



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

12 May 2015 | Draft

Dreams that Dialogue is Made Of

Radical reframing offering neglected degrees of freedom

-- / --

Introduction

Thinking and engaging otherwise through metaphor

Information overload and information underuse: towards a meta-strategy?

Reframing through interweaving "meta" and "para"

Dreaming of dialogue in parameta space

Conscious self-reflexivity in dialogue

Greece as a test case?

A shorter variant of this document has been published under the title: *Metaphor as Fundamental to Future Discourse* (*Futures: the journal of policy, planning and futures studies*, 2016)

Introduction

In a time of information overload, increasing invasiveness, and questionable strategic coherence for individuals and collectivities, could metaphor have an especially important role to play? Any *in extenso* commentary on the possibility is necessarily also part of the problem, fruitfully to be recognized as its own metaphor in exploring the pattern that connects meaningfully.

In this spirit, the commentary can be used as an exercise in avoiding external referents. These are potentially as problematic for readers as for the publisher of a journal, typically challenged by hyperlinks, images, the new possibilities of animation, and copyright constraints. Such a convoluted exercise then corresponds to reported experiments of a group of mathematicians and poets who write texts avoiding use of the letter "e", for example. More to the point, with everything supposedly connected to everything, how can such connectivity be navigated without external referents?

What can be fruitfully said without specific references to matters elsewhere -- potentially behind paywalls, or requiring prior knowledge and/or appropriate security clearance? Does such a modality effectively constitute a form of metaphor for the identity and requisite sense of existence through which to engage with the future?

Is any reference to matters external to a dialogue space then to be construed as an indication of its fragmentation -- or of potentially wider connectivity requiring embodiment otherwise? How is global sustainability to be achieved when challenged by obstacles to shared knowing? Are there forms of allusion and liminality which may suffice for that purpose? Avoiding verbose explication, can significance be usefully implied?

Thinking and engaging otherwise through metaphor

In a period when conventional modes of thinking are seemingly less than empowering or "fit for purpose", metaphor offers a remarkable opportunity -- one poorly explored to any systematic degree. It invites the question as to how many other ways of thinking might there be. As indicated by one early futurist (Kenneth Boulding), in a complex world it may offer the possibility of an integrative worldview which is otherwise elusive -- and indeed we might be one ourselves (*Being Other Wise: clues to the dynamics of a meaningfully sustainable lifestyle*. 1998; *Reinventing Your Metaphoric Habitat*, 1992; *Being What You Want: problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?* 2008).

In this spirit, those metaphors explored in previous writings first focused on moving beyond the strategically ubiquitous vision metaphor to the use of other senses and the polysensorial, otherwise fundamental to the navigation of reality (*Developing a Metaphorical Language for the Future*, 1994). Another approach is to consider each species as offering such leads, as has been explored in the corporate world with respect to dolphins, dinosaurs, and the like. In the light of various traditions, nature more generally can be explored, especially water and its fluidity -- but with the further implication of the complementarity of states of matter as indicative of a necessary complementarity in modes of knowing. Going further in that mode, is the cyclic connectivity between those states an important clue vital

to engaging otherwise with environmental challenges? Especially intriguing is the sense that human identity, cognition and discourse can be better explored in terms of the subtlety of waveforms. Can one understand oneself to be a waveform, and what might this then imply?

Whilst metaphors derived from nature can be explored in this way, as is now characteristic of the emerging discipline of **biomimicry**, the possibility can be taken further by using technology as a source of metaphor through what can be termed technomimicry (*Engendering a Psychopter through Biomimicry and Technomimicry: insights from the process of helicopter development*, 2011). A familiar possibility is offered by the gears of an automobile and its implications for changing conceptual gear -- and the nature of a "gearbox". Shift or automatic? Metaphor can be of great assistance in exploring contrasting conditions which prove so divisive in society, namely by offering insights into alternation between them. Again the contrast between automobile engines, based on two, eight, or more "strokes", opens questions as to the nature of 8 and 12-stroke organizations. How many modes are required for different terrains? What are the design issues fundamental to flying -- as might be vital for strategic initiatives to "get off the ground" and "fly sustainably", or to acquire the escape velocity necessary for "stable orbit"?

