



# laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

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## Engaging with the Future with Insights of the Past Consulting the dead, sacrifice, bone-cracking and divination

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### Introduction

[Institutionalisation of "hell" and "consultation" with its inhabitants](#)

[Divination by sacrifice: entrails and extispicy](#)

[Oracle-bone-cracking](#)

[Divination through the I Ching](#)

[Science vs Imagination: another polarity to be transcended?](#)

[Weaponisation of the Heart: from pomegranate to hand grenade](#)

[Education and research as consultation with the dead?](#)

[References \(main paper\)](#)

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## Introduction

This is an **Annex** to a paper on *Designing Global Self-governance for the Future: patterns of dynamic integration of the netherworld* (2010) and specifically with respect to the case made there for the *Cognitive embodiment of an "underworld" into governance*. That paper is itself the development of an argument in an introductory paper (*Tao of Engagement -- Weaponised Interactions and Beyond: Fibonacci's magic carpet of games to be played for sustainable global governance*, 2010).

As noted there, in a world much characterized by denial in many forms, distinct cases may be made for exploring "undersides" or the "unconscious", as variously argued ([Elise Boulding](#), *The Underside of History: a view of women through time*, 1976; [John Ralston Saul](#), *The Unconscious Civilization*, 1995), most notably by Carl Jung with respect to the [collective unconscious](#) and the individual "shadow", as previously argued (*Global Strategic Implications of the Unsaid: from myth-making towards a wisdom society*, 2003). The case may be extended to various forms of "Omertà", perhaps most recently and dramatically illustrated by the policies of the Catholic Church with respect to sexual abuse by clergy, widespread concern with the secrecy of tax havens, or the scientific neglect of a particular factor in consideration of climate change policy (*Mapping the Global Underground: articulating Insightful Population Constraint Consideration*, 2010; *Sins of Hot Air Emission, Omission, Commission and Promise*, 2009).

Within such a context, the question becomes how best to integrate that dimension of "darkness" into the design of global governance -- into its "geometry". One approach is to recognize the insights to be derived from what is so systematically ignored in conventional thinking, as previously discussed (*Enlightening Endarkenment: selected web resources on the challenge to comprehension*, 2005).

For a "futurist" of today, any such exploration can be usefully set within an historical context of a challenge faced by many civilizations over thousands of years. This has been courageously done, citing an extensive body of literature, by [Robert Temple](#) in an extensive study variously titled in distinct editions (*Netherworld: discovering the oracle of the dead and ancient techniques of foretelling the future*, 2002; *Oracles of the Dead: ancient techniques for predicting the future*, 2002). Although the title is technically appropriate it unfortunately disguises both the range of issues covered (with very extensive references) and the unconventional insights that Temple brings to the matter. The apparent emphasis presumably arises from conventional marketing considerations.

The study is introduced by the following statement, relevant to contemporary challenges to governance, to whatever degree that relevance may be denied:

We do not know who we are; we do not know why we are here, and we do not know what will happen to us. In the midst of all this uncertainty it is not surprising that, during our history as an intelligent species, we have tried in various ways to escape from

the suffocating helplessness of our ignorance. Today, most of our hopes rest on science. But before there was science, a branch of religion or philosophy existed for the purpose of helping man to step outside the confines of the present and to catch glimpses of the future.

In the current period when efforts are made by science to scope out the future as an aid to policy formulation, Temple considers the "underside" of man's history by surveying four major forms of institutionalised prophecy on which governance of the past was heavily dependent over thousands of years. Explicitly excluding astrology, he distinguishes:

- Western disciplines (primarily of the Mediterranean basin): oracles and divination by entrails (extispicy)
- Eastern disciplines (primarily of China): oracle-bone-cracking and the *I Ching* (Book of Changes)

Unfortunately the lengthy examination of these disciplines suffers greatly from the disadvantage that it is effectively four books in one, each of particular interest to a different audience. But it is the insightful possibilities from a wide body of research that is so valuable in the perspective that emerges from an exploration that is only too readily deprecated by disciplines that assume that the current scientific approach has a methodology adequate to the escalating challenges of governance in a crisis-prone world.

Ironically this strategic challenge of uncertainty has been (notoriously) highlighted in poetic form by a former US Secretary of Defense, [Donald Rumsfeld](#), as previously discussed in relation to the encoding offered by the *I Ching* (*Unknown Undoing: challenge of incomprehensibility of systemic neglect*, 2008).

With respect to the above argument, the value of the Temple review lies in the manner in which the following seemingly disparate insights exemplify "correlative thinking". Their potential future significance is further explored in a section of the main paper (*Dynamic structure of events within event-space*).

