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Second-order Dialogue and Higher Order Discourse for the Future

Potential implications of second-order cybernetics and higher-order communication possibilities

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Introduction

The importance of [second-order cybernetics](#) -- for technical understanding and control of complex systems -- has long been recognized.

It is a form of cybernetics in which "the role of the observer is appreciated and acknowledged rather than disguised, as had become traditional in western science". It was developed between the late 1960s and mid 1970s by [Heinz von Foerster](#) and others ([Margaret Mead](#), *The Cybernetics of Cybernetics*, *Purposive Systems*, 1968; [Heinz von Foerster](#), *The Cybernetics of Cybernetics*, 1974; [Magoroh Maruyama](#), *The Second Cybernetics: deviation-amplifying mutual causal processes*, *American Scientist*, 51, 1963, 2).

The focus in what follows is on how those insights might apply to the processes of dialogue, discourse and conversation. The assumption is that it is one thing to develop a conceptual framework for the role of the observer in systems control. However this tends in practice to avoid attention to the matter of how such insights apply to dialogue itself, and the role of the participants experiencing it.

Since calls for dialogue are frequently made in the face of dangerously conflictual situations, of particular concern are assumptions made regarding the quality and adequacy of dialogue associated with those situations, as may be variously discussed ([Challenging impoverishment of conventional discourse](#), 2016).

The question is somewhat naive since it might be assumed that it is effectively addressed in the literature relating to meta-discourse and meta-dialogue, or in any consideration of self-reflexive dialogue. Rather than such academic concerns, the focus here is however on the insights in play in active participation in dialogue in contrast to external observation and reporting of it. In particular, how might such insights and "ways of looking" be recognized and valued in collective debate -- most obviously in legislative assemblies considering matters of global import ([Questionable adequacy of "dialogue" as practiced?](#) 2022)

On the other hand, it could be argued that participants in any form of negotiation, whether political or business-related, must necessarily engage -- in some manner -- in reframing the process in which they are engaged. This would be done such as to recognize strategic opportunities for playing its development to gain an advantage -- or to recognize the failure of a particular discourse modality. This implies a developed perspective on that dialogue, presumably meriting recognition as a "second-order" perspective.

In this light it might then be asked whether there are even "higher" cybernetic orders of discourse in which some have the capacity to

engage -- as with the most persuasive and skilled negotiators. With dialogue potentially to be understood as a form of game, how might those with higher order skills engage in the process? Rather than seeking to gain advantage as in any binary competition, would subtler concerns then take precedence? Clearly of significance to future global governance is the potential of such elusive modalities in response to the dynamics of a chaotic context.

There is also the question of whether there is a general trend towards "meta-perspectives" -- somewhat ironically highlighted by a preoccupation with meta-data. This could be understood as a psychosocial analogue to the increasing focus on humanity's potential future shift to outer space and distant planets -- a mass migration of humanity to a new cognitive frontier (*Future Global Exodus to the Metasphere*, 2022). Such a shift may well be enabled by artificial intelligence, as can be speculatively explored (*Use of ChatGPT to Clarify Possibility of Dialogue of Higher Quality*, 2023).

Potentially even more intriguing is the challenge offered by contact with hypothetical extraterrestrials. It is possible that their most remarkable characteristic may take the form of a modality of dialogue which would be experienced as extremely elusive by conventional human norms -- or too readily "understood" through simplistic human conventions. That modality might explain the **Fermi paradox** regarding the apparent absence of ET contact with humanity -- framed by them as committed to an overly primitive style of communication.

Misleading preoccupation with discourse of a second-order?

There is no lack of preoccupation with "communication" reframed by the prefix "meta", namely communication in some form about communication. It is useful to note such initiatives, as variously defined, **in order to distinguish them from the capacity for self-reflexive discourse and the engagement in that process**. A summary is presented separately (*Overview of a variety of approaches to dialogue and conversation*, 2021). The concern here is to acknowledge that recognition of any "meta-perspective" **about discourse** does not constitute the engagement of such a perspective **during the process of discourse**.

Meta-discourse: As noted by Ken Hyland:

Metadiscourse is the commentary on a text made by its producer in the course of speaking or writing and it is a widely used term in current discourse analysis and language teaching. In fact, it is perhaps now one of the most commonly employed methods for approaching specialist written texts, so that a simple *Google* search produces over 154,000 hits, *Google Scholar* returns some 185,000 documents containing the term and the *Web of Science* encompasses over 270 papers on the topic. (*Metadiscourse: what is it and where is it going?* *Journal of Pragmatics*, 113, May 2017)

Such comments include:

- Richard Nordquist: *What is Metadiscourse?* (*ThoughtCo*, 23 August 2018)
- Rachael Cayley: *Metadiscourse* (*Explorations of Style*, 31 January 2017)
- Ken Hyland and Polly Tse: *Metadiscourse in Academic Writing: a reappraisal* (*Applied Linguistics*, 25, 2004, 2)
- Eric Heinze: *Principles for a Meta-Discourse of Liberal Rights: the example of the European Convention on Human Rights*, *Indiana International and Comparative Law Review* 1999, 319
- Simone Teufel: *Meta-Discourse Markers and Problem-Structuring in Scientific Articles*
- Lisa Wade: *The Contemporary Meta-Discourse of Politics: Stewart's Rally for Sanity*, *Sociological Images*, 31 October 2010
- Brian Donovan: *Advice to College Writers: On Meta-Discourse*
- Annelie Åde: *Metadiscourse in Academic Communication: expanding the scope from visible to less visible genres* (Dalarna University, 2014)

Understood in this way, meta-discourse can readily be understood as commentary on discourse -- after the fact and subsequent to the process. Less evident is when the term might be interpreted as a perspective embodied in the process -- and how this might be experienced by participants, especially in the immediacy of verbal exchange in contrast with "arms-length" commentary on written text.

Meta-discussion: According to *Wikipedia*:

The term **meta-discussion** means a discussion whose subject is a discussion. Meta-discussion explores such issues as the style of a discussion, its participants, the setting in which the discussion occurs, and the relationship of the discussion to other discussions on the same or different topics. It is one of many terms based on the inferred meaning of the "meta-" prefix. The etymology for the prefix dates back to use of *Metaphysics* as the title of the treatise by Aristotle that came after his works on physics in the traditional ordering of his books. The fundamental meaning of the prefix in Greek is simply "after." The modern, inferred meaning of a higher-order, self-referential consideration of the nature of an activity—rather than actual, first-level participation in the activity—has led to many neologisms such as meta-wiki.

Of particular relevance to the preoccupation here is the manner in which participants may "retreat" to meta-discussion, as variously argued by Beth Innocenti (*Demanding a Halt to Metadiscussions*, *Argumentation*, 36, 2022; *Halting Retreats to Metadialogues*, *Evidence, persuasion and diversity* 2020).

Intriguingly consideration is given to the process of deleting "meta-discussion" in the editorial process of *Wikipedia* (*Delete Metadiscussion*). This is defined as the practice of deleting any discussion on a page relating to whether or not the page should exist. This is reminiscent of the practice in English tort law where a **super-injunction** is a type of injunction that prevents publication of information that is in issue and also prevents the reporting of the fact that the injunction exists at all.