Taking the argument further, is there any technological innovation which does not have potential cognitive implications meriting exploration? For example, of great interest are the innovations of Nicolas Tesla based on the rotation of the electromagnetic field as fundamental to visible forms of "enlightenment" (*Reimagining Tesla's Creativity through Technomimicry: psychosocial empowerment by imagining charged conditions otherwise*, 2014). What do those insights suggest with respect to future creative management of perceptions of "positive" and "negative" which are currently so divisive in society? What indeed might be the implications of toroidal nuclear fusion reactor design for "cognitive fusion" -- given the necessary disassociation from the walls of such a container for the reactor to function? (*Enactivating a Cognitive Fusion Reactor: Imaginal Transformation of Energy Resourcing (ITER-8)*, 2006; *Massive Elicitation of Psychosocial Energy; requisite technology for collective enlightenment*, 2011).

In a complex knowledge-based society, does astrophysics offer a rich and fruitful way to "re-cognize" the extreme distance between contrasting worldviews within an ever expanding communication universe? One inspiration for this article, as reflected in its title, has been offered by the compilation by the astrophysicist **Stephen Hawking** (*The Dreams That Stuff Is Made Of: the most astounding papers of quantum physics -- and how they shook the scientific world*, 2011). The relevance of dreaming can also be explored in the light of the proprioceptive dialogue of **Steven M. Rosen** (*Practicing Proprioceptive Dialogue, Embodying Cyberspace; Dreams, Death, Rebirth: a topological odyssey into alchemy's hidden dimensions*, 2014). As a metaphor it can be used to explore project "deliverables" (*Dreamables, Deniables, Deliverables and Duende: global dynamics "at the table" inspired by dining and wining in practice*, 2015).

Having explored many such possibilities, the question emerges as to the degree of cognitive mirroring with such constructs of reality. Whilst much has been made of the container metaphor, this raises the question of the extent to which metaphor is itself a container with potentially paradoxical degrees of topological continuity between its "outside" and its "inside", and thus between objective and subjective. More generally, does geometry offer a more extensive range of unexplored opportunities for cognitive organization than widespread conventional metaphorical use of "line", "side", "global", and the like?

Most intriguing is why such possibilities are not explored to a higher degree in relation to "envisioning" the future, namely to imagining how it may be experienced otherwise and through what frameworks it might be variously organized. More specifically how might metaphor enable new forms of integrative discourse in an increasingly fragmented society -- more fruitful engagement with otherness?

Information overload and information underuse: towards a meta-strategy?

How to handle information overload, with the lack of time or inclination to follow leads -- especially given the opportunities and surprises of the unknown? Curiously the challenge takes a somewhat similar form for the global intelligence gathering services mandated to detect opportunities and threats in unimaginable quantities of information. With their processing power -- as at Bluffdale -- their focus is on pattern recognition through number crunching using supercomputers.

Less evident is to whom any meaningful patterns are then to be delivered and in what memorable form -- given the constraints on attention time of policy makers? How are meaningful insights elicited, held and communicated? Can everyone then usefully consider themselves to be a "Bluffdale" having "global security" preoccupations -- if only for themselves? Is everyone then faced with the challenge of being a "global brain"?

Much has been made of "meta-data" as the technical preoccupation of invasive surveillance and the ability to act on the intelligence so gathered. This is imagined to be the analytical key to the global information challenge of governance and security. For policy makers, how limited can be the information enabling a decision then held to be satisfactory?