## Institutionalisation of "hell" and "consultation" with its inhabitants

As Temple documents, following the work of Robert F. Paget (*In the Footsteps of Orpheus: the discovery of the ancient Greek Underworld*, 1967), it is only in recent decades that the actual physical construction (or replication) of the widely-mentioned "Hades" was discovered at [Baia](#) in the Bay of Naples (*The Antrum of Initiation, Baia, Italy*, *BBC/H2G2*, 6 May 2010). Its legendary existence had previously been assumed to be purely a matter of myth -- the domain of the God of the Underworld, [Hades](#), and his wife [Persephone](#). It is within this extensive subterranean structure, complete with river, that the original Oracle of the Dead functioned for so long, offering [necromancy](#) in support of the processes of the Roman Empire, and its predecessors -- subsequently to be emulated in Greece at the better-known [Necromanteion](#).

Of particular interest is the manner in which an atmosphere was created within the structure to challenge any conventional sense of reality and to evoke imaginative insight in the susceptible -- a process consciously manipulated and exploited by its practitioners, whatever the benefits to those seeking such consultation. Temple compares the techniques -- isolation, drugs, inducing terror, etc -- with those so extensively explored and cultivated in the modern interrogation of prisoners. inspired by the so-called [brainwashing techniques](#) used in concentration camps (Peter Watson, *War on the Mind: the military uses and abuses of psychology*, 1978). Of course, whatever the societal pressures, the Oracle could be said to have been consulted "voluntarily" in contrast to the "consultation" of those more recently "put to the question" in such contexts, most notably by the [Roman Catholic Inquisition](#) of the past. That descriptive phrase has been specifically applied to use of the [rack](#) and the "[water cure](#)" in centuries past.

The question to be asked however is the degree to which, as a consequence of the cultivation of a politics of fear, governance is currently dependent (for lack of any alternative) on analogous "irrational" processes in divining the threats to its future, most notably with respect to the extraction of information from those suspected of terrorism. There is an extreme irony to the fact that the institutionalised processes of the original Hades at Baia (on the Bay of Naples) could be functionally compared to the "living hell" so deliberately created beyond the conventions of global society at *Baia de Guantánamo* (*Bahía de Guantánamo*). The term "bay" originates from the Latin. There is a further irony to the fact that, whether or not the inhabitants are on "death row", they may be appropriately considered to be the "living dead".

These historical twists might be understood as exemplifying [enantiodromia](#) -- taking on the characteristics of that which was most purportedly abhorred (*Psychosocial Energy from Polarization: within a cyclic pattern of enantiodromia*, 2007). As a cycle of learning this recalls the much cited insight of [George Santayana](#): *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it*.

The institutionalised role of an "underworld" in past empires is an appropriate reminder of the extent to which a shadowy "underworld" is currently a feature of global society, whether in terms of the "unsaid", or of the creation of living hells, or in the poorly recognized extent of organized criminality -- with an unknown (and deniable) degree of complicity of governance. This offers a more "rounded" understanding of the world than that widely extolled in the study by [Thomas Friedman](#) (*The World Is Flat: a brief history of the Twenty-first Century*, 2005), as deprecated previously (*Irresponsible Dependence on a Flat Earth Mentality -- in response to global governance challenges*, 2008). A "flat Earth" necessarily has an "underside".

Indeed if the success of Friedman's understanding of globality is consistent with the success of [Facebook](#), as he would probably claim, a more rounded understanding would be consistent with success associated with unmentionable portions of the human anatomy -- as the volume of internet traffic on relevant imagery has long proven to be the case. It is indeed through those non-facial portions of the anatomy that the future is engendered ("*Human Intercourse*": "*Intercourse with Nature*" and "*Intercourse with the Other*", 2007). Of course there are many "[handbooks](#)" of best practice -- each offering a *vade mecum* and insightful metaphors (*Handing Over: handy*

*metaphors for the communication of intent*, 2006). As might be expected, there is even an [Arsebook](#) anti-social networking utility that claims to connect people with those they hate. The face-focused metaphor might then be seen as overly supportive of any commitment to "facing the future" at a time when historians (notably George Santayana) imply that its dangers might paradoxically emerge from "behind" -- potentially offering curious justification to equally problematic metaphors (*Backside to the Future: coherence and conflation of dominant strategic metaphors*, 2003). It is strange that France, for example, should currently be giving legislative priority to the superficiality of facism (*Facism as Superficial Intercultural Extremism*, 2009). Do such metaphors suggest that civilization is faced with a crisis of "one-sidedness" -- with individual identity dangerously associated with the "cut-out" figures of comic strips?

The cognitive implications of rounded "globality" -- metaphorically supported by all portions of the human anatomy -- might be usefully considered as still to be fully understood (*Metaphorical Geometry in Quest of Globality*, 2009; *Future Generation through Global Conversation: in quest of collective well-being through conversation in the present moment*, 1997). The challenge is especially evident in the problematic relationships amongst those who explore it (*Epistemological Challenge of Cognitive Body Odour: exploring the underside of dialogue*, 2006; *Women and the Underside of Meetings: symptoms of denial in considering strategic options*, 2009).

