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Thirty-six Dramatic Situations faced by Global Governance?

Interrelating the array of narratives, plots, agendas, stories and conspiracy theories

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Introduction

There is a need to respond to the mish-mash of narratives, agendas, leakages, plots, stories and complicity theories to which many are exposed through the media on a daily basis. How is sense to be made of the variety of disparate perspectives, many of which deprecate and actively condemn the perspectives offered by others?

In a period readily defined in terms of warfare, even as a new Cold War, reference is made to the regrettable level of "propaganda" deployed by any opposing party. By contrast, reference is made to persuasive "narrative", as appropriately crafted to clarify any preferred strategy. The propaganda traditionally associated with warfare can now be understood as replaced by carefully curated "narrative" in what is increasingly recognized as information warfare, if not cognitive warfare. Those who have the power to lie, are now unable to prove what they claim to be truthful.

The situation is further confused by the extent to which dramatic film portrayals are increasingly difficult to distinguish from the reality by which they may have been inspired. This has become especially clear through documentation of the degree to which the [military-entertainment complex](#) has funded many movies, video games and music videos (Stephen Stockwell and Adam Muir, *The Military-Entertainment Complex: a new facet of information warfare*, *Fibreculture Journal*, 1, 2003; David Sirota, *How Your Taxpayer Dollars Subsidize Pro-War Movies and Block Anti-War Movies Connections between the Pentagon and the entertainment industry*, *HuffPost*, 16 March 2011).

However it is only more recently that any indication of specific movies developed with that intention (Jonas E. Alexis, *CIA and Pentagon behind "over 800 major movies and more than 1,000 TV titles."*, *Veterans Today*, 15 July 2017; *Here Are 410 Movies Made Under the Direct Influence and Supervision of the Pentagon*, *ZeroHedge*, 7 August 2018).

The extent of worldwide exposure to such dramatic depictions, and the psychosocial implications of cultivation of appreciation of such media violence, can indeed be deplored. Potentially more pertinent is the lack of capacity to produce alternative forms of entertainment. More intriguing, as it relates to the argument here is that possibility that the exposure to the dramatic situation depicted is a form of education through which a degree of familiarity with dramatic situations is developed.

Arguably many are developing insight -- if unconsciously -- into the pattern of situations depicted or expressed in narrative form. This suggests that a sense of coherence may well be latent and emergent. The question is whether conscious recognition of those patterns

could be triggered by any means -- raising the possibility of implications for forms of governance highly dependent on the cultivation of narratives.

This exploration is inspired by the much-cited early study identifying the array of dramatic situations and plots by [Georges Polti](#) (*The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, 1916). This has more recently been revised, with examples from film, by [Mike Figgis](#) (*The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, 2017).

Of relevance to this argument is the manner in which strategic commentary now makes reference to "dramatic situations" -- increasingly beyond the scope of the systemic analyses favoured by think tanks and academia. Are there insights to be derived of relevance to global governance from the pattern of "dramatic situations" and the manner in which it is framed and reframed by narrative?

An early inspiration for this exploration has been an interpretation of the role of [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) in enabling the transformation of the USSR, as argued separately (*Gorbachev: Dramaturge?! Participative Democracy vs. Participative Drama: Lessons on social transformation for international organizations from Gorbachev*, 1991). Missing at the present time is an epic, operatic perspective on the dynamics of the global system -- as a contrast to the devious narratives carefully cultivated from different perspectives.

In a period readily described as surreal, in which allegory is increasingly valued as a means of framing situations coherently, will the pattern of folk tales and fairy tales acquire an unsuspected function as a source of systemic insight (*Surreal nature of current global governance as experienced*, 2016; David W. Duffy, *Governance in a Surreal World: the dark art of chairing a board in surreal and virtual times*, *Corporate Governance Institute*, 23 September 2020).

Indicative of such a possibility is the comparison made by [Pradeep Kumar Gautam](#) between insights from past millennia in the *Arthashastra*, understood as the art of strategic management, and the *Panchatantra*, an extensive collection of familiar folk tales (*Kautilya's Arthashastra and the Panchatantra: a comparative evaluation*, *World Affairs: the journal of international issues*, 18, 2014, 2).

Dramatic situations from a global perspective

With respect to global governance, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has repeatedly remarked on the "dramatic situations" with which the world is variously faced (*Ten years on, Syrian crisis 'remains a living nightmare'*, *UN News*, March 2021; *UN chief laments lack of global solidarity in COVID-19 fight*, *Euronews*, 20 July 2020; *Guterres: US, UN partnership 'key' to address world's ills*, *World Bulletin*, 2016)

A focus is given to "dramatic situations" in a EU report (*Bordering, Political Landscapes and Social Arenas: Potentials and Challenges of Evolving Border Concepts in a post-Cold War World*, *Cordis: EU Research Results*, #19361013, January 2017):

Executive Summary: Dramatic situations at and around Europe's borders have become part of everyday life and they trouble us for many reasons. Not only does the steady stream of people seeking safety from violence and a better future remind us daily of the conflict-ridden reality of the world, we are also forced to confront Europe's own contradictions and failures. The promises of a borderless Europe, a political community built on solidarity and a pan-European liberal open society appear to be succumbing to fear, xenophobia, opportunism and, in some cases, sheer ignorance.

Emphasis has been given to the term within the [UN Commission on Human Rights](#) (56th session 4 April 2000):

The Federacion de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos, in remarks typical of the debate, said the countries of the South were burdened by external debt, leaving them in dramatic situations of permanent dependence and subordination within the international economic system.

The term is used from a strategic perspective by Gabriel Gabor and Doina Muresan:

The controversial status of post-conflict reconstruction operations is a tempting invitation for international relations theorists to propose concepts and theories that explain, justify and even interpret very dramatic situations according to the interests the actors involved in the reconstruction want to promote. Hence the diversity of approaches and divergent finalities they propose. (*Reflections concerning post-conflict reconstruction*, *Strategic Impact*, 48, 2013)

Early recognition of the relevance of the term features in the commentary of [David Dyzenhaus](#): *Dramatic situations do arise from time to time, in the form of existential challenges to the order—the situations that we term a state of emergency—and in such situations law recedes*. In a discussion of *Hobbes on the International Rule of Law* (*Ethics and International Affairs*, 28, 2014, 1), Dyzenhaus argues:

Perhaps the most influential passage on the rule of law in international law comes from chapter 13 of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*. In the course of describing the miserable condition of mankind in the state of nature, Hobbes remarks to readers who might be skeptical that such a state ever existed that they need only look to international relations—the relations between independent states—to observe one:

But though there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another; yet in all times, Kings, and Persons of Sovereigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continuall jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their

Forts, Garrisons, and Guns upon the Frontiers of their Kingdoms; and continuall Spyes upon their neighbours; which is a posture of War.

Dramatic situation is used with respect to economic policy (Patricia Commun, *Comparative Cultural Economics Offers Insights into the Current Crisis of Capitalism: path dependencies and anti-capitalism at work*, *Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*, 12, 2009, Spring):

The problem is that the two largest Western economies (i.e., The United States and Germany) experienced opposite dramatic situations in the past and therefore developed opposite phobias: one taking strong measures to avoid deflation, the other trying to curb state deficit in order to avoid the risk of inflation at any price.

A dramatic perspective is recognized in non-Western regions in a discussion of the *Final Battle for the Arab World*:

The dispute between Saudi Arabia/United Arab Emirates and Qatar has added major new developments and regional dynamics to existing dramatic situations across the Middle East—especially in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Palestine. Diving deep into any of these situations inevitably leads one to some of the others, confirming again and again the interconnections between the many actors and issues that have generated so much violence and uncertainty in the Arab region. So it might be useful to step back from examining any one conflict and instead simply try to identify larger historical and political patterns that help us understand the players and the issues at stake. (*Changing Criminal Policies*, *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, June 2017)

Far less evident is the meaning to be associated with "dramatic" in the situations faced in the processes of governance. The point may be particularly emphasized by comparison of the cases of Madeleine Albright and Julain Assange, each esteemed as heroes by particular constituencies, although highly deprecated from other perspectives, as noted by Lawrence Davidson (*Who Is the Hero? Albright vs. Assange*, *Consortium News*, 28 April 2022). As especially well understood from a dramatic perspective and in folk tales, such contrasting framing is a bias characteristic of the "eyes of beholder" (*Proportionate Response in the Eye of the Beholder: educational fables for faith-based global governance*, 2006; Facing History and Ourselves, *The Eye of the Beholder*).

Dramatic situations in narrative and stories -- plus or minus thirty-six?

Thirty-six dramatic situations: Georges Polti became fascinated by an anecdote about Schiller and Goethe seeking to define the dramatic ("tragic") situations supposedly discovered by Carlo Gozzi. Polti found exactly thirty-six dramatic situations, many of which have several sub-sections and possible permutations. (*The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, 1916).

In 2017, screenwriter Mike Figgis produced a reworked version of Polti's list of situations (*The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, 2017). Although identically titled, it combines several of the original dramatic situations and added two new ones to arrive at that number. Figgis also replaces Polti's dated examples with new ones drawn from films, offering a more expansive and poetic interpretation of the situations. Recognition is also now given to the questionably related set of Wycliff Aber Hill (Rebecca Onion, *The 37 Basic Plots, According to a Screenwriter of the Silent-Film Era*, *Slate*, 27 October 2015). This appeared in his *Manual for Screenwriters: ten million photoplay plots* (1919), following Polti's earlier classification. .

There are many references to the set of 36, with different amounts of commentary and interpretation (to which links may be provided), including the following:

- Brandilyn Collins: *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations (Forensics and Faith)*, 12 December 2005)
- Cody James Pedersen: *The "Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations" and how to incorporate them into Dungeons and Dragons*, (2022)
- Terry Cox: *Polti's Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations (Story Builder)*, 14 June 2019
- Jim Miller: *The 36 Dramatic Situations of the Workplace (McSweeney's Quarterly)*, 23 October 2015)
- *The 36 Dramatic Situations by Georges Polti With Sub-Headings and definition Hyperlinks*
- *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations (Art and Popular Culture Encyclopedia)*, including a valuable index of the plays and novels associated with particular situations

Given their exemplification in film, especially noteworthy is the presentation of a film by separate authors, each indicating how it related to one of the dramatic situations (*36 Dramatic Situations, Film School Rejects*, 2010).

An example of the presentation of the dramatic situations at the personal level is presented below. This raises the question as to the potential analogues at the collective level of relevance to global governance -- who the manner in which those identified below tend to be used as metaphor in the framing of collective situations..