This framing merits exploration as a metaphor for a form of communication minimalism, exemplified for individuals by the uptake of Twitter, the popularity of lyrics, and the role of aphorisms. Could "meta-for" be so considered in its own right -- with respect to thematic content? The possibility is curiously prefigured by use of "surfing" and "browsing" as experiential descriptors. Is aesthetics indeed a factor in providing coherence through its mnemonic organizing role as in rhyme or rhythm, independently of reason?

With respect to global governance, there is a curious disconnect between the analytical focus on meta-data and any integrative metaphor through which strategy is framed, presented and debated. This situation is partially mirrored by the manner in which social media and internet discourse enable a degree of coherence through tagging -- most notably hashtags. More questionable is then how the tweeting process enables coherence of larger scope -- a "language of the birds" potentially of requisite complexity for the globality of governance. With an emphasis on "following", how is the coherence to be understood in terms of flocking and swarming, as suggested by current interest in swarm intelligence?

With respect to collection of information, emphasis is placed on its quality. Curiously little is said about the quality of discourse about it, whether with respect to political and strategic options to which analysis may give rise, including oversight obligations, or with regard to

that mediated by the internet or in face-to-face communication. Inspired by the uptake of hashtags, is there a case for exploring an analogue enabling the tagging of metaphor -- as a development of the currently limited connotations of "meta-tag"?

Such a device merits "re-cognition" as a form of cognitive short-cut to avoid otherwise lengthy journeys on information highways -- or the tedious embedding of explanation in a communication. Indications of the operation of such a device are to be found in widespread appreciation of jokes, aphorisms, and interjections -- all characterized by succinctness, potentially of great import. These are however trumped by the potential significance of a glance.

Reframing through interweaving "meta" and "para"

The question is then whether use of "meta" opens access to a space of discourse enabling succinct expression of integrative insight and its communication in modes required by individual and collective creativity. Such a need has been well articulated by developments in computer-enabled communications and the efforts to organize the memory and wiring of such devices ever more efficiently -- to increase speed and minimize overheating. As metaphors, both the latter of course are a preoccupation in discourse.

The challenge with respect to the nature of this discourse "space" -- as with meta-data -- has much to do with associating meaning with seemingly elusive abstraction calling upon inference and allusion. This might be briefly caricatured by the capacity to "see a joke" -- or any inability to do so. The same might be said of a sudden insight.

How is identity and existence then meaningfully affirmed in a flocking/swarming process? The point is more strongly emphasized in the implied associations of a discourse-rich shared culture. Speech may even be reduced to the briefest jargon. Nothing may need to be said -- as with a significant glance across a room.

Meta? The dimensions and qualities of such a meta-space are suggested by the following, possibly to be clustered in terms of increasing "abstruseness" -- potentially better distinguished in terms of degrees of cognitive implication, embodiment, or self-reflexivity:

- Conventional usage:
 - metadata / metatag
 - metaphor
- Analytical disciplines?
 - metaphysics
 - metalogic / metamathematics
 - metalanguage -- pattern language
 - meta-modelling
- Strategic practice?
 - metadiscourse / metadialogue / metacommunication / metalogue
 - metadevelopment
 - metastrategy
 - metaproblem
- Memory, identity and morphogenesis
 - metamorphosis
 - metaverse
 - metamemory -- mnemonic amnesia -- metamnemonic -- memory amnesia -- 3/4 cyber orders / cybernetic orders
 - metaidentity / metaexistence -- virtual reality -- international community -- threats
 - meta-amnesia 3/4 ***

Para? Cognitive engagement with the patterning of meta can be fruitfully associated with the challenges of the subtleties of complexity, its comprehension and communication. Especially relevant to this argument are implications of terms using the "para" prefix and the subtle complexification they offer:

- paradigm, given the current preoccupation with a necessary "paradigm shift", fruitfully associated with metamorphosis and morphogenesis
- paradox, given the sense in which conventional logic and modalities are called into question at this time
- paratheses: as produced by the mind in order to act as a shared presence in public and private consciousness, namely an idea acting as a social force
- paracycling / Para -- Heidegger ?
- paragraph -- concept
- parenthesis
- Parapraxis or Freudian slip (Fehlleistung), is an error in speech, memory, or physical action that is believed to be caused by the unconscious mind
- parables
- paradise
- paraform
- paragon
- **Paralanguage** is a component of meta-communication that may modify or nuance meaning, or convey emotion, such as prosody, pitch, volume, intonation etc. It is sometimes defined as relating to nonphonemic properties only. Paralanguage may be expressed consciously or unconsciously.
- paralysis / paraplegia -- cognitive
- paramnesia a condition or phenomenon involving distorted memory or confusions of fact and fantasy, such as confabulation or dā©jā vu.
- paranoia
- paranormal / parapsychology
- parasite

One approach to the interweaving of para- and meta- would be through "**parameter**", but by distinction from its overly analytical associations. Conventionally it is a characteristic, feature, or measurable factor that can help in defining a particular system. It is considered to be an important element in evaluation or comprehension of an event, project, or situation. The term has more specific interpretations in mathematics, logic, linguistics, environmental science, and other disciplines.

By contrast, use could perhaps be made of "parameta". This could then serve as the useful analogue to hashtag. Etymologically "para" is indicative of distinction, whilst "meter" also offers a sense of aesthetic measure, potentially emergent in "meta" -- if not vital to its memorable comprehension. This tends to be absent from reference to parameter.

Potentially of greater interest would be to use the related spelling to emphasize the degree to which "parameter" is a particular instance of

"parameta" -- a particular interpretation of it. Of relevance is the sense in which "parameter space" is well established as the set of all possible combinations of values for all the different parameters contained in a particular mathematical model.

As noted in the extensive commentary of *Wikipedia*, the ranges of values of the parameters may form the axes of a plot, and particular outcomes of the model may be plotted against these axes to illustrate how different regions of the parameter space produce different types of behaviour in the model.

With respect to discourse, "parameta space" is potentially an abstraction of the cognitive implications of what is named as twitterspace and blogspace -- as domains of cyberspace.

Dreaming of dialogue in parameta space

With little exaggeration, it is fair to say that dialogue -- as widely practiced -- is clearly "not fit for purpose" in a civilization variously torn by numerous differences and dilemmas. This is as evident in the outcomes over decades of interfaith, interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue, as it is in that between political ideologies.

Expressed otherwise, could discourse of higher quality be imagined, if only from some more enlightened future perspective? Use of "higher quality" may itself be inappropriate to comprehension of the nature of the dialogue which would be adequate to the needs of the times. Terms such as "intensity", "operacy" or "potential" might be of greater value -- or perhaps "sincerity", as in "walking the talk". Even more intriguing are the cognitive implications of "laying down the path in walking".

"Meta-dimension": Acquiring a sense of the process of such dialogue is usefully catalyzed by the familiar 12-fold metaphors: the [Dodekathemon](#) of Olympus (or its Roman equivalent), the [12 Knights of the Round Table](#), the [12 Apostles](#), the [12 Tribes of Israel](#), the [Twelve Imams](#), and the like -- or perhaps the members of a jury, or of any team of a similar number. In each case their members can be understood in archetypal terms as representatives of distinctive worldviews, models, languages or cognitive modalities, as separately discussed (*Implication of the 12 Knights in any Strategic Round Table*, 2014).

Although distinguished, it is extraordinary to note how little attention is given to the pattern of discourse amongst the members of any such group. Even the distinctive nature of their contribution to the pattern is of relatively little concern. Emphasis is placed on a desperate quest for their commonality rather than on what is systemically vital in their diversity -- in cybernetic terms -- and how it "plays out" over time. The quest is subject to the dictum of Albert Einstein: *The significant problems we face can not be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.*

Suppose however that the contribution of each is made through characteristic metaphor, rather than via a dominant language assumed to be equally shared -- the "English" of discourse in a multilingual context. This implies the co-existence of 12 "languages" or "voices" -- more characteristic of multi-part singing and how the voices may then interplay. The interaction of the voices -- through contrasting metaphors -- then defines the meta-space as an evocatively strange container for dialogue.