From a design perspective, the slogan for global governance might be *No nether? -- No globe!* The design challenge is how to design in "nether" and the "underside". Hence the wrap-around geometry of a globe on which, from any position, "nether" is always elsewhere -- but every position is consider "nether" from somewhere else (*Responsibility for Global Governance: Who? Where? When? How? Why? Which? What?* 2008).

With regard to the content of oracular pronouncements, Temple notes the degree to which they were characterized by paradox and ambiguity, typically being expressed in [riddles](#) that he contends were evocative of widespread and fruitful reflection (p. 152). This might also be said of the Zen *koan*. Temple cites Aristotle (p. 159-160) to the effect that:

Good riddles do, in general, provide us with satisfactory metaphors: for metaphors imply riddles.... Metaphors must be drawn... from things that are related to the original thing, and yet not obviously so so related -- just as in philosophy also an acute mind will perceive resemblances even in things far apart... Well-constructed riddles are attractive for the same reason: a new idea is conveyed, and there is metaphorical expression.... The thought is startling, and... does not fit in with the ideas you already have... The effect produced... is a surprise (*Rhetoric*, Book III, 1405a-b, 1412a, trans. W. Rhys Roberts)

Provocatively, it might then be the case that **"the secret of global governance may lie in the riddle of a cross word"** (extending the variant proposed in the introductory paper). The ambiguity recalls the tale of the governor who sought only one-handed advisers -- to avoid being repeatedly confronted by advice of the form, "on the one hand...but on the other hand...". The current widespread enthusiasm for riddles is illustrated by the success of *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) of Dan Brown, and by similar works.

## Divination by sacrifice: entrails and extispicy

Again Temple documents the extent to which "consultation" by [extispicy](#) was practiced as a guide to key decision-making in governance over thousands of years -- even considered legitimate by the founding fathers of Western civilization, including Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (pp. 265-278). His documentation of the manner in which the liver, as the focus of such divination, was understood as a form of mirror of emerging reality is a reminder of the extent to which questionable processes of "speculation" remain central to risk taking at all levels of society (*Extreme Financial Risk-taking as Extremism -- subject to anti-terrorism legislation?* 2009)

Modern society might see itself as having long distanced itself from such practices based on the sacrifice of animals (and even of humans). It is however appropriate to recognize yet another "twist" in the process of that evolution, namely the widespread institutionalised use of [torture of humans](#) by authorities in order to "extract" information relevant to the future of governance, most notably in order to discover future threats, usefully to be understood as the emergence of threatening "alternatives".

Rather than extracting information from the entrails of animals, the focus was effectively displaced (through some forms of torture and punishment) onto extracting and manipulating the entrails and other organs of humans. The use of torture was of considerable significance to governance throughout the European Middle Ages -- and through the Renaissance. The current practice of torture in response to suspected terrorists threats -- using a number of techniques from the past -- remains a matter of considerable controversy. Future advances in psychoneurobiology and related disciplines could well see the past focus on the liver replaced by careful examination of the brains of suspects -- removed from the skull if necessary (Alexis Madrigal, *Lie-Detection Brain Scan Could Be Used in Court for First Time*, *Wired*, 4 May 2010; Brandon Keim, *This Is Your Brain on Hillary: political neuroscience hits new low in New York Times*, *Wired*, 12 November 2007).

Any acclaimed dissociation by governance from such approaches to obtaining information of relevance to the future -- or disapproval by them in the eyes of the governed -- is brought into question by the extensive cultivation and promotion of violence through the media. Whilst it may be claimed that such violence is used to highlight the merits of those who endeavour to eliminate it, there can be no question that such violence is central to the attraction of many movies -- and to ratings.

It is within this context that widespread interest in the processes of torture merit consideration, as ("lovingly") explored in the greatest possible detail in the 3-part presentation on *Machines of Malice* (Discovery Channel). Beyond the detailed simulation and testing of the apparatus of the past, special care was taken in that presentation to indicate the valuable later role of the technologies specifically

developed for such mechanisms. In so doing dubious efforts were also made to claim that there was little evidence for actual use of many of the most questionable forms of torture -- even though some (such as the [ducking chair](#)) remained legal late into the 20th century. As with the "water cure", it might be said to have been replaced by [waterboarding](#). Any published evidence of the extent of the current use of torture by authorities is of course readily denied or reframed ([Amnesty International, \*Torture and ill-treatment: the arguments: What is torture? What is ill-treatment? What's the difference?\*, 2007](#)). There is however disturbing evidence to the contrary as in a report by [Physicians for Human Rights \(\*Evidence of Human Subject Research and Experimentation in the 'Enhanced' Interrogation Program\*, 2010\)](#).