Meta-dialogue: It is less evident whether and how "meta-discourse" can be meaningfully distinguished from terms such as "meta-dialogue" or "meta-discussion", as exemplified by the following:

- Jürgen Hargens: *Meta-dialogue* (*Contemporary Family Therapy*, December 1994)
- John Burgoyne: *Learning from Experience: from individual discovery to meta-dialogue via the evolution of transitional myths* (*Personnel Review*, 24, 1995, 6)
- Jakob Landesberger and Ute Ehrlich: *Finding a Meta-dialogue Strategy for Multi-intent Spoken Dialogue Systems* (*Proceedings, CHIRA 2019*)
- Lone Frølund and Jan Nielsen: *The Reflective Meta-dialogue in Psychodynamic Supervision* (*Nordic Psychology*, 61, 2009, 4)
- Peter Houtlosser¹ and Jan Albert van Laar¹: *Metadialogues: Krabbe's Immanent Dialectic* (*Argumentation*, 21, 3, 2007)

Meta-language and meta-argument: A perspective which is more analytical and less participative is implied by the following, or the initiatives of the [International Society for the Study of Argumentation](#):

- Maurice A. Finocchiaro: *Arguments, Meta-arguments, and Metadialogues: a reconstruction of Krabbe, Govier, and Woods* (*Argumentation*, 21, 2007, 3)
- A. Jaworski, et al (Eds.): *Metalinguage: social and ideological perspectives* (Mouton de Gruyter, 2004)
- J. Verschueren: *Language on language: toward metapragmatic universals* (*IPrA Papers in Pragmatics*, 3, 1989)

Meta-communication: Whilst this may be readily conflated with meta-discourse and the like, it also suggests the extent to which communication of significance may be associated with what might be understood as "meta-data", namely content implied by the communication process:

- Kristin Smith-Crowe and Teng Zhang: *On taking the theoretical substance of outcomes seriously: a meta-conversation* Cambridge University Press, 2016
- Herbert Mück: *About the art of "meta-conversations"*
- *Metaconversation Maps*
- Melanie Meltzer and Mollie Nisen: *Meta-Conversation: an exercise in whimsical and critical facilitation* (2014)
- Daniel Robichaud, Hélène Giroux and James R. Taylor: *The Metaconversation: the recursive property of language as a key to organizing* (*The Academy of Management Review*, 29, 2004, 4)
- James R. Taylor and Daniel Robichaud: *Management as Metaconversation: the search for closure* (*Interacting and Organizing*, 2007)
- Simon Torp: *Authenticity in Management Metaconversations* (*Journal of Communication Management*, 14, 2010, 3)
- Pat Akey and Brian Weshler: *Metaconversation as a Vehicle of Dominant Logic Formation: the case of affirmative action* (*SSRN*, 19 Nov 2008)

Meta-talk: This term suggests greater emphasis on the participative dimension of communication:

- Debra Myhill and Ruth Newman: *Metatalk: Enabling metalinguistic discussion about writing* (*International Journal of Educational Research*, 80, 2016)
- *What is "Metatalk," and Why Do It?*

Meta-logic and oppositional logic: The [metatheory](#) of logic which can be considered fundamental to discourse is termed [metallogic](#). Whereas logic studies how logical systems can be used to construct valid and sound arguments, metallogic studies the properties of logical systems. Logic concerns the truths that may be derived using a logical system; metallogic concerns the truths that may be derived *about* the formal languages and systems that are used to express truths.

In metallogic, formal languages are sometimes called *object languages*. The language used to make statements about an object language is called a [metalanguage](#). This distinction is a key difference between logic and metallogic. While logic deals with *proofs in a formal system*, expressed in some formal language, metallogic deals with *proofs about a formal system* which are expressed in a metalanguage about some object language.

Of related interest, and of particular relevance to discourse, is oppositional logic (Guoping Du, et al, [Oppositional Logic, Logic, Rationality, and Interaction](#), 2009). This is an extended system of classical propositional logic. The associated [square of opposition](#) is a diagram representing the relations between the four basic categorical propositions. It is held to be a general framework for cognition, as explored in a continuing series of [international congresses](#). Oppositional logic is at the heart of both narrative progression and semantic, thematic, or symbolic content. As the [semiotic square](#) it has proven to be an influential concept not only in narrative theory. It is a tool used in structural analysis of the relationships between semiotic signs through the opposition of concepts.

As clarified by Daniel Chandler ([Semiotics: the basics](#), EPDF, Routledge, 2002);

Derrida demonstrated that within the oppositional logic of binarism neither of the terms (or concepts) makes sense without the other. This is what he calls 'the logic of supplementarity': the 'secondary' term which is represented as 'marginal' and external is in fact constitutive of the 'primary' term and essential to it (Derrida 1967). The unmarked term is defined by what it seeks to suppress. In the pairing of oppositions or contraries,

Oppositional logic has itself been contrasted with co-genetic logic "in the Tensegrity Self" (Giuseppina Marsico and Luca Tateo, [Borders, Tensegrity and Development in Dialogue, Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science](#), 51, 2017, 2). In offering insights into configuring patterns of anti-otherness, the meta-perspective is especially relevant to an understanding of meta-communication ([Oppositional Logic as Comprehensible Key to Sustainable Democracy](#), 2018).

Self-reflexivity in contrast to discourse of any higher order?

Use of the prefix "meta" may well imply a high degree of self-reference, although this dimension would seem to be down-played in the analytical approach to dialogue, as in the extensive literature on [discourse analysis](#) and [dialogical analysis](#). The first is the primary focus of [DiscourseNet](#) as an initiative of the International Association for Discourse Studies. The second refers to a way of analyzing human communication which is based on the theory of [dialogism](#). A distinction can potentially be made between "reflective" discourse (as discussed below) and any form of "self-reflective" discourse, which may simply imply discourse about themselves by those engaged in it, as is especially evident in the case of creative writers.

Self-reflexive discourse: A particular focus is given to the role of the media in cultivating self-reflexive discourse. Potential conflation with the above perspectives is however variously suggested by:

- Gloria Withalm: *Types of Self-reflexive Discourse in Film (Perception and Self-Consciousness in the Arts and Sciences)*, International Conference under the auspices of the IASS-AIS, 1995)
- Gloria Withalm: *The Self-reflexive Screen: outlines of a comprehensive model (Self-Reference in the Media)*, 2007)
- Maria Poulak: *Self-reflexivity, Description, and the Boundaries of Narrative Cinema (Cinema et Cie)*, 12, 2012, 18)
- Anna Mauranen: *Metadiscourse as Discourse Reflexivity (Reflexively Speaking)*, 2023)
- [Self-reflexive Meta-Narratives](#) (National Chengchi University)

Self-reflexive dialogue: Again, potential conflation with the above perspectives may be variously suggested by:

- *Self-Reflexive Dialogue between the Authors: curating this piece (Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics)*
- David Sapto Adi Guttormsen: *A Self-reflexive Account: thinking with the 'thinker' against the 'thinker' (Constructing 'China': culture and US think tank narratives: a Bourdieusian investigation)*, University of Warwick, 2014)
- Stephen Proce Jr: *Exploring Audience Responses to Self-Reflexivity in Television Narratives* (University of Missouri-Columbia, 2011)
- K. Johnson: Self-reflexiveness in therapy and education (*Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 4, 1979)
- D. Maas: Reflections on self-reflexiveness in literature (*ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 60, 2003)
- David Higgins: *Researcher learning through social poetics: self-reflexivity within a dialogical framework of methodological practice (RENT XXXVI Conference)*, 2022)
- Bjørn K. Myskja and Alexander Myklebus: *Socratic Dialogue on Responsible Innovation: a methodological experiment in empirical ethics (Etikk i praksis: Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics)*, 17, 2023, 1)

Self-reflexive conversation and self-reflexive communication: References include:

- Isobel Anderson and Tullis Rennie: *Thoughts in the Field: 'Self-reflexive narrative' in field recording (Organised Sound)*, 21, 2016, 3)
- Poul Erik Flyvholm Jørgensen: *Institutional Identity as Discourse: explaining what we are made of. (I-LanD International Journal)*, Bind 2019, 1)

Critical dialogue and its variants

There is continuing reference to the value of "critical thinking" -- if not its necessity (*Appreciating the value of critical thinking in time of crisis*, 2021). Less evident is the relation between critical thinking and recognition of critical factors engendering crises (*Critical Factors for the Long-term Survival of Humanity*, 2000).