The possibility could be briefly caricatured by the joking context of long-term Russian prisoners. Widely cited, the prisoners had numbered their limited set of jokes and simply called out the numbers rather than verbally recounting the jokes. The punch line made the point that laughter was only evoked if the number was appropriately articulated.

The challenge in practice is the tedium of the extensive elaboration of any new metaphor. The "explanation" effectively quenches the creative dynamics of collective discourse -- as with any monologue or the focus on a soloist. This may be evident in the predominant role accorded to a "keynote speaker" -- typically unable to evoke corresponding harmonies in the collective.

It is from such a perspective that the disciplined brevity of tweeting offers a fruitful pointer. Rather than as a vehicle for substantive text, could a tweet instead constitute a metaphorical allusion? The dialogue would then take the form of an evolving pattern of metaphorical tweets -- coloured by the contrasting worldviews by which they were each characterized. Fundamental to the process would then be the manner in which each metaphor reframed the discourse as a whole -- as a contrasting eye on that whole. The framing by any one metaphor would be challenged, complemented or reinforced by another -- much as can be the case in the potential contribution of each instrument in the musical improvisation of a group.

The question would then be what contrasting metaphorical voices could be indicative of the nature of the process and the -- possibly 12-fold -- stereoscopic vision it enabled. Examples, variously associated with the gods and muses of traditional cultures, might include, for good reason:

Frameworks of generative metaphor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• astronomy/astronautics• history• politics• physics/astrophysics/cosmology• music• religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (lifelong) education• development• business• military• health/psychotherapy• law

Of particular relevance is the manner in which each voice would be conventionally recognized to be incommensurable with the insight of other voices. This would require that those articulating other voices "see through" the superficialities of other metaphors such as to recognize the patterning they offered -- their challenging contribution to a larger harmony unrecognized by convention.

Each voice is thus a challenge to the others, whether intrinsic or existential, but offering the possibility of enriching any insight through another cognitive framework. As with musical improvisation, it is the capacity to hear the pattern of connectivity between the contrasting

voices which frames the creative potential of the group.

"Para-dimension": Missing from the argument to this point is the role of "para" in a parameta dialogue space. More than metaphor is required, however insightful, in order to transcend the conventions of currently inadequate dialogue. As implied by terms using the para prefix, the additional factors might include:

- paradigm in the sense of implying or requiring a shift of paradigm, possibly understood in terms of transformation of any conventional framing -- a cognitive metamorphosis
- paradox in the sense offered by counter-intuitive, challenging the linearity of conventional discourse -- perhaps to be most readily recognized in the frame-shifting associated with the surprising punchline of many jokes
- indications of otherness and another modality, as variously -- even mysteriously -- suggested by paradise, paragon, paranormal, parable, and paranoia

These could be usefully seen as characteristic of a future perspective -- provocatively exemplified by the mindset of hypothetical extraterrestrials -- namely a distinctively "other" way of engaging with reality, possibly to be understood as a higher order of twistedness. The point is argued separately (*World Introversion through Paracycling: global potential for living sustainably "outside-inside"*, 2013)

The weirdness of quantum mechanics suggests the cognitive "quantum leap" that could be required by the reality of a viable future worldview. Given the unconstrained creative imaginings of astrophysics, this might be understood in terms of a cognitive multiverse to be traversed by wormholes -- especially given its potential poetical associations. Should a significant glance be recognized as a wormhole by-passing the conventions of communication space? The possibilities with respect to dialogue can be variously imagined (*Quantum Wampum Essential to Navigating Ragnarok: thrival in crisis through embodying turbulent flow*, 2014; *Encountering Otherness as a Waveform -- in the light of a wave theory of being*, 2013; *Being Neither a-Waving Nor a-Parting: cognitive implications of wave-particle duality in the light of science and spirituality*, 2013)