<i>Georges Polti's 36 Dramatic Situations (Changing Minds) with links to details in each case</i>		
1. Supplication	13. Enmity of kinsmen	25. Adultery
2. Deliverance	14. Rivalry of kinsmen	26. Crimes of love
3. Vengeance of a crime	15. Murderous adultery	27. Discovery of the dishonor of a loved one
4. Vengeance taken for kindred upon kindred	16. Madness	28. Obstacles to love
5. Pursuit	17. Fatal imprudence	29. An enemy loved
6. Disaster	18. Involuntary crimes of love	30. Ambition
	19. Slaying of a kinsman	

7. Falling prey to cruelty or misfortune	unrecognized	31. Conflict with a god
8. Revolt	20. Self-sacrificing for an ideal	32. Mistaken jealousy
9. Daring enterprise	21. Self-sacrifice for kindred	33. Erroneous judgment
10. Abduction	22. All sacrificed for a passion	34. Remorse
11. Enigma	23. Necessity of sacrificing loved ones	35. Recovery of a lost one
12. Obtaining	24. Rivalry of superior and inferior	36. Loss of loved ones

Types of dramatic plot with global implications?

Of particular value from a global perspective is the manner in which dramatic situations are entangled with conflict -- and thereby inherently interesting, if only in terms of media coverage and newsworthiness (Lyman A. Baker, *Dramatic Situation: Conflict, Critical Concepts*, 2000).

As described by *Wikipedia*,

In a literary work, film, or other narrative, the **plot** is the sequence of events where each affects the next one through the principle of cause-and-effect. The causal events of a plot can be thought of as a series of events linked by the connector "and so". Plots can vary from the simple—such as in a traditional ballad—to forming complex interwoven structures, with each part sometimes referred to as a subplot or imbroglio. Plot is similar in meaning to the term storyline. In the narrative sense, the term highlights important points which have consequences within the story, according to American science fiction writer Ansen Dibell. The term plot can also serve as a verb, referring to either the writer's crafting of a plot (devising and ordering story events), or else to a character's planning of future actions in the story.

There is a degree of overlap between "dramatic situation", "plot" -- and the particular focus of types of folk tale (discussed below). This dates from the work, first published in Russian in 1928, of **Vladimir Propp** (*Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 1968). Propp analyzed the plots used in traditional folk-tales and identified 31 distinct functional components (Jay Massiet, *Propp's Morphology of the Folk-Tale*, 3 February 2013).

The distinction as plots by Loren J. Miller (*The 36 Plots*, 1997) is an example of a presentation which is reflective of the 36 dramatic situations.

By contrast, a relatively influential set of seven is distinguished by Christopher Booker (*The Seven Basic Plots: why we tell stories*, 2004). One commentary is provided by Glen C. Strathy (*Understanding The Seven Basic Plots How to Write a Book Now; The Seven...Actually Nine Basic Plots According to Christopher Booker, How to Write a Book Now*). This notes an implied extension to nine types, as separately discussed (Glen C. Strathy, *Nine Basic Plots According to Christopher Booker*).

Various authors have commented on the possibility of a comprehensive classification of plot types (Mark Nichol, *Types of Plots, Daily Writing Tips*). Thus one blog discusses the *The Quest for Universal Plot Types* (*Daily Writing Tips*):

Six Basic Story Shapes Inspired by Vonnegut's ideas, researchers at the the University of Vermont's Computational Story Laboratory and others used various tools, including one they call the Hedonometer. Based on what Vonnegut called "emotional arc," this online tool compares each part of a story by tracking what kind of words dominate it: either words such as "awful punishment poor blame afraid cried hate" or else "happy father garden faith home great laugh." Graphing the "shapes" of 1,327 books from Project Gutenberg, they found six basic plots.

In that context a checklist is offered of *Basic Plot Types (69 of them)* in a context indicative of the possibility of *1,462 Basic Plot Types* (*Daily Writing Tips*).

Another set of 20 elements is distinguished by Ronald B. Tobias (*20 Master Plots: And How to Build Them*, 2012). This describes 20 common story plots and gives much detail on how to construct complete stories around them, as summarized separately (*Tobias' 20 Plots, Changing Minds*). That number framed a related focus (Jamie Righetti, et al. *The 20 Best Plot Twists of the 21st Century, Ranked, IndieWire*, 3 November 2017)

Collective insight from traditional folk tales and fairy tales

As noted above an early stimulus for the clarification of "dramatic situations" has been a focus on folk tales -- and their extension to fairy tales. **Vladimir Propp** (*Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 1968). Propp analyzed the plots used in traditional folk-tales and identified 31 distinct functional components (Jay Massiet *Propp's Morphology of the Folk-Tale* 3 February 2013).

Such tales continue to offer allegories descriptive in rhetoric regarding the dynamics of the current global situation -- perhaps exemplified by the compilation of V. S. M. de Guinzbourg (*Wit and Wisdom of the United Nations: proverbs and apothegms on diplomacy*, Paroemiological Society, 1961). Possibilities include: *Entangled Tales of Memetic Disaster: mutual implication of the Emperor and the Little Boy*, (2009)

- *"Big Brother" Crying "Wolf"? But them "wolves" are a-changin' -- them's becomin' "werewolves"!* (2013).
- *Proportionate Response in the Eye of the Beholder: educational fables for faith-based global governance* (2006)
- *Marketable Tales of the Exploits of Osama bin Laden* (2004)
- *Enrolling Winnie-the-Pooh's Companions in Climate Change Discourse: key roles in the environmental psychodrama of Hundred*

The existence of the extensive [Aarne-Thompson-Uther folk tale classification system](#) (abridged as AT or ATU) is usefully and extensively described with examples by Tormod Kinnes (*AT Types of Folktales* and *The Gold Scales*; see also a [full classification with code](#), with links to stories within each class). The classification covers 2,500 traditional folk tales, drawing parallels between stories with similar roots across cultures. Their index is divided into 7 broad categories:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Tales • Tales of Magic • Religious Tales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic Tales • Tales of the Stupid Ogre/Giant/Devil • Anecdotes and Jokes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formula Tales
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This suggests a complement to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in the identification and comprehension of "memetic disorders", as discussed separately (*Memetic and Information Diseases in a Knowledge Society: speculations towards the development of cures and preventive measures*, 2008). Used together, these might prove indicative of the potential for "intelligence failure". The relationship to the set of dramatic situations does not seem to have been extensively explored.

Here are the 31 elements of stories that Propp identified, plus their symbol, interpretations and discussion. Note that some of these functions generally occur in pairs, such as departure and return. They may also be repeated. Few stories contain all elements, but where they do contain elements, they will very largely occur in the sequence given here.

- 0. Initial situation
- 1st Sphere: Introduction Steps 1 to 7 introduces the situation and most of the main characters, setting the scene for subsequent adventure.
- 2nd Sphere: The Body of the story The main story starts here and extends to the departure of the hero on the main quest.
- 3rd Sphere: The Donor Sequence In the third sphere, the hero goes in search of a method by which the solution may be reached, gaining the magical agent from the Donor. Note that this in itself may be a complete story.
- 4th Sphere: The Hero's return In the final (and often optional) phase of the storyline, the hero returns home, hopefully uneventfully and to a hero's welcome, although this may not always be the case.

31 Narratemes of Vladimir Propp as presented in <i>Propp's Morphology of the Folk Tale (Changing Minds)</i>			
1st Sphere: Introduction	2nd Sphere: The Body of the story	3rd Sphere: The Donor Sequence	4th Sphere: The Hero's return
1. Absentation: Someone goes missing	8. Villainy and lack: The need is identified	12. Testing: Hero is challenged to prove heroic qualities	20. Return: Hero sets out for home
2. Interdiction: Hero is warned	9. Mediation: Hero discovers the lack	13. Reaction: Hero responds to test	21. Pursuit: Hero is chased
3. Violation of interdiction	10. Counteraction: Hero chooses positive action	14. Acquisition: Hero gains magical item	22. Rescue: pursuit ends
4. Reconnaissance: Villain seeks something	11. Departure: Hero leave on mission	15. Guidance: Hero reaches destination	23. Arrival: Hero arrives unrecognized
5. Delivery: The villain gains information		16. Struggle: Hero and villain do battle	24. Claim: False hero makes unfounded claims
6. Trickery: Villain attempts to deceive victim		17. Branding: Hero is branded	25. Task: Difficult task proposed to the hero
7. Complicity: Unwitting helping of the enemy		18. Victory: Villain is defeated	26. Solution: Task is resolved
		19. Resolution: Initial misfortune or lack is resolved	27. Recognition: Hero is recognised
			28. Exposure: False hero is exposed
			29. Transfiguration: Hero is given a new appearance
			30. Punishment: Villain is punished
			31. Wedding: Hero marries and ascends the throne

A more extensive commentary on each of the stages is given with respect to their [functions](#) in the *Wikipedia* entry on Propp. This is supplemented by a checklist of 7 abstract [character functions](#) into which all the characters in tales could be resolved.

Of considerable relevance, as cited above, is a degree of recognition of the relevance of folk tales to strategic management of resources [Pradeep Kumar Gautam](#) (*Kautilya's Arthashastra and the Panchatantra: a comparative evaluation, World Affairs: the journal of international issues*, 18, 2014, 2). The *Arthashastra* is an Ancient Indian Sanskrit treatise on [statecraft](#), [political science](#), [economic policy](#) and [military strategy](#) (Mala Chandrashekhar, *Arthashastra of Chanakya (Kautilya) : Ancient India's Treatise on the 'Science of Wealth' and 'State Administration'* *The Cultural Heritage of India*, 26 May 2021; Kadambari Rana, *Art and science of resource management, The Hindu*, 7 March 2021).

The *Panchatantra* is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated animal fables in Sanskrit verse and prose, arranged within a frame story. The surviving work is dated to about 200 BCE, but the fables are likely much more ancient. It is likely a Hindu text, and based on older oral traditions with "animal fables that are as old as we are able to imagine". It is "certainly the most frequently translated literary product of India", and these stories are among the most widely known in the world. It goes by many names in many cultures. There is a version of Panchatantra in nearly every major language of India, and in addition there are 200 versions of the text in more than 50 languages around the world. One version reached Europe in the 11th century.

Story archetypes and character archetypes

As described by Fija Callaghan

Story archetypes are recognizable patterns in a story's plot and structure that are repeatedly found in stories across time, cultures, and beliefs. Many religious stories and creation myths fall into these archetypes; so do our most beloved works of literature. Story archetypes work because they reflect real human experience: the things we strive for, the things we dream of, and the things we fear (*What Are Story Archetypes? The Ultimate Guide with 50+ Examples Scribophile*)

The author distinguishes between two major kinds of archetypes: story archetypes and [character archetypes](#):

- *Story archetypes* are the blueprint for the world in which these characters live—the pattern of events, themes, and ideas that lead the plot from start to finish. By following these templates, we can create worlds that we know will resonate with our readers.
- *Character archetypes* are patterns that characters fall in to, like the templates of the hero, the villain, the sidekick, the guardian, and the trickster—in other words, the [classic personalities that populate every good story](#).

