



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

25th March 2013 | Draft

Being Neither a-Waving Nor a-Parting

Cognitive implications of wave-particle duality in the light of science and spirituality

-- / --

[Introduction](#)

[Being a-Waving](#)

[Being a-Parting](#)

[Death -- a final parting?](#)

[Neither a-Waving nor a-Parting](#)

[Transcending a-Waving and a-Parting](#)

[Correspondence to a-Coming and a-Going?](#)

[Varieties of neither-nor dynamic](#)

[Implications of neither-nor enabling Chinese strategic advantage](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

Produced on the occasion of publication by science of an inspiring [map of the Universe](#) shortly after the Big Bang

Introduction

Fundamental physics has long stressed the interrelationship between energy and matter, and their interconvertibility. Light, as one of the most basic forms of such energy (and necessarily the most "visible") is understood to be neither wave nor particle -- or either depending on the circumstances. Efforts have been made to articulate the implications for human beings through understandings of [quantum consciousness](#) and [quantum cognition](#).

Rather than engage in arid exploration of levels of complexity -- ironically only comprehensible to the "enlightened" -- the question here is whether there is a far more immediate understanding of how the distinction between wave and particle is to be experienced personally. Does such experience offer more radical and richer understandings of the sense of individual identity than is offered by convention?

How is it possible to "be a wave", to be identified with a wave, or to be carried by one -- as with a "wave of protest", a "wave of disgust", or a "wave of enthusiasm"? How is it possible to "be a particle" (as one extreme), to be identified with one, or to be carried by one? This could be the case of those sensing their insignificance in the scheme of things to be less than an "iota", being incapable of making an "iota of difference" to the development of events? In exploring such experiences, as experiences, a degree of emphasis can be usefully placed on the associated feelings -- as with a "wave of emotion".

For this reason, with a degree of aesthetic licence, "being a wave" can be provocatively carried by "a-waving". Similarly, feelings associated with "being a part" can be carried by "a-parting", thereby extending the significance of "a part". Appropriately such constructions continue to appear in poetry and as archaic forms surviving in English in a few idiomatic phrases and chants -- or *The Times They Are a-Changin'* (1964) of [Bob Dylan](#), evoked in a variety of contexts since then.

As [clarified here](#), although the construction appears to be an "a" prefixed to a gerund, technically it is better understood to be prefixed to the present participle. It serves as an adjective, whereas a gerund is a verbal noun, which can be the subject, direct object, or object of a preposition. A German equivalent is "*Ich bin am lernen*" (I am at learning). There are extensive references to "a-coming and a-going", both in ordinary language, in philosophy, in religious texts, and in literature. This can be suggestively related to "a-waving and a-aparting", as with "neither here nor there".

Science now offers a greeting, through "a-waving", from the origins of the Universe -- to a global civilization faced with collapse, "a-parting", through lack of capacity to encompass its own paradoxes consequent on its growth. The paradoxes are those assiduously explored by the best of science and spirituality.

Being a-Waving

The gesture of waving offers a very direct sense of relationship, especially in acknowledging a person seen from a greater distance and in any subsequent greeting when in the immediate environment. The gesture carries a sense of bonding. Its use by leaders, or by those waving to them, then merits questions as to its sincerity, if that is to be considered relevant. Does the degree of identification with the wave offer a sense of the nature of the bond?

Curiously, in a very comprehensive listing of entries on uses of "wave" in *Wikipedia*, that employed in such a gesture is not represented. Extensive coverage is however given on the web (Katie Kindelan, *Royal Wave: How Do the Royals Do It?* *ABC News*, 5 June 2012; Elizabeth Haggarty, *Royal wave reveals the inner royal*, *Toronto Star*, 23 March 2013). A comparison is made with the "parade wave" as described by the *Urban Dictionary*: oscillation of the hand from the wrist with minimal input from the elbow or shoulder. *Wikipedia* does however offer an extensive entry on the *Mexican wave* as being a *metachronal rhythm* achieved in a packed stadium when successive groups of spectators briefly stand, yell, and raise their arms, then immediately returning to the usual seated position.

Is such waving to be considered an indicator, more fundamental than voting, of the nature of engagement in society and of socialization? For religion this may take the form of gestures of blessing -- as with the focus on papal blessing, presented worldwide via the media, following the recent inauguration of the new Pope

A person can be understood to participate in a "wave of public opinion" -- an emotional response to an issue (*Oscars: Nominations catch wave of emotion*, *Variety*, 10 January 2013; George Byrne, *Film Review: Disaster movie rides tidal wave of emotion*, *Herald*, 4 January 2013; Andrew Fenton, *Naomi Watts riding an intense wave of emotion*, *News.com.au*, 24 January 2013; Pádraic Killeen, *A Wave of Emotion*, *Irish Examiner*, 2 January 2013).

As an experience, being part of such a movement offers a sense of being part of a wave. Individual identity may be felt to be diffused to a degree into that of the wave. Some may be experienced by others as "embodying the wave". The sense of community may best be experienced in terms of a variety of wave motions through which the individual, framed conventionally, is effectively taken out of that framing and "diffused" (or "spread") throughout the community. A community could possibly be understood in terms of a "standing wave" -- as might a civilization or culture, vulnerable to collapse.

Especially relevant in this period has been the "wave of protest" known as the *Arab Spring*. A related argument could be made with respect to other movements of opinion at this time (*Cultivating Global Strategic Fantasies of Choice: learnings from Islamic Al-Qaida and the Republican Tea Party movement*, 2010). The ambiguity in relation to "wave" and "part", as explored here, is however only too evident in the "part-like" nature of individual acts of terrorism on the part of *Al-Qaida*.

Engaging with a river or the sea necessarily involves engaging with the waves by which one is carried. This is especially the case with surfing. For some this experience extends into a degree of identification with the wave -- notably as an ultimate experience of surfing. This could be readily described as "a-waving". For one *blogger* in 2007:

if there is identifying with a wave...there is identifying with a wave..
to ride whatever wave...is suffering...the surferers may say something
else...but they depend on the wave(s)...for their happiness...
truely you are not a mere surferer...
let the waves be...and you will see

Encounters with especially meaningful people or places, may be readily described in terms of "waves" -- possibly of empathy, sympathy, friendliness, love, or hostility. The "chemistry" of such encounters may be articulated in terms of "vibes" or "resonance". Again this significance may be embodied by individuals, then to be associated with that "resonance", rather than through more conventional framings (name, clothing, status, physiognomy, nationality, etc).

The experience, when shared, may be associated with a "look" of recognition, or a "twinkle" in the eye -- possibly as a prelude to other explorations of the relationship. Rather than conventional descriptions of "being in love", or love itself, this may well be experienced as an "overwhelming wave" -- as a "wave of recognition" transcending time, partly valued for being surprisingly inexplicable.

The experience may also be characteristic of the encounter with a charismatic individual or a guru. As described by Shaila Catherine (*I, Me and Mine*, 2006):

My teacher in India, Poonjaji, often used the analogy of an ocean. He used to say that when we identify with our thought, we are identifying with a wave. However, it's a wave that doesn't know that it is ocean, so as we approach the shore we are afraid that we will be crushed. We'll be afraid that when we land on the beach we will be destroyed. But waves arise and pass, and they're never separated from ocean. Like this, we're never separated from truth. We're never separated from emptiness. No matter how many thoughts we identify with, it's just like identifying with the wave. Thoughts are only concepts, and yet there is a knowing that occurs beyond the rise and fall of concepts, beyond the tides of thinking, beyond what words can describe and beyond what the intellect can grasp.

Variants may be used to describe a living experience, notably in lyrics (cf. Tim Wheeler, *On a Wave*). Use is made of the phrase "wave of emotion" (cf. as with *Unbreakable*), getting "carried away on a wave" (*A Wave*), or even a *Wave of Mutiliation*. Most evident is the fourth album of *Richie Kotzen* (*Wave of Emotion*, 1996). Some may well be promoted for use as ring tones for phones. A psychological forum has addressed the question as to *whether "normal" people experience unexplained waves of emotion*. A wave of negative emotions may contribute to procrastination (*The Overwhelming Wave That Makes Us Procrastinate*, *Lifehacker*, 2 April 2010).

The experience of an emotional wave is widely cultivated and appreciated through music and dance. The latter even elicits undulation in response to the music, encouraging a degree of individual, or collective) identification with it -- as explored by [Maxine Sheets-Johnstone](#) (*The Primacy of Movement*, 2011) and [Mark Johnson](#) (*The Meaning of the Body: aesthetics of human understanding*, 2008). Many live their lives -- "wave-like" -- through their "music" in which they continually "bathed" -- to complement, or compensate, for their particulate obligations..

