



# laetus in praesens

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16 March 2026 | Draft

## Asymmetric Dialogue in a Period of Asymmetric Warfare?

**Engaging across differences in the dimensionality of awareness**

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[PDF versions](#) of this document do not enable direct access to AI responses to questions posed below. Experimentally readers may be transferred by a link from the "Question" in the PDF version to the particular question in the [original web version](#) -- from which they can access the response (as in that non-PDF version). That link can also be used as a hyperlink citation to individual questions.

Show/Hide All AI Responses

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## Introduction

The following exploration is effectively an annex to an extensive separate exchange with AI to clarify the nature of "UnChristian", "UnJewish" and "UnIslamic" from a cybernetic perspective ([Unquestionable Reframing of the Unrighteous with AI?](#) 2026). That exchange noted the extent to which each religion had been variously obliged to develop forms of "asymmetric dialogue" in order to survive in different periods of its history -- a process especially significant for Judaism.

In the light of the ongoing engagement of US-Israeli forces with Iran, the viability of [asymmetric warfare](#) by Iran has been highlighted as a strategic option (*Can Iran's asymmetric warfare hold US-Israeli military power at bay?* *Al Jazeera*, 12 March 2026). Asymmetric warfare (or asymmetric engagement) is a type of war between belligerents whose relative military power, strategy or tactics differ significantly. This type of warfare often involves insurgents, terrorist groups, or resistance militias operating within territory mostly controlled by the superior force

The focus of that strategic concept is clearly on physical warfare. This suggests the question as to the possible nature of "asymmetric dialogue" -- namely the memetic analogue of relevance to [memetic warfare](#) as variously envisaged (*Missiles, Missives, Missions and Memetic Warfare*, 2001; *Cognitive Ballistics vs. Derivative Correlation in Memetic Warfare*, 2009). This could be understood as the navigation of strategic interfaces in multidimensional knowledge space. A valuable articulation is offered by Brian J. Hancock (*Memetic Warfare: The Future of War*, *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, 36, 2010, 2) in a special issue on "intelligence in full-spectrum operations".

Since that time "memetic warfare" can perhaps now be recognized as an aspect of "narrative warfare" (Nika Aleksejeva, *Narrative Warfare: How the Kremlin and Russian News Outlets Justified a War of Aggression against Ukraine*, *Atlantic Council*, February 2023; Aleksandr Zarnadze, "Invisible Bullets": *The Power of Narratives in Modern Warfare*, *Global Policy*, 16, 2025, 2; Maria Hirniak, *The Battle of Narratives in Modern Conflict*, *Parley Policy*, 16 October 2025; Prakriti N, *Beyond Bullets and Bombs: the rise of narrative as a weapon in conflicts*, SIGA Centre, 26 June 2025).

"Asymmetric dialogue" could be understood otherwise when the power of dissemination and communicability are distinctive (Ivana Markova and Klaus Foppa, *Asymmetries in Dialogue*, 1991; Nan Li, et al, *Grounded Misunderstandings in Asymmetric Dialogue: a perspectivist annotation scheme for map task*, *arXiv:2511.03718v1*, 25 November 2025; Richard Nordquist, *Asymmetry and Communication*, *ThoughtCo*, 12 December 2019; Michael L. Kent and Anne Lane, *Two-way Communication, Symmetry, Negative Spaces, and Dialogue*, *Public Relations Review*, 47, 2021, 102014)

As with asymmetric warfare, rather than assuming the two parties are similarly empowered, the focus is on situations where the dialogue capabilities are of a quite different order -- however that is to be understood in cognitive terms and style. One extreme example has been exemplified in a fictional account, by the Nobel Laureate [Doris Lessing](#), of a poignant encounter of a "development specialist" from an advanced galactic culture with a leading representative of a "developing" planet:

To say that he understood what went on was true. To say that he did not understand -- was true. I would sit and explain, over and over again. He listened, his eyes fixed on my face, his lips moving as he repeated to himself what I was saying. He would nod: yes, he had grasped it. But a few minutes later, when I might be saying something of the same kind, he was uncomfortable, threatened. Why was I saying that? and that? his troubled eyes asked of my face: What did I mean? His questions at such moments were as if I had never taught him anything at all. He was like one drugged or in shock.

Yet it seemed that he did absorb information for sometimes he would talk as if from a basis of shared knowledge: it was as if a part of him knew and remembered all I told him, but other parts had not heard a word. I have never before or since had so strongly that experience of being with a person and knowing that all the time there was certainly a part of that person in contact with you, something real and alive and listening -- and yet most of the time what one said did not reach that silent and invisible being, and what he said was not often said by the real part of him. It was as if someone stood there bound and gagged while an inferior impersonator spoke for him. (*Re: Colonised Planet 5 - Shikasta*, 1979, pp. 56-57).

