order is conveyed by an experience of transcendence which

can never be fully defined nor described, though it may be conveyed in symbols (*In Search of Order*, 1987). It remains to be seen how the widely-publicized focus of Ray Kurzweil on both technological singularity and human transcendence responds to their "entanglement" in memetic singularity (*Emerging Memetic Singularity in the Global Knowledge Society*, 2009).

There is a case for associating "between" with the "both/and" logic, and using "betwixt" for the "neither/nor" case. With respect to "us" and "them", it would seem that the challenge is in the cognitive nature of the conjunctive "and" in providing a bridge. Why and how is the "middle" excluded so strangely by convention?

The issue of concern here is the manner in which conventional responses to the challenges of governance and sustainability would seem to be stuck in "us and them" logic -- as with US foreign policy -- when **the possibilities of responding to the challenges of experience call for consideration of "both/and" and "neither/nor"**. However efforts at "both/and" would seem to have been less than successful -- as exemplified by the UN Year of Dialogue between Civilizations (2001) in the very year in which the "you're either with us, or against us" mindset was given such dramatic focus in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Living "betwixt and between"

Cognitive confusion: The phrase "betwixt and between" (in English) evokes an interesting challenge to conventional thinking. It now appears to be used to suggest -- in support of an intuitive insight -- a curiously rich and subtle focus in a surprising variety of domains, as noted below. It can be understood as indicative of an experiential reality which various "universalizing", "integrative" and "unifying" initiatives have as yet failed to encompass -- or to which they are insensitive. Again, rather than offering an abstract, logical explanation, it appears to give expression to the quality of complex experience which may include both a high degree of confusion and uncertainty and the existential dynamics of engaging with it. Any "integrative" dimensions are then subtly aesthetic -- perhaps consistent with the call for an aesthetic dimension to strategic coherence (*Enacting Transformative Integral Thinking through Playful Elegance*, 2010).

Most challenging is the sense in which the confusion relates to any sense of living between objective and subjective realities as many naturally do, irrespective of conventions regarding either. This confusion may be entangled with any sense of living between the past and the future as is the case of many caught in collective conflicts of historical origin or in relationships largely determined by their "history".

A helpful contribution to reflection on the "in-between", is the work of Yair Neuman (*Mirrors Mirrored: Is That All There Is? S.E.E.D. Journal (Semiotics, Evolution, Energy, and Development)*, 2004) summarized by Peter Harries-Jones (*Editorial: Essays on Recursion, Difference, Dialectics, Maps and Territories in Celebration of Gregory Bateson's centennial, S.E.E.D.*, 2004) as:

As Neuman explains it, the key to understanding Bateson's view of recursion lies in the relations that exist between levels of a heterarchy. This gives rise to a 'logic of in-between.' The recursive 'logic of in-between' requires oscillation between two dimensions so that the meaning of an event emerges from this oscillation rather than strict re-ordering that Russell's version of logical proposed. Russell's logical typing imposed a 'higher,' or more inclusive level, on a 'lower.' By contrast, in Bateson's writing, the product of the oscillation is the re-entering form and is the 'meta-level.' This version gives a more satisfying explanation of changed meanings than the simple descriptive correspondences of wholes and parts in mathematical set theory. It also highlights boundary phenomena of a meta- or more holistic level in a manner quite different from the post-modernist trend of 'bottom-up' signification which tends towards infinite regression as if in a hall of mirrors.

The breakthrough in fuzzy logic is to recognize that there are other alternative representations in between extremes, as described by Chris Lucas (*Fuzzy Multidimensional Logic, CALResCo*, March 2000). This is a theme of fuzzy system design (Leonid Reznik, et al., *Fuzzy Systems Design: social and engineering applications*, 1998).

Trans-portion: Understood in terms of bridging, the conventional initiatives associated with "inter-", "cross-" and "multi-", then imply more limiting "mechanistic", structural connotations which have indeed proven to be less than adequate to the challenges of the times. Progress to date is remarkably summarized by Jennifer Gidley (*The Evolution of Consciousness as a Planetary Imperative: an integration of integral views. Integral Review*, 2007).

The possibilities of "trans-" have as yet to bear fruit and already pose fundamental problems of comprehension -- as with the many presumptuous appeals to "universal" on an isolated planet (*New Paradigms via a Renewed Set of Prefixes: dependence of international policy-making on an array of operational terms*, 2003). Humanity has yet to be cognitively "trans-ported" into a mode of sustainability. Hence the merit of further reflection on the "neither/nor" connotations of bridging -- as potentially to be associated with the Ponte Vecchio.

Gaps and cracks: The potential importance of "betwixt and between", as discussed below, is indicated by a commentary on the significance of gaps by William P. Cheshire, Jr. (*Grey Matters: the synapse and other gaps*, The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, 12 December 2008):

Gaps are an intractable feature of the landscape of knowledge. Betwixt and between the known and the knowable, gaps persist. A complete explanation of mind, matter and the universe remains persistently elusive to human inquiry. Some of these explanatory gaps are like holes in a jigsaw puzzle awaiting the addition of more scientific knowledge. Other gaps lie at the edge, above, or below the jigsaw puzzle. These gaps are open opportunities to look beyond the empirical patterns to larger answers....

The task of science is to seek to fill explanatory gaps. And yet, there are questions that science alone cannot answer with certainty. Though all of nature is subject to scientific investigation, not all that is true regarding the nature of things and minds can be apprehended through the scientific method. Science properly understood accommodates a creative tension between what can be seen and what is abstractly reasoned, between what is known and what can be imagined. Gaps persist. They force us to

seek answers more earnestly. Some answers come not as solved mathematical formulae but as wondrous epiphanies unwritable by equations but hintable through metaphor. Ignoring these gaps, one might measure the brain completely without fathoming the mind or contemplating its Maker.

Of potential relevance to reflection on predictive decision-making is the argument of [Robert Temple](#) (*Oracles of the Dead: ancient techniques for predicting the future*, 2002). This relates insights of physics into crack formation to their traditional Chinese use with respect to the *I Ching* binary coding system, as discussed separately (*Engaging with the Future with Insights of the Past*, 2010)

Understood as interval, such gaps are fundamental to Japanese culture, as noted by Richard B. Pilgrim (*Intervals (ma) in Space and Time: foundations for a religio-aesthetic paradigm in Japan, History of Religions*, 1986):

The word *ma* basically means an "interval" between two (or more) spatial or temporal things and events. Thus it is not only used in compounds to suggest measurement but carries meanings such as gap, opening, space between, time between, and so forth.

Betwixt and Between Syndrome: In a relevant commentary on *Deconstructing the Power of the Global Elite* (2008), however excessively politicized, an understanding of "betwixt and between" is expressed as a "syndrome" by Judith H. Young (*The Betwixt and Between Syndrome, Earth Rising*, 4 October 2008) in the following terms:

The relentless march toward tyranny in the United States and other nations with a heritage of freedom, underscored by the blatant criminality of the recent bailout package implemented against the political will and interest of the populace, seems to portend a terrifying future for humanity. It leaves us in a no man's land between the familiarity of our previous reality and the uncharted dangers lying ahead. This loss of bearings should be seen as a form of psychological control by the globalists over the populace for two reasons.

- First, it is a situation they have engineered, and engineered in such a way as to serve their self-interest.
- Second, our fear of a destiny they have designed for us keeps us from exercising our full potential of actively opposing its unfolding.

At a time of the implementation of what can only be perceived as their endgame, we find ourselves floundering and cut off from our inner fire. Humans have an instinctive fear of the unknown, which is exacerbated if trends indicate an unknown that is negative rather than positive. In the present case the unknown seems to be characterized by the probability of enormous global destabilization, with massive suffering in store for the populace. Although the world as we have known it is far from acceptable, the horizon appears quite possibly unbearable - hence the phrase "looking into the abyss" used recently by a number of analysts.

This makes the *betwixt and between predicament more difficult to navigate than it would be in less extreme situations*, such as adolescence as a normal and predictable transition from childhood to maturity.

Another exacerbation is the endless onslaught of crises that the oligarchy orchestrates in order to keep us in a state of continual disorientation, seemingly unable to process one trauma before the next one hits. [*emphasis added*]

Of greater relevance to the following argument, Young concludes:

But as in the case of normalizing the abnormal and learned helplessness, the solution lies in keen understanding of the problem. Once we dissect the betwixt and between predicament, a predicament that all of us have experienced and navigated in our personal lives but may well not have recognized and named as such, our fear will lose its hold and we can reclaim our power.

Liminality of betwixt and between

Liminal personae: The theme is otherwise explored in relation to [liminality](#) by Bob Trubshaw (*The Metaphors and Rituals of Place and Time: an introduction to liminality or Why Christopher Robin wouldn't walk on the cracks. At the Edge*, 1996). In discussing Hermes as the "god of the gaps", Richard E. Palmer (*The Liminality of Hermes and the Meaning of Hermeneutics*, 2001) refers to the articulation of liminality by [Victor Turner](#) (*Passages, Margins, Poverty*, 1974) following [Arnold Van Gennep](#) (*The Rites of Passage*, 1972).

Turner highlights the sense in which during the liminal stage of transformation, the between stage, one's status becomes ambiguous; one is "neither here nor there," one is "betwixt and between all fixed points of classification," and thus the form and rules of both an earlier state and a state-to-come are suspended. For the moment, one is an outsider; one is on the margins, in an indeterminate state -- a liminal person betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. For Turner:

The attributes of...liminal personae are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classification that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial. As such their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or the moon. (1969, p. 95)

Many cultures offer a mythical articulation of the "mysterious" nature of those able to live in such conditions -- to live "in between". The

elves and other creatures of the land of [faerie](#) of western mythology offer an example. These are enchanting to children of all ages (as acknowledged in production of blockbuster movies), despite being variously deprecated by the conventions of science and faith that have proven to be so inadequate in the face of current global crises.

Movement between worlds: References in current literature to "betwixt and between" in contemporary preoccupation with such matters are relatively rare, although often surprising in their own right (Erebos, [Betwixt and Between](#), South African Pagan Council, 23 November 2008). The phrase is of particular significance in [Wicca](#) -- being translated into Irish Gaelic, for example, by [Idir Eatarthu](#) (to mean "between worlds"). In a discussion of [shamanism](#), Claire Montanaro ([Betwixt and Between Times](#), [ezinearticles.com](#), 2008) indicates that:

An important part of this tradition is omen reading, which is a practice whereby a shamanic practitioner works in different realities, timeframes or cycles, using the "betwixt and between" time to get information and guidance about situations in the present or future... Humanity itself is experiencing its own betwixt and between time in a way that is profoundly important for us as individuals and as a race, and for the planet.