From that perspective, Callaghan indicates as "*the ultimate list of story archetypes*":

- The Hero's Journey in 12 stages
- Kurt Vonnegut's 6 story archetypes
- Christopher Booker's 7 story archetypes
- Ronald Tobias's 20 story archetypes
- Georges Polti's 36 story archetypes
- The Aarne–Thompson–Uther Index using 7 broad categories to cluster 2,500 traditional folk tales.

As these imply, it is well recognized that there are (unfortunately) many approaches to such clusterings of plots, as mentioned by Cecil Adams (*What are the seven basic literary plots? The Straight Dope*, 24 November 2000) and by David Edgar (*How Plays Work*, 2009). A 12-volume compilation was produced (Frank Northen Magill, et al., *Masterplots: 1,801 plot stories and critical evaluations of the world's finest literature*, 1976/1996). The challenge of any taxonomical approach has been argued separately (*Taxonomies of dramatic situations*, 2009).

Variouly appreciated sets include (see convenient [listing](#)):

- **Two:** Aristotle distinguished comedy and tragedy, reducing the number of plots to two. Tobias (2003) acknowledges that the 20 he identifies can also be reduced to two: "plots of the body" and "plots of the mind."
- **Three:** The number of plots identified, semi-comically, by William Foster-Harris (*The Basic Patterns of Plot*, 1959).
- **Seven:** Christopher Booker (*The Seven Basic Plots: why we tell stories*, 2005)
- **Nine:** The number of plots identified by John Carroll (*The Western Dreaming*, 2001).
- **Thirteen:** Wallace Hildick (*Thirteen Types of Narrative*, 1970)
- **Nineteen:** The basic effects underlying all [magic tricks](#) as identified by [Dariel Fitzkee](#) (*Trick Brain*, 1944), considered, with associated works, to be one of the major contributions to the theory of magic. The number and types continue to be disputed.
- **Twenty:** The number of basic, major plots, or those more effective (Ronald Tobias, *20 Master Plots And How to Build Them*, 2003; Tennessee Screenwriters Association, *Twenty Basic Plots*, 2002). Two of them are recognized as occasionally combined. Tobias considers that many of the 36 identified by Gozzi and Polti are no longer used ("because they seem hopelessly out of date"). These are now widely used in the education of creative writing.
- **Thirty-one:** The set of narrative functions (or narrative units) of *dramatis personae*, as identified by [Vladimir Propp](#) (*Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 1928). He argued that the limited number of functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled.
- **Thirty-six:** The number of plots, as identified by Carlo Gozzi and elaborated by Georges Polti (*The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, 1916; also accessible from *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations, Gordian Plot*)
- **Forty-five:** A set of identified archetypal, mythic cross-cultural plot characters, male and female, and their typical reactions to situations (Victoria Schmidt, *45 Master Characters*, 2007)
- **Sixty-nine:** An estimate of the total number of basic story lines allegedly identified by [Rudyard Kipling](#), regarded as a major "innovator in the art of the short story"

As Jon Adams indicates these might be considered as variously aspiring to be an artistic version of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements. However, in the light of the history of the evolution of that table, the various proposals might be understood as particular "takes" or understandings of a complex underlying pattern of periodicity that continues to be a focus of exploration in the relevant sciences (J. W. van Spronsen, *The Periodic System of Chemical Elements; a history of the first hundred years*, 1969; Eric R. Scerri, *The Periodic Table: its story and its significance*, 2006). The potential of such a pattern is explored separately (*Periodic Pattern of Human Knowing: implication of the Periodic Table as metaphor of elementary order*, 2009).

The question is whether these enable a richer understanding of the relation between "us" and "them" -- if an attempt was made to describe the dynamics of such relationships as a form of narrative, rather than being locked into a binary box (*Us and Them: Relating to Challenging Others: patterns in the shadow dance between "good" and "evil"*, 2009). No classic western, or other good-guy/bad-guy movie, would get away with the simplifications of discourse through which the political conflicts of the current period are articulated. Represented as such, they are indeed inherently boring. There is only so much the media can do to sustain interest (and ratings) with framing the good guys as purely angelic and the bad guys as unredeemably demonic. According to the distinction of Aristotle, this can

only then be seen as either tragedy or comedy -- if not a tragi-comedy.

Navigating the chaos associated with the dramatic situations of global governance

Global chaos has given rise to to chaos [theory](#). This is an interdisciplinary scientific theory and branch of mathematics focused on underlying patterns and deterministic laws highly sensitive to initial conditions in dynamical systems that were thought to have completely random states of disorder and irregularities. It is deemed especially appropriate to engaging with [complex systems](#). Of some relevance is the related discipline of [catastrophe theory](#), with the insight it offers into catastrophes -- "dramatic situations" *par excellence*.

For Jian-Qiao Sun and Albert C. J. Luo:

In the theory of nonlinear dissipative systems, one often studies bifurcation phenomena as a single control parameter is varied. The most dramatic situations are so-called crises, namely the collision of a chaotic attractor with an unstable periodic orbit following the notation of Grebogi et al. (1983, 1986), in which a chaotic attractor undergoes a sudden discontinuous change. Of special interest are the mechanisms that induce crises. Two different kinds of crises are distinguished. A chaotic attractor can suddenly disappear due to a boundary crisis or change in size due to an interior crisis ([Global Analysis of Nonlinear Dynamics](#), Springer, 2012, p. 76)

Unfortunately, given the crisis of crises with which governance is increasingly faced, it is quite unclear whether these disciplines are proving adequate to the challenges now confronted -- whether recognized or denied (a systemic factor in its own right). In this light it is appropriate to explore the extent to which strategic thinking is able to draw on collective insights formulated otherwise -- and valued over millennia. The question is partially highlighted by the intuitive approach purportedly characteristic of generals in conflict situations (Tony d'Andrea, [Strategic Thinking Under Chaotic Conditions: the "General's Glimpse" beyond analysis and intuition](#) (18 August 2019).

A degree of consideration is indeed given to the application of chaos theory in the social sciences and in "real life" (Ashley Crossman, [Chaos Theory](#). *ThoughtCo*, 27 August 2020), The possibility of designing more appropriate organizations is envisaged (Paul Millerd, [Integrating Chaos: Building Resilient Organizations with Chaos Theory](#), *Boundless; Understanding and Leading Change, a chaos theory perspective*, *Organizational Change*, 3 April 2010). Implications for politics are considered (Robert Tracinski, [Political Chaos Theory](#), *The Bulwark*, 18 July 2019). Its potential relevance to management has been articulated (Jason Gordon, [Chaos Theory of Management Explained](#), *The Business Professor*, 8 April 2022)

However it is difficult to trace successful applications to governance and especially to global governance (Joshua Chambers, [Chaos theory: how are governments adapting to tackle "wicked problems"?](#) *Civil Service Reform*, 19 May 2015; Paul Taylor, [How chaos theory is changing management tech](#), *BCS*, 5 August 2021).

Do intergovernmental institutions like the United Nations acclaim the benefits of chaos theory in responding to dramatic situations? Do the following have any current impact on international relations?

- Dimitrios Kantemnidis: [Chaos Theory and International Relations](#) (*Journal of Mediterranean and Balkan Intelligence*)
- Dylan Kissane: [A Chaotic Theory of International Relations: the possibility for theoretical revolution in international politics](#) (*Pro Polis*, 2, 2007)
- Joshua Keating: [Can chaos theory teach us anything about international relations?](#) *Foreign Policy*, 23 May 2013)
- Carlos Bonilla: [How can Chaos Theory be used to study International Relations?](#) (Industrial University of Santander, 2 April 2014)
- Sefika Sule Ercetin and Santo Banerjee: [Chaos and Complexity Theory in World Politics](#) (IGI Global, 2014)
- A. Korybko and H. Haddad: [Chaos Theory, Global Systemic Change and Hybrid Wars](#) (*Comparative Politics*, 7, 2016, 4)
- J. P. P. Y. Font and Régis Dandoy: [Chaos theory and its application in political science](#) (*Semantic Scholar*, 2006)

The interrelation between chaos and "dramatic situations" has been explored to a degree by Tom Steppared as noted by John Fleming (["It's wanting to know that makes us matter": epistemological and dramatic issues in Tom Stoppard's Arcadia, Miranda](#), 8, 2013). In his plays Stoppard likes to employ "dramatic situations" where "bizarre elements [are] empirically proven to have much more natural explanations". Rather than "the championing of epistemological pessimism"

For Ronald Schrantz [Complexity at Work](#), *Brunswick Review*, 16, 2018):

The principle of complex systems with interconnected elements working together to solve problems is the standard approach for emergency units, including first responders, medical intensive care and industrial incident units as well as corporate crisis management teams. These groups are empowered to self-manage in unpredictable situations within a range of predefined skills and roles. The potential of such complex organization becomes very visible when addressing dramatic situations, saving lives and controlling damage.

Such language, whilst technically to be admired, helps to make the point that chaos theory takes little account of the psychological issues of communicating with a wider public expected to blindly accept the strategic appreciation of experts -- who may themselves have limited understanding of the efficacy of what they are recommending. There is a fundamental disconnect to be addressed -- one effectively denied by chaos theorists.

Collective analogues to 36 dramatic interpersonal situations

It is of course the case that Polti's set of dramatic situations is presented and cited as a means of clarifying the pattern of **interpersonal**

dynamics which feature so prominently in narrative, drama and in the media. As a pattern, the situations may well be used to exemplify **collective dynamics**, although this is not the emphasis in their description. The question is then how the collective implications might be rendered more explicit. Allegory and metaphor are notable in drawing on interpersonal dynamics to frame collective relationships.

One approach, following from chaos theory and complexity theory -- given their intimate relation to systems thinking -- is the unusual articulation offered by the organization theorist, [Russell Ackoff](#), a pioneer in the field of operations research, systems thinking and management science (*Ackoff's Fables: Irreverent Reflections on Business and Bureaucracy*, 1991). The management sciences now recognizes the value of **business fables** as being a motivational fable, parable or other fictional story that shares a lesson or lessons that are intended to be applied in the business world with the aim to improve the organizational culture. (Niki Giankaris, *Fables in the Boardroom: seven tales of strategic success*, Drexel University, 23 September 2013; Nicki Hayes, *7 Leadership Fables Every Leader and Manager Should Read*, *Professional Academy*), Presentations of fables by [Stanislaw Lem](#) offer links to *Wikipedia* (*The Cyberiad: Fables for the Cybernetic Age*, Penguin, 2014)

Curiously however there seems to be no systematic approach by systems theorists to the pattern of fables and the lessons they offer for dramatic situations -- especially those of a collective nature. The focus is anecdotal and interpersonal in emphasis, notably in the quest for memorability. As noted by Nicolas Szilas, dramatic situations and the related notion of deep narrative structures have been overlooked in the domain of computational models of narrative (*Modeling and representing dramatic situations as paradoxical structures*, *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 32, 2017, 2).