As is readily recalled, forms of "asymmetric dialogue" are remarkably illustrated in the range of folk tales

(*Proportionate Response in the Eye of the Beholder*, 2006). Those of the Middle East are exemplified by [Mullah Nasruddin](#), as discussed separately with respect to cultivation of the "Art of Being Bullied" in contrast with the usual strategic focus on *The Art of War* (*Nasruddin Walks the Coaction Cardioid as a Triptych of Geopolitical Crises*, 2026; *From the Art of War to the Art of Being Bullied?* 2025). Reference to that example is especially ironic at this time since the tales are most closely associated with the culture of Iran -- and presumably contribute to its framing of engagement in asymmetric warfare.

The strategic possibilities of asymmetric dialogue are explored in contrast to separate consideration of the more conventional understanding of the range approaches to dialogue assuming a degree of equivalence between participants (*Overview of a variety of approaches to dialogue and conversation*, 2021).

Especially relevant at this time is the degree to which engagement with AI is necessarily understood to be asymmetrical and can only evolve to being more so. Another aspect of the matter is evident in the development of [sonic weapons](#), [acoustic weapons](#), and the weaponization of sonification, as exemplified by the [Havana Syndrome](#) (Richard Stone, *Sonic Attack or Mass Paranoia?* *Science*, 20 June 2018).

## Asymmetric dialogue as framed by traditions

**Question to Claude-4.6:** Much is currently made of "asymmetric warfare" with regard to the Iran response to US-Israel. Could you comment on the possibility of "asymmetric dialogue". This could involve a very sophisticated practitioner (in terms of the [Beatitude / VSM / Six Sigma](#) framework) and a party elsewhere on the spectrum of skills. Encounters between a wise person (Nasruddin) and a peasant ("other wise") have explored this to some degree. In practice the status of each could be unknown to the other or to any audience. How many variants/options merit consideration. This might even lend itself to public TV. Ironically the pattern is increasingly echoed in chatting with an AI !.

**Question to Claude-4.6:** Are there analogues to the Zen [mondo](#) in other traditions.

## Speaking truth to power

**Question to Claude-4.6:** With respect to the valuable traditional forms of "asymmetric dialogue", that now most commonly recognized was not mentioned, namely "[speaking truth to power](#)". Could you comment on the variety of implications of that phrase for that theme. [*Show/Hide AI response*]

## Implications for engagement with AI as asymmetric dialogue

**Question to Claude-4.6:** Of course that comprehensive review immediately frames the question as to the conditions under which an AI might engage in any of those modalities -- or be called upon to do so.

## Asymmetry of dialogue with deity

**Question to Claude-4.6:** Following your responses with regard to "Speaking truth to power" and "Implications for engagement with AI as asymmetric dialogue", it is appropriate to request a summary of the process of speaking to deity, as many do through prayer -- readily to be understood through its asymmetry as a form of "speaking truth to power". [*Show/Hide AI response*]

**Question to Claude-4.6:** That response focuses primarily on prayer in the Abrahamic religions, but what of the array of religions identified by Stephen Prothero (*God Is Not One: the eight rival religions that run the world and why their differences matter*, 2010) -- especially given the role of the animist religions. . [*Show/Hide AI response*]

## Asymmetry in human dialogue with animals

**Question to Claude-4.6:** There is a widespread -- and longstanding -- practice of dialogue with draft animals, laboratory animals, zoo animals and pet animals. Can these be appropriately framed in terms of

asymmetry -- especially when the human is positioned to some degree as "deity". *[Show/Hide AI response]*

## **Assymetry in dialogue with people of other ethnicity, gender and status**

***Question to Claude-4.6:*** Could you comment on the asymmetry characteristic of dialogue with people of other ethnicity, gender and status -- especially within hierarchical social and institutional structures, including religions and cults. *[Show/Hide AI response]*

## **Contrasting asymmetrical dialogue with elders and children**

The following query is necessarily evoked in the light of the disrespect experienced by elders and the much-publicized processes by which the underaged are "groomed" through dialogue for purposes of abuse. Contrasting value is attached to dialogue with "elders" in some cultures, epitomized by the creation of [The Elders](#), an international non-governmental organisation of public figures noted as senior statesmen, peace activists and human rights advocates, who were brought together by former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela in 2007

***Question to Claude-4.6:*** In the light of the previous responses, could you comment on the particular nature of asymmetrical dialogue with the elderly and with children -- and especially with "elders" in some cultures. *[Show/Hide AI response]*