Given the increasingly evident inadequacies of global governance, it might be provocatively asked whether this is in some measure due to a form of collective "navel gazing", effectively analogous to what is deprecated in the attention to "entrails" in divination, whatever the degree to which it is held to reflect the wider social reality ([Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council: misleading as vital to governance of the future?](#) 2007). Might the current preoccupations of the media and opinion surveys be seen by the future as such a form of divining the future? The fascination with "extra spicy" could well be considered an indicative misreading of "extispicy".

## Oracle-bone-cracking

As the Chinese functional equivalent of extispicy, Temple reviews the extent to which this process was of fundamental importance to decision-making over thousands of years. He notes that the decoding of the patterns on the many thousands of [oracle bones](#), now stored in museums, remains to be achieved -- despite dramatic recent advances in decryption technology.

As with Temple's extensive discussion of "signs", "portents" and "omens", considered so important as a complement to extispicy, their interpretation in Chinese processes of governance might be fruitfully compared to the credibility attached to current interpretation of "signs" regarding the emergence of future challenges of governance. Climate change offers an interesting example ([Climate Change as a Metaphor of Social Change](#), 2008). However, as he points out (p. 225-9), the interpretation of portents is intimately related to political processes and their manipulation. He notes a study of how the acknowledgement of portents was used as a form of indirect criticism of processes of governance. A modern equivalent is to be found in the marked tendency of religious leaders in faith-based societies to interpret major natural disasters as a sign of divine retribution or disapproval -- as was the case with [Hurricane Katrina](#) and the [South Asian tsunami](#) ([Acts of God vs Acts of al-Qaida: Hurricane Katrina as a message to Bible Belt America?](#) 2005).

As Temple concludes: *There are times, surely, when we would all be tempted to invent an eclipse if that is what it might take to change a government policy* (p. 229). However he avoids any reference to what might be of far greater significance to current processes of governance, namely the "false flag" fabrication of portents of threats by those in power -- justifying the reinforcement of repressive policies ([Terror as Distractant from More Deadly Global Threats](#), 2009; [Promoting a Singular Global Threat -- Terrorism: Strategy of choice for world governance](#), 2002).

## Divination through the I Ching

Temple provides a very useful review of the function of the *I Ching*, noting (as with others before him): *In all of Chinese history there has never been a single book held in so much awe and reverence as the I Ching. If it were simple to understand, perhaps it would not have been held in such awe.... the fact is that this strange oracle book is, and has been for two and a half thousand years, at the heart of Chinese culture.* (pp. 304-5).

Temple also refers to recognition of the manner in which chess, as played in the West, emerged from the use in China of precursors of chess in divination processes -- as an aid to governance. Of particular interest is his summary of the "militarization of chess" from the symbolic and philosophical context fundamental to the *I Ching* (pp. 321-3), as he had previously described ([The Genius of China](#), 1999). Both chess and the *I Ching* can of course be represented in terms of an 8x8 array. As noted earlier, the game of chess has long been recognized as providing a training for strategic thinking -- as with the relevance of the *I Ching* to governance.

Whilst attention is naturally drawn to the commentaries and metaphorical allusions which are most apparent in the *I Ching* -- mistakenly considered comprehensible as a conventional "book" (p. 307) -- it is appropriately pointed out that its central core lies in the encoding of patterns of change by a system that subsequently proved to be identical to that independently discovered by [Gottfried Leibnitz](#) and embodied in the binary system of computers. However in contrast to such significance for the West, Temple cites approvingly (p. 315-6) the remarks of Rudolf Ritsema and Stephen Karcher ([I Ching: the classic Chinese oracle of change with concordance](#), 1993-5):

This system describes the way psychic energy moves in the world and in the individual in a precise yet imaginative way.... a fluid changing world whose ground is imaginative energy (p. 65 and 83)

The images [offered by the *I Ching*] do not offer standard predictions of an unalterable future. They describe the way energy is moving to create possible futures. This presents you with an opportunity to interact with the energy clusters or complexes of the psyche. Changing your relation to these forces can change what will happen to you... [you] make conscious the imaginative background and the goal of the situation in which you find yourself, giving you the necessary information to make choices. In a traditional culture, where myth is alive...this oracular image carries [people], keeping them connected with the imaginative ground. (pp 32-3)

As previously argued with regard to the current "energy" challenges of global society, any "psychic energy" merits greater attention ([Reframing Sustainable Sources of Energy for the Future: the vital role of psychosocial variants](#), 2006)

The coding system of the *I Ching* explicitly embodies the paradoxical cognitive relationship between such polarities as light-dark, thereby incorporating the cognitive challenges to conventional, **mono-polar governance** -- exemplified in part by the challenges of a **multi-polar global system**. It is in this sense that the second pair of Drasny's *Yi-globe* images (Fig. 11) is suggestive.