Similar references are to be found to the "cracks between worlds" and to movement between them. Such notions are cultivated in modern myth-making (as with the [Stargate](#) series) as well as figuring in shamanic training programmes in relation to sacred sites. They are also cultivated metaphorically in relation to the many "worlds" of which society is composed (for example: John Gray, [Moving between Worlds, Resurgence](#); Vonda Plett Martens, [Moving between Opposing Worlds: the moral experiences of white, anti-racism educators in Saskatchewan](#), 2007; Miranda Ward, [Can You Move Between Worlds As A Perpetual Traveler?](#) [MatadorNetwork](#), 4th August 2008).

Contemporary references to "betwixt and between"

More surprising however, even astonishing, is the extent to which the extraordinary phrase "betwixt and between" -- historically associated with evocative folk tales and myth -- is now widely used in a variety of contexts. This is evident in the references (in an Annex) to those obliged to live "between worlds" to some degree and variously confronted by their contradictions. -- also recognized as a "twilight zone" ([Bibliography of "Betwixt and Between": including references to liminality and Neti Neti](#), 2011) . Of particular relevance is any sense of being "caught between worlds" as a "dweller in a twilight zone". The experience is the subject of both serious study and a theme of creative cultural exploration in works of imagination.

The bibliography includes very few of the many references to commentaries from a pagan, wiccan or shamanistic perspective -- readily to be found by web searches. The items in the bibliography, with the indicative addition of some (of the many) focusing on liminality, can be roughly grouped under the following headings (which link to the relevant section of the [Annex](#)):

- **sociopolitical and strategic contexts:** The explicit use of "betwixt and between" in this case is indicative of the nature of the reality to which some feel they are now exposed and with which they have to deal pragmatically:
 - [relations between countries](#)
 - [place, immigration and refugees](#)
 - [disempowerment](#)
- **social relations and management:** This group is especially interesting given the recognition of the failure of conventional frameworks to encompass regulatory challenges
- **cultural relations and dialogue:** Notions of "betwixt and between" have clearly been acknowledged as opening a space central to discourse and social intercourse
- **life transition and gender:** This group, with the focus on transitional phases, initiated the associated focus on the cognitive subtleties of liminality (discussed below)
- **aesthetics, literature and performance art:** The sense of "betwixt and between", especially as explored in terms of liminality, is now much-valued in some forms of aesthetic expression and experience (as discussed below)
- **creativity**
- **education and philosophy**
- **science, technology and media**

"Reality" of "betwixt and between"

Existence: It could readily be argued that "betwixt and between" is merely used as a literary device -- a structural descriptor, even a newly fashionable code -- especially given the inability of translations to carry the cognitive challenges and mythical subtleties emphasized here. As indicated by the burgeoning literature on liminality (and irrespective of the more extreme imaginings of physicists), it is however possible to give a degree of credence to such potential forms of "existence". These are increasingly acknowledged as being of relevance to governance. The problematic nature of such "existence" was explored in a separate comparison of the US Tea Party movement and Al-Qaida (see [Reality and existence](#) in [Cultivating Global Strategic Fantasies of Choice](#), 2010).

However of primary interest is the use of "betwixt and between" to emphasize the challenging cognitive subtlety and confusion -- especially for the marginalized with little strategic traction -- irrespective of any conventional academic descriptive framing through "liminality". The latter may be suspected of seeking thereby to "appropriate" and define that space -- marking out the boundaries of a new discipline according to academic convention. The experiential subtlety may also be explored more speculatively ([Existential challenge of "The Other": climbing elven stairways](#), 2007; [Archetypal otherness -- "DNA vs. I Ching": climbing elven stairways](#), 2007; [Climbing Elven Stairways: DNA as a macroscopic metaphor of polarized psychodynamics](#), 2007).

The quality of the existence of "betwixt and between" may also be "re-cognized" through expressions such as the Vedic *Neti Neti* (Not this, Not that). Its translation into other languages may serve as translations of "betwixt and between". "Betwixt and between" can then be understood as being as much a tautology as *Neti Neti* which is variously translated as:

- German; *Nicht dieses, nicht jenes; Nicht dies, nicht dies; Nicht dies, nicht das*
- French: *Pas ça, pas ça; Pas cela, pas cela; Ni ceci, ni ceci; Ni ceci, ni cela*
- Spanish: *Ni esto, ni aquello; Yo no soy eso, yo no soy eso; Esto no, esto no; No es esto, no es esto; Ni esto, ni lo otro*

Such efforts are consistent with those of **apophatic discourse** and "unsaying", as discussed separately (*Being What You Want: problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?* 2008).

Psychosocial construction of reality: Whereas crossing a bridge may imply adventures into new territory where other conventions are upheld, here the adventure potentially involves enraging with other kinds of reality -- one that is between conventional realities -- calling into question the very nature of cognitive "convention" (*Navigating Alternative Conceptual Realities: clues to the dynamics of enacting new paradigms through movement*, 2002). **How "viable" might imaginal constructs of this "between worlds" condition prove to be? Are they a neglected key to sustainability -- the space from which it might emerge?** Is their viability simply a matter of faith for those who choose to dwell within them?

Multidimensional spacetime: It is of course the case that physicists have given themselves the freedom and legitimacy to explore multi-dimensional spacetime -- far beyond ordinary comprehension -- some of whose dimensions are described metaphorically as best understood as "curled up" into minuscule form. Analogous explorations by the psychosocial sciences are condemned as lacking and credibility whatsoever.

Virtual reality: Many have commented on the transitional spaces created by the virtual realities and virtual worlds of electronic media. For example, Gheorghe Dan (*Living in Limnos, Betwixt and Between: a trans-reality Balkan Odyssey*, 2006) discusses Netochka Nezvanova (NN), a seven year:

.... Glass Bead Experiment grown within the global-mindscape, dispersed and dissipated within the panoply of actions and interactions, mutualism, parasitism, mimicry and errors which form the basis of the Internet, a global network that spans the planet, a live membrane consisting of more than 10000 networks and more than one million computers.... In our modern epoch of game playing, NN may be a phantasmagorical Internet experiment, manifesting herself in forms utterly alien to reason and reflexivity, a pataphysical black hole that consumes the bodies falling prey to its seductively intoxicating and euphoric 'love theory', in the process experiencing a melange of singularities.

Twixters: Curiously, and of some relevance, is the recognition accorded to "twixters" by *Time* (January 2005) as being a new generation (of Americans) trapped, in a sense, *betwixt* (between) adolescence and adulthood. Parallels have been recognized in other developed societies, notably Italy and Japan. This focus tends however to obscure the many other modes in which "betwixt and between" is experienced by other segments of the population with more than a mild degree of anguish. For example, in relation to Northern Ireland, the point is made by Stephen Kelly (*The Island that is Nowhere: or, cultural translation -- a utopian project*)

Living and working in Northern Ireland, one is more accustomed than is perhaps typical in a developed Western society of the extent to which place, and placedness, determines one's sense of identity.... And yet, for a considerable, and arguably growing, number of people in Northern Ireland, identity has become a case of thinking of oneself as 'neither/nor' or 'and/both' -- as, in other words, *betwixt* and *between*.... And there has hardly been a more urgent need to imagine 'new modes of life.' At a moment when identities threaten to ossify into the dangerous polarities of West and East, of secularity and religion, of freedom and submission, we are desperately in need of new languages, new narratives, new critical practices. What I want to suggest is that translation, and reflection upon the conditions and dynamics of translation, is a pre-eminent means of investigating the possibility of new forms of politics expressive of the pluralities of place, of identity, of history.

Of similar relevance, using "betwixt" as an acronym, a major European project focused on family precarity (Daniel Bertaux, et al., *BETWIXT -- Between Integration and Exclusion: a comparative study in local dynamics of precarity and resistance to exclusion in urban contexts*. 2002).

Dwellers in interstices: Given the recognition of "twixters", it is useful to identify others with acknowledged skills in dwelling "between worlds" however these worlds are understood. Those living to some degree in some such "twilight zone" might variously include:

- "intermediaries", including negotiators and mediators
- people of faith believing in a transcendental reality, including priests, shamans, mediums
- people living and working in "alternative" or intentional communities
- innovators drawing on diverse sources of inspiration, typically (if not of necessity) indifferent to convention
- pragmatists, opportunists, "survivors", resourceful "scroungers"
- levels of secrecy: the partially informed, confidence tricksters, spin doctors and public relations specialists, double agents of espionage
- levels of corruption: operators in the black economy, criminals (successful or otherwise)
- users of psychoactive drugs and substances
- variously deluded: superstitious, neurotic
- the elderly in their bewildered exposure to the inhabital
- life at a nexus of various partially incompatible technologies, especially evident in the case of information technology

- the chronically or terminally ill -- conscious of living between life and death

Also of relevance are those who perform functions unrecognized by the formal classifications of the ILO *International Standard Classification of Occupations* (or its national counterparts) or the UN *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities*. Absence from either of these systems tends to imply an existential experience which is "betwixt and between".

Another approach to those who dwell in interstices (or are forced to do so, knowingly or otherwise) is through the use of language known only to the few, as surveyed by Barry J. Blake (*Secret Language: codes, tricks, spies, thieves, and symbols*, 2010). He notes the use of language to marginalize all but the initiated -- but who themselves thereby dwell in interstices they have made their own.

Cognitive space of higher order? In the quest here for a more fruitful understanding of "betwixt and between", it is appropriate to note Kelly's quote of [Hugh of St Victor](#) (1096-1141):

The man who finds his country sweet is only a raw beginner; the man for whom each country is his own is already strong; but only the man for whom the whole of the world is like a foreign country is perfect.

Also of relevance is the much-cited reference of the poet [John Keats](#) to "negative capability" as the poetic state in which we are "capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. [...Being] content with half knowledge" where one trusts in the heart's perceptions.