The set of 36 dramatic situations invites reinterpretation in the light of its strategic significance for collectives -- whether nation states, regions (North-South; East-West) or other groups. In the following table the elaboration of Polt's distinction in the *Wikipedia* entry is used to trigger consideration of a collective equivalent in systemic terms.

Implication of the 36 dramatic situations for global relationships?		
	Interpersonal significance	Collective significance (exploratory exercise)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplication: a persecutor; a suppliant; a power in authority, whose decision is doubtful. 	Appeals by countries or groups made to the international community for aid or assistance
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliverance: the unfortunate has caused a conflict, and the threatener is to carry out justice, but the rescuer saves the unfortunate 	Remedial action and relief provided to countries or groups, irrespective of the degree to which they are considered responsible for their situation
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime pursued by vengeance: the criminal commits a crime that will not see justice, so the avenger seeks justice by punishing the criminal 	Strategic initiatives of states, framed as righteous, despite being outside the framework of international law (Vietnam War, Invasion of Iraq, Invasion of Ukraine)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vengeance taken for kin upon kin 	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursuit: the fugitive flees punishment for a misunderstood conflict 	Misunderstood pursuit following involvement of Interpol
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster: the vanquished power falls from their place after being defeated by the victorious enemy or being informed of such a defeat by the messenger 	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling prey to cruelty or misfortune: the unfortunate suffers from misfortune and/or at the hands of the master 	Unfortunate consequences of hegemonic strategies
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revolt: the tyrant, a cruel power, is plotted against by the conspirator 	Characteristic reaction to authoritarianism, collective oppression and hegemony
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daring enterprise: the bold leader takes the object from the adversary by overpowering the adversary 	Successful revolt by freedom fighters?
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abduction: the abductor takes the abducted from the guardian 	Forms of extradition
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enigma: the interrogator poses a problem to the seeker and gives a seeker better ability to reach the seeker's goals 	Strategic dilemmas?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtaining: an arbitrator decides who gets the object desired by 	

12	opposing parties	Successful competition for aid and relief funding
13	• Enmity of kinsmen	Implicit hostility between allies
14	• Rivalry of kinsmen	Rivalry between allies
15	• Murderous adultery	Collective conspiracy to attack an erstwhile ally
16	• Madness	Condition attributed to global leaders. their action and the support they elicit
17	• Fatal imprudence	Imprudent strategy in the light of the Precautionary Principle
18	• Involuntary crimes of love	Mistaken forms of collective assistance and remedial action
19	• Slaying of an unrecognized kinsman	Unrecognized undermining of an ally
20	• Self-sacrificing for an ideal	Strategic pursuit of principles irrespective of collective cost to the population
21	• Self-sacrifice for kindred	Collective sacrifice in support of an ally
22	• All sacrificed for a passion	Collective sacrifice in pursuit of belief or ideology
23	• Necessity of sacrificing beloved	Strategic situations exemplified by the trolley problem
24	• Rivalry of superior and inferior	Assymetric conflict between nation states
25	• Adultery	Breaches of international agreement, possibly engaged in secret
26	• Crimes of love	Breaches of international norms in support of an alliance
27	• Discovery of the dishonour of a loved one	Exemplified by the scandal between states following Wikileaks disclosures
28	• Obstacles to love	Obstacles to strategic alliance, exemplified by aspirations to EU or NATO membership
29	• An enemy loved	Exemplified by ambiguity in attraction of states and groups to the USA
30	• Ambition	Aspiration of states to "Being Great Again"
31	• Conflict with a god	Strategic conflict with religious principles
32	• Mistaken jealousy	Mistaken appreciation of the consumer society by those with higher quality of life
33	• Erroneous judgment	Exemplified by invasion of Iraq and assumptions regarding success in Afghanistan
34	• Remorse	Collective sentiment with regard to massacres, as with the Holocaust
35	• Recovery of a lost one	Strategic efforts to recover alienated former allies
36	• Loss of loved ones	Alienation of allies

Narrative visualization as a discipline

There are many approaches to narrative and its visualization as most usefully reviewed by Cameron Edmond and Tomasz Bednarz (*Three Trajectories for Narrative Visualisation*, *Visual Informatics*, 5, 2021, 2). They recognize that narrative and visualization often remain independent elements within visualizations. As the authors argue:

Narrative Visualisation (NarVis) is the pairing of data visualisation with narrative techniques. Due to its [interdisciplinary](#) applications and scholarship, NarVis presentations often feature vastly different interpretations of “narrative” and “visualisation”, which is echoed in NarVis authoring tools. To map the morphology of how the narratives of NarVis manifest, we identify three different trajectories for the field.

Having clarified the issues relating to the confusing variety of understandings of "narrative", the authors conclude:

Through our analysis, we conclude that the NarVis discipline has begun a journey down three different paths. In the case of **leading narratives**, the traditional narrative remains intact... including characterisation and metaphor. However, where the **leading narrative** offers potential for NarVis authors is in its ability to turn abstract objects into characters. This approach to narrative embraces visualisation and allows the weaving of tales about concepts and movements not otherwise possible. In addition, the **leading narrative** may also allow the author themselves to take on a sort of character, becoming the narrator of their own journey through the data.

By contrast, **integrated narratives** take a far more transformative stance towards the narrative, mapping traditional narrative techniques to data visualisation methods. In doing so, the **integrated narrative** creates a new vocabulary of narrative, while retaining all the benefits that come with the narrative form. In the **integrated narrative**, the subjects become more abstract, with the data itself taking on a sort of characterisation.

Finally, the **supporting narrative** offers a different interpretation of narrative completely. The **supporting narrative** does not

concern itself with following narrative convention or adopting any of its techniques. Instead, the narrative simply becomes one of the many tools for the data visualiser to use, placed alongside highlighting, graphs and more. The **supporting narrative** is often designed not to weave a good tale, but instead simply to express data in an understandable and accessible manner.

It is appropriate to note that the many valuable references made by the authors include the work of Vladimir Propp (*Morphology of the Folktale*, 1968) but not that of the more widely cited Georges Polti (*The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, 1916). This suggests that the understanding of narrative and its visualization somehow excludes the dramatic focus valued in the classification of Polti -- even though aspects are taken into account to some degree. More puzzling is the manner in which the challenges of memorability are seemingly ignored by the developing discipline.

By contrast a distinctive approach is developed with respect to discourse analysis and its visualization, however this may be understood as the relationship between narratives (Cóstin-Gabriel Chiru, *A Tool for Discourse Analysis and Visualization and Stefan Trausan-Matu, International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking (IJVCSN)*, 5, 2013, 2).

A useful analogue through which to frame such questions of narrative and discourse is the widespread appreciation of football. There is of course a narrative about football and it engenders a vast amount of discourse. The teams (and their supporters) could be said to cultivate their respective narratives with which they strongly identify. The encounters between teams could be understood as a form of discourse -- and the focus of extensive visualization.

Another perspective is offered by the analysis of games and players, and especially of so-called passing patterns, which may or may not feature in the visualization. An increasing amount of technology is applied to tracking ball movement in order to improve team performance. To what extent is such analysis valued by those who engage in the narrative and the discourse? Does the perspective acquire legitimacy through any discipline of narratology engendering a **metanarrative** or a **metadiscourse** perspective?

Such issues acquire another dimension through the extensive exploration of the capacity of computers to create poetry and more recently humour (Corinne Purtill, *Artificial Intelligence Can Now Craft Original Jokes- and that's no laughing matter*, *Time*, 4 January 2022; *It's No Joke: AI Beats Humans At Making You Laugh*, *Forbes*, 30 Apr 2020; Tony Veale, *When will humorous AIs press our buttons with their jokes?* *Aeon*, 25 April 2022).

Given the increasingly widespread appreciation of the relevance of artificial intelligence to governance, it is most curious to note the potential relevance of an unusual modelling initiative (Alex Woodie *'Deep-Speare' Emulates the Bard with AI*, *Datanami*, 1 August 2018; Jey Han Lau, Trevor Cohn, Timothy Baldwin, Julian Brooke, and Adam Hammond. *Deep-speare: A joint neural model of poetic language, meter and rhyme*, *Proceedings of the 56th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (Long Papers)*, 2018). The approach has been summarized by the authors as *This AI Poet Mastered Rhythm, Rhyme, and Natural Language to write like Shakespeare* (*IEEE Spectrum*, 30 April 2020). It suggests a means of transforming alienating articulations of global strategy into attractive memorable form characterized by higher orders of coherence, as discussed separately (*Potential for Coherence through Engaging Strategic Poetry*, 2021).

Memorable systemic organization of dramatic situations and folk wisdom?

Mnemonic devices: The current tendency is to engage with any new crisis as it emerges as a "dramatic situation" -- potentially to be acclaimed as unexpected and inexplicable -- namely as a **Black Swan** (Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*, 2007).

The question here is rather whether any such situation can be recognized as embedded in a reasonably familiar pattern providing a valuable context grounded comprehensibly in collective memory. In conventional terms this is only framed as **emergency preparedness**. However there is a case for framing a dramatic situation as characteristic of a dramatic development, then to be understood quite otherwise and especially from an aesthetic perspective. Use of "tragedy" on such occasions is indicative of recognition of the relevance of appreciation of an aesthetic dimension -- "tragedy" being merely one stage in a dramatic process..

However, rather than "tragedy" alone, the question is whether it is possible to "re-cognize" and name a set of 36 situations (for example) potentially relevant to strategic engagement with a crisis -- enabled by popular understanding.

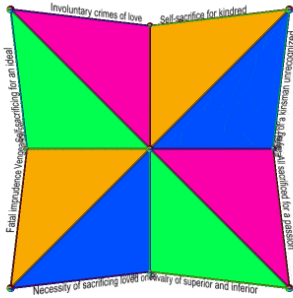
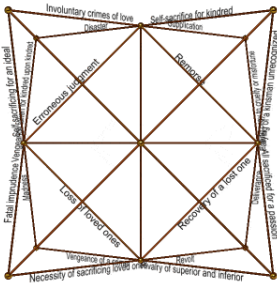
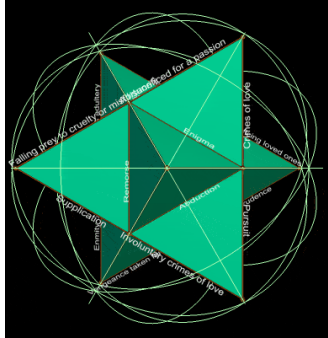
The possibility can be framed in terms of the necessary articulation of mnemonic aids to trigger appreciation of dramatic patterns -- in contrast with abstract systemic perspectives -- as argued separately (*Time for Provocative Mnemonic Aids to Systemic Connectivity? Possibilities of reconciling the "headless hearts" to the "heartless heads"*, 2018).