References to the experience of "[being in the zone](#)", or the more restricted sense of "[being on a roll](#)" (as in gambling or in other forms of risk-taking), may refer in large part to a wave-like experience. These are intimately related to the experiential nature of confidence, belief and trust. Such experiences have an integrative quality which contrasts fundamentally with any focus on "part" -- or on optimistic efforts to integrate disparate parts, as with [unified science](#). Exploration of "wholth" is suggestive of "wave-like" possibility (*Wholth as Sustaining Dynamic of Health and Wealth: cognitive dynamics sustaining the meta-pattern that connects*, 2013). There is a case for "liberating" the approach to integration from "part-like" constraints, as previously argued (*Liberation of Integration, Universality and Concord -- through pattern, oscillation, harmony and embodiment*, 1980).

Acquiring understanding of [wave-like phenomena](#) through the natural sciences, as framed by a variety of mathematical models, has been the focus of considerable attention as in: fluid dynamics, aerodynamics, quantum mechanics, electrical transmission, and (ironically) particle science. The social sciences have long given attention to waves in the form of cycles, framed as [social cycle theory](#), notably as explored by [Pitirim Sorokin](#) (*Social and Cultural Dynamics: a study of change in major systems of art, truth, ethics, law and social relationships* (1937, 1943), and from a comparative perspective by [Johan Galtung](#) and [Sohail Inayatullah](#), (*Macrohistory and Macrohistorians: perspectives on individual, social, and civilizational change*, 1997). As these titles emphasize, change itself is readily understood as "wave-like".

Economics is especially attentive to a variety of [business cycles](#) of different periodicity. Given the strategic quest for resilience, the "surprise" associated with the current financial crisis -- exemplifying an acyclic disruptive "event" -- suggests that these acquire the contrasting quality of discontinuous "partings" within the social fabric, better framed by the recent arguments of [Nassim Nicholas Taleb](#) (*The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*, 2007; *Antifragile: how to live in a world we don't understand*, 2012).

Governance, to be sustainable, could be designed such as to navigate an [adaptive cycle](#) -- an approach framed as vital by [Thomas Homer-Dixon](#) (*The Upside of Down: catastrophe, creativity, and the renewal of civilization*, 2006).

Being a-Parting

As with the gesture of recognition in waving a greeting, an equivalent gesture may be used in parting -- in waving farewell, or in the more problematic gesture of "waving away" (*Parting is such sweet sorrow*, *TVM News*, 28 February 2013). Here however there is a sense of impending separation into "parts" going their separate ways -- possibly to be understood as the collapse of the wave-like experience framed by the original greeting.

A sense of departure is given special focus through closure processes, including the "last lectures" of retiring academics and the final despatches of diplomats ([Matthew Parris](#) and Andrew Bryson, *Parting Shots: undiplomatic diplomats -- the ambassadors' letters you were never meant to see*, 2010). The frankness of President [Eisenhower's "farewell address"](#) was significant in that respect, for example.

An individual is only too readily identified by convention as being a part -- of a family, an enterprise, a community, a nation, or a culture -- even as a world citizen. Individuals as separate parts have their rights, as defined by the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). Individuals increasingly live "apart" -- whether from their family or their community of origin. They may well live in "apartments", as with the members of the wealthiest families in a mansion. Couples and close relatives may live "apart". They may also sleep "apart", or be seated "apart". This sense may be reinforced, or mitigated, by the formation of "partnerships" -- bonds between parts defined contractually.

Being "a part" is also evident in the variety of ways in which an individual is defined by legislation, regulations and procedures. In many senses, modern lifestyles may be understood in terms of "a-parting", both as a living condition, and as a progressive separation from others. Architecture reinforces this sense of "apartness" -- in contrast with "togetherness". The extent to which people now live "alone", whether lonely or not, is characteristic of the condition and process of "a-parting".

Apertness is most evident in what is defined and experienced as "otherness", most notably through recognition of "others" (*Us and Them: Relating to Challenging Others*, 2009). Whilst more obvious in the case of individuals -- of some other neighbourhood, ethnic group, nationality, or persuasion -- it is also evident with respect to other species, whether animals or plants. Clearly this sense extends to features of the environment, whether built (constructions, etc) or natural (rivers, mountains, deserts, etc). As in the value of distinguishing an "other", a case can be made for the value of apartness to dialogue (*Sustaining the Coherence of Dialogue through Apertness: patterns of systematic configuration of entities through hypertext*, 1997).

Enjoined to "participate", people can be understood as living as parts in a world of parts -- through which reality is variously framed. Otherness is attributed in many ways to tools and technologies -- to objects self-evidently to be considered apart. A useful comparison is to be made with the particulate understanding of light -- as a stream of particles. This is evident in the case of traffic, readily experienced as both movement of individual vehicles and as a "stream". The distinction may be applied to individuals in a process such as education, readily understood as confined to one "stream" or another -- even extending into a career path. The wave-like sense of a life-cycle may be articulated through musical metaphor, as by [Mary Catherine Bateson](#) (*Composing a Life*, 2001; *Composing a Further Life: the Age of Active Wisdom*, 2011).

Such distinctions extend from the tangible to the less tangible, such as models, concepts and categories -- even theories, belief systems and value systems. All these may be understood as particular frames or systems of frames. There is a sense in which, like clothes, these

may be variously donned or doffed -- even ultimately to be cast away. Waste disposal is appropriately to be considered a particular process of a-parting.

The individual can then readily be understood as surrounded by a vast array of "things" apart -- at various degrees of separation. This has been speculatively discussed separately (*Cyborgs, Legaborgs, Finaborgs, Mediborgs: meet the extraterrestrials - them is us*, 2013). In principle the individual is then free to pick and choose amongst them, prior to eventually casting them away. More problematic is the sense in which particular things are considered to be "a part" of the individual's sense of self. Such "possessions" can be cast away only with difficulty. It is difficult to separate from them -- whether a person, an automobile, a favourite coat, a house, or the like.

Death -- a final parting?

Whilst "a-parting" may be understood as engagement with an ecosystem of "parts", of which one variously partakes, a more active process of "a-parting" is evident in separation. This may include moving elsewhere or retirement. In its most traumatic form this is recognized in divorce or the breakup of relationships -- possibly described thereafter as estrangement. The process may be the culmination of separative tendencies or it may be the consequence of fatality -- an accident or the final stage in a terminal illness. The gesture of a last farewell, of ultimate separation, is then especially poignant -- distinguished in French by *adieu* in contrast to *au revoir* (Michael Walsh, *The Poetry of Parting, The Irish Monthly*, 60, 1932; Rainer Maria Rilke, *Parting*)

The role of "death" is curious given one favoured Christian marriage vow: *Til death do us part*. The bond of marriage can be considered in the light of the resonance bond within chemical molecules -- necessarily wave-like. The breakdown is then a collapse of that wave.

Such a breakdown, following the most solemn vow or promise, takes on heightened significance within a collectivity -- a community, a culture, or an international "special" relationship, an empire, or a civilization -- whether qualified as "holy", or not. An early case is the [Holy Roman Empire](#). A relatively recent example is the case of the Nazi *Tausendjähriges Reich* ("Thousand-Year Reich") -- which, despite its [millennial connotations](#), lasted only 12 years. The most recent potentially follows from the recognition of an "eternal" bond between the USA and Israel (*Obama Declares US-Israeli Alliance 'Eternal'*, *Voice of America*, 20 March 2013).

The times are currently witness to collapsing economies and bankruptcy at every level of every society -- obscuring levels of increasing moral bankruptcy (*Slide towards global moral bankruptcy?* 2010). These distract from the collapsing relationship with nature (Anders Wijkman and Johan Rockstrom, *Bankrupting Nature: denying our planetary boundaries*, 2012).

Such a collapse of a special bond, as an experience of "a-parting", is transformed by the intensity of any final movements of togetherness -- through poignancy -- into a particular form of "a-waving". Thereafter the latter sense may be sustained through the feeling that the person is "still there", namely that the person continues to "exist" in some way (irrespective of whether he/she has been defined as medically and legally dead). This feeling may persist for years and be valued for its intimacy -- or of concern as a source of anxiety. Poignancy may be conflated with nostalgia, for some, as has followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Some cultures may qualify the experience in a variety of ways, as with the Japanese terms for "sadness" -- essentially sensed as wave-like. This may be well-symbolised in that culture by the celebrated fall of cherry blossoms. The feeling may be especially valued in sustaining a relationship to ancestors, possibly through [ancestor veneration](#) or even [ancestor worship](#), as in many Eastern and tribal cultures. This is strangely echoed by the preoccupation with genealogy in Western cultures -- and in the Mormon commitment to [ancestor baptism](#). The relationship has been widely remarked in the case of the fundamental Australian Aboriginal engagement with the ancestors of the [Dreamtime](#).