Vestigial "pillar" of the middle way

Bridge construction: The construction of a bridge -- of fundamental historical significance to travel, trade and development -- offers the possibility of holding further insights into the cognitive process between "here" and "there". A degree of legitimacy has been given to this through metaphor in relation to [cognitive behavioural therapy](#) (Richard Stott, et al., *Oxford Guide to Metaphors in CBT: building cognitive bridges*, 2010).

Crucial to bridge construction (of all but the simplest) is the arch and how its form can be sustained and can thereby carry a load. Essential to the construction of an arch in traditional bridges is the function of the [keystone](#). This may be viewed as a "vestigial" pillar no longer requiring to be conventionally grounded. This avoids the need for a pillar which would allow the bridge to be constructed using the simplest means -- as with those based on laying one or more tree logs between the two sides.

Keystones: The discovery and use of keystones must clearly have cognitive implications reflecting a breakthrough in understanding. It is out of that breakthrough that the tangible construction was enabled. However these implications are readily forgotten in the necessary focus on the engineering of any bridge. Used figuratively, keystone refers to the central supporting element of a larger structure, such as a theory or an organization, without which the whole structure would collapse. And yet it is not grounded as might otherwise be expected.

Pillars: The single arch of the Bridge of Sighs uses a keystone. But the much larger Ponte Vecchio has two intermediary pillars between the sides, namely with three arches -- each with keystones. There are habitations and shops across all three.

It is intriguing that efforts at the construction of major psychosocial structures, such as organizations (whether international or local) and communities are typically based on "pillars". For example many initiatives of the European Community explicitly refer to a set of virtual pillars, often value-based, by which the initiative is sustained (*Strategic "pillars"*, 2008). There is less explicit reference to any "arches" linking them, or to use of "keystone" in that context -- but rhetorical reference may occasionally be made to it in relation to the connection between the pillars.

Psychosocial Rosetta stone: Although indeed "virtual", the actual function of a keystone in that context is less clear -- as with the juxtaposition of corresponding language variants on the [Rosetta Stone](#). There is as yet no "Rosetta Stone" through which corresponding language variants of disciplines or religions can be juxtaposed, although such may be variously hypothesized (*Systemic Crises as Keys to Systemic Remedies: a metaphorical Rosetta Stone for future strategy*, 2008; *Potential Psychosocial Significance of Monstrous Moonshine: an exceptional form of symmetry as a Rosetta stone for cognitive frameworks*, 2007).

Unconventional modalities: It is unclear whether and how such construction enables people to live sustainably "on the bridge", namely "in between". However -- and irrespective of the logical exclusion of any "middle" -- people may well be obliged to discover ways to do so in managing their relationships in polarized psychosocial contexts. These modalities may necessarily be unconventional, whether loosely described as "alternative" or "informal" -- even to the point of being deprecated and criminalized from the perspectives of conventional frameworks. The dynamic relationship between "formal" and "informal" then becomes relevant (*Enabling Moral Currency Circulation*, 2010).

Avoiding constraining pillar-dependency

Shifting levels: In the light of bridge construction, a useful question is then how to avoid the need for "pillars" and the simplistic ("Stone Age") architecture which they encourage. How to enable the transition from pillar-dependency to keystone-dependency? In this light an intermediate pillar is "excluded" by being effectively virtualized to a degree into a keystone. The "excluded middle" of logic achieves a new form of cognitive operacy -- but not at the level of the relationships it regulates. This can be understood in terms of Albert Einstein's much-cited phrase: *The significant problems we face can not be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them*. Some kind of "keystone functionality" is required at a different level.

Being (up)right: In seeking to support psychosocial arches of greater span, however, at what point is it nevertheless necessary to

combine keystones with pillars -- as with the Ponte Vecchio? But are there forms of psychosocial construction which could obviate any need for pillars -- conventionally understood as necessarily "upright" with respect to the orienting constraints of gravity? "Upright" is then readily associated with being "right" by the "righteous" -- despite the unfortunately divisive consequences for a "global" civilization within which people are variously "upright" on a sphere (*Geometry of Thinking for Sustainable Global Governance*, 2009).

Nevertheless "flat earth" thinking continues to be promoted, as separately discussed (*Irresponsible Dependence on a Flat Earth Mentality -- in response to global governance challenges*, 2008; Richard Slaughter, *Transcending Flatland*, In: *Knowledge Base of Future Studies*. Presence, 1996). More intriguing still is the possibility of forms of psychosocial construction in which any keystone becomes virtual in relation to relatively more tangible pillars.

Tensegrity: These issues have been discussed separately, notably in relation to [tensegrity architecture](#):

- *Coherent Value Frameworks: Pillar-ization, Polarization and Polyhedral frames of reference* (2008)
- *Configuring pillars in Towards Polyhedral Global Governance: complexifying oversimplistic strategic metaphors* (2008).
- *From Networking to Tensegrity Organization* (1984)

Especially relevant to the dynamics of liminality is the extent to which the viability of tensegrity design is dependent on dynamic readjustment of stresses throughout the whole structure. This dynamic offers one way of reflecting on living betwixt and between. Tensegrity dynamics are evident to a degree in the rigging of sailing boats. Its relevance is attested by the title of a book by policy scientist [Geoffrey Vickers](#) (*Freedom in a Rocking Boat: changing values in an unstable society*, 1972).

Dynamics of cognitive possibility: "possum"?

Embodying keystone functionality: In quest of the possibility of living "in between" -- as implied by the Ponte Vecchio -- the above argument highlights the manner in which keystone functionality must necessarily be embodied by the inhabitants of that space. It is they who hold the attitudinal and behavioural "pattern that connects" (*Walking Elven Pathways: enactivating the pattern that connects*, 2006). This means that, in addition to becoming "virtual", that functionality is necessarily associated with a dynamic. In a tangible bridge the keystone does indeed have such a function in relation to the invisible stresses and strains to which the bridge is dynamically subjected. In a psychosocial structure this dynamic is cognitively embodied, notably in the form of necessary regulatory behavioural patterns. The inhabitants collectively take on functions of the keystone -- in a manifestation of [collective intelligence](#).

Rather than being simply a regulatory dynamic, as in the more tangible case, there is an additional adaptive requirement to ensure sustainability in a dynamic psychosocial context. The inhabitants have to deal with the possible and its emergence, anticipating and embodying change over time to a degree (*Strategic Embodiment of Time: configuring questions fundamental to change*, 2010).

Identity implications: This shift has implications for the identity of the inhabitants who take on qualities of that dynamic. This is explored separately in relation to dynamic cycles (*Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psychically" defined*, 2007). The matter has been explored in relation to the emergence of transgendered identity (Mandy Wilson, *I am the Prince of Pain, for I am a Princess in the Brain!: liminal transgender identities, narratives and the elimination of ambiguities*, *Sexualities*, 5, November 2002, pp. 425-448). The deliberate juxtaposition of "liminal" and "elimination" is also suggestive. Liminality, notably in the case of ritualised transitions, is then associated with the simplification or elimination of social structure accompanied by an increase in logical categories and forms of their relations.

There is a sense in which identity is then associated with possibility and potential -- with becoming. Rather than the conventional "*cogito ergo sum*", there is a shift to "*adapto ergo sum*" -- an engagement with time. The inhabitants become dwellers in time as separately discussed (*The Isdom of the Wisdom Society: embodying time as the heartland of humanity*, 2003; *Strategic Embodiment of Time: configuring questions fundamental to change*, 2010).

Possum? Mnemonically, the etymology of "possibility" and "[possum](#)", can be exploited: *possibilis* "that can be done", from *posse* "be able"; *potis* ('able, capable') + *sum* ('I am').

In that mode the argument of [Edward de Bono](#) for use of a new conjunctive device -- "po" -- can also be fruitfully associated with *sum*. For de Bono, "po" is a call for a suspension of conventional judgement to enable reframing (*Po: Beyond Yes and No*, 1973). It is a challenge to cognitive straightjackets as previously discussed (*Categorical Straightjackets: PO -- a suggestion for a de-patterning device for international organization descriptions*, 1974).

Becoming a bridge: Reframing the locus of individual or collective identity in relation to possibility and potential is intriguingly associated with the widely-appreciated chanted slogan of Barack Obama for the [2008 US presidential campaign](#): *Yes We Can*. Irrespective of any subsequent disappointment (and reactions against "*yes we canism*"), this gave a degree of credibility to a cognitive space typically considered problematic and non-viable. It adds a degree of meaning to a related slogan: *Be the Change* -- first articulated by Mahatma Gandhi (Michelle Nunn, *Be the change!: change the world, change yourself*, 2006). This has been given a focus through various networks and conferences (e.g. [Be the Change Earth Alliance](#)).

Recognition is commonly given to "bridge-building" and to "**acting as a bridge**" through which connections are enabled between different parties, groups or cultures. The roles of match-maker, mediator and negotiator are of this kind. The role may be deliberately institutionalized as with [The Bridges Conferences](#) bringing together "practicing mathematicians, scientists, artists, educators, musicians, writers, computer scientists, sculptors, dancers, weavers, and model builders in a lively atmosphere of exchange and mutual encouragement".

These raise questions as to whether that mode is primarily one of acting as exemplar, as catalyst, or has other cognitive implications as potentially suggested by [The Transitioner](#) network -- focused on "transitioning the world through collective intelligence". Both slogans

suggest a cognitive possibility of "**becoming the bridge**" -- a form of engagement dramatically demonstrated by the collective behaviour of colonies of some species of ant when needing to cross a stream. Again it could be said, following Varela, that they effectively "lay down the path in walking" (*Walking Elven Pathways: enactivating the pattern that connects*, 2006). However **there is a sense in which *Yes We Can* refers to bridging the obstacle to change, with *Be the Change* as the process of doing so, whereas the concern here factors in the mysterious relevance of the contrary nature of what is thereby crossed.**

A similar reservation may be made with respect to use of *Neti Neti* as a paradoxically descriptive assertion, when "betwixt and between" at least offers a sense of existential implication in a paradoxical cognitive space.