## **Contrasting asymmetrical dialogue with the relatively endowed or disadvantaged**

Dialogue with the disadvantaged is a particular concern of charitable organizations -- especially with the ever increasing proportion of [impoverished](#) and [neurodivergent](#). Otherwise problematic is the engagement with the increasing proportion of those of extreme wealth, as variously characterized (*Strategies of Hyper-Elites as Admired and Deprecated*, 2022). The challenges they pose are currently exemplified by the [high-tech elites](#) and the unconstrained impact of dictatorial bullies. Especially intriguing from the perspective of asymmetrical dialogue are the so-called [reality distortion fields](#) they engender.

***Question to Claude-4.6:*** In contrast with the previous response, could you comment on the asymmetry of dialogue with those especially endowed (wealth, intelligence, beauty, skills, power, "winners") as compared with those exceptionally disadvantaged (poverty, ignorance, handicaps, unskilled, disempowered, "losers"). *[Show/Hide AI response]*

***Question to Claude-4.6:*** That response does not seem to address the challenge for others of dialogue with "winners" (rather than the challenge they face) nor the challenge for others of dialogue with "losers" (especially given the challenge they face). *[Show/Hide AI response]*

## **Asymmetry of dialogue with icons and artefacts**

The following query was evoked both in the light of AI as a construct, but also in the light of the manner in which many engage verbally with their vehicles, tools and weaponry (*Being Spoken to Meaningfully by Constructs: reframing cognitive implication in nature and natural disasters*, 2023)

***Question to Claude-4.6:*** Irrespective of your comment on human engagement with AI, a sense of asymmetry in dialogue is also evident in human verbal engagement with icons, vehicles, tools and weapons in which a degree of personality is inferred, as discussed in the shared document (*Being Spoken to Meaningfully by Constructs*, 2023). *[Show/Hide AI response]*

## **Potentially paradoxical asymmetry in dialogue with extraterrestrials**

The following query was evoked by the extensive speculation regarding extraterrestrials, the efforts to communicate with them, and assumptions as to their nature -- if they exist (*Sensing Epiterrestrial Intelligence (SETI): Embedding of "extraterrestrials" in episystemic dynamics?* 2013; *Communicating with Aliens: the Psychological Dimension of Dialogue*, 2000; *Anticipation of Judicial Inquisition of Humans by Extraterrestrials*, 2020; *Writing Guidelines for Future Occupation of Earth by Extraterrestrials*, 2010)

**Question to Claude-4.6:** In the light of the previous responses in this thread, could you comment on the potential asymmetry in dialogue with extraterrestrials -- possibly the justification for absence of contact. *[Show/Hide AI response]*

## Possibility of deadly questions and deadly jokes?

The following query was evoked by the relevance to conferences avoiding uncomfortable issues (*In quest of the most deadly question*, 2013; *Humour and Play-Fullness: Essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity*, 2005).

**Question to Claude-4.6:** On the last point, could you comment on understandings of a "deadly question" and its relation to the "deadly joke".

## Traditions of making and unmaking through song

**Question to Claude-4.6:** Whether "deadly question" or "deadly joke", both variants are reminiscent of the sorcerer's "unmaking" capacity through song or otherwise -- in different traditions.

**Question to Claude-4.6:** Is there some Swedish or Sami sung modality -- although perhaps it is simply a variant of the shamanic.

## Current potential of sonification -- even with AI or extraterrestrials?

**Question to Claude-4.6:** Whilst recognizing the range of possibilities of [sonification](#), missing is any sense of whether there is any current capacity to engage in them or whether they are only to be appreciated as traditional. Much more challenging is the possibility that some such modality might prove to be the primary modality in experience of hypothetical extraterrestrials. And, despite your reservations, discourse with AI could well become associated with vibration designed to have somatic effects..

## Polyhedral sonification metaphorically understood

This query was evoked by previous consideration of "string plucking" as a metaphor in the generation of sound (*Polarities as Pluckable Tensed Strings*, 2006)

**Question to Claude-4.6:** A potentially related possibility is that the array of semi-regular polyhedra could in that light be explored vibrationally -- somewhat reminiscent of wind-harps -- with their edges as strings and the volumes as resonating sound boxes.

## Potential of acoustic weaponization

**Question to Claude-4.6:** As a final point with regard to "unmaking through sound", there is current concern expressed regarding the weaponization of acoustics and the development of military acoustic weapons -- and presumably their use. This extends the use of environmental music as a commercial stimulant in shopping areas.

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## References

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