Conscious self-reflexivity in dialogue

Such an imagined process embodies much greater significance to the extent that it moves beyond interventions bouncing off one another, whatever the pattern is engendered. In cybernetic terms this can be framed as the transition from first-order feedback processes, through second-order, to higher orders. These reflect increasing degrees of self-reflexivity though which otherness is progressively embodied, namely a transition from conventional objectivity to strange combinations of subjectivity and objectivity. Metaphor is vital in enabling such comprehension (*Consciously Self-reflexive Global Initiatives: Renaissance zones, complex adaptive systems, and third order organizations*, 2007; *Embodying Strategic Self-reference in a World Futures Conference: transcending the wicked problem engendered by projecting negativity elsewhere*, 2015).

Dialogue can then "shift gear" to greater embodiment of its distinctive process (*Engaging with the Future with Insights of the Past: consulting the dead, sacrifice, bone-cracking and divination*, 2010). The otherness of particular contrasting voices is then cognitively incorporated. Such reflexivity can be understood in terms of mirroring. The other mirrors or reflects what one might have said. -- recalling the fractal significance of Indra's Necklace (David Mumford, Caroline Series and David Wright, *Indra's Pearls: the vision of Felix Klein*, 2002).

However, rather than the dialogue being enacted through a particular metaphoric framework, its scope emerges from the interference of multiple perspectives -- admirably suggested by multi-part singing as a metaphor (*Enabling a 12-fold Pattern of Systemic Dialogue for Governance*, 2011; *All Blacks of Davos vs All Greens of Porto Alegre: reframing global strategic discord through polyphony?* 2007; *A Singable Earth Charter, EU Constitution or Global Ethic?* 2006). The path it takes is then well expressed by the saying "laying down a path in walking". The process could be compared to collective dreaming -- perhaps qualified in terms of lucid dreaming.

Greece as a test case?

The situation of Greece in this period offers a remarkable possibility for exploring discourse in parameta space. Greece benefits from cultural riches which continue to play a prominent role in that culture -- and its traditional influence on Europe and the world. It is extraordinary to note how the gods of the Dodekathion continue to figure in design and architecture worldwide -- with their temples echoed in the architecture and logos of international agencies.

There is however a disconnect between the current discourse on Greek governance and the wealth and wisdom of that culture. Hypothetically, what might the Gods and Goddesses elicit as new insight through their interplay in parameta space? Simulating such a symposium, giving special emphasis to the metaphors which characterize their respective qualities, would constitute an interesting experiment at little cost -- possibly to be replicated in many contexts to enable a reframing of the issues, irrespective of how seriously the exercise is taken. Would multiple experiments engender insight of particular value?

In addition to metaphor there is the question of the role that "para" might have in deliberately introducing a counter-intuitive twist to the discourse. This might be recognized in a degree of mirroring between the perspectives, perhaps taking the dramatic form of enantiodromia -- in contrast to any oversimplistic chorus of woe. There is clearly a case for embodying paradox into the nature of any coherence that might emerge.

Potentially more intriguing is the seeming reluctance of Greeks to draw upon their real and long-lasting wealth, rather than focus discourse on monetary tokens which may be of questionable relevance to sustainability in the longer term. Consideration of such reluctance might in itself offer a key to more appropriate discourse -- and to startling strategic proposals that might be made. Why might the gods and goddesses of Greece be reluctant to offer their collective insight at this time

References

Stephen Hawking (Ed.). The Dreams That Stuff Is Made Of: the most astounding papers of quantum physics -- and how they shook the scientific world. Running Press, 2011

David Mumford, Caroline Series and David Wright. Indra's Pearls: the vision of Felix Klein. Cambridge University Press, 2002

Steven M. Rosen. Dreams, Death, Rebirth: a topological odyssey into alchemy's hidden dimensions. Chiron Publications, 2014



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

For further updates on this site, [subscribe here](#)