Innovative approaches to bridge design -- as with the [suspension bridge](#) -- are appropriately associated with such suspension of conventional framing of the challenge of traversing a space of otherness. **Where are the designers of "suspension bridges" to enable the spanning of greater psychosocial difference? How can any such designs be rendered credible?**

Of relevance is that an anonymous blogger, suffering from myalgic encephalomyalitis, and celebrating liminality as the realm of tricksters, ambiguity, and "betwixt and between", should choose to frame her condition in terms of *Becoming the Bridge* (22 June 2010). This is consistent with a degree of existential resonance between personal and planetary "disease" (*Implication of Personal Despair in Planetary Despair*, 2010; *Cognitive Implications of Lifestyle Diseases*, 2010).

Living "as" an imaginal bridge, rather than "on" one

Living on a bridge: Potentially more challenging is any psychological process which might be framed as "living on a bridge", as implied by the traders living above their shops on the Ponte Vecchio. This recalls those who lived at trading hubs at the points of intersection of traditional trade routes -- the [caravanserais](#). The apparently simple network geometry, in which such a nexus is embedded, obscures the psychosocial "knots" associated with functioning in these modes.

The internalization of these cognitive knots is recognized to a degree in the topological explorations from a psychiatric perspective of [Jacques Lacan](#) (*Of Structure as the Inmixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever*, 1966) and [R. D. Laing](#) (*Knots*, 1970). As is to be expected such concerns invite criticism and controversy, most notably by those who have little concern for the issues addressed -- and having little insight to offer to those challenged by them. Of relevance are the arguments formulated by [Alan Sokal](#) (*Beyond the Hoax: science, philosophy, and culture*, 2008).

This ambiguous condition derives from the anguish of the common existential experience described metaphorically as getting from "here" to "there" -- typically with respect to a sense of progress in any initiative, developmental project or improvement of a personal condition. This can be central to a sense of identity and its lifelong frustrations, especially -- as is common -- when there is little sense of movement or "growth". Daily life, in "going nowhere", is then readily felt to be a nexus of frustrations -- a form of reprise of the traditional trading hub.

The choices it is then necessary to make again recall the existential regret associated with the Bridge of Sighs, a brief vision of frustrated potential, tainted by the sense of subsequent entrapment it implies. On a global scale, this is consistent with the persisting challenges of a continuing round of crises and the sense of an imminent crisis of crises ([Web resources on "breaking the cycle"](#), 2002). Development may then be experienced as a process of getting from "bad" to "worse", as explored from a contrarian perspective (*Veloping: the art of sustaining significance*, 1997).

Living as a bridge: The internalization could however be taken a stage further through exploring cognitive processes of "living as an imaginal bridge", irrespective of any externalities by which they may be reinforced to some degree. The concern is then the coherence and viability of that bridging process when the bridge is understood not so much as a device for getting from "here" to "there". Rather it calls into question the meaning of any "side" on which one might be -- the choice of "which side one is on" in terms of any "us and them" polarization.

Also called into question however is the nature of the "here and now" as a viable cognitive space for living -- especially under the pressures for progress and growth. This is a theme most recently popularized by [Eckhart Tolle](#) (*The Power of Now*, 1999).

Exemplifying conventional resistance: Appropriately resistance to consideration of such possibilities is well-reflected in the essentially sterile controversy over the explorations of Lacan and deconstructionists, as in the [Sokal Affair](#), for example. Its relation to the challenge of "betwixt and between" is well-identified in an encyclopedia entry on [deconstruction](#) as contrasted with [logical positivism](#) (*GeoDZ: Earth Encyclopedia*):

All meaningful scientific statements were either empirical (or synthetic), and could be verified against the facts of the world, or were analytical, that is, true by definition such as logic and formal mathematical theorems. Statements that were neither empirical nor analytical were metaphysical, and simply meaningless. *Here, then, is a classic case of asserting the presence of one side of the binary, the part representing facts and logic, over its subordinate, the part which is absent and which represents values and metaphysics.* An immediate criticism of logical positivism, though, was the justification of the empirical-analytical distinction that defined the limits of meaningful scientific statements. It was itself neither a strictly empirical statement, nor an analytical one. But it wasn't a metaphysical statement either because it would then be meaningless, whereas its purpose is precisely one of delimiting the meaningful from the meaningless. In short, it lies *betwixt and between the binary of facts and values, between science and metaphysics, thereby rendering that very distinction problematic.* [*emphasis added*]

Living through an inner bridge: Potentially even more intriguing is the sense in which any locus of personal identity in the brain could be associated with the "bridge" between the various cognitive modules (or "brains") rather than in any one of them -- or in shifting

between them. Antonio de Nicolas focuses on the biocultural implications of the five brains of humans: reptilian, limbic, right and left hemispheres, and the "interpreter module" (*Neurobiology, Communities, Religion: a bio-cultural study*, 1998). These brains function either independently or in harmony, either as dictators or as balanced multiplicity, either as a democracy or as victims, and thus there is still room for further human development. They develop progressively and successively through childhood, although the development of any of them be inhibited and stunted.

Such brains may be understood as corresponding to a degree to both the [theory of multiple intelligences](#) (spatial, linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and existential) and articulations of strategic beyond the conventional "vision" metaphor (*Strategic Challenge of Polysensorial Knowledge: bringing the "elephant" into "focus"*, 2008).

Enacting, engendering and embodying

Embodying externality: For those living "betwixt and between" is this modality inner- or outer-directed? Is it a nexus for others or rather a mode of playfully engaging with externalities -- as suggested by the metaphoric title of [Mary Catherine Bateson](#) (*Composing a Life*, 2001). Is it a question of embodying externalities, as separately discussed (*Existential Embodiment of Externalities*, 2009)? Of relevance is the modality explored by [Francisco Varela](#) (*Laying Down a Path in Walking: essays on enactive cognition*, 1997). It is not sufficient to "compose" a life, the composition has to be "played" -- preferably "improvising" adaptively to emerging circumstances (in the light of the musical metaphor). Rather than the conventional "enjoyment" of life, this may involve some process of imbuing life with joy -- a proactive, or enactive, process of "en-joying" it.

The psychological internalization of the process of "being the change", through the metaphor of "**living as a bridge between worlds**", implies some form of embodiment of the "traffic" on that bridge rather than reifying it as an externality. This traffic is most problematically associated with the chaos of polarization and the "us and them" dynamic. The metaphor raises the question of how to hold and contain the two-way traffic -- with the bridge then functioning as a form of cognitive container.

Dynamics of intercourse: The argument can be taken a stage further through the intuitive understanding of the dynamics fundamentally associated with creativity and polarization.

Fruitful engagement with otherness is built into the dynamics of intercourse in all its forms (*Human Intercourse: Intercourse with Nature and Intercourse with the Other*, 2007). This is recognized to a degree in the romantic associations of the arch of a bridge, exemplified by the case of the Bridge of Sighs. It is echoed in the evocative design of any proscenium as framing the psychoactive space within which the new is creatively engendered, given form, and from which dramatically emerges. Cognitively there are intimate relationships between creativity and dramatically and engendering. Intercourse and consummation can be construed as "bridge building" of the most fundamental kind -- through which conception of the new is achieved. As a form of "public" intercourse, dialogue can be understood in these terms (*Future Generation through Global Conversation: in quest of collective well-being through conversation in the present moment*, 1997).

Paradoxes of self-reflexivity: The bridge between can then take on paradoxical form -- as in some well-known sketches of "impossible" architecture by [M. C. Escher](#), much-appreciated by mathematicians. However it is the manner in which such paradoxical bridging is internalized which merits greater attention. In a sense the bridging process must be both enacted and embodied.

Mathematics offers forms which take Escher's cognitive challenges even further, as previously discussed (*Intercourse with Globality through Enacting a Klein bottle*, 2009). As noted there, the cognitive implications of the Klein bottle, and their current psychosocial relevance, have been extensively explored by Melanie Purcell (*Imperatives for unbiased holistic education: the Klein bottle, a universal structure: an archetypal image*, 1999) and [Steven M. Rosen](#) (*Topologies of the Flesh: a multidimensional exploration of the lifeworld*, 2006).

There is also the intriguing relationship with biological processes in a society in pursuit of globalization as separately explored (*Engendering Invagination and Gastrulation of Globalization: reconstructive insights from the sciences and the humanities*, 2010). How might the cognitive experience of "betwixt and between" relate to that of invagination?

Negative capability: a bridge to nowhere as a bridge to knowhere?

Negative vs. Positive thinking: Much has been made of the need for "positive" thinking and initiatives as the primary means of enabling viable movement from "here" to "there" -- bridging across conventional obstacles. Remedies to most problematic conditions are vigorously (if not violently) asserted in that mode in reaction against "negative thinking" -- so unfortunately conflated with [critical thinking](#) (*Critical Thinking vs Specious Arguments*, 2001).

The fact that those advocating such positive action are typically confronted by others in disagreement is not addressed -- except to declare the others as "negative", being part of the problem rather than of the solution (*Being Positive and Avoiding Negativity: management challenge of positive vs negative*, 2005). Those awaiting the outcome of such dynamics are then obliged to live "betwixt and between" in a cognitive wilderness. Some consequences have been explored by [Barbara Ehrenreich](#) (*Bright-sided: how the relentless promotion of positive thinking has undermined America*, 2009). In that sense **positive thinking precludes awareness of liminality**.

The question on the ground is how to develop the survival skills to thrive in that wilderness of "bewilderment" -- "making it one's own". This recalls the original wilderness of nature as yet unfenced by conventional modes of thinking -- the experiential reality which convention is unable (by its very nature) to fence effectively. Hence the relevance of Keats' reference to "**negative capability**", the ability to thrive through navigating interstices and the negative spaces identified by the Japanese understanding of *ma*. Such possibilities feature increasingly in considerations of liminality although it is appropriate to be well-warned of any potential tendency to replicate the [tragedy of the commons](#) with respect to such a cognitive wilderness.

Certainty vs. Uncertainty: As might be expected there is a necessary irony to any archetypal battle between "positive" efforts towards certainty and any "negative" cultivation of ambiguity:

- **the art of certainty** involves designing out uncertainty. But as a consequence, if the efforts are excessive, uncertainty emerges unexpectedly as surprise -- with "chickens coming home to roost". Uncertainty is effectively designed out through neglecting it, notably as an irrelevant "externality". But a consequence is the strategic need to create conditions of disorientation and insecurity in order to sustain a sense of security. For example, it is felt necessary to create such conditions through a politics of fear, enhanced interrogation and the like, in order to elicit information of strategic relevance to the dependence on certainty (Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, etc)
- **the art of uncertainty** involves designing out dependence on certainty. But as a consequence, if the efforts are excessive, this elicits dependence on forms of certainty not otherwise envisaged -- even to be understood as transcendental.