Ironically the absence of such thinking during the recent pandemic crisis is increasingly remarked -- with recognition of the extent to which it has been repressed (Blanca Puig, et al, *"Fake News" or Real Science? Critical Thinking to Assess Information on COVID-19*, *Frontiers*, 3 May 2021; Stephen J. Sterlitz, et al, *Promoting Critical Thinking during a Pandemic*, *Journal of Dental Education*, 85, 2021, 1). There is a case for recognizing the distinction from specious argument and "uncritical thinking" (*Web resources: Critical thinking vs. Specious arguments*, 2001; *Mapping the system of uncritical thinking?* 2016). As a form of meta-communication, it is also appropriate to recognize how vital critical thinking tends to be repressed under conditions of crisis.

Reference to "critical" can be understood as implying a form of "meta-perspective". There is then the concern with enabling "critical dialogue" on highly controversial questions, as separately argued (*Guidelines for Critical Dialogue between Worldviews*, 2006)

- Mary Jane Collier and Brandi Lawless: *Critically Reflexive Dialogue and Praxis: academic/practitioner reflections throughout a formative evaluation of Circles (Journal of Applied Communication Research)*, 44, 2016 2)
- J. A. Lucy (Ed.): *Reflexive Language: Reported speech and metapragmatics*(Cambridge University Press, 1993)
- Suresh Raval: *Metacriticism* (University of Georgia Press, 1981).

Reflective dialogue: This is presented by David J Voelker as:

Reflective dialogue is a special kind of discussion that can be used strategically in the classroom to build community, expand the capacity for listening, and cultivate individual reflection... A reflective dialogue opens space for students to work through the intellectual and emotional implications of the content that they are studying, without the pressure for everyone in the room to arrive at the same destination. Reflection (with listening) can be especially productive when students are confronting difficult issues. (*Reflective Dialogue*)

Voelker refers to related resources in the form of:

- [Reflective Discussion: Why, Who, When, and How](#) (for facilitators) (shareable PDF)
- [General Principles for Participating in Reflective Discussion](#) (1-page, shareable PDF)
- [Annotated Resource Guide on Reflective Dialogue and Transformative Education](#) (shareable PDF)
- [The Center for Civic Reflection on Reflective Discussion](#)

Self-criticism: Considerable importance has been variously and controversially attached to the process and role of [self-criticism](#), most notably as cultivated by [Marxism-Leninism](#), and clarified by Joseph Stalin (*Against Vulgarising the Slogan of Self-Criticism*, 26 June 1928).

Such criticism is potentially to be understood as a form of meta-communication. In psychology it is typically studied and discussed as a negative personality trait in which a person has a disrupted self-identity. A valuable exception is offered by Paul B. Woodruff (*Self-Ridicule: Socratic Wisdom, Laughter, Humor, and Comedy in Ancient Philosophy*, 2019).

It is of course remarkable that many in positions of authority exhibit little capacity to adopt a critical perspective -- a meta-perspective (?) -- with regard to their own behaviour and failure to learn from strategic disasters in which they have been complicit.

Higher orders of self-reference from a cybernetic perspective

With respect to any sense of "higher order", potentially offering a meta-perspective, there is clearly an extensive literature on different understandings and practices of initiation (*Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being born again*, 2004; *Web Resources on Being Born Again*, 2004). These offer many contrasting efforts to distinguish degrees of "enlightenment".

Of particular interest is that articulated in terms of degrees of self-reference in the light of insights into the cybernetics of a viable system (Maurice Yolles and Gerhard Fink, *A General Theory of Generic Modelling and Paradigm Shifts, Kybernetes*, 2015; Maurice I. Yolles, *Knowledge Cybernetics: a metaphor for post-normal science, Cybernetics and Systems Theory in Management*, 2010). Four of these cybernetic orders are discussed separately (*Consciously Self-reflexive Global Initiatives*, 2007).

An interpretation of such distinctions is provided in the discussion of Cadell Last (*Towards a Big Historical Understanding of the Symbolic-Imaginary*, 2017; *Global Brain Singularity: universal history, future evolution and humanity's dialectical horizon*, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2018):

- externally observed objects are modelled with an observer's noumenal view and voice that is systematically excluded from the "objective" model of the world to create the effect that the "true natural world" in-itself is looking and speaking at the subject [eg science]
- observer's noumenal view and voice of externally observed objects is included in the model thus creatively relativizing the observer's "objective" world model to the subjective locus producing it in order to study its effects in the ideational field structuring the motion of subject-object [eg deconstruction]
- observer of externally observed objects reflectively incorporates its own and subjective-multiplicities as a (virtual, estimate) object of analysis structured by an a priori frame of desire that unconsciously filters orientation, intervention, and understanding of subject-object entanglement [eg psychoanalysis]
- observer reflectively incorporates noumenal view and voice model(s) structured by a priori frames of desire as capable of overdetermining the virtually narrated images of externally observed objects ("the world") through transcendental reflection and creation [eg historical subjectivity]
- observer identifies the virtual ideational field composed of a multiplicity of self-relating and desiring world views and voice models as a universal agency ("scmiosphere") in-itself with asymmetrical and irreversible reflective and creative autonomy structuring the motion of subject-object entanglement [eg history itself]

A valuable distinction is argued by Hugo F. Alrøe (*Three Levels of Semiosis: Three Kinds of Kinds*):

There are three, and only three, levels of semiosis: non-or proto-semiotic processes without representation, such as physical or causal processes; semiotic processes with representation, such as the processes of life and cognition; and second-order semiotic processes with representation of representation, such as self-awareness and self-reflexive communication. This leads to the distinction between not two, but three kinds of kinds: indifferent, adaptive and reflexive kinds, of which the last two hitherto have not been clearly distinguished. (*Cybernetics and Human Knowing*, 23, 2016, 2)

Of relevance to any meta-perspective from the perspective of logic is the distinction made in the [calculus of indications](#) of [George Spencer-Brown](#) (*The Laws of Form*, 1969). This is renowned as a formal exercise to separate what are known as algebras of logic from the subject of logic, and to re-align them with mathematics. The result is the explicit, and extremely elegant logical re-integration of the observer -- effectively the decision-maker. His final chapter, entitled "reentry into the form" commences with: *The conception of the form lies in the desire to distinguish. Granted this desire, we cannot escape the form, although we can see it any way we please* (p. 69). It ends with:

An observer, since he distinguishes the space he occupies, is also a mark... In this conception a distinction drawn in any space is a mark distinguishing the space. Equally and conversely, any mark in a space draws a distinction. We see now that **the first distinction, the mark, and the observer are not only interchangeable, but, in the form, identical.** (p. 76) [*emphasis added*]

Application of meta-communication insights in practice

A principal concern is whether there is any indication that the insights expressed in the disciplines associated with the categories above are evident in their own communication processes -- especially at their gatherings. Is there any research on the role of meta-communication in the work and gatherings of the associated professionals? Or are such categories lenses through which the disciplines observe their topics of concern without implying any need to consider how they merit consideration in the communications of those engaged in such observation -- especially in relevant conferences?

To what extent are disciplines themselves self-reflexive in practice. Most ironically this question is of relevance to the systems disciplines and cybernetics, despite the renowned work of [Gordon Pask](#) (*Developments in Conversation Theory: actual and potential applications, International Congress on Applied Systems Research and Cybernetics*, 1980).

Of particular interest is the avoidance of any focus on the meta-communication associated with gatherings of those who are deemed specialists in dialogue and the facilitation of group dynamics. There is little evidence of dialogue between those associated with distinctive schools of psychology, philosophy or religion, for example. This is exemplified by the absence of initiatives by "gurus" of any persuasion to interact directly with each other.