Symbolic portrayals through carefully designed institutional logos may faintly imply the necessity for such a countervailing perspective to encompass globality -- only too readily understood simplistically. In the case of the [logo of the United Nations](#), for example, the two **olive branches** framing the globe are held to be a **symbol for peace**, but without implying any understanding of the cognitively challenging dynamic through which "peace" is sustained by governance. As previously argued, the manner in which a polarity (or binary logic) can "hold" (or "uphold") globality is not readily evident -- as political parties continue to demonstrate in their struggle with each other (*Metaphorical Geometry in Quest of Globality*, 2009). The "olive branches" may however offer an aesthetic echo of understandings of the flow forms discussed below.

## Science vs Imagination: another polarity to be transcended?

Curiously, given the various "imaginative" modes for engaging with the future, as documented by Temple, he himself regards the matter as *being ultimately much more scientific and less psychological* (p. 317). The current relevance of such readily deprecated insights is however usefully highlighted by Temple by placing past modalities (and those currently favoured) within a pattern of change -- in all probability giving rise to future deprecation of those now so authoritatively advocated. In effect it is the generality of the *I Ching* that ensures its demonstrated greater capacity to embody shifting modalities and polarities -- exemplified by deprecation and advocacy. But, as he stresses with regard to "scientific methodology", and the many examples of its resistance to new thinking:

- Rigid orthodoxy is simply fear...Modern science and true scholarship of all ages should feel enough conviction in their own sound principles to be able to throw down the long walls which guard the corridors of academe. They were built not to keep the barbarian hordes out, but to confine those within... Science and learning must not be bound and gagged by stuffy opinions, but open to free and unlimited enquiry....It would be insufferable arrogance to insist that we have nothing to learn from the strange system of the Chinese *Book of Change*. (pp. 315-6)
- Long may as many people as possible be *at variance with established theories!* After all, since no established theory can ever be wholly correct due to the imperfection of human knowledge, it is only if we are perpetually at variance with them that any progress can ever be made at all. (p. 205)

The pattern of relationships between the disparate points of the argument above might be usefully reinforced by:

- acknowledging the challenge to conventional methodologies of both the possibility and urgent need for a higher degree of **correlative thinking**, as previously argued (*Theories of Correspondences -- and potential equivalences between them in correlative thinking*, 2007)
- recognizing that the criticism implied by reference to the "proto-scientific" thinking of the past calls for self-reflexive recognition that the knowledge of the present will in its turn be framed as "not fit for purpose" by the future -- if "science" is indeed to evolve, rather than seeking to pre-determine ("to colonize") the emergence of future modes of cognition from the present (*End of Science*, 2008). **Rather than as "proto-scientific", knowledge at any one period in the flow of history is then best understood as "proto-knowledge"** in the expectation of new forms of knowing -- with the possible additional twist that modes of the past may in future be understood as reflecting insights neglected in the fashions of the present.
- noting the inadequacy of conventional strategic modes, as exemplified by:
  - the questionable efficacy of **counter-insurgency** strategies in "**winning the battle for hearts and minds**" in societies framed as breeding grounds of terrorism -- despite the unprecedented resources expended in asymmetric warfare on cultures repeatedly framed as "primitive". Ironically, to a greater degree than is considered reasonable, it is these cultures that rely on imaginative poetry to express the subtleties of identity simplistically indicated by reference to "hearts and minds" (*Poetic Engagement with Afghanistan, Caucasus and Iran an unexplored strategic opportunity?* 2009).
  - the **predilection for myth** in a society supposedly heavily committed to rational development (*Relevance of Mythopoeic Insights to Global Challenges: cognitive integration implied by the Lord of the Rings*, 2009). Myth is a form of explanation with which one can meaningfully engage. This predilection offers new articulations of evil and its hellish domains. Curiously this has been recently justified by Barack Obama's much-cited affirmation that "evil exists" in his [acceptance speech for the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize](#). Also noteworthy is the very extensive review of four recent studies of evil in the *Financial Times* ([Julian Baggini, The Faces of Evil, FT, 5-6 June 2010](#)). As the reviewer notes: *Perhaps this resurgence of interest is inevitable, for even though evil as an idea may have been out of fashion, as a reality it has never gone away. Attempts to do without the word in the face of genocide, torture and flagrant disregard for life, collapse into euphemistic absurdity.... One lesson is that we should not be seduced by the illusion that we can eliminate evil. As is so often the case, Svendsen and Todorov are in wise agreement, cautioning that catastrophic results follow when people try to take on this purifying role.*

It is in this light that the recent release of the most engrossing celebration of myth (*Avatar*, 2009) offers a much-commented contrast to conventional development thinking and its supporting military strategies: if "evil" does not exist, it must be created. Any threatening "other" must be framed as demonic, with the consequence that dictatorships are

variously associated with unspeakable torture, cannibalism, and the like -- with seemingly no possibility of verifying (scientifically) the "facts" presented. Some have hypothesized that the self-acclaimed most powerful nation of the world cannot be sustainably governed without the assertion of "evil elsewhere". Should this be considered a re-emergence of a gnostic insight according recognition to a "netherworld" (Erik Davis, *Technognosis: myth, magic and mysticism in the age of information*, 1998)? What does this imply for global governance in a technological society?