As an exemplar of the obsessive pursuit of certainty, [Donald Reused](#), as US Secretary of Defense, formulated a now notorious poem regarding the strategic significance of the [unknown unknowns](#), as contrasted with the known unknowns. The implications have been separately discussed ([Unknown Undoing: challenge of incomprehensibility of systemic neglect](#), 2008). He has of course been significantly implicated in promoting the controversial enhanced interrogation required to reduce such uncertainties.

With respect to any new Renaissance, the dramatic relationship between the pursuers of certainty in relation to the uncertain has long been expressed in terms of lines from the [Second Coming](#) (1920), a poem by [William Butler Yeats](#): *The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity*. This was itself partly inspired by [Percy Bysshe Shelley's Prometheus Unbound](#) -- usefully understood as expressing various qualities of "betwixt and between":

The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
The wise want love, and those who love want wisdom;
And all best things are thus confused to ill

The above-mentioned cognitive wilderness and its inherent uncertainties, as associated with the "bewilderment" of "betwixt and between", highlights the challenging possibility that (contrary to conventional assumptions) uncertainty may itself increase in the decades to come in relation to certainty. Whilst the uncertainties of "nature" may indeed be reduced through the certainties of technological development, the level of cognitive bewilderment engendered for the individual and for society may well increase. It is as though the interstices and cracks of the "between worlds" of "betwixt and between" were to increase relative to the domains neatly encompassed by convention -- effectively an upwelling of uncertainty well-modelled by the unexpected nature of the flooding of rivers, the overflowing bridges, or their being swept away. In Jungian terms, the "upwelling" might be compared with an expression of the [collective unconscious](#) -- consistent with the global implications of the argument of [John Ralston Saul](#) (*The Unconscious Civilization*, 1999).

A global knowledge society may even be subject to the climatic "chaos" induced by a systemic analogue to the [El Niño Southern Oscillation](#) -- a quasi-periodic climate pattern that occurs across the tropical Pacific Ocean, on average every five years. The psychocultural implications of any widespread "flooding" may well be reflected in the myths of many cultures regarding [great floods](#) organized by deities to destroy civilization as an act of divine retribution. This might even be understood as a form of [psychological flooding](#), now recognized in a context of behaviour therapy and based on the principles of respondent conditioning.

The uncertainty of "whether patterns" may be further exacerbated by the increasing significance of the unsayable and the unsaid, as Wikileaks is making increasingly evident ([Global Strategic Implications of the Unsaid: from myth-making towards a wisdom society](#), 2003). The significance is implicit in the dysfunctional relationship between strategic initiatives and their leaders ([Epistemological Challenge of Cognitive Body Odour: exploring the underside of dialogue](#), 2006).

Global liminality: Indicators of the strategic emergence of "negative capability" are now evident in adaptive interpretations of liminality, such as that of D. Lindsay ([Organizational Liminality and Interstitial Creativity: the fellowship of power](#), *Social Forces*, September 2010). Others have addressed the possibility of "[liminal strategies](#)". More specific is the work of Sue Newell, et al. ([The Liminality Associated with Project Teams: exploring and explaining some of the problems of ES project implementations](#), 2008) framed as:

The project space that develops to enable configuration and implementation of standard software packages is central to the success of creating a working information system. We investigate the IS project environment as a liminal space existing in-between the status quo and the new ES-enabled environment. Our analysis indicates that liminality can be beneficial to cultivate within the project team but that too strong a liminal space makes it difficult when it is time to incorporate the learning and the software back into the organizational working environment after the project finishes. We present mechanisms which can be used to create the liminal space and highlight the positive and negative. Liminal spaces can be reflexive spaces for future strategy development.

Curiously, despite the above-mentioned references to the dilemmas of "betwixt and between" in a strategic context, **the potentials of development of liminal strategies and negative capability would seem to have been avoided in relation to global strategic challenges**. Interesting exceptions include arguments of Maria Mälksoo ([The Challenge of Liminality for International Relations Theory](#), 2010) and the [special issue on liminality](#) of the journal *International Political Anthropology* (2009). Of particular interest is the cautionary argument by Judith H. Young ([The Betwixt and Between Syndrome](#), 2008), cited above, in her [Deconstructing the Power of the Global Elite](#). (*Global Research*, 2008). This highlights the exploitative potential of the "betwixt and between" predicament as experienced globally by many..

However global strategic remedies continue to be desperately framed as dependent on "certainties" and the "positive" -- despite their dismal track record and their loss of credibility (*Credibility Crunch engendered by Hope-mongering: "credit crunch" focus as symptom of a dangerous mindset*, 2008).

The extreme certainty, with which the problematic consequences of overpopulation (as predicted by some) are declared to be ill-informed bodes ill for the future, for example. Despite the unpredicted global financial crisis of 2008-2009, the mindset is exemplified at the time of writing by the extreme surprise and horror at the disastrous flooding in Queensland. Naughty rain, naughty rivers, naughty tides -- for failing to conform to the best of scientific predictability and enlightened urban planning !? (Germaine Greer, *Australian floods: Why were we so surprised by floods?* *The Guardian*, 15 January 2011).

An earlier example was provided by the [2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami](#) about which warnings had been provided by the head of the Thai meteorological office -- forced to retire in 1998, accused of scaremongering and jeopardising the tourist industry. Failures of previously assertive authorities need in each case to be remedied by "bailouts" from the public -- called upon emotively (even exploitatively) to exhibit solidarity towards those whose risk-taking had been tacitly and implicitly encouraged.

As with some classic exercises in bridge construction -- caricatured as [bridges to nowhere](#) -- some strategic efforts to get from "here" to "there" might be usefully recognized as strategic **bridges to nowhere**. These might be understood as inadvertent cultivation of uncertainty (*Spontaneous Initiation of Armageddon -- a heartfelt response to systemic negligence*, 2004).

Bridging to nowhere

By contrast, in a cognitive context of "betwixt and between", negative capability might be fruitfully reframed mnemonically in terms of a "bridge to nowhere" -- perhaps with the art of its design and construction to be discovered and recognized as an as yet missing "k-factor". In the light of the above argument, this might variously involve:

- a degree of self-reflexivity and mirroring (*Engendering the Future through Self-reflexive Group Initiatives*, 2008; *Stepping into, or through, the Mirror: embodying alternative scenario patterns*, 2008)
- embodiment of externalities, as noted above (*Existential Embodiment of Externalities*, 2009; *En-minding the Extended Body: Enactive engagement in conceptual shapeshifting and deep ecology*, 2003)
- enacting of patterns (*Enveloping Development through Cognitive Enactivism*, 2008; *Patterns Essential to Individual and Global Health?* 2010)
- expecting the unexpected (Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*, 2007; Karen A. Cerulo, *Never Saw It Coming: cultural challenges to envisioning the worst*, 2006)
- indirection -- perhaps recognized to a degree through the case made for "soft power"

As embracing or living contradictions, "living as a bridge between worlds" might then be understood as:

- not "making a difference", or "being different", but rather "being a difference" and "encompassing a difference"
- embodying incommensurability and incommunicability (*Social organization determined by incommunicability of insights*, 1995; *Containing the incommensurable*, 1995)
- being "in the world" of contradictions "but not of it", whether according to Christian understanding (see *Romans 12: 2* and *2 Corinthians 10: 3*) or in the light of other traditions, such as Buddhism

Conventional approaches to governance can seemingly only engender contradictions, with no capacity to resolve them, whatever is claimed to the contrary. As a philosopher, [Nicholas Rescher](#) (*The Strife of Systems: an essay on the grounds and implications of philosophical diversity*, 1985) responded to such distinctly unintegrative conflict by concluding:

For centuries, most philosophers who have reflected on the matter have been intimidated by the strife of systems. But the time has come to put this behind us -- not the strife, that is, which is ineliminable, but the felt need to somehow end it rather than simply accept it and take it in stride. To reemphasize the salient point: it would be bizarre to think that philosophy is not of value because philosophical positions are bound to reflect the particular values we hold.

Any apparent resolution of problems is then achieved by externalizing, "exporting" or neglecting problematic conditions -- treating them as irrelevancies to be ignored. This is most notably achieved through a "positive" focus on technical solutions, avoiding both their psychosocial consequences and consideration of challenges not readily amenable to technical solutions (and conventional business models). Hence the degree of surprise when such deliberate neglect, however unconscious, becomes apparent ([Nassim Nicholas Taleb](#), *The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*, 2007; Karen A. Cerulo, *Never Saw It Coming: cultural challenges to envisioning the worst*, 2006; [John Ralston Saul](#), *The Unconscious Civilization*, 1999).

Cyclic bridging between worlds of modality

Making ends meet: In this context there is a degree of irony to the experiential understanding of the common phrase "making ends meet" with respect to resources, especially with increasing threats to survival, austerity programmes, and the primary socioeconomic preoccupation with ensuring "growth" (however unsustainable).

In a systemic context, "making ends meet" then relates well to the cyclic challenge of [resilience](#), or [psychological resilience](#), in navigating the adaptive cycle (*Adaptive Hypercycle of Sustainable Psychosocial Self-organization*, 2010). This might include:

- any requisite alternation between distinct modes, states of cognition, or (potentially polarized) strategic styles -- as being variously "different worlds":

- subjectivity / objectivity
- certainty / uncertainty
- positivity / negativity
- "head" / "heart"
- concrete / abstract
- cognitively "going knowhere" in the form of embodiment of learning/action cycles encompassing distinct phases or styles:
 - fruitful cycles, as implied by resilient recycling and the adaptive cycle and exemplified by:
 - the water cycle in the environment (precipitation, evaporation, etc)
 - geothermal cycle
 - the respiratory cycle (inspiration, expiration)
 - metabolic cycles
 - migratory cycles
 - problematic cycles (*Web resources on "breaking the cycle"*, 2002), including:
 - vicious cycles (*Examples of vicious problem cycles and loops*, 1995)
 - cycles of violence (whether in domestic, neighbourhood, ethnic or regional contexts)

It is appropriate to note the fundamental irony of the phrase "making ends meet", given its Freudian connotations in a reproductive process entangled in the challenge of sustainable production on a resource challenged world -- but also the cognitive challenge mythically symbolised by the **Ouroboros**. As noted above, the experience of intercourse itself, and its operation as a strange attractor, could be understood in terms of the bridging metaphor, its relation to the quadrilemma, and of becoming an imaginal bridge. The visual cues framing the sexual attractiveness of females (and the possibility of physical intercourse) -- extensively exploited by fashion setters and by marketing -- can also be seen as entangled with intimate experience of "betwixt and between".