Whether or not the death was physical, a definitive breakdown in relationship (and a separation, however distant) may result in a continuing sense of "entanglement" with the other -- borrowing the subtle articulation offered by quantum physics. Forced separation from parents or siblings at an early age may also result in a sense of intimate entanglement throughout the subsequent life -- possibly leading to quests for the long lost relative.

Some such feeling may be associated with the sense of haunting and the experience of ghosts. People may themselves claim to move through life like ghosts -- effectively haunting their community, and being so perceived by others. They may well be described as "dead".

Neither a-Waving nor a-Parting

The wave-particle distinction above has effectively been explored as that made by the social sciences between [collectivism](#) and [individualism](#). For an individual exposed to both, or obliged to live in both "worlds", this may be a particular challenge -- or not. Although individualism is often contrasted either with [totalitarianism](#) or with collectivism, in fact a spectrum of social behaviours is recognized as ranging from highly individualistic societies, through mixed societies, to collectivist. Use of "spectrum" is suggestive of wave-like understanding encompassing the particulate nature of individualism.

Most curious is the sense in which democracy is wave-like in many respects, as a reflection of [mass movements of opinion](#), and yet is rendered operational through [political "parties"](#). Each such party being highly conscious of the otherness of those with whom it competes. The process is dependent on the "participation" of individuals -- with their votes being particulate in the extreme. There is a degree of alternation, possibly opportunistic and cynical, between framing the participation of potential voters individually or as a wave-like movement.

Is the sense of "humanity" -- of "human nature" -- to be itself considered as essentially wave-like, better understood in cyclic terms, as previously discussed (*Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psychically" defined*, 2007)? Is the sense of selfhood also essentially wave-like? Does the importance of brain waves in determining life suggest that identity is an improbable [wave-function](#) -- susceptible to collapse (as understood by physics)? Most problematic is the capacity for [dehumanising](#) reduction -- "collapsing" the sense of humanity -- thereby justifying inhumane atrocities. This process of aggregation of "particles" (if not "iotas") into

a mass, and its reductive treatment, is all too evident with respect to non-human species, typically treated with extremes of inhumanity.

At a different extreme there is the sense in which movements of opinion, especially as sustained by political, economic and religious propaganda, endeavour to elicit confidence and trust through the hope implied by their promises. Aside presumably from the latter, such cultivation of belief would seem to be essentially wave-like. The crisis of the times suggests that this process is currently inadequate to the challenge.

Life in society, notably as advocated by the leaders of movements (whether political or otherwise), involves the expectation that each should "play a part" in its development. However, between "having a part" (or "having a job"), and the process of "playing a part", there is a shift in modality. It is in "playing", as in any drama, that wave-like characteristics are sensed. These may be experienced as problematic when the individual feels constrained by the possibility of only being able to play a "bit part" -- unable to participate effectively or significantly in "making a difference".

Drama, as widely consumed through the media, offers an interesting experiential illustration of the switch in modality between:

- having (no) part to play, whether in the drama of social relationships, or in economic recovery or growth
- playing a part, with which one can identify
- waving at those who have a part, with others expected to acknowledge them by waving back -- tragically emphasized in solicitation by beggars in the street

The work of environmental designer [Christopher Alexander](#) offers an insight into the shift between the two modalities. He argues that:

- a "quality without a name" can be recognized within well-designed environments, rendering it attractive as a "place to be" (*The Timeless Way of Building*, 1979). This experience could be framed as essentially "wave-like".
- to enable such recognition, and to elicit designs which reinforce it, a "pattern language" is a valuable aid (*A Pattern Language: towns, buildings, construction*, 1977). Such an approach through pattern recognition is necessarily "part-like"

Alexander's subsequent work (*The Nature of Order: an essay on the art of building and the nature of the universe*, 2004; *New Concepts in Complexity Theory*, 2003) might be said to interrelate these preoccupations (*Harmony-Seeking Computations: a science of non-classical dynamics based on the progressive evolution of the larger whole*, 2009) -- as separately discussed (*Harmony-Comprehension and Wholeness-Engendering: eliciting psychosocial transformational principles from design*, 2010; *In Quest of a Dynamic Pattern of Transformations: sensing the strange attractor of an emerging Rosetta Stone*, 2012).

A shift in modality is most strikingly evident with respect to finance and the world of speculative financial trading. Whereas finance is based on the particulate nature of tangible monetary tokens, these are readily reframed as "income streams" -- the flow of money. However, as the ongoing financial crisis is making ever more evident through preoccupation with "liquidity", viable processes of exchange are intimately dependent on the intangible sense of confidence, belief and trust. Essentially wave-like, these are extremely vulnerable to collapse. Ironically the challenge becomes one of how to "sustain the wave".

Physics has not been able to resolve the distinction between wave and particle -- the [wave-particle duality](#) -- other than through the [Uncertainty Principle](#) and the abstractions of quantum mechanics. The standard [interpretations of quantum mechanics](#) explain this [paradox](#) as a fundamental property of the Universe, while alternative interpretations explain the duality as an emergent, second-order consequence of various limitations of the observer. As formalizations, both are intrinsically incomprehensible in individual experience. They offer the ironic implication that the requisite complexity has been "promoted" to such levels of incomprehensibility in practice in a manner echoing that of the [Peter Principle](#) in organizations, namely promotion beyond the capacity of those at the highest level.

The extremes of "a-waving" and "a-parting" give strong focus to the question of the nature of identity and how it is to be experienced -- as a "wave" or as a "part" (even a "particle"). These challenge the conventional boundaries of an individual, whether a sense of identity is partially associated with objects (like a cyborg) or on relationships. As physics has so clearly explored with respect to light, an individual can be understood and experienced as a "part" (of society) under some conditions or as a "wave" phenomenon under others. In practice individuals may have skills in shifting between these modalities, at least in their own understanding, as discussed separately (*Living as an Imaginal Bridge between Worlds: global implications of "betwixt and between" and liminality*, 2011).

Being "neither a-waving nor a-parting", what am I? It is possible that a clue, or a key, lies in the questioning process itself -- and the nature of a "question" -- rather than in an answer as an "explanation", as previously discussed (*Am I Question or Answer? Problem or (re)solution?* 2006; *Question Avoidance, Evasion, Aversion and Phobia: why we are unable to escape from traps*, 2006; *Cognitive Feel for Cognitive Catastrophes: Question Conformality*, 2006). The point is made otherwise through the role of the [koan](#) as recognised by Zen, as with the much-commented compilation of koans *Gateless Gate* and that of [Suzuki Shosan](#) (*Death Was His Koan*). [see also *Configuring a Set of Zen Koan as a Wisdom Container: formatting the Gateless Gate for Twitter*, 2012].

Transcending a-Waving and a-Parting

The citation above with regard to the contrast in spiritual experience between being a "wave" and being an "ocean" can be usefully related to the understandings of "non-localization" extensively developed by physics in terms of [nonlocality](#) (action at a distance) and [quantum nonlocality](#). Whilst the former is a more comprehensible consequence of [classical mechanics](#), the latter is a phenomenon by which the measurements made at a microscopic level necessarily refute one or more notions that are otherwise regarded as intuitively true. Hence the explorations into [quantum consciousness](#) and [quantum cognition](#) and the challenge of rendering them meaningful to ordinary experience.

Curiously individuals commonly encounter such paradoxical experience in dreams with the wave-like sense they may offer. It is in this sense that a dream may be presented as transcending conventional discourse, as in that famously offered by [Martin Luther King](#) (*I Have*

a Dream, 1963) -- perhaps to be understood as subsequently echoed by the progressive focus of the *Common Dreams NewsCenter*. Both are consistent with the much-cited *American Dream*, as a national ethos of the USA, namely a set of ideals in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success, and an upward social mobility achieved through hard work.

Also indicative is the unprecedented worldwide appeal of the interpretation in 2009 by *Susan Boyle* of the song *I Dreamed a Dream*. This focus on dream may be contrasted with the compilation by theoretical physicist *Stephen Hawking* (*The Dreams That Stuff Is Made Of: the most astounding papers of quantum physics--and how they shook the scientific world*, 2011), that of mathematicians *Philip J. Davis* and *Reuben Hersh* (*Descartes' Dream: the world according to mathematics*, 2005), and by the critical socio-political analysis offered by philosopher *Slavoj Žižek* (*The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*, 2012). As expressed by Žižek:

In 2011, we witnessed (and participated in) a series of shattering events, from the Arab Spring to the Occupy Wall Street movement, from the UK riots to Breivik's ideological madness. It was the year of dreaming dangerously, in both directions: emancipatory dreams mobilizing protesters in New York, on Tahrir Square, in London and Athens; and obscure destructive dreams propelling Breivik and racist populists across Europe, from the Netherlands to Hungary.