What mnemonic devices enable a complex of 36 dramatic situations to be presented succinctly and rendered memorable? Of relevance in this respect is the quantitative challenge to overloaded memory, as clarified separately (*Comprehension of Numbers Challenging Global Civilization*, 2014). The set of 36 dramatic situations is well beyond what is readily memorable.


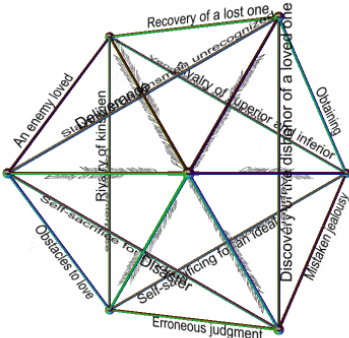
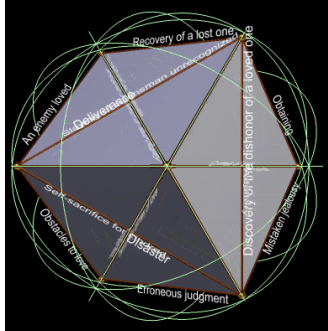
Edge mapping on polyhedra: The following exercises illustrate the use of polyhedral forms to hold the 36 dramatic situations distinctively. The attribution of situations to the forms if however arbitrary in anticipation of the possibility that the forms facilitate systemic insights into a more appropriate positioning.

Stella Octangula: One approach is to transform the list of 36 disparate dramatic situations, so extensively referenced as a list, onto the 36 edges of a singular form as shown below (using what is otherwise known as the **stellated octahedron**). The value of the polyhedron shown derives in part from the manner in which it constitutes a version of the Star of David in 3D, as discussed separately (*Richer pattern of significance through complexification of the Star of David?* 2017). The **relative positioning of the dramatic situations is arbitrary (and merely indicative)** in this exercise -- in anticipation of careful consideration of any memorable positioning in the light of

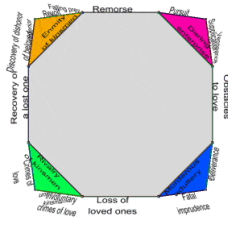

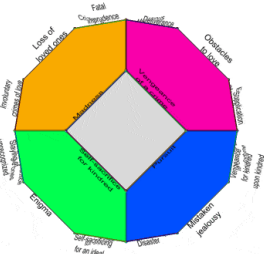

dramatic and systemic factors.

Animations indicative of allocation of 36 dramatic situations onto 36 edges of Stella Octangula (36 edges; 24 faces; 14 vertices)		
Solid faced	Faces transparent	With great circles
		
Animations above (and below) prepared with the aid of Stella Polyhedron Navigator		




The transformation of the images above into their **geometrically dual** form below is one indication of how representation of a dramatic complex might be totally transformed -- with vertices becoming faces, and faces becoming vertices -- whilst the number of edges remains constant.

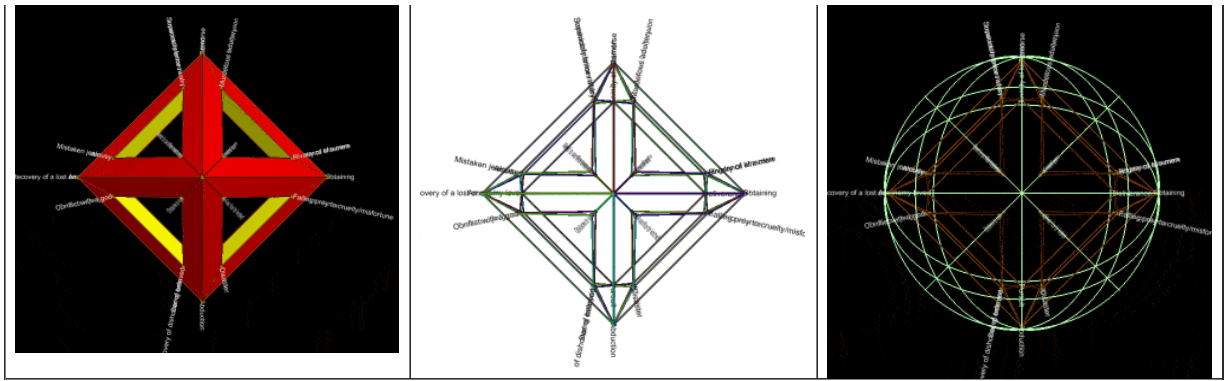
Animations indicative of allocation of 36 dramatic situations onto 36 edges of dual of Stella Octangula (36 edges; 14 faces; 24 vertices)		
Solid faced	Faces transparent	With great circles
		

Archimedean polyhedra: Two of the 13 Archimedean polyhedra have 36 edges and can be used in a similar manner to the above.

Indicative animations of mapping of 36 dramatic situations onto edges of Archimedean polyhedra			
Truncated cube 36 edges; 14 faces; 24 vertices	Truncated cube (dual) 36 edges; 24 faces; 14 vertices	Truncated octahedron 36 edges; 14 faces; 24 vertices	Truncated octahedron (dual) 36 edges; 24 faces; 14 vertices
			

Vertex mapping on Leonardo Octahedron: One alternative approach is to map the 36 dramatic situations onto the 36 vertices of a memorable polyhedron like the Leonardo Octahedron, as variously depicted below, and discussed separately (George W. Hart, *Leonardo da Vinci's Polyhedra*, *Virtual Polyhedra*, 1999).

Animations indicative of allocation of 36 dramatic situations onto 36 vertices of Leonardo Octahedron (96 edges; 48 faces; 36 vertices)		
Solid faced	Faces transparent	Transparent with great circles
		



Curiously, and potentially of mnemonic value in contrasting the edge-mapping with the vertex-mapping, the dual of the Stella Octangula offers a similar appearance to the dual of the Leonardo Octahedron as shown below. In the latter case however, the transformation to the dual then associates the 36-fold vertex mapping with the 36 faces of the dual in a manner which does not allow them to be indicated on the complex internal geometry of the dual.

Animations indicative of allocation of 36 dramatic situations onto 36 faces of dual of Leonardo Octahedron (96 edges; 36 faces; 48 vertices)		
Solid faced	Faces transparent	With a selected face-type transparent

Face-mapping on 3-Frequency Tetrahedral Geodesic Sphere: Using one of the very few polyhedra with a set of 36 visible faces, the dramatic situations can be mapped onto it as shown below left. The faces can be unfolded into a network as shown in the central image in which the 3 face-types are distinctively coloured. The animation on the right offers an interesting perspective on how the set of dramatic situations might be "unfolded" and "folded" together.

Animations indicative of allocation of 36 dramatic situations onto 36 faces of 3-Frequency Tetrahedral Geodesic Sphere (54 edges; 36 faces; 20 vertices)		
Solid faced	Unfolded network of faces	Folding and Unfolding

Configuring patterns of "wisdom" consistent with this approach: Other sets of insights have evoked the possibilities of such an approach, with relevant images and animations in 3D.

One classic set is composed of 48 fundamental *koans* of Zen Buddhism, known as the *The Gateless Gate*. A koan can be usefully recognized as a form of dramatic situation, at least in cognitive terms. Appropriate to the associated paradoxes and dilemmas, the set is also recognized as a barrier (Robert Aitken, *The Gateless Barrier*, 1991). (*Configuring a Set of Zen Koan as a Wisdom Container: formatting the Gateless Gate for Twitter*, 2012).

Another traditional set of particular interest, because of its degree of articulation, is the pattern of 64 conditions of change known as the *1 Ching* -- each condition being indicative of a strategic dilemma whether understood personally or collectively (*Framing Cognitive Space for Higher Order Coherence: toroidal interweaving from 1 Ching to supercomputers and back?* 2019).

Toroidal framing of narrative as container for a cycle of dramatic situations

Potentially of considerable relevance to the quest for greater insight into the pattern of dramatic situations from a global perspective is the preference of many for the experience of narrative as a contrast to any systemic perspective. The latter is then readily held to detract from the story and its interest as a source of excitement and surprise for the listener/spectator. As a story the narrative is a journey of discovery to an important degree. The story teller, as with those crafting a narrative, may also resist any initiative which undermines their particularly valued role in relation to the audience.

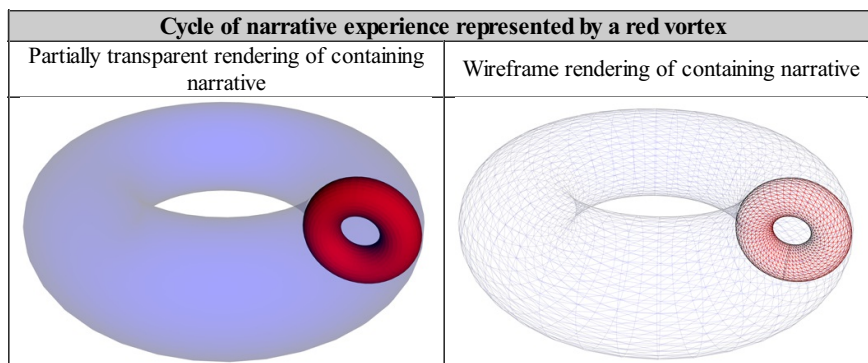
For the audience, the potential surprises in the development of the story evoke a valued sense of anticipation -- even if it is told many times. For the story-teller the art lies in part in ensuring the elements of the story remain (provisionally) "under the radar" or "over the horizon". This may be understood in relation to a [daily news cycle](#), the narrative has to be sustained by a daily drip of snippets -- as is only too evident in the case of propaganda relating to the operation in Ukraine.

Further clarification is required as to how the success of major aesthetic achievements "work" when defined as a cycle or a ring -- as with [opera cycles](#).

Circumferential tori: Of notable interest to the argument are the animations above indicating the association of particular edges or vertices with [great circles](#) circumscribing the polyhedron or its dual. Each such cycle, as a journey, can be understood as a torus -- a circular tunnel -- through which experience is moved as the story develops. A torus also reinforces the sense in which the narrative is a form of container of experience for the duration of the story. There is the further sense that at any particular time in the journey, the attractive dynamics of the story function as a form of vortex for attention -- dynamically resisting dissociation from the narrative by which attention is held.