Encompassing cycles: Whilst such cycles can be readily described "objectively", their cognitive implications tend to be more elusive. This is a preoccupation with various meditative approaches to consciousness of breathing. The rediscovery (as for the first time) of "ends meeting" is well made by the poet **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 the place for the first time* (*Little Gidding*, 1943).

This can usefully be seen as indicative of the larger cognitive challenge of the dynamics of any cycle as a whole -- rather than the recognition of such peak moments within it. Examples of larger cycles posing challenges, typically experienced as unexpected and surprising, include:

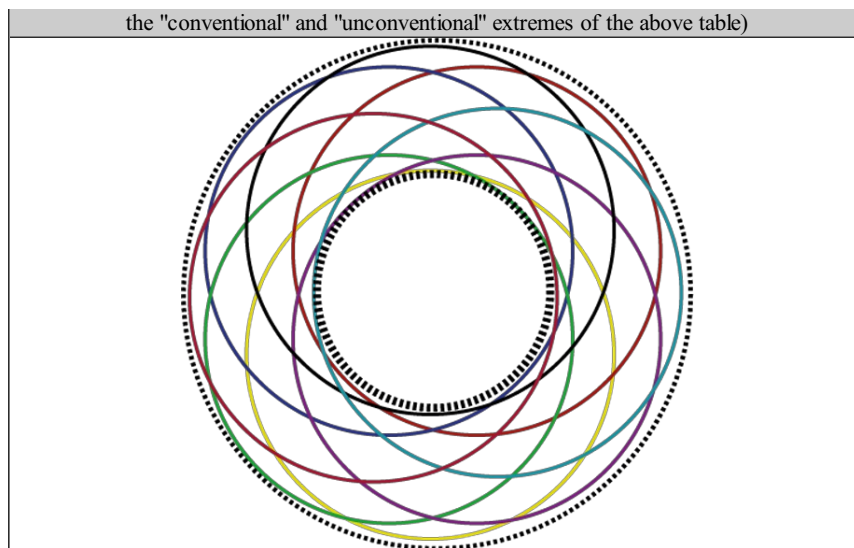
- business, financial and economic cycles
- weather cycles, including patterns of drought and flooding
- resource cycles (scarcity and plenty)
- generational cycles (implying birth, youth, aging and death)

A cyclic context necessarily has implications for a larger and more dynamic sense of identity for both collectivities and individuals (*Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psychically" defined*, 2007). Whilst the challenge may be described in terms of the adaptive cycle, cognitively there are potentially more radical implications. These derive from changing engagement with "categories" during a cycle, whether in terms of objectivity/subjectivity, certainty/uncertainty, concreteness/abstraction, etc. One useful framing of the range of such variation is offered as seven "axes of bias" as separately summarized (*Axes of Bias in Inter-cultural Dialogue*, 1993):

Axes of Cognitive Bias (adapted from W. T. Jones, <i>The Romantic Syndrome: toward a new method in cultural anthropology and the history of ideas</i> , 1961)		
Dimensional "bias"	Cyclic alternation of cognitive framing between preference for	
	"Conventional"	"Unconventional"
<i>Order vs Disorder</i>	system, structure, conceptual clarity, etc.	fluidity, muddle chaos, etc.
<i>Static vs Dynamic</i>	the changeless, eternal, etc.	movement, with explanation in genetic and process terms, etc.
<i>Continuity vs Discreteness</i>	a cognitive framing in terms of wholeness, unity, etc	discreteness, plurality, diversity, etc.
<i>Inner vs Outer</i>	being able to project oneself into the objects of one's experience (to experience them as one experiences oneself)	a relatively external, objective relation to the objects of experience
<i>Sharp focus vs Soft focus</i>	clear, direct experience	threshold experiences, felt to be saturated with more meaning than is immediately present.
<i>This world vs Other world</i>	belief in the spatio-temporal world as self-explanatory	belief that the world can only be comprehended in terms of other frames
<i>Spontaneity vs Process</i>	explanation through chance, freedom, accident, etc	explanations subject to laws and definable processes.

Interwoven cycles: The distinct "dimensions" are then each usefully understood as a learning/action cycle between two extreme cognitive modalities. Together the seven cycles could be understood as interwoven. Although Magoroh Maruyama offers a subtler articulation of contrasting "mindscapes", like Jones he does not indicate the dynamics of transition between them.

Learning/Action cycles between cognitive extremes
(representing as cycles, between perigee and apogee,



The above 7-fold pattern raises the question of how it relates to similar patterns of distinction based on larger or smaller numbers as highlighted separately (*Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases*, 1993; *Representation, Comprehension and Communication of Sets: the role of number*, 1978). An obvious traditional example is the [Eightfold Way](#) of Buddhism. The case can be made more generally using the [Periodic Table](#) (*Periodic Pattern of Human Knowing*, 2009).

Mapping the associated pathways of higher orders of connectivity -- the pattern that connects -- could be explored through:

- connectivity of different degrees of probability (credibility and communicability) could be mapped onto various types of links between the distinct cycles suggested by the table above (possibly as aesthetic "correspondences"). Such patterns of links are a characteristic of spherical tensegrity structures.
- the characteristic ("dancing") dynamics of such associations, a feature of both tensegrity dynamics and liminality, can be encoded using the classic Chinese binary system within a Fibonacci spiral framework (*Tao of Engagement -- Weaponised Interactions and Beyond Fibonacci's magic carpet of games to be played for sustainable global governance*, 2010)
- "traffic on the geometry" of higher orders of connectivity as described mathematically by Ron Atkin through q-analysis (*Social organization determined by incommunicability of insights*, 1995)
- interrelating dysfunctional planetary patterns, giving rise to a map reminiscent of that above (*Mapping the Global Underground*, 2010)

Cyclic comprehension: Any such shift from linear to circular, effectively from "arrow of time" progress to **circular time**, is embodied in the [myth of Eternal Return](#) so potentially fundamental to the psychology of sustainability (*Psychology of Sustainability: embodying cyclic environmental processes*, 2002). This highlights the need for more powerful metaphors to enable such comprehension. Possibilities meriting exploration include:

- traditional reflections of eastern cultures on circulation of psychic energy (*ch'i*) within the human body, notably in relation to the spinal chord (*Circulation of the Light: essential metaphor of global sustainability?* 2010)
- fluid dynamics, notably in relation to toroidal geometry and vortex (smoke ring) formation (*Enabling Governance through the Dynamics of Nature: exemplified by cognitive implication of vortices and helicoidal flow*, 2010)
- topological paradoxes associated with the Mobius strip and the Klein bottle (*Intercourse with Globality through Enacting a Klein bottle*, 2009)
- aesthetic and other correspondences (as implied by the above table), beyond the conventional constraints of linear coherence in argumentation (*Theories of Correspondences -- and potential equivalences between them in correlative thinking*, 2007). Detection and expression of unusual correspondences (including "poetic logic") could well be understood as part of the traditional art of the [troubadour](#) and the [court jester](#) -- and associated with the [trickster](#) of myth, all notably associated with liminality and dancing in the space of "betwixt and between" (even at some personal risk)

Reframing convention: The above diagram, even in 2-dimensional form, helps to distinguish between several forms of "liminality" and "modal worlds" which could be unfortunately confused and conflated:

- between the extreme phases of [perigee](#) and [apogee](#)
- between the different cycles identified above

There is the further amusing sense of confusion to be derived from "liminality" and "limnology" which seemingly do not share any common etymology. The first is associated with notions of "threshold" and the second with the study of freshwater flows, including marshy conditions. Together they suggest qualities of experience of cognitive clarity and confusion -- including that of sinking into a marsh of incomprehensibility.

The cyclic extremes of apogee and perigee, functioning as a [Venn diagram](#), "define" both the **"conventional" core mindset** as well as a **larger "unconventional" contextual context**. By so doing they call into question any implication that the core is appropriately defined conventionally in the rigid sense of normal and normative expectations. It is in this sense that the above diagram can be explored in terms of the symbolism of the Chinese [bi disk](#) with its central empty core. The traditional tracery on such disks is reminiscent of the pattern of the above diagram.

The above diagram, and its associated Chinese symbolism, suggest three further reflections:

- the conventional core, reframed dynamically as in process of constant re-creation -- re-engendering reality -- is reminiscent of the sun as the systemic functional centre of conventional experience as celebrated in many traditional systems. The dynamics of "betwixt and between", "Neti Neti" or liminality might then be associated with those hypothesized as fundamental to solar processes -- the [solar dynamo](#), the [proton-proton chain reaction](#), the [triple-alpha process](#), the [CNO cycle](#).
- the stages through which [epicycles](#) are comprehended and "re-cognized" -- from centering cognition and significance on the mundanities of "earth", to the light-reflecting role of a "moon", to the centering on the "sun", with its vital significance, through photosynthesis, to enlivening "earth" thereby imbued with enhanced (rather than simply derivative) meaning
- the zones of intersection of the diagram, in the light of their experiential implications, are reminiscent of an array of keys of a musical instrument through which harmonies can be elicited and interrelated through "playing" appropriately. Hence the earlier reference to the metaphor of a periodic table as an ordering of human knowing

Higher-orders of representation: The representation in interwoven cycles in two dimensions raises the question of the nature of the insight to be derived from (or associated with) a three-dimensional representation (*Spherical configuration of interlocking roundtables: Internet enhancement of global self-organization through patterns of dialogue*, 1998; *Spherical Configuration of Categories to Reflect Systemic Patterns of Environmental Checks and Balances*, 1994).

Traditional eastern symbolism notably frames the 2-dimensional pattern as "petals" of a "flower" folding into (or from) a 3-dimensional form. This understanding could be seen as the challenge of "globality" in contrast with the "flat earth" mentality (noted [above](#)).