There is therefore a case for reviewing how such "meta" preoccupations may be evident -- perceived or named otherwise -- in other arenas and by others (possibly non-professionals). In no particular order:

- **Public relations "optics":** In engaging with the public through managing and disseminating information from an individual or an organization (such as a business, government agency, or a nonprofit organization), "optics" is a neologistic term for the way something will be perceived in seeking to influence their perception. Marketing can be appropriately recognized as a form of meta-communication ([Nikola Mihin](#), *meta-communication and Contextual Marketing*. Coria, 28 June 2018).
- **Interpersonal communication:** It could be argued that, in practice (and without being named as such), there is considerable recognition of a "meta" dimension to interpersonal communication (*What Is meta-communication in Interpersonal Relations?* *Psych Central*, 14 October 2022).
 - Ironically this may be most evident in courtship and romantic discourse where it is what is not said that may well be the primary message. A "line" through which engagement is initiated may be especially significant in that respect ([Tana M. Mann](#), *Relationship between meta-communication among Romantic Partners and their Level of Relationship Satisfaction*, *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 6, 2003)
 - In the case of a salesperson endeavour to influence a potential client, skill in meta-communication may determine success whether more constrained and objective processes would fail
 - The pattern is evident in the proselytising process where an effort is made to persuade a non-believer of the credibility of a belief system
 - There is a case for exploring how dressing appropriately for an encounter is a form of meta-communication, as with "saying it with flowers" or the use of perfume
- **Playing "games":** Interpersonal interaction may well be recognized or interpreted in terms of a game metaphor. Some may be especially skilled in such games. Less evident is the extent to which participants may be conscious of the games they are playing - or the manner in which they are "played" -- as clarified by transaction analysis ([Eric Berne](#), *Games People Play: the psychology of human relationships*, 1964)
- **Use of status symbols:** There is no lack of recognition of the value of acquiring status symbols in order to impress others without any explicit consideration of the process as a feature of meta-communication.
- **Story telling:** The process of story telling, and especially the manner in which engagement of the audience is sought, can be understood as involving some form of meta-communication. Skill in story telling could be interpreted as intimately related to skill in meta-communication. Where this is associated with political, business or religious communication, "spinning a tale" may require some form of meta-communication in order to be effective (with respect to the "optics" noted above)
- **Reporting an event:** The formal report of conference or other meeting -- through minute writing or summary reporting -- can be recognized as a surrogate for meta-communication otherwise unrecognized in any explicit form in the course of the event. However, especially in summarizing the meeting, any "flavour" embodied in the description may be recognized as meta-communication rendered explicit. Of interest are supplementary processes such as:
 - reframing the event in aesthetic terms, as with paintings or song, and occasionally by poetry ([Kenneth Boulding](#), *Beguiling Events: a systems poem*)
 - metaphoric reframing may be offered by commentators in dramatic terms, especially when there are calls for recognition of their failure ([Fernando Espada](#), *The World Humanitarian Summit: a (failed) drama in Three Acts*, 21 November 2017; [Cancun summit: Drama, intrigue, and now kidnapping fears](#), *BusinessGreen*, 22 November 2010; [Gorbachev: Dramaturge?! 1991](#)).
- **Metaphor:** As noted below, whether employed in political, religious or marketing discourse, the extensive use of metaphor may be understood as an instance of meta-communication ([Mehmet Firat](#), *Metaphors in Meta-Communication*, 2012).

From the perspective of global governance, it is appropriate to acknowledge the apparent failure to give explicit recognition to the meta-

communication which may have contributed considerably to its evident failures. Curiously this may well contrast with decoration of any conference with flowers -- an apparent effort to "say it with flowers", as characteristic of the role of *ikebana* in Japanese culture.

That observation is appropriately contrasted with the intense focus on "passing patterns" in ball games, especially at the highest level of proficiency (*Understanding passing patterns, Soccer Coach*). Wherever possible technology is adapted to recording, analyzing and visualizing such patterns to enable player learning and more insightful commentary. No analogous effort is made to record the development of a point in public debate -- and to visualize it "on the fly" -- especially with respect to collective decision-making.

It could however be argued that many engage in "second order dialogue" in practice, but without being aware that they are doing so -- or of naming it as such. As famously exemplified by Monsieur Jourdain in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*:

Par ma foi ! il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose sans que j'en susse rien, et je vous suis le plus obligé du monde de m'avoir appris cela.

Cultural contrasts in meta-communication

As a prefixed-term in English, it is obviously questionable how "meta-communication" is translated into other languages, and how it might be recognized there through the lens they offer -- as suggested by *ikebana*. The question can be asked more generally with respect to the array of prefixes distinguishing various forms of connectivity and boundedness ("*Inter-*", "*multi-*", "*cross-*", "*trans-*" in relation to *disciplines, English StackExchange, Varieties of Disciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity*, 1998; *Conceptual Distortions from Negative Descriptors*, 1974).

It is therefore somewhat curious that preoccupation with "meta-communication" was developed by the discipline of cultural anthropology. The term was introduced by Gregory Bateson in the 1960s, noting that it is common across different cultures (*Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry*, 1968; Robert T. Craig, *Meta-communication*, 2016). This suggests the question as to whether practitioners of that discipline are themselves especially skilled in the process -- beyond their observation and analysis of it. Is an international conference of cultural anthropologists recognized as exemplary in the quality of its meta-communication -- and what has been learned from that proficiency of relevance to other conferences?

Such possibilities may be framed otherwise with respect to the extent to which processes corresponding to "meta-communication" have long been distinguished in other cultures and are particularly valued and practiced there (Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, *Meta-communication*, Center for Intercultural Dialogue, 2014; Bailey Bosch, *What is meta-communication and why does it matter? Free Range Lawyers*; Fahri Yetim, *A Meta-communication Model for Structuring Intercultural Communication Action Patterns, ACM SIGGROUP Bulletin*, 22, 2001, 2).

The challenge has been recognized in one form through the difficulties of communication for international business and political initiatives (Jeanette W. Gilsdorf, *Meta-communication: effects on international usiness negotiating in China, Business and Professional Communications Quarterly*, 60, 1997, 2; H. Simons, "*Going Meta*": definition and political applications, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 80, 1994, 4; M. Patch, *The effect of asymmetrical use of metacommunicative behavior on judgments of power, Journal of Social Psychology*, 135, 1995). Of concern is how the relevant skills are acquired (Hayet Bahri, et al, *Interconnectivity and meta-communication, Training Language and Culture* 1, 2017, 3).

More specifically with respect to this argument is the manner in which meta-communication is distinguished as communication of a "second order" (Samuel Mateus, *Meta-communication as Second Order Communication, KOME – An International Journal of Pure Communication Inquiry*, 5, 2017, 1). This suggests the further question as to the nature of any communication of a "higher" or subtler order -- and where it might be recognized and practiced.

Despite its recognized importance, it is less evident how the variety of cultural differences in this regard are recognized -- as might be expected from an initiative of UNESCO, for example. Greater insight is potentially offered by compilations of terms in other languages for which there is no meaningful equivalent in English (Howard Rheingold, *They Have a Word for It: a lighthearted lexicon of untranslatable words and phrases*, Sarabande Books, 2000; Ella Frances Sanders, *Lost in Translation: an illustrated compendium of untranslatable words from around the world*, Ten Speed Press, 2014). A related approach is evident in the creative invention of neologisms to describe some of the most profound feelings human beings are capable of experiencing (John Koenig, *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, Simon and Schuster, 2021)

Occam's Razor and premature closure in dialogue?

Premature closure: Given the additional dimension implied by any form of meta-communication, of some relevance is the manner in which explicit communication may be subject to premature closure, potentially to be understood as an application of the principle of **Occam's Razor**. This is a problem-solving principle that recommends searching for explanations constructed with the smallest possible set of elements -- thereby potentially excluding the subtle complexity associated with meta-communication (Jonathan Howard, *Premature Closure: anchoring bias, Occam's error, availability bias, search satisficing, yin-yang error, diagnosis momentum, triage cueing, and unpacking failure, Cognitive Errors and Diagnostic Mistakes*, 2018). The process has been only too evident in relation to the recent pandemic -- as noted above

This suggests exploration of the degree to which discourse of strategic significance may be vulnerable to what might be recognized as a mindset appropriately described as a "cognitive mouse-trap". A questionable sexual metaphor is "premature ejaculation". The concern has been variously discussed in terms of **silos thinking**, tunnel vision and **groupthink** (*Cui Bono: Groupthink vs Thinking the Unthinkable?* 2005).