Psychology, as with some spiritual disciplines, recognizes an "oceanic feeling". This may be associated with an understanding of "plenum" as presented by philosophy of religion (*The Cosmic Plenum; The Proposal of Creation via a Plenum of Potentialities, Tribe*, 20 December 2012). The latter points to the work of Daniel A. Dombrowski (*Must a Perfect Being Be Immutable?*, In: *Hartshorne, Process Philosophy, and Theology*, 1989) who introduces his argument in a manner reminiscent of the dilemmas of particle-wave duality:

One would think that philosophical theists would have a great deal in common with each other, yet it is surprising how little theists read across the various boundaries in contemporary philosophy... I will try to cross one such divide, that between analytic and process theism.

Curiously religion can be fulsome in its appreciation of the smallest part, as in its symbolic comparison with the Greek letter iota (as cited above). Thus for Ambrose Columbus (*Signs, Science and Symbols of the Prophecy*, 2008 pp. 15-16):

Iota is a beautiful number, because like the Holy Spirit, it may appear insignificant and is often invisible, but in actuality is ubiquitous and powerful. "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your Presence? (*Psalms*, 139, 7-12)... "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (*Matthew*, 5:18).

A sense of (transcendent) plenum is deliberately echoed and symbolised by understandings of religious community -- as with the *Ummah* of Islamic peoples.

Whilst the explanations of both physicists and those with considerable spiritual experience are indicative, they are just that: "explanations". **The question is how "personally" to adjust to the experience of being "neither a-waving nor a-parting", possibly living as an "imaginal bridge" between the two.** Does one feel more "a wave" than "a part" at any moment -- or neither, or in some way transcending such conceptual distinctions? Is the sense of feeling "nothing" suggestive, given the value physics now attaches to "nothing", and the meditators to "emptiness" or the *stillness of the mind* ?

A helpful insight, using a wave metaphor, is offered by *Thomas Cotterill* (*The Difference between Being and Identity*, 3 February 2013):

To have an identity, to define ourselves, we must first put ourselves firmly in context. To revive an old radio metaphor, being is the unmodulated *carrier wave* and identity is the *modulated carrier wave* -- the music. Being is like a radio station that is "on air," but broadcasting nothing but "dead air." Radio does not come to life until something happens and keeps on happening. People work in much the same way. The crucial point here is that we must make a clear distinction between being and identity if we are to walk the path to some kind of enlightenment or peace of mind. Pursuing being is a stagnant dead end, the last resort of the spiritually impoverished. Meditating ourselves into a recurring state of self-obliteration is most definitely not the way to a fulfilling life.

Any concern with transcending the limitations of "science" and "religion" can be partially addressed by effectively "writing them into the paradox" as being separately and together, "part of the problem, rather than part of the solution". The wave-particle framing of experience is only too evident in that:

- science believes primarily in parts because they can be measured as observations by individuals as evidence to their satisfaction
- religion believes primarily in waves because it is deemed possible for individuals to identify with them -- and be entrained by them

The ambiguity might be partially held by some special sense of "conscience" (*Towards Conscientific Research and Development*, 2002).

Curiously both science and religion claim a special, but distinctive, understanding of death. Given their respective limitations, it is at least possible that its nature remains necessarily mysterious -- unencompassed by the explanations offered by either or both. Religion exemplifies its inadequacy through the various explanations by different religions -- and the unresolved (often bloody) disagreements to which they give rise. In the case of physics this inadequacy is evident in the inability to render significant to the dying the abstractions of its insights into the transcendence of the wave-particle duality.

This "incompleteness", exemplified by the *incompleteness theorems* of *Kurt Gödel*, suggests the possibility of a modality or "space"

characterised by strange possibilities -- to be recognised only through distorted simplifications as "reincarnation", "extraterrestrials" or "angels" (cf. [Matthew Fox](#) and [Rupert Sheldrake](#), *The Physics of Angels: exploring the realm where science and spirit meet*, 1996). The latter recalls the challenge to human knowing addressed from a systems theoretic perspective ([Gregory Bateson](#) and [Mary Catherine Bateson](#), *Angels Fear: towards an epistemology of the sacred*, 2004). Recent work by [Harvey Friedman](#) (*Boolean Relation Theory and Incompleteness*, 2010), as described by Richard Elwes (*It doesn't add up*, *New Scientist*, 14 August 2010), suggests that:

The only way that Friedman's undecidable statements can be tamed, and the integrity of arithmetic restored, is to expand [Peano's rule book](#) to include "[large cardinals](#)" -- monstrous infinite quantities whose existence can only ever be assumed rather than logically deduced.... We can deny the existence of infinity, a quantity that pervades modern mathematics, or we must resign ourselves to the idea that there are certain things about numbers we are destined never to know.

The argument above suggests the possibility that there is an unexplored degree of familiarity with wave-like and part-like experience. Especially problematic is the possibility that, through failure to distinguish adequately between them, either may be inappropriately and unfruitfully managed. The terms conventionally used to describe these experiences may obscure these distinctions through having alternative connotations.

The outcome of the exponential expansion of the Universe remains a mystery despite the speculations of physics. The outcome of the commitment to growth of a global civilization also remains a mystery -- despite warning signs and their dubious denial.

In the case of the Universe, there is a suspicion on the part of both physics and religion that any "outcome" may necessarily be of the highest elegance -- if only that could be comprehended. The possibility is variously echoed and explored by many books with the theme "the universe within" ([Joseph Campbell](#), *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: metaphor as myth and as religion*, 1993; [Neil Shubin](#), *The Universe Within: discovering the common history of rocks, planets, and people*, 2013)

In aesthetic terms, the marriage with complexity theory suggested by the etymology of "[autopoiesis](#)" implies that any outcome could best be currently comprehended as a special form of poem, as separately discussed (*Being a Poem in the Making: engendering a multiverse through musing*, 2012). For example, 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 [Mary Catherine Bateson](#), p. 288-9)

Whether for the Universe, or for an individual, this suggests that "being neither a-waving nor a-parting" is a question of being such a poem "in the making".

Does this share some of the epistemological and cognitive implications of an inspirational dream -- as evoked, for example, by the much-cited [butterfly dream](#) of [Chuang Tzu](#)? (cf. [Kuang-Ming Wu](#), *The Butterfly as Companion: meditations on the first three chapters of the Chuang Tzu*, 1990).

Correspondence to a-Coming and a-Going?

As presented above, the seemingly strange reference to "a-waving" and "a-parting" can also be readily and fruitfully compared with "a-coming" and "a-going". An appropriate indication of this correspondence is offered in the earliest extant piece of [Franz Kafka](#)'s writing (dating from 1897), as noted by [Neil Heims](#) (*Biography of Franz Kafka*, 2009, p. 26):

*Es gibt ein Kommen und ein Gehn,
Ein Scheiden und oft --- kein Wiedersehn*
[There is a coming and a going,
A parting, and often -- no returning]

The phrase is now widely used (notably by bloggers) and is the focus of specific commentary. For example, [William James](#), as author of the much-cited *Varieties of Religious Experience: a study in human nature* (1902), subsequently compared the views of [Charles Peirce](#) and [Henri Bergson](#) in an appendix (*On the Notion of Reality as Changing*) to his study *The Pluralistic Universe* (1909):

Both philosophers believe that the appearance of novelty in things is genuine. To an observer standing outside of its generating causes, novelty can appear only as so much 'chance'; to one who stands inside it is the expression of 'free creative activity.' Peirce's '[tychism](#)' is thus practically synonymous with Bergson's '*devenir réel*.' The common objection to admitting novelties is that by jumping abruptly in, *ex nihilo*, they shatter the world's rational continuity.

Peirce meets this objection by combining his tychism with an express doctrine of '[synechism](#)' or continuity, the two doctrines merging into the higher synthesis on which he bestows the name of '[agapasticism](#)...', which means exactly the same thing as Bergson's '*évolution créatrice*.' Novelty, as empirically found, doesn't arrive by jumps and jolts, it leaks in insensibly, for **adjacents in experience are always interfused, the smallest real datum being both a coming and a going**, and even

numerical distinctness being realized effectively only after a concrete interval has passed. The intervals also deflect us from the original paths of direction, and all the old identities at last give out, for the fatally continuous infiltration of otherness warps things out of every original rut.