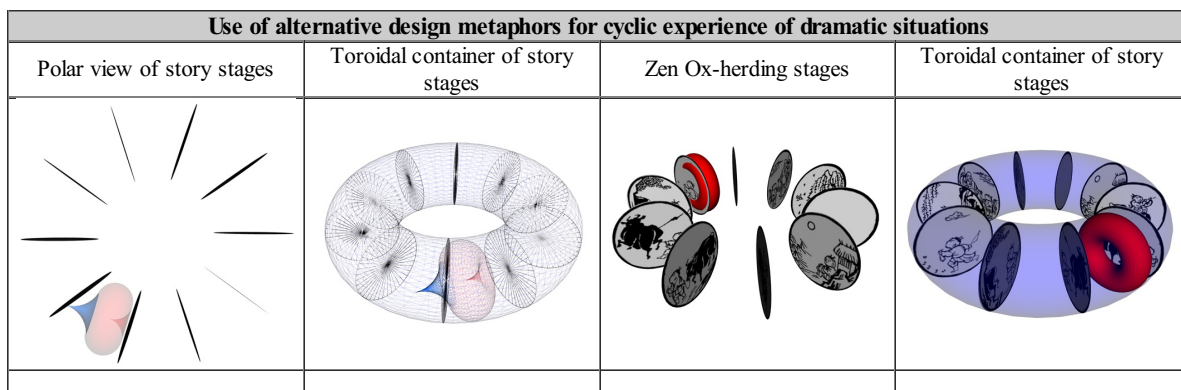
To the extent that people and groups structure their lives through stories, there is a case for exploring "toroidal living", as discussed separately ([Imagining Toroidal Life as a Sustainable Alternative: from globalization to toroidization or back to flatland?](#) 2019).

One exploration of relevance to that perspective is that offered by the screenshots of the animations below. The narrative as a toroidal container (in blue below) can be represented as experienced at any particular moment by a second torus (in red) circulating within it. This torus functions as an attention vortex -- deriving information from the container and pulling it into the centre. The relative rotations of the blue and red tori are effectively interlocked (although this is relatively difficult to see, even in the wireframe versions).

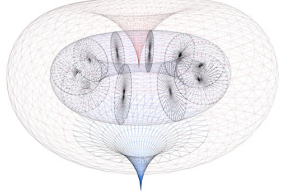
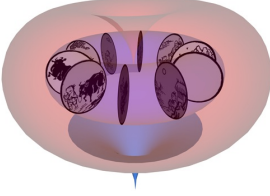
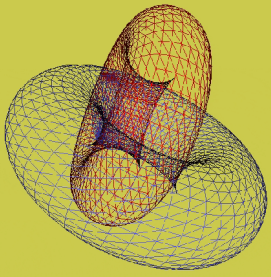
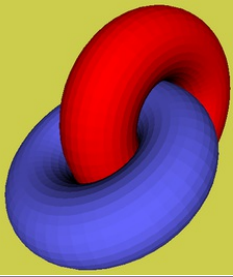


The narrative can be understood as having phases, stages, or dramatic situations, indicated on the left below from a polar perspective as 10 separations (rather than a larger set). An alternative design metaphor can be used for the experiential perspective -- an approximation to a cardioid form in 3D, as discussed separately ([Cognitive heart dynamics framed by two tori in 3D](#), 2016; [Fearful attraction of a hole](#), 2016; [Cardioid Attractor Fundamental to Sustainability](#), 2005). In the second image from the left the separations are shown as transparent disks within a wire frame rendering of the torus.

Reverting to the vortex form above, the succession of experiences of dramatic situations (cognitive crises) can be represented using the classic [Zen 10 ox-herding images](#) -- given the absence of any recognized depictions of the set of dramatic situations Use of those images was the focus of a previous toroidal presentation ([Zen of Facticity: Bull, Ox or Otherwise? Herding facts and their alternatives in a post-truth-era](#), 2017; [Phases in the "Re-cognition" of "Bull" according to Zen? Experimental attribution of significance to traditional distinctions](#), 2017). The adaptation is represented in the animations on the right.




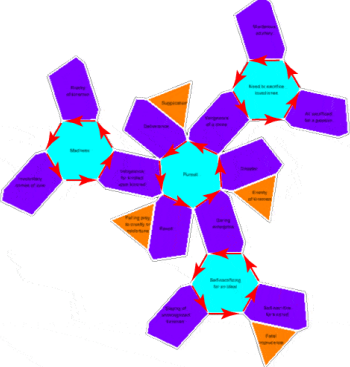
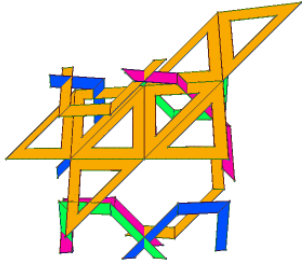
More speculative animations regarding the relationship between the narrative and the experience of it are presented below. Those on the left have the toroidal pattern within the cardioid pattern. Those on the right have the two tori interlocked -- the narrative and the experience of it (*Cognitive osmosis through topological eversion and interlocking tori -- framing outside-inside otherwise*, 2017).

Alternative design metaphors indicative of more complex engagement of the perceiver with the narrative			
Cardioid as container for a toroidal narrative		Interlocking tori: narrative and perceiver	
			

As triggers for imagination and discussion, regarding the experience of dramatic situations in a narrative, the animations lend themselves to various modifications and improvements, notably with respect to orientation, rate of rotation, direction of rotation, relative transparency, and colour. Some of the variations are necessarily less satisfactory on web pages. As 3D images, most are best experienced and manipulated in virtual reality.

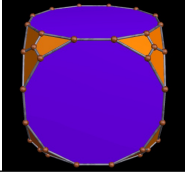
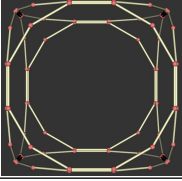
Interrelating global cycles of dramatic situations

Global systemic forces? The polyhedra indicated above are variously a potential source of insight into ways of thinking about the forces engendering dramatic situations as illustrated by the animations below. The alternatives invite discussion as to whether it is the edges the drama is engendered by the edges (as "red lines"?), by the faces (as "tectonic plates"?), or by the vertices (as critical points or "tipping points"?).

Alternative perspectives on forces potentially engendering dramatic situations		
Stella octangula (un)folding 36 edges ; 24 faces; 14 vertices	3-Frequency tetrahedral geodesic sphere (alternating between 2 conditions) 24 edges; 36 faces ; 20 vertices	Leonardo octahedron (un)folding 96 edges; 48 faces; 36 vertices
		

12-sided "table" in 3D: One exercise to that end could be formulated in terms of *Increasing the dimensionality of the archetypal Round Table?* (2018). That possibility was explored in terms of envisaging a 12-sided (dodecagonal) table in 3D. Given the dramatic implications of the traditional 12-sided Round Table, consideration can be given to a dodecagonal table and its projection into 3D -- and what this might then imply for enhanced modes of discourse.

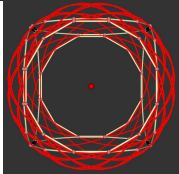
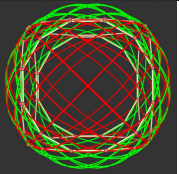
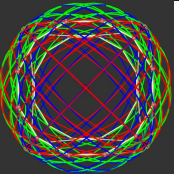
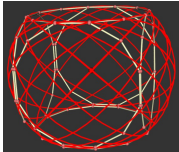
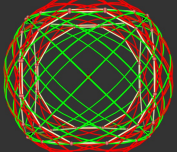
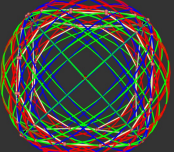
The following animations of unusual polyhedra, derived by further truncation from the **truncated cube**, were discovered in relation to the communication implications of great circles in connection with different polyhedra (*Framing Cyclic Revolutionary Emergence of Opposing Symbols of Identity*, 2017). However, in order to reproduce that configuration so as to explore the great circle process, it proved necessary to construct in 3D a cubic arrangement of dodecagonal faces (right-hand image below).

Animations of variants of truncated cube with dodecagonal faces	Framework of dodecagonal faces
	
Reproduced with permission from <i>The Truncated Cube, with Two Variations Featuring Regular Dodecagons</i> (RobertLovesPi's blog, 2016)	Constructed by use of <i>Stella Polyhedron Navigator</i> and X3D-Edit

Given the importance conventionally accorded to a 12-fold patterns of dialogue, most notably in round tables of the wise and in juries, the question explored by the great circle process was the potentially implied pattern of interactions. Three sets of 12 great circles were therefore applied to the dodecagonal framework. This was done as a possible prelude to introducing a 12-fold helical pattern as discussed in relation to the [Triple Helix model of innovation](#) and suggestions for a Quadruple and Quintuple variants (*Embedding the triple helix in a spherical octahedron, Embedding the quadruple helix in a spherical cube, Embedding the quintuple helix in a spherical dodecahedron and a Pentagramma Mirificum*, 2017).

The more complex variants necessarily address strategic issues of greater complexity (Elias Carayannis and David F. J. Campbell, *Triple Helix, Quadruple Helix and Quintuple Helix and How Do Knowledge, Innovation and the Environment Relate To Each Other?* *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development*, 1, 2012).

As indicated below, the 36 great circles create a complex interweaving pattern in their own right, possibly precluding addition of helical patterns (or implying them in some way). As to any emergent symbol, this might be better understood as taking a 3D form (rather than 2D, as in the cases above). Given that any of the [Kepler-Poinsot star polyhedra](#) could be considered too complex, a better symbol might be the 8-vertex [compound of two tetrahedra](#) (otherwise known as Stella Octangula), and discussed separately with respect to the [Merkabah](#) as a 3D variant of the Star of David (*Framing Global Transformation through the Polyhedral Merkabah: neglected implicit cognitive cycles in viable complex systems*, 2017).

Successive addition of 36 great circles to dodecagonal-faced cubic framework (above-right)					
Application of 1st set of 12 great circles		Application of 2nd set of 12 great circles		Application of 3rd set of 12 great circles	
					
Patterns dynamically combining red / green / blue circles are shown in the animation. Interactive 3D versions: x3d ; wrl/vrml . Video: mp4 (7mb)					

Use of a dodecagonal-faced truncated cube pattern is especially interesting for mapping purposes in that 72 edges are subtended by the 36 great circles. However 8 of these edges are associated with two great circles, offering 64 edges for distinctive mapping. A further 24 edges are excluded from this encirclement. The pattern of 72 edges recalls the traditional symbols articulated as the contrasting qualities of the angelic order on the one hand, and the demonic order on the other, as discussed separately (*Engaging with Hyperreality through Demonique and Angelique? Mnemonic clues to global governance from mathematical theology and hyperbolic tessellation*, 2016; *Variety of System Failures Engendered by Negligent Distinctions: mnemonic clues to 72 modes of viable system failure from a demonic pattern language*, 2016).

Structurally consistent with the 3D structure of the dodecagonal configuration (based on the truncated cube) is that of the drilled truncated cube (discussed above), unique in its pattern of 64 edges (*Proof of concept: use of drilled truncated cube as a mapping framework for 64 elements*, 2015). As discussed there, this offers a 3D mapping surface for the 64 distinctions made by the *I Ching* encoding or the genetic codon combinations.