The pattern is commonly depicted in fictional accounts of the premature closure of police and military investigations of threats -- in the quest of an early conviction in the first case, and the identification of a legitimate target in the second. It can be recognized as the effort to achieve -- rapidly -- a credible explanation at any cost. This is notably cited in management training: *There Is Always a Well-Known Solution to Every Human Problem -- Neat, Plausible, and Wrong* (17 July 2016)

More generally, the dialogue process may itself be understood in that light, as suggested by an influential title in that regard (Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes: negotiating agreement without giving in*, 1981). The counter-productive perspective is emphasized by the idiom "going for the kill" in negotiation and achieving buy-in.

Especially problematic in a context in which such tendencies are rife is the highly constrained possibility of referring to the possibility -- but without inviting and evoking condemnation of "irrelevance". This constraint may be exacerbated in media interviews in quest of "an answer".

Meta-ignorance: Premature closure can be understood as enabled by failure to appreciate the extent and nature of the ignorance associated with communication, otherwise recognized in terms of so-called groupthink, as noted above (Nicholas Rescher, *Ignorance: On the Wider Implications of Deficient Knowledge*, 2009). For David Dunning:

... the scope of people's ignorance is often invisible to them. This *meta-ignorance* (or ignorance of ignorance) arises because lack of expertise and knowledge often hides in the realm of the "unknown unknowns" or is disguised by erroneous beliefs and background knowledge that only appear to be sufficient to conclude a right answer. As empirical evidence of meta-ignorance, I describe the **Dunning–Kruger effect**, in which poor performers in many social and intellectual domains seem largely unaware of just how deficient their expertise is. (*The Dunning–Kruger Effect: on being ignorant of one's own ignorance, Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 2011).

Bohmian dialogue, proprioception and appreciative inquiry

Bohmian dialogue: The quality of dialogue and its enhancement have been of particular importance to David Bohm as an extension of his insights as a nuclear physicist (*Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980). This focus has been actively developed into what has come to be termed "**Bohmian dialogue**", understood as a freely flowing group conversation in which participants attempt to reach a common understanding, experiencing everyone's point of view fully, equally and nonjudgmentally (David Bohm, Donald Factor, and Peter Garrett, *Dialogue: A Proposal*. 2002; *David Bohm on Communication, Mindstructures; On Dialogue*, 1996; *Changing Consciousness: exploring the hidden source of the social, political and environmental crises facing our world*, 1991).

Of particular relevance to this argument is the distinction made by Bohm between "explicate order" and "implicate order". It is in terms of an "implicate order" that meta-communication might be most fruitfully understood.

Proprioception: The characteristics of Bohmian dialogue are explored by Steven Rosen in terms of **proprioception** (*Phenomenology, Self-reference, and Bohmian Dialogue* (42nd Annual Conference of the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences, 2003):

Now, for the kind of Dialogue of which Bohm spoke, it seems we need to relate to each other by moving in the "opposite direction" in which conventional discourse takes place. Rather than moving forward, moving out to you, authoritatively advancing my position on whatever we are discussing by simply and directly presenting it to you, it appears I must relate to you in a more circuitous, reflexive way, by going *backward into myself*...

Crucial to this process is our ability to suspend or slow down our own thinking to a great enough degree that we can be receptive to ourselves and to each other; to *listen deeply*, and mirror back to each other "a view of some of the assumptions and unspoken implications of what is being expressed along with that which is being avoided" (Bohm et al., 2002). Each participant then has an opportunity "to examine the preconceptions, prejudices, and the characteristic patterns that lie behind his or her thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and feelings, along with the roles he or she tends habitually to play."...

In sum, what seems most crucial to Dialogue is that we be able to "move *backward*," self-reflexively engage in what Bohm called *proprioception*.

Understood as proprioception, Steven Rosen clarifies with great insight the nature of the cognitive skill appropriate to the potential implied by the Klein bottle -- in several studies, fruitfully to be read as complementary.

For Rosen (*emphasis added*):

- *Topologies of the Flesh: a multidimensional exploration of the lifeworld* (2006 p. 47-48): What I propose here is that proprioception -- broadly understood as a mode of "self-taking" inclusive of cognition -- is the appropriate way to work with the Klein bottle, and that such a meditation is what the self-containing Klein bottle requires and invites. In thinking this Kleinian text, we must think proprioceptively, think our own thinking.

Note that, when I speak of "meditation", I am surely not referring to the *classical* kind. Whereas classical meditation generally aims at transcending the body, the self-reversal of thinking I have in mind would seek to move back into it. **The goal would be re-embodiment, reconnection with the lifeworld.** But would this not require a *disengagement* from thought and a return to the bodily *senses*?

What we learn from Merleau-Ponty is that thinking in fact does not entail sheer abstraction but possesses its on bodily grounding. For Merleau-Ponty, the dimension of language and thought operates as a "second flesh", a second order of embodiment: *It is as though the visibility that animates the sensible world were to emigrate, not outside of every body, but into another less heavy, more transparent body, as though it were to change flesh, abandoning the flesh of the [sensible] body for that of language.* (1968, p. 153)

- *The Self-evolving Cosmos: a phenomenological approach to nature's unity-in-diversity* (2008, p. 246): Proceeding in the manner of [Trigant Burrow](#), I, the psychological analyst, aim to enter my body through my head to obtain a bodily sense of the head that is directing this analysis. Since the proprioception thereby enacted is no act of "pure meditation" that leaves thinking and language behind, it seems the process must include the appropriate mode of signification if the maximum effect is to be achieved. ***In the semiosis required, neither words nor conventional mathematical symbols will suffice.***

What is needed is that unique topological signifier that refers concretely to the "fourth dimension" -- the dimension of depth incorporating my subjectivity -- by referring to *itself*. I am speaking, of course, of the Klein bottle. Assuming the Klein bottle is not just taken as a signified topological object or as an arbitrarily devised, conventionally agreed upon signifier (as are most mathematical symbols), it is this body of paradox that constitutes the semiotic content of the proprioceived brain.

In the proprioception of the brain that is at once a phenomenological mediation upon the Klein bottle, the analyst surpasses the brain of the particular individual to gain a glimpse of the dimensional organism's "generic brain", the "braneworld" in which the thinking function is centered. The brain thus proprioceived is no mere object of scientific scrutiny but is the sub-objectively *lived* brain ([Drew Leder](#), *The Absent Body*, 1990, p. 113); it is the brain as a concrete universal, as the "flesh of the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 139).

- *Dimensions of Apeiron: a topological phenomenology of space, time, and individuation* (2004, p. 207): In making the (w)holeness of Being a concrete reality, we are to read this text Proprioceptively; read our own reading; read these words about passing beyond themselves (into their prereflective roots) in such a way that the passage actually takes place. ***Such a reading is mediated by fleshing out this text via the dimensional amplification provided by the Klein bottle.***

Now the body of our text does not consist merely of lifeless, empty symbols, intrinsically meaningless signifiers that can only point outside themselves to disembodied meaning: our text is the Klein bottle. It is in contentively reading the (w)hole in this self-containing three-dimensional text (the "blind spot" in the field of vision) that we should pass unbrokenly into its subtext. The Klein bottle's incompleteness when read ontically is at once an incompleteness in our reflecting upon it....

Can we read the hole in the Klein bottle in such a way that we relax the compulsion to regard it as *merely* a hole, a gap in an ordinary object simply contained in space? ***Can we read the hole in the Klein bottle as an opening to "another dimension"*** and read that dimension as the prereflective source of our very own reading? Can we *enter* that dimension through Proprioception?