Just so, in a curve, the same direction is *never* followed, and the conception of it as a myriad-sided polygon falsifies it by supposing it to do so for however short a time. Peirce speaks of an 'infinitesimal' tendency to diversification. The mathematical notion of an infinitesimal contains, in truth, the whole paradox of the same and yet the nascent other, of an identity that won't *keep* except so far as it keeps *failing*, that won't *transfer*, any more than the serial relations in question transfer, when you apply them to reality instead of applying them to concepts alone. [*emphasis added*]

In his comment on these paragraphs of James, [Nicholas Rescher](#) (*Process Metaphysics: an introduction to process philosophy*, 1996) notes:

Like his spiritual kinsman, Henri Bergson, James believed that arguments along the lines of Zeno's classical paradoxes demonstrated the incapacity of stable concepts to characterize the fluidities of an ever-changing reality. But whereas Bergson looked for escape from conceptual rigidities to the biological sphere, James saw them in the psychological sphere. For him it is the nature of human experience which, above all, prevents the imposition of conceptual fixities from giving an adequate account of reality. Accordingly, James strongly emphasized the processual nature of experience. (pp. 15-16)

Rescher then cites James to the effect that:

We live, as it were, upon the front edge of an advancing wave-crest, and our sense of a determinate direction in falling forward is all we cover of the future of our path.

In a commentary on the search for self, as evident in the classic work by [Samuel Beckett](#) (*Waiting for Godot*, 1953), [Martin Esslin](#) (*The Theatre of the Absurd*, 1980) comments that it is the peculiar richness of such a play that it opens vistas on so many perspectives:

It is open to philosophical, religious, and psychological interpretations, yet above all it is a poem on time, evanescence, and the mysteriousness of existence, the paradox of change and stability, necessity and absurdity. It expresses what Watt felt about the household of Mr Knott [Samuel Beckett, *Watt*, 1958, pp. 144-6]: '... nothing changed in Mr Knott's establishment, because nothing remained, and nothing came or went, because all was a coming and a going'. In watching *Waiting for Godot*, we feel like Watt contemplating the organization of Mr Knott's world: 'But he had hardly felt the absurdity of those things, on the one hand, and the necessity of those others, on the other, (for it is rare that the feeling of absurdity is not followed by the feeling of necessity), when he felt the absurdity of those things of which he had just felt the necessity (for it is rare that the feeling of necessity is not followed by the feeling of absurdity)'. (pp.60-61)

As noted by [S. E. Gontarski](#) (*Creative Involution: Bergson, Beckett, Deleuze*, *Deleuze Studies*, 6, 2012, 4, pp. 601-613):

Such 'a coming and a going' permeates Beckett's *oeuvre* and is central to at least Bergson's defence of motion. Preoccupation with bodies in motion, or motion itself has more traditionally fallen within the province of physics than metaphysics, even for Aristotle, but Bergson situates himself on the bridge between those disciplines, as he does between matter and spirit, and so his emphasis on motion undergirds and so coincides, overlaps or intersects with the spirit of change, of evolution, of constant becoming, of time's flow, of *durée*; it is an embrace of natural law, life's vital force, an *élan vital*, the implications of which philosophy has all too often ignored, Bergson reminds us. Aristotle himself acknowledged such a vital force in his punning coinage, *entelechy*, but Aristotle's vision was finally binary, *entelechy* opposed to stasis, which may contain the potential of such motion, or *kinesis* or *entelechy* but is in opposition to it. Of such fixity or stasis Bergson will say that it is 'only an ephemeral arrangement between mobilities' .

Inspired by the deconstructivist perspective of [Jacques Derrida](#), the phrase is employed in the analysis of the creative writing process, Marilyn Low and Pat Palulis (*Laboured breathing: Running with and against internationalizing texts of currere*. *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry*, 1, 2004, 1):

Running with and against internationalizing curriculum... Where are we? Peggy Phelan (1997) contends that, "[p]erformative writing enacts the death of the 'we' that we think we are before we begin to write" (p.17). And so we continue to write with and against -- this Englishness. We write toward what Phelan terms "the radicality of unknowing who we are becoming" (p. 17) -- our writing pushing against the hegemonic ideologies of knowledge -- our writing pushing against this Englishness that shifts with some degrees of separation. In the space of the 'inter' one imagines a coming and a going -- a to-and-fro movement in in-between spaces -- an ex-change of messages.

For psychology, the nature of "a-coming and a-going" is usefully highlighted with respect to moods, as noted by Therese J. Borchard (*3 Ways We Can Control Our Moods*, *World of Psychology*, 2009) citing a blogger: *Moods are processes -- not events. They have a coming and a going.*

Appropriate to the spiritual sensitivity of this argument, the phrase "a coming and a going" is cited with respect to the encounter with objects in meditation, as described by [Theravadin](#) (3 May 2008):

Especially when we have a look at the various 'objects' stated as valid insight meditation topics: all of them describe our experiential moment-to-moment reality in certain 'categories' which all imply motion. A rising and a falling. A coming and a going. Not just in spatial terms (sound coming from a bird behind me) or time (sound coming and going over time) but at a deeper level even depending on consciousness itself, no consciousness there, no one knowing, then no 'being'.

Aside from any such spiritual framing, the encounter with any "object" framed by a category may well be experienced in wave-like terms to some degree, rather than in part-like terms as is conventionally and conveniently assumed. It may well be via this mode that significance in interiorised (as brain waves) and entanglement enabled. This would complement the manner in which reality is effectively "plastered" -- and then "tiled" into more or less well-fitting patterns of categories by which objects are defined.

The emphasis above on "a coming **and** a going" misses the extra significance which is a focus of commentary on an insight of the Buddha -- as represented in the formulation "**neither** a coming **nor** a going" in some translations of the widely cited [Nibbàna Sermon](#) from within the [Udana](#) (part of the [Pali Canon](#) of [Theravada Buddhism](#)). This is upheld as an inspired utterance of the Buddha on the subject of [Nirvana](#) (Nibbàna), of which one rendering is as follows:

Monks, there is that sphere, wherein there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air; neither the sphere of infinite space, nor the sphere of infinite consciousness, nor the sphere of nothingness, nor the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; neither this world nor the world beyond, nor the sun and the moon. There, monks, I say, is no coming, no going, no staying, no passing away and no arising; it is not established, it is not continuing, it has no object. This, itself, is the end of suffering...

Or otherwise translated as:

There is that sphere of being where there is no earth, no water, no fire, nor wind; no experience of infinity of space, of infinity of consciousness, of no-thingness, or even of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; there is neither this world nor another world, neither moon nor sun; this sphere of being I call neither a coming nor a going nor a staying still, neither a dying nor a reappearance; it has no basis, no evolution, and no support: it is the end of suffering. (*Udana Sutta 8.1*)

As noted by one commentator, the verbal dichotomy characteristic of worldly concepts is reflected in this reference to a coming and a going etc. with the implication of the possibility of transcending the limitations imposed by that dichotomy.

With respect to the cognitive and existential nature of death, is it somehow "via" such a space that "reincarnation" of particulate identity is best understood to occur -- rather than detachment from what is expressed metaphorically as the [wheel of rebirth](#) -- with its wave-like implications? The subtleties of current speculation by physicists on the origins of the Universe suggest that simplistic closure on the nature of death and reincarnation is fundamentally premature. Similarly the "convergence" of "science **and** spirituality", as implied by the [Dalai Lama](#), may hinder insight more appropriately associated with "**neither science nor spirituality**" (*The Universe in a Single Atom: the convergence of science and spirituality*, 2006). The challenge of that insight is potentially implicit in the concluding phrase of the title of the more recent dialogue between [Deepak Chopra](#) and [Leonard Mlodinow](#) (*War of the Worldviews: where science and spirituality meet -- and do not*, 2011).

Varieties of neither-nor dynamic

Both "a-waving and a-parting" and "a-coming and a-going", as presented above, suggest the merit of exploring insights associated with other "neither-nor" dynamics potentially significant to comprehension of a possible "transcendent" perspective.

Neither here nor there: Implicit in the above argument is an understanding of movement or relationship across space, whether through identification with a wave or the separation of apartness. One aspect of this has been fruitfully framed otherwise through discussion elsewhere on the relationship between "here and there", notably within a context of post-colonial studies and psychoanalytic social theory, as by [Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks](#) (*The Ethics of Travel*, 2002). So framed, "travel" may imply other kinds of "displacement" with respect to a sense of identity, as in her earlier study with its reference to racial and immigration implications (*Desiring Whiteness: a Lacanian analysis of race*, 2000). Similarly, and aside from travel, "neither here nor there" is a focus for other interdisciplinary preoccupations.

With respect to travel, Seshadri-Crooks contrasts conventional insight with that in the much-cited verse of [T. S. Eliot](#):

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time
(*Little Gidding*, 1942)

In the conventional mode, travel is between two points: a here and a there, home and the world, an inside and an outside. For her:

The second model of travel is less binary; it suggests the discovery of the here as a there, the strangeness of the world as one's home, and the outside as the inside.... Eliot... is interested mainly in self-discovery. Traveling for him is primarily a process of

coming to terms with one's loss of consistency. Home is where one is not longer at ease; it is a place, perhaps of spiritual exile and displacement. It must be transfigured so that the reutnr is but a moment in the ceaseless cycle of beginnings and endings (pp. 67-68)

Seshadri-Crooks goes on to explore the possibility of being "at home" neither here nor there, in the absence of a self-identifying space and without the support of ownership. The experience of both "here" and "there" can be wave-like or particulate.