Interrelating ways of looking at dramatic situations

Ways of looking? The stated purpose of this exercise is to clarify the mish-mash of ways in which dramatic situations may be perceived. In terms of governanc, this was previously explored in *Interrelating Multiple Ways of Looking at a Crisis* (2021). From an aesthetic perspective, that was itself partially inspired by the much-cited poem of [Wallace Stevens](#) (*Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*, 1917). As might be expected, that framing has been variously applied to drama tic forms

- E. M. Lewis, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Play* (*Howround Theatre Commons*, 14 December 2020)
- J.M. Coetzee, *Eight Ways of Looking at Samuel Beckett* (*Literary Hub*, 2 January 2018).
- *Poetic Forms: 13 Ways of Looking at a Poem*(*Merriam-Webster*, 21 Mar 2022;

The exercise above noted, amongst others:

- **Three:** William Foster-Harris (*The Basic Patterns of Plot*, 1959)
- **Six:** Aristotle (*The Poetics*), noting the key elements of drama (plot, character, theme, diction, melody (music-dance, song, rhythm) and spectacle
- **Seven:** Christopher Booker (*The Seven Basic Plots: why we tell stories*, 2005)
- **Nine:** The number of plots identified by John Carroll (*The Western Dreaming*, 2001).
- **Thirteen:** Edmund Wallace Hildick (*Thirteen Types of Narrative: a practical guide on how to tell a story*, 1968).
- **Twenty:** The number of basic, major plots namely those more effective (Ronald Tobias, *20 Master Plots And How to Build Them*, 2003; Tennessee Screenwriters Association, *Twenty Basic Plots*, 2002).

- **Thirty-one:** The set of narrative functions identified by [Vladimir Propp](#) (*Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 1928)
- **Thirty-six:** The number of plots, as identified by Carlo Gozzi and elaborated by Georges Polti (*The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, 1916)
- **Sixty-nine:** An estimate of the total number of basic story lines allegedly identified by [Rudyard Kipling](#) (according to Ronald Tobias), regarded as a major "innovator in the art of the short story"

Related insights? In terms of "ways of looking" how then are these to be interrelated to offer a sense of coherence from the perspective of global governance? **What are the proponents of such different sets "seeing" -- and "ignoring"?** The polyhedral mapping approach could be understood as exemplifying a particular way of seeing -- potentially alienating to those who appreciate drama as a form of embodiment that is not entrapped in an analytic mindset.

As indicated, the polyhedral approach offers a way of mapping different patterns of distinctions. The question is then whether it offers a means of interrelating them. **How does one navigate from a 7-fold pattern to a 36-fold pattern, or to a 20-fold pattern, for example?** A related approach offers some guidance in that respect, namely the study of seven "axes of bias" by the philosopher W. T. Jones (*The Romantic Syndrome: toward a new method in cultural anthropology and the history of ideas*, 1961) -- presented in comparison with other studies of ways of looking (*Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases*, 1993).

Selective attention? From a polyhedral perspective, what is being "seen" by the proponents of each case: the "edges" of a drama, the "vertices", the "axes", or the "faces" -- or the "great circles"? Does a crisis for governance have all of these, with some necessity to interrelate the perspectives they variously offer, as separately explored (*Engaging with Globality -- through cognitive lines, circlets, crowns or holes*, 2009)?

Also of relevance is whether the particular focus on drama precludes due consideration of one or other aspect of the drama, exemplified by the focus of the examples above: "plots", "situations". "story lines", "narratives". How for example do the "seven basic plots: relate to insight into recognition of the "seven elementary catastrophes" articulated from a topological perspective by [René Thom](#) -- who also had an interest in its relevance to dance (*Structural Stability and Morphogenesis*, 1972).

A similar question could be asked of the 20-fold pattern of most efficacious basic plots -- as it might be understood within a more general context (*Requisite 20-fold Articulation of Operative Insights? Checklist of web resources on 20 strategies, rules, methods and insights*, 2018; *Memetic Analogue to the 20 Amino Acids as vital to Psychosocial Life?* 2015).

Stratagems? With respect to the pattern of 36 dramatic situations, and especially from a governance perspective in this period, how might this relate to the Chinese insight into [36 stratagems](#), a unique collection of ancient Chinese proverbs that describe some of the most cunning and subtle war tactics, presented metaphorically as "luring the tiger":

- Yuan Gao: *Lure the Tiger Out of the Mountains: how to apply the 36 stratagems of Ancient China to the Modern World* (1993)
- Ma Xiaochun: *The Thirty-six Stratagems Applied to Go* (1996)
- Harro von Senger: *The 36 Stratagems for Business: achieve your objectives through hidden and unconventional strategies and tactics* (2005)
- Peter Taylor: *The Thirty-Six Stratagems: a modern interpretation of a strategy classic* (2013)

Traditional symbolic articulations? The set of stratagems could be understood as an instance of a traditional articulation of a 36-fold pattern. In addition to that Chinese example, others are noted by *Wikipedia*:

- Jewish tradition holds that the number 36 has had special significance since the beginning of time:
 - According to the [Midrash](#), the light created by God on the first day of creation shone for exactly 36 hours; it was replaced by the light of the Sun.
 - The [Torah](#) commands 36 times to love, respect and protect the stranger.
 - In every generation it is claimed that there are 36 [righteous people](#) (the "*Lamed Vav Tzadikim*") in whose merit the world continues to exist.
 - In the modern celebration of [Hanukkah](#), 36 candles are kindled (Pinchas Winston, *The Wonderful World of Thirty-Six*, 2016)
- In one Maori legend, concerning the creation of mankind, 36 gods took active part in assembling the various parts of the first human before the god Tane breathed life into her.
- In [Shaivism](#), the [36 tattvas](#) describe the Absolute, its internal aspects and the creation including living beings, down to the physical reality.
- In [Jain](#) philosophy, the responsibility of spiritual welfare of the entire Jain community rests on the shoulders of spiritual leaders -- [Acharyas](#) -- recognized as having 36 primary attributes
- According to the *Rig Veda*, 36 qualities of [Agni](#) (as the fire god of Hinduism) are distinguished (Umakant Nadkar, *36 Qualities of Agni according to the Rig Veda, The Eye Opener*, 19 September 2020)
- In Egyptian religion, the 36 [decans](#) are a series of gods presiding over the degrees of the zodiac and the fixed stars.

Less evident are the qualitative insights associated with the other traditional articulations. One approach to a particular tradition, with an extensive reference to specific films, is that of [Mikel J Koven](#) (*An Ethnography of Seeing: a proposed methodology for the ethnographic study of popular cinema*, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1999). This makes no reference to sets of plots or "dramatic situations" however.

Characteristics of excellence? The following examples result from web searches as a preliminary exercise in clarifying the possibility of underlying qualitative commonalities distinguished by some constituencies in a 36-fold set:

- *Development of human potential:*

- *Alcoholics Anonymous: The 36 Principles of Alcoholics Anonymous*. Composed of 12 steps, 12 traditions and 12 concepts for world service
- *Health-related quality of life*: The *Short Form-36 Health Survey* is a commonly used technique to measure the Health Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) in chronic diseases. It is a 36-item, patient-reported survey of patient health
- *Post traumatic stress disorder*: Susan Anderson: *36 Characteristics of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder of Abandonment (Abandonment)*, 1 June 2020)
- *Work ethic*: Perry Pascella: *The New Achievers: creating a modern work ethic*, 1984) concludes with a 36-point agenda for management action to help people develop their full human potential
- *Thriving: 36 Ways to Thrive -- Find happiness (Thrive)*
- *Interpersonal influence*: Deborah Anne Newton, *Influence strategies used by relational partners during disagreements* (University of Arizona). It is argued that in close relationships, influence is used to attain instrumental goals, manage the relationship, and maintain desired identities. Six strategic categories, involving 36 tactics, were created to assess influence during the videotaped disagreements of fifty couples
- *Self-help*: Hilary White: *36 ways to change your life for the better*, *Business Insider*, 28 March 2016)
- *Love*: Charles O. Prince: *36 Ways to Love* (Cathedral Central Books. 2005)
- *Character*:
 - *Arranged marriage*: 36 qualities of potential partners are matched to determine the appropriateness of an arranged marriage. The tradition of matching *kundalis* or *janam patrikas* before marriage is an integral feature of Hindu marriages (*36 Characteristics that are matched in a traditional horoscope match*, *Tuvi365*, 2022)
 - *Human character: The 36 Qualities of Character* (Character Council)
- *Life style*:
 - *Life roles: The 36 Roles: Genetic Continuity and the Mastery of Lines (Human Design System)*
 - *Resistance*: Anthony Alvarado: *DIY Resistance: 36 Ways to Fight Back!* (Seven Stories Press, 2018)
 - *Living differently*: Chris Guillebeau: *36 Ways to Live Differently (Art of Non-Conformity)*
- *Conceptualising*:
 - John Spacey: *36 Ways of Thinking (Simplicable)*, 3 October 2020)
 - James Paul Gee: *36 Learning Principles (Education Bookcast)*. Donald Clark: *36 learning principles in games*
 - Henry Wansbrough: *36 Days and 36 Ways: daily meditations from Advent to Epiphany* (Catholic Truth Society, 2017)
- *Declarations of 36 points*:
 - *SAARC leaders adopt 'Kathmandu Declaration'* at 18th Summit (November 2014)
 - *The Warrenton Declaration on Medical Mandates, Biblical Ethics, and Authority; The Warrenton Declaration and Civil Authorities* (13 August 2021)
 - *Convention on the Right to Development*, presented in draft form on 20 January 2020 by the UN Working Group on the Right to Development, with an operational part consisting of five parts with a total 36 articles (*Advance Edited Version*).
 - Declaration established by defense ministers of Latin American countries in response to the need to foment cooperation between countries in the face of "diverse and complex multinational threats and risks" (*U.S. stokes LatAm's anti-terror support*, *UPI*, 19 November 2011)
 - Establishment of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) in 2018 as a Specialised Agency of the African Union (AU) articulated by 36 Articles in the AMA Draft Treaty (*Draft Treaty to establish AMA in 2018*, *Africa Health*, 18 July 2017)
 - *Account of the 36 Articles of the Treaty of Peace, at Reswick*, (1697)
- *Norms and principles*:
 - *Fiscal transparency*: The IMF's *Fiscal Transparency Code* is the international standard for disclosure of information about public finances. The Code comprises a set of 36 principles.
 - *Hazardous waste*: Circular, consisting of 36 articles divided into six Chapters (FAO / FAOLEX / ECOLEX, *Circular No. 36/2015/TT-BTNMT on management of hazardous wastes*, 2015)
- *World views*:
 - *Dimensions of the universe*: Mind map of *36 Dimensions of the Universe*
 - *Feng shui compass*: Song Shuang Yuan: *36 phases of Luoqing with illustrations* (Inner Mongolia peoples Publishing House, 2010)
- *Art (installations)*:
 - *36 Views of Mount Fuji*, a famous series of prints by Japanese ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai
 - Joanna Szumiec: *"36 Insights": a follow up to Joseph Campbell's "Hero with a Thousand Faces"*.
 - Creative Climates, with 36 pieces on display at this conceptual art installation (Margaret Rhodes, *36 Ways To Reconsider The Weather*, *FastCompany*, 4 September 2014)

Current implications? Arguably it is somewhat curious that the articulations of western modernity have focused on the dramatic distinctions so widely explored in the media. Mathematics has identified a so-called **36 officer problem**, to which no solution has been found. 36 is the number of possible outcomes (not summed) in the roll of two distinct dice (Francis J. McHugh, *U.S. Navy Fundamentals of War Gaming*, Skyhorse Publishing, 2013)

To the extent that drama and stratagems lend themselves to analysis in terms of **game theory** (especially given its relevance to global strategy), it could be assumed that the **transactional analysis** of Eric Berne (*Games People Play: the psychology of human relationships*, 1964) would highlight a distinctive set of games. This does not appear to be the case. Alternatively, from a game perspective (and the existence of comprehensive **lists of games**), it might be expected that **metagame analysis** would recognize a distinctive set. Preliminary explorations to that end are presented separately (*Playing the Great Game with Intelligence: authority versus the people*, 2013; *Towards a Periodic Table of Games: avoiding decision-making paralysis*, 2006; *Varieties of Games -- and their role as memetic containers*,

2004).