- increasing dependence of governance on news management ("spin") and **image building** -- through cultivating a coherent narrative by which unfortunate facts can be reframed or set aside
- recognizing the paradoxical attitudes cultivated in modern society with respect to:
  - **human life**, to be protected and obsessively "multiplied" at any cost, and irrespective of the implications of an exploding population and its consequences for the life of future generations (James Lovelock, *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: a final warning*, 2009; Bill McKibben, *Eaarth: making a life on a tough new planet*, 2010). Considerable effort is made to ensure that the termination of life by abortion, suicide or euthanasia is criminalized as murder -- although, in the case of suicide, exceptions may be extolled as heroic self-sacrifice
  - **human death**, to be dissociated from the challenges of governance, with the exception of "just wars" and the historically unprecedented investment in arms and their dissemination, most notably at the instigation of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council. Most curiously it is typically only as a consequence of death in sufficient quantity -- effectively of human sacrifice reminiscent of the past -- that any legislation is enacted in response to recognized challenges. Capital punishment and targeted assassination may well be considered appropriate, as with enthusiastic development of ever more effective weapons of mass destruction (*Globalization of Death: a checklist*, 2003)

These attitudes may be compared with those of civilizations that survived over centuries (Stanislav Grof, *Books of the Dead: manuals for living and dying*, 1994).

It is within this context that the founding myths of Western civilization with respect to life/death, good/evil -- and the role of Hades -- may be fruitfully revisited in relation to the Chinese system of encoding polarity and the value of designing it into a Fibonacci spiral (as in the [main paper](#)).

As previously argued, there is a case for relating the challenges of global governance to those of game-playing and imagination in the light of insights from complexity theory (*Imagining the Real Challenge and Realizing the Imaginal Pathway of Sustainable Transformation*, 2007). It is questionable whether the intangibility of "imagination" is compatible with the focus of science on tangibles. Within what methodological framework can science *per se* lay claim to the process of imagination, readily to be defined as meaningless, if not nonsense. The assumption that science alone is the basis for global governance is questionable when so much of value proves to be dependent on kinds of imagination and credibility that science is unable to furnish. The challenge for science is well illustrated by a much cited quote from Albert Einstein:

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.

As a polarity science-imagination could be fruitfully transcended.

## Weaponisation of the Heart: from pomegranate to hand grenade

**Persephone and the pomegranate:** With respect to the Oracle of the Dead in the Hades at Baia, Temple appropriately notes the terrifying role of Persephone in relation to the myth -- as Queen of the Underworld, namely "She Who Destroys the Light". Curiously, although not mentioned by Temple, her movement and significance are intimately associated with the [pomegranate](#) fruit in various myths in the cultures of the Mediterranean basin (including [Judaism](#), [Greece](#), [Christianity](#), [Islam](#)) as well as in other cultures (*Pomegranates and Symbolism; The Power of Pomegranate Symbolism*; Nancy Haught, *A Pomegranate for All Religions: Looking at the fruit's spiritual properties in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Beliefnet*, 2005). The compound design (in the [main paper](#)), with the original spiral and its reversal, holds the complementarity between light and dark -- and the alternation between them (discussed [below](#)). In the myth Persephone moves between both realms in a regular annual cycle, embodying appropriately a paradoxical ambiguity.

Any such shared significance across cultures merits attention when their relationship and beliefs have exemplified violent divisiveness down the centuries. This is particularly relevant since the pattern includes those cultures which have contributed most to Western beliefs -- widely claimed to be "universal". As noted in the *Wikipedia* entry, particular significance is variously attached to the seeds of the pomegranate fruit and their supposed number, as in the case of Ancient Greece, for example:

It was the rule of the [Fates](#) that anyone who consumed food or drink in the Underworld was doomed to spend eternity there. Persephone had no food, but Hades tricked her into eating six pomegranate seeds while she was still his prisoner and so, because of this, she was condemned to spend six months in the Underworld every year. During these six months, when Persephone is sitting on the throne of the Underworld next to her husband Hades, her mother Demeter mourns and no longer gives fertility to the earth. This became an ancient Greek explanation for the seasons.... It should be noted that the number of seeds that Persephone ate varies, depending on which version of the story is told. The number of seeds she is said to have eaten ranges from three to seven, which accounts for just one barren season if it is just three or four seeds, or two barren seasons (half the year) if she ate six or seven seeds.