It is a matter of proceeding medi(t)atively, from "both sides at once" -- from the mediative side of the conceptual, and from the side of experiential immediacy known in meditation. The Kleinian concept brings us to the limit of the conceptual... ***It is here that we can realize the intimate harmony of outside and inside, of object and subject, of the bounded and boundless.*** That is to say: the harmony of *apeiron* can be realized in full by the Goddess herself.

A more recent description of the process has also been provided by Rosen, stressing its paradoxical nature (*Splitting the Atom: the paradox of Proprioceptive Dialogue*, *The Journal of Mind and Behavior*, 2022, 43, 2022, 3).

Appreciation of meta-communication? As a model that seeks to engage stakeholders in self-determined change, [appreciative inquiry](#) raises the question as to degree to which such "appreciation" involves engagement in meta-communication (David L.

Cooperrider, *Appreciative Inquiry in a Broken World*, 22 April 2020; F. J. Barrett, F.J. and R. E. Fryx, *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Building Cooperative Capacity*, Taos Institute, 2005).

However, although the need to transcend the habitual focus of that method on the "positive" is argued, little effort is seemingly made to engage with the problematic dimensions of meta-communication (Gervase R. Bushe, *Appreciative Inquiry is not (just) about the Positive*, *OD Practitioner*, 39, 2007, 4; Gervase R. Bushe and Aniq F. Kassam, *When Is Appreciative Inquiry Transformational?: A Meta-Case Analysis*, *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 41, 2005, 2).

Meta-communication as implied by metaphor?

The widespread use of figures of speech and tone of voice can be understood as implying a meta-perspective and therefore enabling a form of meta-communication (*Questionable Classification of Figures of Speech -- as fundamental to the need for powerful rhetoric in governance*, 2016; *Varieties of Tone of Voice and Engagement with Global Strategy: alternating between a requisite variety of voices to engender coherence?* 2020).

Readily recognized as even more indicative of meta-communication is the explicit use of metaphor (*Metaphors of dialogue and dialogue through metaphor*, 2021). In contrast to non-figurative discourse, use of metaphor in dialogue provokes the imagination to elicit a creative response (*Dreams that Dialogue is Made Of: radical reframing offering neglected degrees of freedom*, 2015), The role and potential of dialogue through metaphor is discussed separately (*Guidelines towards Dialogue through Metaphor*, 1993) in a collection of papers and notes, problems and possibilities on the new frontier of high-risk gatherings concerning social development (*Towards*

Transformative Conferencing and Dialogue, 1991).

Other arguments include:

- David Demeritt Sarah Dyer: *Dialogue, metaphors of dialogue and understandings of geography* (Royal Geographical Society, 34, 2002, 3)
- Shirley Ann Freed: *Metaphors and Reflective Dialogue Online* (Andrews University)
- Sarah Davey Chesters *Developing the Socratic Classroom: metaphors of engagement in dialogue* (*The Socratic Classroom*, 2012)
- John H. Quirk, Jr: *Meaning through Metaphor: visual dialogic and the picturing of abstractions* (University of Massachusetts, 2008)
- Line Brandt: *Dance as Dialogue: metaphorical conceptualization and semantic domains* (*Signata: Annals of Semiotics*, 2015, 6)
- Anthony Judge: *Metaphor as fundamental to future discourse*, (*Futures*, 84, November 2016)

Individual metaphors may prove of less value when a set of contrasting metaphors offers a complementarity of perspective, as argued separately (*Metaphorizing Dialogue to Enact a Flow Culture: Transcending divisiveness by systematic embodiment of metaphor in discourse*, 2019). How divisiveness might be transcended by systematic embodiment of metaphor in discourse is explored there in the following:

Metaphorizing -- beyond one-off usage	Requisite metaphoric "circumlocution" avoiding disruptive disagreement
Sustaining dialogue through metaphor?	Sustainable discourse framed metaphorically as "orbiting"
Indicative precedents of metaphorizing skills	Metaphorizing as artful indulgence in misplaced concreteness?
Discourse and debate reframed as cognitive combat through metaphor?	Re-imagining: metaphorizing, metamorphizing and cognitive shapeshifting
Integrity of metaphorizing framed by complementarity between alternatives	Sustainable discourse: longest conflict versus longest conversation?
Imagining a relevant philosophers' game -- and beyond	

Meta-communication as characterizing exemplary dialogue?

Much-valued attempts have been made to elicit insights from dialogues or trialogues between those esteemed for their insight. It is useful to ask whether such instances are an indication of the highest forms of discourse which humanity can envisage and to which it could aspire. As noted separately (*Challenging impoverishment of conventional discourse*, 2016), it is appropriate to recognize the appreciation associated with particular dialogues between two or three individuals, suggesting that their quality should be considered exemplary, even when hypothetical:

- Kenneth N. Cissna and Rob Anderson. *Buber, Rogers, and the Potential for Public Dialogue* (2012)
- J. Krishnamurti and David Bohm: *The Future of Humanity: a dialog between Krishnamurti and Bohm* (1990)
- Don Howard: *Revisiting the Einstein-Bohr Dialogue* (*Science 2.0*, 2009)
- Jung-Pauli dialogue: S. Gieser, *Depth Psychology and Quantum Physics: Wolfgang Pauli's dialogue with C.G. Jung* (2005)
- Sitansu Ray: *The Tagore-Einstein Conversations: reality and the human world, causality and chance* (1995)
- Ralph Abraham, Terence McKenna and Ruper Sheldrake: *Triologues at the Edge of the West: chaos, creativity, and the resacralization of the world* (1992)
- Daniel Fidel Ferrer: *Triologue between Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Nagarjuna in Todtnauberg* (2011)
- Leonard Swidler, Khalid Duran and Reuven Firestone: *Triologue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Dialogue* (2007)

Noteworthy is that those cited above do not include dialogues renowned in other cultures and include only a few that could be understood as "between cultures". It is unclear to what extent such dialogues inspire replication or are subject to appreciative critiques leading to the improvement of their methodology.

More complex examples have been envisaged. including thought experiments:

- Timothy Williamson: *Tetralogue: I'm Right, You're Wrong* (2015)
- Petr Nawka and Charlene M. Reiss: *Integrating people who are stigmatized: the tetralogue model* (*World Psychiatry*, 2002)
- *Examples of Tetralogue Poetry*
- Andrew M. Colman, Susan Blackmore, Robert L. Morris, Richard Wiseman, and Christopher C. French: *Is the spirit willing? A pentologue on parapsychology* (*The Psychologist*, Ausut 1996)
- *Best Pentologue Poems*
- *Kostis Palamas and His Dodecalogue of the Gypsy* (1955)
- Ioannis Raptis: *A Dodecalogue of Basic Didactics from Applications of Abstract Differential Geometry to Quantum Gravity* (*International Journal of Theoretical Physics*, 2007)

Especially relevant to this argument is the quality of various forms of inter-sectoral dialogue, notably that between "belief systems" and worldviews, however these are understood. Obvious examples include interfaith dialogues, interdisciplinary dialogues and intercultural dialogues.

Little effort is however made to assess such gatherings in terms of the degrees of synthesis which it might be assumed that they are intended to elicit (*Evaluating Synthesis Initiatives and their Sustaining Dialogues: possible questions as a guide to criteria of evaluation of any synthesis initiative*, 2000; *Deconstructing conference communication processes to elicit meta-discourse*, 2013). Why do such events not achieve renown as "magical" beyond conventional meeting norms? Expressed otherwise, can interfaith, transdisciplinary, and interethnic dialogues succeed without the connectivity experienced and described as "magic"?