Missing is an appropriate confrontation between the "36 dramatic situations" and the other instances cited, most notably the "36 stratagems" -- given their respective relevance to global governance.

Polyhedral clues to the dynamics of relating disparate ways of looking

The commentaries on the contrasting ways of looking at dramatic situations and plots is seemingly unchallenged by their relationship, if any. The tendency is to imply that any set of ways is a matter of convenience and that their disparate nature does not call for attention. This seems less than appropriate in the case of their potential relevance to the crises of global governance. Whereas drama can cultivate the continuing repetition of any plot, and the learnings that may be repeatedly enjoyed or inferred, this is less than justified in the case of global governance faced with the adage of [George Santayana](#): *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it*.

This suggests that there is a peculiar challenge to the manner in which drama is "re-membered". As indicated above, this suggests that **global governance is faced with a question of how memory is organized**, especially collective memory. How are larger sets of disparate insights held in memory, how may such retention fail, and what are the consequences for governance? Curiously the question is also relevant to computer memory, as separately discussed ([Framing Cognitive Space for Higher Order Coherence: toroidal interweaving from I Ching to supercomputers and back?](#) 2019).

The polyhedra used above for mapping sets of dramatic situations merit juxtaposition to highlight their geometric relationships. These suggest geometrical transformations between them which may well have cognitive implications for transitions between ways of seeing, most obviously between a 7-fold pattern, to a 20-fold pattern, or to a 36-fold pattern, for example. This possibility can be highlighted by the juxtaposition of the properties of the polyhedra.

Polyhedra referenced above as mapping devices for 36 dramatic situations			
	F	E	V
Stella octangula	24	36	14
Stella octangula (dual)	14	36	24
Truncated cube	14	36	24
Truncated cube (dual)	24	36	14
Leonardo octahedron	48	96	36
Leonardo octahedron (dual)	36	96	48
3-frequency tetrahedral geodesic sphere	36	54	20
3-frequency tetrahedral geodesic sphere (dual)	20	54	36

Especially evident is the role of 14 as an organizing principle, separately discussed with respect to the coherence offered by Shakespeare's sonnets ([Pattern of 14-foldness as an Implicit Organizing Principle for Governance?](#) 2021; [Variety of Rhyming Patterns in Standard 14-line Sonnets](#), 2021). Whilst there is no 14-fold articulation of dramatic situations, emphasis is given to seven basic plots. Understood as "axes of bias" in ways of looking, the 14 extremes noted in Jones' exploration offer a comprehensible bridge from 7 to 14. The question is then what cognitive bridge is potentially available from 14 to more complex articulations, notably 20 and 36.

Significant in this respect are the transformations enabled through the [cuboctahedron](#) as an intermediary form, termed by Buckminster Fuller the vector equilibrium. This can be transformed into an [icosahedron](#), [octahedron](#), and [tetrahedron](#) by folding along the diagonals of its square sides. A more systematic approach to the transformation between polyhedra is offered through the [Conway polyhedron notation](#), as discussed separately ([Cognitive implications of operational modification of polyhedra -- "global tiling"](#), 2021). Such insights suggest the possibility of a systematic understanding of transformation of dramatic situations.

Transformations of the cuboctahedron as an intermediary mapping device for dramatic situations			
	F	E	V
cuboctahedron	14	24	12
icosahedron	20	30	12
octahedron	8	12	6
tetrahedron	4	6	4

The forms above indicate -- via the 14-fold -- the possible mapping relationships between:

- 6-fold: Kurt Vonnegut's 6 story archetypes
- 12-fold: The Hero's Journey in 12 stages
- 20-fold: Ronald Tobias's 20 story archetypes

The argument can be developed further -- beyond the flexible organization offered by the cuboctahedron -- given insights into the special role of opposition both in drama and in strategic confrontation. Drama is especially characterized by opposition, to the point that many articulations emphasize the extent to which distinctive situations are dramatically paired. Of particular interest is the relation between the cuboctahedron and the polyhedral forms through which oppositional logic and geometry is now studied:

- Fabien Schang: [A Formal Semantics of International Relations](#),
- Fabien Schang: [Abstract Logic of Oppositions, Logic and Logical Philosophy](#), 2013
- Lorenz Demey and Hans Smessaert: [Logical and Geometrical Distance in Polyhedral Aristotelian Diagrams in Knowledge](#)

Representation (*Symmetry*, 9, 2017, 204)

- Alessio Moretti: *The Geometry of Logical Opposition* (University of Neuchâtel, 2009)
- Hans Smessaert: *On the 3D Visualisation of Logical Relations* (*Logica Universalis*, 3, 2009, 2).
- *Oppositional Logic as Comprehensible Key to Sustainable Democracy: configuring patterns of anti-otherness* (2018)
- *Antagonistic Dualities: polarization and paradox* (1983).

Polyhedral mapping of opposition in dramatic situations in the light of oppositional logic/geometry			
	F	E	V
cuboctahedron	14	24	12
cuboctahedron dual (rhombic dodecahedron)	12	24	14

It is the dual of the cuboctahedron which is favoured in depiction of the patterns of logical opposition. Of some relevance is the theoretical reduction from the 16-fold mapping of the Boolean logical connectives (of relevance to oppositional logic) to 14 in order to enable representation in 3D -- discussed separately as *Questionable confusion in configuring strategic frameworks: "fudging" self-reflexivity?* (*Global Coherence by Interrelating Disparate Strategic Patterns Dynamically: topological interweaving of 4-fold, 8-fold, 12-fold, 16-fold and 20-fold in 3D*, 2019). Similar confusion is evident in the choice of 17 Sustainable Development Goals by the UN, where 16 would have enabled greater memorability (*Higher dimensional coherence of SDGs implied by a set of 17 4-dimensional polyhedra?* 2021).

As noted above, an intriguing question is **what is readily seen or ignored in configuring dramatic situations or stratagems**. Is there a problematic potential for axial-bias, for edge-bias, or for facial-bias, as highlighted by any preferred polyhedral mapping? Is there a bias in distinguishing a smaller or larger number of elements? Such questions effectively give focus as to whether it is "plots", "storylines", "archetypes", "elements" or "situations" which are preferentially perceived. The tables above notably highlight a 12-fold pattern characteristic of the distinction of *The 12 Dramatic Elements* (*Drama Teacher*, 20 February 2008). They also indicate a relationship with *30 Powerful Elements of Drama* (*Drama Teacher*, 4 March 2022). The 12-fold pattern is especially characteristic of strategic preferences:

- *Eliciting a 12-fold Pattern of Generic Operational Insights: recognition of memory constraints on collective strategic comprehension* (2011)
- *Checklist of 12-fold Principles, Plans, Symbols and Concepts* (2011)
- *Reframing Strategic Dilemmas through 12 Modes* (2009).

The dramatic situations faced by global governance suggest that it is indeed *Time for Provocative Mnemonic Aids to Systemic Connectivity* (2018). The latter notes the manner in which the 13 Archimedean polyhedra are configured together in a closest packing pattern, suggesting a relation to the 13 ways of looking explored by *Wallace Hildick* (*Thirteen Types of Narrative: a practical guide on how to tell a story*, 1968).

Memorability, pattern conviction and cognitive "goodness of fit"?

"Goodness of fit"? The exercise above frames the question as to whether any particular pattern of numbers is especially meaningful in relation to the significance with which it is variously associated. The focus here is the qualitative characteristics which have been associated with a 36-fold pattern, most obviously that of dramatic associations, especially from a Western perspective.. Somewhat surprisingly, that same pattern features in a fundamental manner in the traditions of other cultures.

Such considerations can be dismissed as coincidental and the consequence of arbitrary selection of factors -- as possibly suggested by the other patterns by which plots and narratives have been ordered. The assumption here is that the variety of instances through which a 36-fold pattern is favoured merits consideration as an indicator of a pattern that is experienced as ordering satisfactorily an array of elusive qualities. The pattern seemingly evokes a degree of conviction in relation to those qualities.

The conviction could be assumed to arise from some sense of a cognitive "goodness of fit" (Yori Gidron, *Goodness of Fit Hypothesis. Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine*, 2013). This term refers to the effectiveness of matching (fitting) a coping strategy to a situation's level of controllability, in relation to adaptation to stress. Whilst "goodness of fit" is primarily cited in relation to modelling of statistical data, the term is also used in a psychological context. More generally it could be understood as the sense of an explanation that "works", whatever that may be held to mean.

Another term for "goodness of fit" may be appropriateness, and the challenges it poses for comprehension (*Comprehension of Appropriateness*, 1986). It is appropriate to ask whether there is any concern for the "goodness of fit" of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals to the challenges of global governance -- most notably with respect to their memorability as a set and its uptake in practice (*Systemic Coherence of the UN's 17 SDGs as a Global Dream*, 2021).

Memorability? Another response to the argument for the arbitrary ordering of patterns (in the instances cited) is that it may prove to be the case that the memorability of patterns, especially more complex patterns, is enhanced and facilitated by the number of factors defining the N-foldness of the pattern. In the case of 36, as composite factors these are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 18, and 36; as prime factors this reduces to $2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3$ (or $2^2 \times 3^2$).

These arguments are separately developed (*Memorability, Mnemonics, Maths and Governance: memory enhancement ensuring strategic credibility*, 2022).

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