**Cultural relevance of the pomegranate:** Of greater interest is the extent to which the pomegranate was central to the symbols of the

cultures named, as noted in the *Wikipedia* entry. In Jewish tradition the pomegranate is a symbol for righteousness, because it is said to have 613 seeds. Through *gematria*, it is believed to be of potentially fundamental significance (Yaron Gordon, *Star of David: inspired by the pomegranate*, *EzineArticles.com*, 21 Oct. 2009). The seeds are held to correspond to the commandments of the *Torah* -- the **613 Mitzvot** -- of which no definitive list appears to exist, as discussed in *The Magic 613* (*Dyneslines*, 13 September 2008). In a curious international effort to assess that number using a scientific methodology, the average number was indeed reported to be 613 (Alexander Haubold, *How many seeds does a pomegranate have?*).

In almost every religion the pomegranate has been used as a symbol of humanity's most fundamental beliefs and desires, life and death, birth and eternal life, fertility and marriage, abundance and prosperity. Appropriate to the argument here regarding the weaponisation of interactions, 'pomegranate' and 'grenade' are identical, or almost identical, in many European languages, most controversially in Hebrew (Philologos, *Pome-Grenade: on language*, *The Jewish Daily Forward*, 6 February 2004). The latter notes that, as with the Hebrew term for "terrorist" (*habel*), both terms had completely different connotations when used in an erotic love poem and the Biblical *Song of Songs*.

**Persephone and leadership of the Western world:** Perhaps even more curious, with respect to Persephone, are the various documents identifying her as the statue on the top of the Capitol Building in the U.S. (*Why is a statue of Persephone, Goddess of the Underworld atop the Capitol Dome?*; *Persephone on the US Capitol Building*; *Mystery Lady at the top of the Capitol*, 2006). This is a bronze statue that, since 1863, has crowned the dome of the building. Now formally named the *Statue of Freedom*, it was originally named *Freedom Triumphant in War and Peace*. This formality has not prevented other interpretations -- a developing urban mythology appropriate to Persephone herself (*Occult Symbolism in Washington D.C.*; *U. S. Congress - A Pagan Society*). It is noteworthy that Temple's own account was the subject of an extensive review from a masonic perspective (*Entering the Oracle of the Dead: Robert Temple Descends into an Ancient Hell*, *Freemasonry Today*, Issue 20, April 2002). Such curiosities are matched by the significance accorded to Persephone in Canada's cultural heritage (*Government of Canada Supports Persephone Theatre*, *Canada News Center*, 30 March 2010).

**Pomegranate as the primary symbol of healing:** To the extent that the challenge of global governance addressed here is one of design enabling a degree of psychosocial "healing", it is appropriate to note that the pomegranate was selected as the logo for the Millennium Festival of Medicine. According to Patricia Langley (*Why a Pomegranate?* *British Medical Journal*, 2000, November 4, 321(7269), pp. 1153-1154), the reasons were:

- the pomegranate has been held sacred by many of the world's major religions
- it has been revered through the ages for its medicinal properties
- preparations of different parts of the plant have been used to treat a variety of conditions
- it features in the coat of arms of several medical associations

**"Persephone" as an indicator of attention span:** With respect to the Fibonacci-based spiral design, the "number of seeds" might be variously associated with it. With regard to Persephone's alleged "consumption" of from 3 to 7 of them -- cognitive "ingestion" -- this could usefully point to variations in the cognitive span of engagement beyond the polarity, namely the number of "arenas" around which the spiral is constructed. References in the Chinese literature to the encounter with "10,000 things", acknowledged as signifying "many" or "infinite" (p. 341), could be seen in terms of a cognitive constraint imposed by an analogue to the **Dunbar number** -- a constraint on cognitive embodiment (*Existential Embodiment of Externalities: radical cognitive engagement*, 2009).

As in Christian symbolism, the fruit as a whole is indicative of the "bleeding heart"-- at the origin of the design. But, through what amounts to a weaponisation of the heart, Persephone herself, in her terrifying form, might even be understood as the deity of the **improvised explosive device** (IEDs) -- a seemingly perverse antithesis of freedom, but an appropriate complement to the forms of freedom spread by **drones** (unmanned aerial vehicles). Such distortions are the price of binary logic and the consequence of reductionism.

## Education and research as "consultation with the dead"?

Understandings of the distant past regarding deprecated "consultation with the dead" and their "spirits" may be fruitfully, if ironically, compared with modern understandings of "education" and "research" -- more especially in the emerging virtualized cyberworld.

The point to be made is that ever larger proportions of extant knowledge and insight are now embodied in books or their electronic equivalent. As previously explored, the challenge is how to enable access to the vast sweep of time and insight in the present moment, constrained by time (*Engaging Macrohistory through the Present Moment*, 2004).