Challenge of extraterrestrials? There is the ironic possibility that any such future contact could be severely challenged by the predilection of humanity for framing any communication in terms of "us and them". ETs might well be expected to centre their identity and communications in liminal modes beyond a 2-dimensional mode (*Communicating with Aliens: the psychological dimension of dialogue*, 2000).

Irrespective of any ETs, "THEM" (as an acronym) might well be provocatively indicative of "Terrestrial Humans with Extremist Mindsets" -- effectively of terrestrial "extras" (*Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism: rooting for normalization vs. rooting out extremism?* 2005). With its echoes of eugenic and ethnic cleansing, the argument for "elimination" is made even more strongly by Audrey Shalinsky and Anthony Glascock (*Killing infants and the aged in nonindustrial societies: removing the liminal*, *The Social Science Journal*, 25, 3, 1988, pp. 277-287):

In nonindustrial societies defective babies and decrepit old people are killed occasionally as an adaptive response to short term changes in environmental and economic conditions. This is not murder. Analysis of the Human Relations Area Files demonstrates that such individuals are viewed as liminal, in ritual transition, and as nonhuman outsiders. They then may be killed justifiably. In other words, under certain circumstances, newborns and old people (and perhaps others) are defined through ritual process as not complete social persons and are killed.

This attitude could usefully be explored in relation to US foreign policy as articulated by [Madeline Albright](#), US Ambassador to the United Nations, in a [CBS 60 Minutes](#) interview (1996) when asked about the deaths of Iraqis under US sponsored sanctions: "*We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?*". She responded "*I think this is a very hard choice, but the price -- we think the price is worth it.*". She was subsequently appointed US Secretary of State.

On the other hand, also meriting consideration is the sense in which some "terrestrials" are considered "extra" because of the degree to which they epitomize human qualities -- whether acknowledged as charisma, "a person for all seasons", "well-rounded", wise, or corresponding to some understanding of holy.

Meriting more reflection is the possibility that ETs may have criteria of consciousness analogous to those applied by humans to animals through the [mirror test of self-awareness](#) (*Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criteria of species maturity?* 2008).

Enabling autopoiesis through poesis

Diversity through poesis: There is a fundamental puzzle to such extensive use of both "betwixt" and "between" in the titles of so many of the conventional studies listed in the [Annex](#). Etymologically the two words are poorly distinguished and therefore their use together would appear to constitute an unusual tautology. The justification can however be found to a degree in their poetic function, further emphasized by [alliteration](#). The question is why that is of any value in relation to unconventional, cognitive confusion. In that mode, the term might be extended in the form of "**betwixt and between and bewildered**".

The biologist/anthropologist [Gregory Bateson](#), in explaining why "we are our own metaphor", pointed out to a conference on the effects of conscious purpose on human adaptation that:

One reason why poetry is important for finding out about the world is because in poetry a set of relationships get mapped onto a level of diversity in us that we don't ordinarily have access to. We bring it out in poetry. We can give to each other in poetry the access to a set of relationships in the other person and in the world that we are not usually conscious of in ourselves. So we need poetry as knowledge about the world and about ourselves, because of this mapping from complexity to complexity. (Cited by

Poetic logic: This suggests that, as with notions of "poetic justice", a form of "poetic logic" may continue to reinforce use of the term "betwixt and between" where redundancy would otherwise be assumed (John E. Fritch and Karla K. Leepe, *Poetic Logic: the metaphorical form as a foundation for a theory of tropological argument*, *Argumentation and Advocacy*, Vol. 29, 1993; Frederick Sommer, *The Poetic Logic of Art and Aesthetics*, 1995; Kaj Skoldberg, *Poetic Logic of Administration: Styles and Changes of Style in the Art of Organizing*, 2007). Poetic comprehension of "betwixt and between" might also be found through associations such as the following:

- whilst betwixt and between may be equivalent, their distinction could derive from their being some form of mirror image of betweenness, as with two distinct threads, exemplified in a spiralling DNA coil. This offers a sense in which the strands are best understood as twisted together -- emphasizing their degree of knottedness (as previously mentioned) and exemplifying the logical paradoxes of *Catch-22* and *Kafkaesque* situations characteristic of the experience of being "betwixt and between"
- betwixt and between could indicate two distinct kinds of betweenness, perhaps structure-based and flow-based, as suggested by Edward de Bono in a book with an appropriately convoluted title (*I Am Right, You Are Wrong: From This to the New Renaissance: From Rock Logic to Water Logic*, 1990). This distinguishes two-sidedness (as with respect to the connectivity offered by a bridge) and the flow of time, whether in terms of before and after (in traversing or constructing the bridge), or upstream and downstream (with respect to what flows beneath it). Together these imply a 4-fold logic to "betwixt and between", as previously discussed. It is also appropriate to note that "water" exists in a number of phases of which only one is the "liquid" form with which the term is typically associated. As "ice" it is "rock" hard. In addition to highlighting the "betwixt and between" nature of water itself -- so vital to life -- this suggests that "water logic" might be more appropriately understood in terms of the phase transitions of water, as separately discussed (*Integrative relationship between reality and fantasy?* 2010).
- the spiralling, twisting connotations offered by DNA can also be associated with the characteristic vortex flow of water, in addition to smooth laminar flow -- perhaps recalling mythical allusions to a twisting movement required to negotiate the gap between worlds. More prosaically this may correspond to the purportedly "twisted" logic of one conventional approach as perceived (and deprecated) from another
- the water allusions (whether with respect to bridges or de Bono's "water logic") highlight a typical survival strategy in situations of "betwixt and between", namely to "go with the flow". This theme is reinforced by the degree of similarity between "liminality" and "limnology", with the latter stressing both freshwater flows and the marshy, wetlands of the natural environment. Being "betwixt and between" is of course readily experienced as being "bogged down".
- the water and flow implications suggest that an "unconventional" life, "going with the flow", effectively involves "living on water"
- to the extent that "convention" implies agreement, a bridge is then a constructed convention linking two distinct conventional domains. As a construct it is essentially "unnatural" and contrasts with the "unconventional" thereby bridged -- perhaps, in the case of flowing water, to be considered as exemplifying the "natural". These suggest a further contrast between the inorganic (the bridge) and the organic (the water). A conventional bridge effectively "de-natures", raising the question of how to "re-nature" or to "en-nature".

Participative cognition: These considerations avoid reference to the importance attached to "betwixt and between" in the pagan and wiccan nature-oriented cultures. Their traditional insight is perhaps now appropriately framed by the literature on ecological philosophy and psychology (Henryk Skolimowski, *The Participatory Mind: a new theory of knowledge and of the universe*, 1994; Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature: a necessary unity*, 1979; David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*, 1997; Theodore Roszak, et al., *Ecopsychology: restoring the Earth, healing the mind*, 1995).

This entanglement is appropriately explored in the literature on cognitive embodiment as separately discussed (*Existential Embodiment of Externalities: radical cognitive engagement with environmental categories and disciplines*, 2009; *En-minding the Extended Body: Enactive engagement in conceptual shapeshifting and deep ecology*, 2003). This is a challenge to conventional governance of western inspiration (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy In The Flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to western thought*, 1999).

Such possibilities raise the question, as yet to be explored, as to whether there is an essentially "poetic" quality to the quest for sustainability and its comprehension (*Psychology of Sustainability: embodying cyclic environmental processes*, 2002).

Strategic autopoiesis: It is intriguing that as "poesis" or "poiesis", poetry shares etymology with the "autopoiesis" of the complexity sciences (K. K. Murthy, *Autopoiesis and strategic management in emerging economies*, 1997; Peter A. C. Smith and Carol Ann Sharicz, *Autopoiesis and Fluid Self-Organizing Networks In Business*, 2008; Rodrigo Magalhães and Ron Sanchez, *Autopoiesis in Organization Theory and Practice*, 2009).

Irrespective of occasional (deprecated) spelling as "autopoiesis", the common origin lies in the Greek "poiesis", meaning production, creation or composition. In the complexity sciences it therefore refers to the process of self-creation and is held to express a fundamental dialectic between structure and function. It is the creative emphasis on "making" which highlights the readily obscured dynamic sense in which even a conventional bridge is not only a one-off construction but must be maintained over time. In the metaphor explored here the emphasis is to a far greater degree on the continuing process of reconstruction. Like poetry, it is the process of composition which is essential to its recreative function. It is the weaving together of words which potentially enlivens both poetry and strategy -- as separately explored (*Poetry-making and Policy-making: arranging a marriage between Beauty and the Beast*, 1993).

This process of re-making may be the key to any "renaissance", as implied in de Bono's book title -- with its juxtaposition of "rock logic" and "water logic". Any imaginal exploration of such possibilities could also be appropriately informed by the science fiction articulation by M. A. Foster of the construction of a hyperspaceship by a mutant community (*The Gameplayers of Zan*, 1977). This recognized the need to navigate any such vessel in hyperspace **during the process of its construction** -- essentially to ensure that (given its complex dynamic nature) it stayed in place (and time) until the construction was complete. This recalls the self-reflexive challenges of global

governance in responding to change, as separately discussed (*Consciously Self-reflexive Global Initiatives: Renaissance zones, complex adaptive systems, and third order organizations*, 2007).

Given the above-mentioned value attached to *ma* in Japanese culture, it is not surprising that *haiku* poetry should have been variously interwoven with the martial arts and bushido culture. It is fundamental to the classic strategic text *The Book of Five Rings*. The question is whether this offers clues to global "strategy-making" at this time (*Ensuring Strategic Resilience through Haiku Patterns: reframing the scope of the "martial arts" in response to strategic threats*, 2006). The potential value of poetry to ongoing conflictual situations has been separately explored (*Poetic Engagement with Afghanistan, Caucasus and Iran*, 2009; *Strategic Jousting through Poetic Wrestling*, 2009).

Living the magic: In this interplay of poesis and autopoiesis, it is tempting to recognize the possibility that any process of **living as the bridge** is best understood as one of **living the magic** of the process of autopoiesis -- where the magic is intimately related to the emergence of insightful poetic associations sustaining cultural coherence. This could be understood as consistent with the symbolism of solar processes as mentioned above.