Configuration with a set of other fruitful cases: These might include:

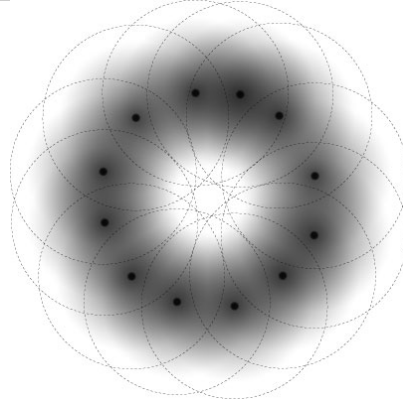
"wave-like" ?	"part-like" ?	preoccupation
a-waving	a-parting	comprehension
a-coming	a-going	busyness
here	there	directionality (sense of place)
quality	quantity	growth (more, aspiration)
right (coherent)	wrong (incoherent)	truth (coherence)
important (significant)	unimportant (insignificant)	attention priority

The above table is clearly tentative. It suggests how attention may be "invested" with respect to what amount to polarising "attractors" or "repulsors". As qualitative "dimensions" these might be distinguished ("part-like") or conflated ("wave-like") -- and might be better represented as spokes of a wheel. In each case they serve to frame the potential existence of a condition of "neither-nor" with which individuals and governance may be variously familiar to some degree (*Living as an Imaginal Bridge between Worlds: global implications of "betwixt and between" and liminality*, 2011). The nature of this condition may well transcend exclusion of any such possibility as conventionally associated with use of the phrase "neither rhyme nor reason", otherwise readily understood as framing wave-like and part-like extremes.

Such a table could of course be extended with a larger set of polarities, as was one concern of the [Human Values Project](#). This resulted in a table of 225 [value polarities](#), variously clustered into a table of 45 [value types](#). The approach was used in separate discussion of a *Global Market in Indulgences* (2007) -- with "indulgences" exemplified by each polar extreme

The "dimensions" implied by such polarities are fundamental to individual and collective experience and aspiration as drivers of psychosocial dynamics. Sustainability of any kind is thereby framed as relatively elusive since it implies a modality whose viability transcends the particular "preoccupations" indicated in the right-hand column.

Suggestive circular representation of polar "partings", with opposing "waves" associated with each pole, together engendering a central "neither-nor" zone
(an animated version might vary the strength, gradient and colour of different "waves", dynamically displacing the central zone)



The nature and function of a central or underlying "hole", as suggested by the above schematic, invites exploration of a variety of ways of engaging with its potential significance (*Wholth as Sustaining Dynamic of Health and Wealth*, 2013; *Unthought as Cognitive Foundation of Global Civilization*, 2012; *Implication of Indwelling Intelligence in Global Confidence-building*, 2012; *Enabling Wisdom Dynamically within Intertwined Tori*, 2012; *Paradoxes of Engaging with the Ultimate in any Guise: living life penultimately*, 2012; *Exploring the Hidden Mysteries of Oxfam's Doughnut*, 2012; *Intercourse with Globality through Enacting a Klein bottle*, 2009; *Cognitive implication "down the rabbit hole"?* 2009).

With respect to any such "hole", the epistemological inspiration currently encouraged by astrophysical speculation on the origins of the Universe, is also a reminder of the so-called [doughnut theory](#) regarding the [shape of the universe](#) as being a [three-dimensional torus](#). Such speculation also recalls the [Great Attractor](#), namely the gravity anomaly in intergalactic space which is a localized concentration of mass equivalent to tens of thousands of galaxies, each the size of the Milky Way.

Implications of neither-nor enabling Chinese strategic advantage

Although the argument has cited many examples of the experiential reality of wave-like and part-like experience, it is appropriate to note the extent to which familiarity with the fluidity of "neither-nor" has been reinforced within Chinese culture over centuries, if not millennia. This is most evident in the manner in which coding systems have seemingly been used to provide a formal underpinning to key Chinese philosophical classics (*Yi Jing*, *Tai Xuan Jing*), as separately discussed (*Tao of Engagement -- Weaponised Interactions and Beyond:*

Fibonacci's magic carpet of games to be played for sustainable global governance, 2010; *Embodying Values Dynamically through Alternation: integrating sets of polarized static values through indicative metaphor*, 2008). Given the argument above regarding poetry, it is appropriate to note that these classics are expressed in poetic form.

The seemingly abstract emphasis of the argument acquires concrete strategic relevance in the light of the work of [Susantha Goonatilake](#) (*Toward a Global Science: mining civilizational knowledge*, 1999). He highlights the extent to which cultures, such as the Chinese, are able to derive benefit from long-cultivated metaphors with which others are not familiar and may well not find meaningful. The consequence is evident in scientific innovation, most notably in fundamental physics -- to which Chinese scholars have made significant contributions.

A different example is offered by the strategic capacity of the Chinese, notably in competition with the US on the occasion of the Vietnam War. It has been argued by [Scott Boorman](#) that whilst the US framed their strategy through a "chess" mindset, the Chinese employed "go" to their advantage (*The Protracted Game: a wei-ch'i interpretation of Maoist revolutionary strategy*, 1969). The strategic concern may be framed in terms of [cognitive bias](#), as argued by Josh Kerbel (*Thinking Straight: cognitive bias in the US Debate about China -- Rethinking Thinking, Studies in Intelligence*, 48, 3, 2004), noting:

Of the axioms, dictums, and mantras echoing through the US foreign policy and intelligence debates in the wake of controversy over estimates of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, none reverberates more than: *be wary of mind-set and bias and constantly reexamine assumptions*. The fact is, however, that genuine wariness and thorough reexaminations have been rare and attention has tended to focus on the more easily recognizable non-cognitive biases, the "low-hanging fruit," that eclipse much more ingrained cognitive biases and the flawed assumptions they engender.

Given such arguments, it is appropriate to see the capacity for "neither-nor" thinking -- "[negative capability](#)" as phrased by [John Keats](#) -- as distinct from that cultivated in Western strategic thinking. The point may be made by contrasting:

- Declarations of the essence of US foreign policy as based on "[you're either with us, or against us](#)", as separately discussed (*Us and Them: Relating to Challenging Others -- patterns in the shadow dance between "good" and "evil"*, 2009). This has played out over the past decade in the "war against terror", most specifically in the Iraq and Afghanistan arenas, now extended with respect to Iran. Initially based on deliberate deception regarding WMD, compounded by use of torture, this has resulted in loss of every shred of moral standing amongst the populations of many other countries with regard to issues of human rights.
- Increasingly successful role of China in world trade, playing more successfully than the West (according to the rules established by the West) -- now evident in the extension of Chinese influence into developing countries, most notably African. This has been despite widespread protest at its policies with respect to human rights in Tibet and elsewhere.

Strategically China is emerging as having greater coherence in its global initiatives, whilst arousing less opposition. In the pursuit of its strategic interests the US has effectively adopted a strategic stance of wanting to "[have it's cake and eat it too](#)", most particularly in relation to non-renewable resources, but also in both the acceptance and deprecation of science and religion.

Irrespective of whether Chinese governance operates explicitly (and consciously) according to "neither-nor" insights, Chinese culture frames the implicit (and largely unconscious) engagement with such subtlety in ways consistent with them. By contrast, in leading the West and providing its media diet, the US would seem to be operating implicitly (if unconsciously) in terms of a "Cowboys-and-Indians" framing of relationships. This precludes any such subtlety. This plays out most notably in the inadequacy of the strategic proposals in relation to the Israel-Palestine challenge, where the "neither-nor" opportunities regarding "two-state" solutions remain essentially unexplored.

Despite their incoherence, these respective framings encourage the US, as spokesperson for the West, to "preach" to other countries from a standpoint variously justified by its religious traditions -- a standpoint increasingly perceived to be seriously lacking in credibility, irrespective of continuing respect for those traditions. China would seem to have avoided preaching, other than against that tendency. Arguably the tendency is not encouraged by "[negative capability](#)".

The difficulty for the West, having been so intimately involved with the US in military intervention based on a lie, is its subsequent inability to supply "concrete proof" that it is telling the truth, when it claims to do so. This undermines the credibility of politicians in the eyes of their own populations. The US is in an even more difficult situation, epitomised by the imprisonment without trial of [Bradley Manning](#) for over 1000 days -- for revealing unwelcome truths. In the eyes of history, the [show trial](#) (as with those of the Stalinist era) will prove to be a judgment on the US rather than on Manning -- irrespective of its outcome.