Little is said of the efficacy of such processes, thereby cultivation the assumption that they are "fit for purpose" or "as good as it gets" --

especially in evoking "feel good" outcomes. The fact that reports do not suggest that the quality of dialogue on such occasions is especially noteworthy indicates that its inadequacy is not perceived as a challenge. There would appear to be little articulated aspiration to a higher order of discourse -- rather than complicity in achieving minimal "feel good" adequacy.

It is somewhat extraordinary to note the various domains in which exemplary performance is presented, recognized and awarded as an inspiration to those who might choose to emulate it. Such evaluation is evident in the star system for hotels and restaurants, or the ranking of universities and corporations. This is rarely evident in the case of discourse, except in particular debate settings. Individual orators may well be admired but the dynamic of a dialogue -- in contrast with ball games. What insights regarding the quality of discourse are evoked by debates between presidential candidates?

It is therefore intriguing to note references to "extraordinary dialogue", although with little sense of what justifies that qualification or its memorability, and how the term may be simply a misnomer without significance:

- Sheldon Krause: *Extraordinary dialogue happening in extraordinary times* (Michigan State University, 8 March 2021)
- Marcella Kraybill-Greggo: *An Extraordinary Dialogue: Mr. Gurdjieff Meet Mr. Teilhard!* (Claymont Wisdom School, 18 December 2019)
- Richard C. Dujardin: *Year of Scandal prompts and extraordinary dialogue on sin, morality in America* (*The Buffalor News*, 2 January 1999)
- *An Extraordinary International Dialogue With Lyndon LaRouche* (*Executive Intelligence Review*, 10 September 2010)
- *Extraordinary Dialogue on Urban Crisis Response and Recovery* (*World Urban Forum*, 11th Session, 2022)
- *Wholly Shift: Moving from Dangerous Discourse to Extraordinary Dialogue* (Bailey Strategic Innovation Group, 2019)
- *[An extraordinary dialogue between the poets Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes]* (Thesis, University of Tasmania, 2002)

A rich exchange between conflicting perspectives may be noted anecdotally in legislative assemblies. However there is little capacity to identify what makes for extraordinary discourse -- and how admirable qualities may be variously undermined. There is no "star system" to distinguish qualities of discourse, nor are the institutional environments in which dialogues occur ranked in any way.

Necessarily especially provocative is the quality of dialogue associated with potential or latent conflict. What form might an exemplary dialogue between Russia and the Ukraine take, even if hypothetical? Or between Israel and Palestine?

Meditative and mindful dialogue -- with otherness

Consideration may be distinctively given to what might be termed meditative dialogue. An obvious example is the articulation of [Martin Buber](#) (*I and Thou*, 1923; Kenneth Paul Kramer, *Martin Buber's I and Thou: practicing living dialogue*, 2004; W. John Morgan, et al, *I and Thou: The educational lessons of Martin Buber's dialogue with the conflicts of his times*, *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 44, 2010. 9). Ironically, as an iconic Jewish author, there is little sense in which Buber's "I" could be understood as "Israel" and "Thou" as "Palestine".

Contexts in which meditative dialogue is especially framed are a feature of the work of Susan A. Lord:

- *Meditative Dialogue: cultivating compassion and empathy with survivors of complex childhood trauma* (*Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*, 22, (2013), 9)
- *Meditative Dialogue: a tool for engaging students in collaborative learning processes* (*Journal of Family Therapy*, 29, 2007, 4)
- *Meditative Dialogue: cultivating sacred space in psychotherapy -- an intersubjective fourth?* (*Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 80, 2010, 2-3)

It is to be expected that interfaith dialogue, especially involving theologians and mystics, might clarify the nature of meditative dialogue. This is not immediately evident. The discourse within the [Parliament of the World's Religions](#) does not seemingly aspire to any such modality (*Learnings for the Future of Inter-Faith Dialogue*, 1993).

Of much greater potential interest from a mindful perspective is the tradition of [apophatic discourse](#) and the cultivation of "unsaying" (Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 1994). This is not to be confused with inner dialogue. Of some relevance is the more general and fundamental understanding of mindful "intercourse" -- with nature, as variously discoursed ("*Human Intercourse*": "*Intercourse with Nature*" and "*Intercourse with the Other*", 2007).

Potentially relevant to "meditative dialogue" is recognition of the process of [inner dialogue](#) and how this may necessarily engender some form of internal meta-communication. One contrast among inner verbal forms is between self-talk and inner dialogue (Piotr K. Oles, et al, *Types of Inner Dialogues and Functions of Self-Talk: Comparisons and Implications*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 2020; Donna R. Vocate, *Intrapersonal Communication: Different Voices, Different Minds*, 2012). Self-talk involves only one voice talking to itself. For inner dialogue, several voices linked to different positions take turns in a form of imaginary interaction. [Models of intrapersonal communication](#) explore which components are involved and how they interact (James P. Lantolf, *Intrapersonal Communication Theories*, *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, 2009).

Magical communication through magical thinking?

Any reference to "magic" in relation to communication is however necessarily problematic because of the manner by which the term is appropriated by those invested in esoteric or anthropological perspectives (Graham M. Jones, *Magic, an appreciation*, *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 7, 2017, 3; Eugene Subbotsky, *The Belief in Magic in the Age of Science*, *SAGE Open*, January-March 2014). The term is of course commonly used in marketing of locations and events by the tourism industry.

"Magical thinking" versus "Natural magic"? Understood as superstitious thinking highly deprecated by science, [magical thinking](#) is

upheld as the belief that unrelated events are causally connected despite the absence of any plausible causal link between them, particularly as a result of supernatural effects. The precise definition of magical thinking may vary subtly when used by different theorists or among different fields of study. In anthropology, the posited causality is between religious ritual, prayer, sacrifice, or the observance of a taboo, and an expected benefit or recompense. (Matthew Hutson, *Magical Thinking*, *Psychology Today*, 1 March 2008).

Readily conflated, by contrast, is the process of ensuring the complementarity of design factors, elicited through all the senses. This was a theme of the so-called "**natural magic**" of the Renaissance period (D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: from Ficino to Campanella*, 2000). It was the preoccupation of **Marsilio Ficino** concerned with practical techniques ("**natural magic**") for ensuring that speculative insights connect with the realities of daily living -- a psychological daily life.

There is now a delightful degree of irony to the cognitive relation between the "**superstition**", as held to be characteristic of pseudoscientific perspectives, and "**superposition**" -- as understood in terms of the new logic of quantum mechanics.

"Magical communication"? Given the intersubjectivity implied by entanglement, meta-communication can be explored in the light of occasional descriptions of a much-valued communication process as "magical". An early presentation endeavoured to identify the subtleties of such a communication focus as "**meeting magic**" (*Towards Transformative Conferencing and Dialogue*, 1991). Is that sense of magic one of the ways in which meta-communication is recognized, however it is otherwise held to be meaningless -- or conflated with "feel good" impressions?

The elusive experience of magic in such gatherings might well be described metaphorically by **super-conductivity** -- especially with the current quest to achieve that high-level connectivity at "room temperature", with all that that would imply (John Timmer, *What's going on with the reports of a room-temperature superconductor?* *ArsTechnica*, 4 August 2023).

The nature of the entanglement has been described as paradoxical, namely as the interface challenge in communication of "inside-outside", "insight-outsight" and "information-outformation" (*Cognitive Osmosis in a Knowledge-based Civilization*, 2017). Use of "osmosis" as a metaphor endeavours to indicate the transfer across conventional category boundaries -- typically associated with aesthetic creativity and humour. The latter may be understood as an essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity (*Humour and Play-Fullness*, 2005; *Recognized Role of Humour -- in politics, leadership, religion and creativity*, 2005).