An increasing proportion of the authors are now definitely dead, at least physically, if not in relation to collective memory -- as with the founders of many religions. Some might well already be perceived as the "living dead", to say nothing of those formally recognized as **"Immortals"** (as with members of the *Académie française*). A significant proportion of education and research therefore involves "consultation with the dead" -- and indeed their "spirits" live on through their works. Here lies the challenge of education, however -- namely how to evoke those spirits and benefit from their insights.

Many of the processes attributed to the consultation of oracles, especially those detailed by Temple with regard to the Oracle of the Dead, can be compared with educational processes. This is especially the case with respect to the means employed to trigger imaginal receptivity, respect for the past, and the as yet unknown. In their more extreme form, as he notes, they may be associated with modern approaches to brainwashing. Evocation of a sense of mystery through appropriate ritual may be upheld as a mark of an influential educator -- well-celebrated by the movie *Dead Poets Society* (1989). The challenge is engendering an appropriate disposition of mind for learning through subtle attitudinal catalysts. How can the "dead" be encouraged to speak? How can people be enabled to "hear"? Deriving insight from arrays of the entombed in libraries, or embalmed in copyright, is no trivial matter.

Approaches to engendering such disposition, echoing those of the past, may be variously appreciated and deplored: cult rituals, hazing, bootcamp methods, "outward bound" exercises, meditation, fasting, etc. Those of secret societies, such as the freemasons, may bear an even closer relationship to those of the distant past -- especially through use of "high priests" or "high priestesses" ("Persephones"?). After the experience of educational "hell" -- a qualifier commonly used by students -- Temple remarks on the euphoria of the "post-consultation" experience, namely the return from "Hades" (for those who survive). It is an aspect of the process of being born anew (*Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being born again*).

Also worthy of consideration are the parallels between modern "re-search" and the surreal dimensions of any such consultation -- notably in the future, as explored in the fictional accounts of archetypal "libraries", such as that of [Jorge Luis Borges](#) (*The Library of Babel*, 1941) or the "Galactic Imperial Library" on [Trantor](#) of [Isaac Asimov's](#) *Foundation Series*. Given the disposition of knowledge in cyberspace, the nature of "consultation with the dead" through the use of search engines -- Google and the like. -- merits consideration, especially given the ambitions to render all published knowledge accessible through such facilities. But again the challenge is how to evoke the "spirits" so embodied and how to derive meaning from their pronouncements -- however well they may be abstracted and summarized.

As is widely recognized, a key to human access to knowledge over the web is interface design. Hence the exploration of a Fibonacci-style "magic carpet" in the [main paper](#) and separately (*Interweaving Thematic Threads and Learning Pathways: noonautics, magic carpets and widdomes*, 2010). Given the widely recognized possibility of a [holodeck](#), its anticipation in memory theatres, [memory palaces](#), and the high-tech [Allosphere](#) theatre-like research facility, there is every possibility that search engines may simulate environments in which "consultation with the dead" is enabled -- complete with "librarians", potentially in either of the forms of Persephone. It is ironic that many students and researchers have referred to particular librarians of their experience as "Gorgons", whatever the fruitful implications of their multi-snake-headed connectivity, or their petrifying capacity ("rock logic") unless viewed via a suitable mirror. As a monster of the underworld, the threat of such an encounter with the [Gorgon \(Medusa\)](#) is described in the *Odyssey*:

"...and pale fear seized me, lest august [Persephone](#) might send forth upon me from out of the house of [Hades](#) the head of the Gorgon, that awful monster..."

Given the informal corporate slogan of Google, *don't be evil*, it would be ironic if any simulated environment required for such interactivity necessitated a dimension of what is too readily deprecated as "evil" or "negativity" -- in order to evoke appropriate learning. *No pain, no gain?*. Might Google be obliged to create a form of "cyber-Hades", using features explored by millions in *Second Life*, to enable acquisition of knowledge, if not wisdom? Notions of a [Second Death](#) have been long held, whatever its relation to wisdom. Given the widespread use of the mirror metaphor in relation to speculation regarding the future, what kind of cognitive mirror might be appropriate (*Stepping into, or through, the Mirror: embodying alternative scenario patterns*, 2009)?

The oracles of the past seem to have done marvels -- even without an iPad and Wifi access, or the associated media effects now available. Future "consultation with the dead" via iPad or iPhone? Presumably the future will have even better consultation facilities to offer -- interactive animations of dead authors, irrespective of the aspirations for cryogenics and "[mind uploading](#)".

[Implications of this argument are developed in the [main paper](#): *Designing Global Self-governance for the Future: patterns of dynamic integration of the netherworld* (2010) where the [references](#) are also to be found]



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