Despite, or because of, interpretations of the methods of science and/or religion, the patterns of thinking applied to governance at this time can be usefully caricatured in terms of animal footedness. There is a marked tendency to logical "two-footedness", exemplified by "either/or" thinking -- with considerable aspiration to "one-footedness" as the primacy of one truth (and discarding any alternative). There is a degree of acceptance of the "three-footedness" exemplified by "both/and" thinking (and kangaroos?) -- especially in the experience of human relationships in practice. As many animals demonstrate, there is an advantage to "four-footedness" in all-terrain movement, namely to "neither/nor" thinking encompassing the other modalities, but unconstrained by them.

Conclusion

As noted in the introduction above, science now offers a form of greeting, through "a-waving", from the origins of the Universe -- to a global civilization faced with collapse, "a-parting", through lack of capacity to encompass its own paradoxes arising from its exponential expansion. The paradoxes are those assiduously explored by the best of science and spirituality (as *religio*).

As with the Universe, seemingly, civilization is deeply committed to ever-increasing growth from an origin framed metaphorically through orgasmic allusion -- by both science and religion. Both have demonstrated extremely limited capacity to communicate the emerging consequences of that expansion and the a-parting by which it is now characterised -- in terms of collapse of mutual comprehension and confidelity.

Through the reflected light waves from the beginning of the Universe, science proudly emphasizes the extreme insignificance of the particulate perspective of Earth in the larger scheme of things -- whilst religion struggles to offer it significance as the focus of humanity's Universe (and responsibilities). Such a contrast is evident between the impersonal perspective of global governance and that of the individual aspiring to self-esteem.

Most curiously, however, and at the most fundamental level, science and religion have in common the arrogance of their definitive assertions at any one time. This is a mysterious quality of the human mind, perhaps as mysterious as is gravity, or the propensity to evil -- to each respectively. Both engage with this manifestation, whilst complicit to the highest degree with the [military-industrial complex](#) in righteously sustaining bloody conflict -- cynically exploiting differences in understanding in the name of peace. In the desperate quest for explanatory closure, neither has evidenced any capacity for considered dialogue regarding its processes of righteous denial and conceptual gerrymandering. These are seemingly intrinsic to an unexamined commitment to a-parting.

As suggested by the best of science and spirituality, there is scope within the paradoxes they explore -- exemplified by the nature of wave-particle duality and considerations of [nonduality](#) -- to reframe comprehension and engagement with reality. The complementarity of wave and particulate framings can be fruitfully used to recognize the role of both in social processes and the potential for their interweaving -- as reinforced by the necessities of everyday experience.

Despite "waves of change", crises and their solutions are typically framed through a particulate (separative) modality. There is scope for engaging with them through a wave-like (integrative) modality. Values upheld as fundamental to society may, for example, be inherently wave-like (*Freedom, Democracy, Justice: Isolated Nouns or Interwoven Verbs? Illusory quest for qualities and principles dynamically disguised*, 2011). The contrast is evident between the financial flows and monetary tokens which are a focus of current crises.

The paradoxical wave-particle duality is strangely echoed by the problematic relationship between the contrasting "languages" of science and religion -- which neither is able creatively to encompass. The complementarity could be seen as echoed embryonically in that of the [lateralisation of the brain](#) into two hemispheres with distinct primary "languages". Perhaps appropriately "hair-brained", framed in this way, "wave-like" lends itself to association with one hemisphere, and "particle-like" to the other. Hence the ability of the individual to navigate to some degree between "a-waving" and "a-parting" -- an ability which remains a challenge in governance of the collective, as is exemplified by any parliamentary debate and other dysfunctionalities of the democratic process.

A humorous reframing of the argument would note the use of "wave" and "parting" in hairdressing -- with which "hair-brained" is of mnemonic value. "Neither wave nor part" is consistent with the context of the Buddha's concluding address (cited above) -- to monks, whose traditional [tonsure](#) offers an embodiment thereof. In effect the circular form this may take is then the result of the multiple partings of any representation of the wheel of rebirth. It might even be said that, with sufficient "problematic" linear partings, emerges a circular "solution" echoing the remainder of a sinusoidal wave.

In the quest for any dynamic alternation between wave and particle perspectives, the argument here has emphasized that it is neither one nor the other, separately -- nor both together -- but rather a paradoxical integrative modality which is "neither one nor the other". It is this which offers a transform between them, as highlighted by Kindhide Mushakoji (*Global Issues and Interparadigmatic Dialogue; essays on multipolar politics*, 1988). This bridge has been well explored in the case of the synaptic connectivity within the human brain. It is less evident cognitively. Hence the highlighting above of insights offered by "a coming and a going", notably from a "meta-physical" perspective, especially that of process philosophy.

A concern is how the requisite dynamic connectivity -- vital to the collective intelligence of any ["global brain"](#) of civilization -- is to be comprehended (*Simulating a Global Brain: using networks of international organizations, world problems, strategies, and values*, 2001). In a period when astrophysics is exploring ["brane cosmology"](#) as fundamental to understanding the organization of the Universe, there is a case for exploring the relevance of such thinking to current psychosocial challenges (*Global Brane Comprehension Enabling a Higher Dimensional Big Tent? Strategic implication in encompassing nothing and coming to naught*, 2011). "Hair-brained" such connectivity may be, but radical new thinking is clearly required.

The current constraint would seem to be the emphasis conventionally placed on the apparent incommensurability of the "languages": science vs. religion or particle vs. wave. There is however a case for imagining that they are isomorphic at some fundamental cognitive level, as yet to be "explicated" -- as intimated in the work of quantum physicist [David Bohm](#) (*Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980). Its nature would however already seem to be sensed to a degree through intuition, and through the metaphors of spirituality and everyday experience. Ironically, and most "elegantly", the strange complexities of the Universe currently explored may well mirror those of individual experience -- precisely because the comprehension of both is constrained by human cognitive capacity and imagination.

Relevant insight could emerge from creative exploration of mathematical theology (*Mathematical Theology: Future Science of Confidence in Belief*, 2011). Intriguingly, in topology, a set which is both open and closed is often called "[clopen](#)"; but there is [no term for a set which is neither open nor closed](#) -- the case explored here, and by spirituality. The topological arguments of [Steven M. Rosen](#) regarding the [Möbius strip](#) and [Klein bottle](#) are highly pertinent (*Science, Paradox and the Moebius Principle: the evolution of the transcultural approach to wholeness*, 1994; *Topologies of the Flesh: a multidimensional exploration of the lifeworld*, 2006).

As suggested by indications from a variety of sources presented above, any sense of this "quest" as being one of "displacement" can be fruitfully called into question. The curious challenge of informed speculation of the greatest subtlety, on the "distant" Universe and its origins "long ago", is fruitfully embodied in the [recently published image](#) of the condition 380,000 years after the Big Bang. Its implications are most accessibly explored through metaphor corresponding to that subtlety (*Being the Universe : a metaphoric frontier*,

1999). As with the first image of the Earth from the Moon, it offers a kind of paradoxical mirror of the dynamic nature of emergent being -- "neither a-waving nor a-parting". Is the essential process of creation, whether of the Universe or otherwise, most fruitfully framed through a cognitive ecosystem of orgasmic, [inflationary](#) or [ekpyrotic](#) metaphors -- to which studies have variously alluded (David Bohm with F. David Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*, 1987; Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 1964)?

As provocatively intimated by [Kenneth Boulding](#) (*Ecodynamics; a new theory of social evolution*, 1978):

Our consciousness of the unity of self in the middle of a vast complexity of images or material structures is at least a suitable metaphor for the unity of group, organization, department, discipline or science. If personification is a metaphor, let us not despise metaphors -- we might be one ourselves.