Mary Catherine Bateson's focus on "composing a life" might then be reframed to encompass both "playfully" improvising any composition ("making magic") and living the dynamics of that magic. Bateson provided the foreword to the complementary focus of [Jean Houston](#) (*A Mythic Life: learning to live our greater story*, 1996). Intimations of this cognitive engagement are evident in relationships to music -- expression of identity through a melody and "being a tune". Living the magic may be associated with some proactive, or enactive, process of imbuing life with joy -- of "en-joying" it (as noted above) -- perhaps to be understood as "en-livening" it. This offers a radically different appreciation of the "final warning" of [James Lovelock](#) (*The Vanishing Face of Gaia: a final warning: Enjoy It While You Can*, 2009). Comprehension of "it" is then also called into question.

It is curious that although "magic" is central to the worldview of pagan traditions and Wicca (however deprecated by convention), it is now celebrated with imaginative enthusiasm in the widely popular fantasy literature (*Magic, miracles and image-building*, 1993). Even more surprising, it is a key attribute in the promotion of the quality of many commercial services. A "magical experience" is a primary attractor for tourists seeking alternatives to the existential boredom of the conventional.

Insights regarding composition have been developed in relation to the design of so-called magic carpets (*Magic Carpets as Psychoactive Systems Diagrams*, 2010; *Tao of Engagement -- Weaponised Interactions and Beyond: Fibonacci's magic carpet of games to be played for sustainable global governance*, 2010; *Sustainability through Magically Dancing Patterns*, 2008)

Poetic inspiration: Bridges have of course long been a source of poetic inspiration, notably as offering a degree of coherence (Robert Bohm, *Bridging the Disconnected: Five Poems, Avatar*, Summer 2003, 5). The Ponte Vecchio has offered such inspiration (Erika Enggren, *The Old Bridge At Florence: Florence and the Ponte Vecchio in the poetry of Henry Longfellow*).

There is however a delightful poetic irony to the Wiccan invocation by the Director of the Texas (USA) Betwixt and Between -- given to an opening of a Dallas City Council meeting, despite controversy (*Dallas Wiccan Gives City Council Invocation In Dallas* October 2000).

Questioning for a dynamic quality without a name

Mystery of global governance: As a legal scholar and professor of international relations, [David Kennedy](#) made a presentation on *The Mystery of Global Governance* (2008) arguing:

Global governance remains a mystery because so much about global society itself eludes our grasp....We do not know how power is put together on the global stage, let alone how its exercise might be rendered just or effective.... Everywhere there is important knowledge, promising new initiatives, intriguing insights. But somehow the broader picture remains elusive.... knowledge about the ways the world is governed is not spread evenly. It clumps in the centers and spreads unevenly to the periphery. But it is also hoarded in all these middle lands and liminal spaces.

The unequal distribution of knowledge about the mysteries of global governance calls for more than filling in the gaps in what we know and sharing out what we have learned. The distribution of knowledge about strategic action in a fluid world is also a political, economic and social issue of the first order.

The fruitful framing of global governance as a "mystery" raises the question as to the nature of the cognitive modality appropriate to its comprehension in a period of ever more evident misleadership (*Comprehension of Appropriateness*, 1986; *Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council: misleading as vital to governance of the future?* 2007). As noted above, the attentive research on "liminality" itself has seeds of premature and inappropriate closure in the face of evident existential confusion. This recalls the classic warning: *The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao; The name that can be named is not the eternal name* (*Tao Te Ching*). The emergence of "liminality" as a fashionable name then engenders the "10,000 things" in taoist terms.

Quality without a name: The highlighting by environmental designer [Christopher Alexander](#) of a "quality without a name" is more appropriately precautionary in offering, through his "pattern language", a cognitive pointer to the core attractor of a "place to be" -- even for humanity. For him, to seek the timeless way we must first know **the quality without a name**.

There is a central quality which is the root criterion of life and spirit in a man, a town, a building, or a wilderness. This quality is objective and precise, but it cannot be named. The search, which we make for this quality, in our own lives, is the central search of any person, and the crux of any individual person's story. It is the search for those moments and situations when we are most alive (*The Timeless Way of Building*, 1979)

This is consistent with the above-mentioned insight of [Eric Voegelin](#) that the sense of order sought is conveyed by an experience of transcendence which can never be fully defined nor described, though it may be conveyed in symbols (*In Search of Order*, 1987). Again the unconventional nature of any associated cognition can be understood as a theme of [apophatic discourse](#), and "unsaying", as discussed separately (*Being What You Want: problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?* 2008). When fruitfully understood, the place of "betwixt or between" (being neither here nor there) is then indicated by the classic Vedic adage: *Neti Neti* (*Not this, Not that*) with the portal to that fruitful cognition then corresponding to *The Gateless Gate* (*Mumonkan*) of Zen tradition.

The dilemma with respect to any descriptive communication is that any assertions regarding the quality of that space "without a name" necessarily denature it. This could well be the case with respect to the "mystery" of global governance. As previously noted, there is great irony to the fact that, at a time of widespread concern with the global level of hot air emissions, proposals for global governance should be characterized by a high order of strategic hot air (*Sins of Hot Air Emission, Omission, Commission and Promission*, 2009; *Strategic Inflation of Expectations and Inconsequential Drift*, 2009). The "targets" of such political, commercial and religious persuasion are however rapidly developing avoidance techniques (*Mutual targeting in a democratic process*, 1998).

Cognitive geometry: In his subsequent explorations, following continuing work on *The Nature of Order* (2003-4), Alexander has been concerned with the implications of the "geometry" of that order (*Harmony-Seeking Computations: a science of non-classical dynamics based on the progressive evolution of the larger whole*, *International Journal for Unconventional Computing (IJUC)*, 2009). This focus raises comprehension issues relevant to the above argument, as previously discussed (*Harmony-Comprehension and Wholeness-Engendering eliciting psychosocial transformational principles from design*, 2010).

The possibility raised by the above argument is that any collective strategic quest for global "peace", "sustainability", "transdisciplinarity", "human development", and the like, can only emerge from a more complex cognitive space -- a "liminal space" -- perhaps an analogue to the higher dimensionality now required by fundamental physics and cosmology.

Prevailing assumptions of the possibility of universal agreement on simple solutions might then be compared to the quest for a magical silver bullet. Such assumptions "compact the cognitive soil", denaturing it and rendering it infertile, as with over-urbanised environments. Again, as noted above: *The significant problems we face can not be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them*. Some kind of "keystone functionality" is required at a different level.

It is curious that any quest for this functionality currently gives rise to "universal" models or value systems of limited credibility and application. These do not effectively encompass the alternatives they design out -- thereby transforming them into simple binary exercises in "us and them". The Bridge of Sighs offers an appropriate metaphor for their use. The complex subtle possibilities extolled in the tradition of any "philosopher's stone" or "sacred space" (temenos) are deprecated. Despite amazing advances in translation possibilities, there is little sense of any emergent "Rosetta Stone" -- embodying dynamic qualities essential to de Bono's "water logic" (*Potential Psychosocial Significance of Monstrous Moonshine: an exceptional form of symmetry as a Rosetta stone for cognitive frameworks*, 2007; *Systemic Crises as Keys to Systemic Remedies: a metaphorical Rosetta Stone for future strategy?* 2008; *Hyperaction through Hypercomprehension and Hyperdrive: necessary complement to hypertext proliferation in hypersociety*, 2006).

In contrast to any descriptive appropriation of ambiguity through use of "liminality", this would emphasize the enabling and enhancing of capacity to thrive in such ambiguity -- as the emergent reality of the 21st century. If major cognitive surprises, equivalent to those offered by 20th century physics are to be expected, possibilities might include:

- contact with extraterrestrial cultures cultivating uncertainty to a degree similar to the cultivation of certainty in the current global civilization:
 - with its current marginalization of those cultures traditionally operating otherwise, as highlighted by Magoroh Maruyama and others (*Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases*, 1993).
 - with a degree of "marginalization" of the non-technical mindset currently reinforced by the "silver bullet" expectations of "positive" thinking
- radical reframing of subjective engagement with externalities:
 - of the natural environment, as noted above -- again possibly reinforced by an extraterrestrial criteria (*Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criteria of species maturity?* 2008)
 - of the technical environment
 - technical implications (Robert D. Romanyshyn, *Technology as Symptom and Dream*, 1989; M. M. Weil, and L. D. Rosen (*The Psychological Impact of Technology From a Global Perspective: a study of technological sophistication and technophobia*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, 1995)
 - of the psychosocial environment:
 - following the original Renaissance insights of [Marsilio Ficino](#) ([Thomas Moore](#), *The Planets Within: the astrological psychology of Marsilio Ficino*, 1990) as separately discussed (*Composing the Present Moment*, 2001)
 - following the mythological insights of [Joseph Campbell](#) (*The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: metaphor as myth and as religion*, 2002)

Betwixt and Between
Neither here nor there
Neither now nor then
Nowhere and Now here

	Focus	Concern	Outcome
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Conventional growth model	Getting there	Know where	Now here
Psychology of sustainability	Getting here	Know here	Now here

<i>Responsibility for Global Governance</i> <i>Who? Where? When? How? Why? Which? What? 2008</i>	
Where: neither here nor there?	When: neither now nor then?
An initiative of global importance requires engagement <i>Everywhere</i>	An initiative of global importance requires engagement <i>Everytime</i>
<i>Everywhere</i> implies that it will at least happen <i>Somewhere</i>	<i>Everytime</i> implies that it should at least happen <i>Sometime</i>
It could happen <i>Anywhere</i> , but is now happening <i>Nowhere</i> .	It could happen <i>Anytime</i> , but not when there is <i>Notime</i> .
Anger arises <i>Somewhere</i> because engagement should happen <i>Everywhere</i> .	Anger arises <i>Sometime</i> because engagement should happen <i>Everytime</i> .
<i>Everywhere</i> it is known that it could happen <i>Anywhere</i> , but <i>Nowhere</i> is it realized that <i>Somewhere</i> it is not.	<i>Everytime</i> implies that it could happen <i>Anytime</i> , but it takes <i>Notime</i> to realize that <i>Sometime</i> will not do.
<i>Everywhere</i> blame is assigned <i>Somewhere</i> because <i>Nowhere</i> has happened what could have happened <i>Anywhere</i> .	<i>Everytime</i> blame is assigned <i>Sometime</i> because it takes <i>Notime</i> to do what could have been done <i>Anytime</i> .

With appreciation to the possum who triggered early morning reflection on this theme

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