References

Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (Eds.). *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies*. Duke University Press, 2000

Robert Aitken (Trans.). *The Gateless Barrier: the Wu-Men Kuan (Mumonkan)*. North Point Press, 1991

Christopher Alexander:

- *The Timeless Way of Building*. Oxford University Press, 1979
- *A Pattern Language: towns, buildings, construction*. Oxford University Press, 1977 [[summary](#)]
- *The Nature of Order: an essay on the art of building and the nature of the universe*. Center for Environmental Structure, 2003-4. [[summary](#)]
- *New Concepts in Complexity Theory: an overview of the four books of the Nature of Order with emphasis on the scientific problems which are raised*. 2003 [[text](#)]
- *Harmony-Seeking Computations: a science of non-classical dynamics based on the progressive evolution of the larger whole*. *International Journal for Unconventional Computing (IJUC)*, 5, 2009 [[text](#)]

Mary Catherine Bateson:

- *Composing a Life*. Grove Press, 2001
- *Composing a Further Life: the Age of Active Wisdom*. Vintage, 2011

Gregory Bateson and Mary Catherine Bateson. *Angels Fear: towards an epistemology of the sacred*. Hampton Press, 2004

Craig L. Blomberg. *Neither Poverty nor Riches: a Biblical theology of possessions*. IVP Academic, 2000

Harold Bloom (Ed.). *Franz Kafka*. Infobase, 2009

David Bohm:

- *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. Routledge, 1980 [[summary](#)]
- *The Undivided Universe: An ontological interpretation of quantum theory*, Routledge, 1993
- *On Creativity*. Routledge, 1998

David Bohm with F. David Peat. *Science, Order, and Creativity*. Routledge, 1987 [[summary](#)]

Scott Boorman. *The Protracted Game: a wei-ch'i interpretation of Maoist revolutionary strategy*. Oxford University Press, 1969 [[summary](#)]

Kenneth Boulding. *Ecodynamics; a new theory of social evolution*. Sage, 1978

Larry R. Bradley. *Neither Liberal Nor Conservative Be: an action plan for people disgusted by polarized politics*. Kindred Minds Enterprises, 2006

Judith Butler. *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the critique of Zionism*. Columbia University Press, 2012

Nadia Butt. *Inventing or Recalling the Contact Zones? Transcultural Spaces in Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines*. *Postcolonial Text*, 4, 2008, 3

Joseph Campbell. *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: metaphor as myth and as religion*. HarperPerennial, 1993

Deepak Chopra and Leonard Mlodinow. *War of the Worldviews: where science and spirituality meet -- and do not*. Three Rivers Press, 2011 [[summary](#)]

Ambrose Columbus. *Signs, Science and Symbols of the Prophecy*. iUniverse, 2008

Dalai Lama. *The Universe in a Single Atom: the convergence of science and spirituality*. Three Rivers Press, 2006

Philip J. Davis and Reuben Hersh. *Descartes' Dream: the world according to mathematics*. Dover Publications, 2005

Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanne Oboler. *Neither Enemies nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

Martin Esslin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. Taylor and Francis, 1980

Matthew Fox and Rupert Sheldrake. *The Physics of Angels: exploring the realm where science and spirit meet*. HarperSanFrancisco,

1996

Mark Furlong. Being neither Pollyanna nor Henny Penny: responding to McDonald and Jones. *Australian Social Work*, 53, 2000, 3

Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah. *Macrohistory and Macrohistorians: perspectives on individual, social, and civilizational change*. Praeger Publishers, 1997

Susantha Goonatillake. *Toward a Global Science: mining civilizational knowledge*. Indiana University Press, 1999

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

Neil Heims. *Biography of Franz Kafka*. In: Harold Bloom (Ed.), *Franz Kafka*. Infobase, 2009

Thomas Homer-Dixon. *The Upside of Down: catastrophe, creativity, and the renewal of civilization*. Knopf, 2006

William James:

- *A Pluralistic Universe*. University of Nebraska Press 1996
- *The Varieties of Religious Experience: a study in human nature*. 1902 [[summary](#)]

Mark Johnson:

- *The Body in the Mind: the bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*. University of Chicago Press, 1987
- *The Meaning of the Body: aesthetics of human understanding*. University of Chicago Press, 2008

Jaak Jöerüüt. *Muutlik*. Tuum, 2010 (*The Mutable*) [[review in English](#)]

Robert Kane and Stephen H. Phillips (Eds.). *Hartshorne, Process Philosophy, and Theology*. SUNY Press, 1989

Josh Kerbel. Thinking Straight: cognitive bias in the US Debate about China -- Rethinking Thinking. CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence, *Studies in Intelligence*, 48, 3, 2004 [[text](#)]

Winston L. King. *Death Was His Koan: Samurai Zen of Suzuki Shosan*. Asian Humanities Press, 1986

Arthur Koestler. *The Act of Creation*. Hutchinson, 1964 [[summary](#)]

Jeremy Lent. *Liology: Towards an Integration of Science and Meaning*. 2012 [[summary](#)]

Esther Levenson, Pessia Tsamir and Dina Tirosch. Neither Even Nor Odd: sixth grade students' dilemmas regarding the parity of zero. *Journal of Mathematical Behavior*, 26, 2007, pp. 83-95

Gilbert Meilaender. *Neither Beast Nor God: the dignity of the human person*. Encounter Books, 2009

Floyd Merrell. *Entangling Forms: Within Semiotic Processes*. Walter de Gruyter, 2010

Kinhide Mushakoji. *Global Issues and Interparadigmatic Dialogue; essays on multipolar politics*. Albert Meynier, 1988.

Matthew Parris and Andrew Bryson. *Parting Shots: undiplomatic diplomats -- the ambassadors' letters you were never meant to see*. Penguin, 2010

Stephen J. Pope. Neither Enemy Nor Friend: nature as creation in the theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas. *Zygon: journal of religion and science*, 32, 1997, 2, pp. 219-230 [[abstract](#)]

Nicholas Rescher:

- *Ignorance: on the wider implications of deficient knowledge*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009
- *Aporetics: rational deliberation in the face of inconsistency*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009
- *Unknowability: an inquiry into the limits of knowledge*. Lexington Books, 2009
- *Paradoxes: their roots, range, and resolution*. Open Court, 2001
- *The Limits of Science*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999
- *Process Metaphysics: an introduction to process philosophy*. SUNY Press, 1996
- *The Strife of Systems: an essay on the grounds and implications of philosophical diversity*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985

Steven M. Rosen:

- *Dreams, Death, Rebirth: a multimedia topological odyssey into alchemy's hidden dimensions*. 2013 [[text](#)]
- *Topologies of the Flesh: a multidimensional exploration of the lifeworld*. Ohio University Press, 2006 [[excerpts](#)]
- *Dimensions of Apeiron: a topological phenomenology of space, time, and individuation*. Value Inquiry Book Series of Editions Rodopi, 2004 [[excerpts](#)]
- *Science, Paradox and the Moebius Principle: the evolution of the transcultural approach to wholeness*. State University of New York Press, 1994 [[summary](#)]

Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks:

- *The Ethics of Travel*. In: Kelly Oliver and Steve Edwin (Ed.), *Between the Psyche and the Social: psychoanalytic social theory*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2002, pp. 67-82
- *Desiring Whiteness: a Lacanian analysis of race*. Routledge, 2000

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone. *The Primacy of Movement*. John Benjamins, 2011

Zenkai Shibayama. *Gateless Barrier: Zen comments on the Mumonkan*. Shambhala, 2000

Neil Shubin. *The Universe Within: discovering the common history of rocks, planets, and people*. Pantheon, 2013

Peter Sloterdijk:

- *Neither Sun nor Death*. Semiotext(e), 2011
- *The Art of Philosophy: wisdom as a practice*. Columbia University Press, 2012
- *You Must Change Your Life*. Polity, 2013

Pitirim Sorokin. *Social and Cultural Dynamics: a study of change in major systems of art, truth, ethics, law and social relationships*. Transaction Publishers, 1985

Charles M. Stang. *Being Neither Oneself Nor Someone Else: the apophatic anthropology of Dionysius the Areopagite*. in *Apophatic Bodies*. In: Chris Boesel and Catherine Keller (Eds.), *Apophatic Bodies*, Fordham University Press, 2009 [[abstract](#)]

Robert Sugden. *Neither Self-interest Nor Self-sacrifice: the fraternal morality of market relationships*. *Springer Series in Game Theory*, 2009, pp. 259-283

Nassim Nicholas Taleb:

- *Antifragile: how to live in a world we don't understand*. Allen Lane, 2012 [[summary](#)]
- *The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*. Allen Lane, 2007) [[summary](#)]

Tom J. F. Tillemans. Two Tibetan texts on the "neither one nor many" argument for sunyata. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 12, 1984, 4

Neil Turok. *The Universe Within: from quantum to cosmos*. House of Anansi, 2012

Michael Walsh. *The Poetry of Parting*. *The Irish Monthly*, 60, 1932, 712, pp. 597-602 [[text](#)]

Alan E. Wittbecker. *Topopoetics: the scientific basis of Eutopias; making good places with ecological designs and thought experiments*. Mozart and Reason Wolfe, 2006

Anders Wijkman and Johan Rockstrom. *Bankrupting Nature: denying our planetary boundaries*. Routledge, 2012 [[summary](#)]

Kuang-Ming Wu. *The Butterfly as Companion: meditations on the first three chapters of the Chuang Tzu*. State University of New York Press, 1990

Koun Yamada and Ruben L. F. Habito. *The Gateless Gate: the classic book of Zen koans*. Wisdom Publications, 2004

Slavoj Zizek. *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*. Verso, 2012



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

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