"Meeting magic"? Given the deprecation of "magical thinking" as pseudoscientific, it is curious to note the value attached to meetings described as "magical", and the explicit cultivation of "meeting magic" in various contexts -- as an extension of the marketing focus of the tourism industry:

- Katherine Woods: *Meeting Magic: a practical guide for business managers who want to make their meetings productive* (Meeting Magic Publishing, 2007)
- Sharon Richmond: *Meeting Magic, The 'Three-H' Way* (*Forbes Coaches Council*, 2020)
- Margaret Andrews: Meeting Magic They should really teach this in school. (Inside Higher Ed, 12 September 2018)
- Brian Gorman: *Meeting Magic* (*Change Management Review*, 11 June 2018)
- Tim Eigo: *Meeting magic may merit high member marks for meaningfulness* (*American Bar Association*, 42, 2017, 1)
- Harry Eggleton, et al: *Meeting Magic: the facilitator's guide to leading productive, interactive meetings* (2000)
- Tony Jeary and George Lowe: *The Secrets of Meeting Magic Revealed* (The Walk The Talk Company, 2001)
- *Meeting Magic: making meeting meaningful* (*LinkedIn*)

Given the deprecation by science, it is understandable that many professional associations and intergovernmental organizations have little insight into why their meetings cannot be described as "magical" -- thereby favouring the cultivation of antithetical qualities tending to ensure that they are inherently "boring" for many. This offers an understanding of why vital global summitry fails to gain strategic traction in response to urgent global problems. In the desperate pursuit of their agendas, is there effectively a conscious commitment to ensure that such gatherings are maximally "unmagical"? Or are they to be appropriately and ironically described as exemplifying "bad magic" -- namely problematic connectivity (in the light of the superconductivity metaphor)?

Facilitation? Many professionally engaged in group dynamic facilitation would see it as their role to elicit a degree of collective self-awareness -- suggesting one understanding of meta-communication. An understanding of the possibility that meetings may be characterized as "magical" is indeed cultivated (Sam Killermann and Meg Bolger, *Unlocking the Magic of Facilitation*, Impetus Books, 2016; Douglas Ferguson and John Fitch, *Magical Meetings: reinvent how your team works together*, Volatage Control, *The Non-Obvious Guide to Magical Meetings*, Ideapress, 2021).

Mental health professionals make extensive use of so-called **talk therapy**, also known as psychotherapy, as a process of eliciting meaningful communicating with their patients. Given the crises of the times, the adequacy of such modalities calls for consideration, as provocatively expressed by **James Hillman** and **Michael Ventura** (*We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy -- and the World's Getting Worse*, 1992). Few would make claims for the inherently higher quality of discourse in gatherings of professionals in the psychosciences -- or their value as exemplars of meta-communication.

Enabling discourse of a higher order

"Assume a virtue if you have it not"? The distinctions clarified in the above sections have been made in order to frame the possibility of another understanding of meta-communication and discourse -- potentially implied by "meeting magic". Those above tend to place extensive emphasis, if not exclusive emphasis, on an objective analysis of communication from some meta-perspective, however that may be defined and understood. The objectivity, especially as cultivated by any science, detaches and dissociates the observer from what

is observed -- namely the communication process in which the observer is embedded.

With respect to potential communication of any higher order, claims in respect of meta-communication and discourse may well disguise its absence, as implied by the injunction of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: *assume a virtue if you have it not*. This could be understood as the guiding principle in describing conventional discourse -- especially for public relations purposes: *fake it till you make it*. Expressed otherwise **with regard to "meta-communication": *All that glitters is not gold***.

The question is then how a participant in any communication process can be cognitively "more intimately" associated with it -- effectively to become "entangled" with it. As the "hard problem of consciousness", this is the challenge that fundamental physicists endeavour to recognize, for other reasons. In another context it is understood as the manner in which participants are conscious of the nature and quality of the communication in which they are engaging. How is awareness of the communication process -- collective self-awareness -- to be engendered, recognized and articulated? Should meta-communication professionals openly acknowledge, like physicists, a "hard problem of consciousness"?

This could be understood as contrasting significantly with calls for "time-out" or a "point of order". The perspective could also be contrasted with the argument of Edward de Bono (*Po: Beyond Yes and No*, 1973). For de Bono, "po" is a call for a suspension of conventional judgement to enable reframing. It is a challenge to cognitive straightjackets as previously discussed (*Categorical Straightjackets: PO -- a suggestion for a de-patterning device for international organization descriptions*, 1974). Used in that way, po is a word that precedes and signals a provocation. A provocation is then an idea which moves thinking forward to a new place from where new ideas or solutions may be found. However it is curiously associated with the "lateral thinking" (as originated by de Bono), when it can be readily imagined that there is a case for thinking of higher dimensionality -- with whatever that implies (*From Lateral Thinking to Voluminous Thinking*, 2007).

Degrees of presence? A potentially more fruitful approach to such meta-communication is through recognition of degrees of presence - articulated from one perspective by Alan Watts: *Stop measuring days by degree of productivity and start experiencing them by degree of presence*. Eastern traditions may associate it with centering, especially in relation to *hara*, as articulated for the West by Karlfried Graf Dürckheim (*Hara: the vital centre of man*, 1988).

For Leonard Jacobson (*Degrees of Presence, The Edge*, 1 April 2010), although framed with a questionable degree of closure:

It is important to know that there are levels of Presence. It is as if Presence exists on a vertical scale or axis. As you deepen into Presence, you cross a point on the vertical axis where time disappears. Now you are in the Eternal realm. There is no time. Life does not exist outside of the moment, and you do not exist outside of the moment. You are completely absorbed into the Oneness. You are completely absorbed into the moment of Now

By contrast, from a therapeutic perspective, Pamela Renee Boeck argues:

Therapeutic nursing presence demonstrates caring, empathy, and connection, qualities required to build rapport and trust between nurse and patient. This concept analysis' purpose was to illuminate the various forms of the meanings of presence and the value placed on them. ... In nurses' haste to complete their duties, are we facing the risk of overlooking one of the original gifts of the nursing profession? This would be the gift of genuine presence. This concept analysis aims to identify the attributes that are essential to the concept of presence, and to clarify its nursing usage (*Presence: A Concept Analysis, SAGE Open*, January-March 2014).

The author includes references to the following:

- D. Childs: *Mindfulness and the psychology of presence (Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 80, 2007)
- Anna Easter: *Construct analysis of four modes of being present (Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 18, 2000, 4)
- Carole Brooks Platt: *Presence, poetry and the collaborative right hemisphere (Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 14, 2007, 3)
- L. M. Savary and P. H. Berne: *Kything: The art of spiritual presence* (Paulist Press, 1988)

Indications of the quality of presence are a characteristic of occasional descriptions of a person of great authority, including a guru or a criminal godfather. Some such quality is imagined in reference to the presence of God (David Sanford, *What Does It Mean to Be in the Presence of God? Christianity.com*, 26 June 2019; *Being In The Presence Of A Guru, Write Spirit*). However the challenge with respect to communication of a higher order is whether the appreciation of presence is mutual rather than unilateral.

The essayist Anaïs Nin reported on what Mexican locals knew about "living with presence" that the society from which she escaped did not, as noted in *The Diary of Anaïs Nin* (Volume 5, 1974):

The natives have not yet learned from the white man his inventions for traveling away from the present, his scientific capacity for analyzing warmth into a chemical substance, for abstracting human beings into symbols. The white man has invented glasses which make objects too near or too far, cameras, telescopes, spyglasses, objects which put glass between living and vision. It is the image he seeks to possess, not the texture, the living warmth, the human closeness. (cited as *Vacation and the Art of Presence, The Marginalian*, 14 August 2018)

Attention is accorded to that understanding with respect to indigenous knowledge more generally, as indicated by Darrell Posey (*Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity: a complementary contribution to the global biodiversity assessment*, United Nations Environment

Programme and Intermediate Technology Publications, 2000).

Degrees of absence? Distinct from such understandings, a particular understanding of "presence" has become significant in relation to electronic communications and virtual meetings -- by comparison with the face-to-face modality (P. Rogers, et al, *Social Presence in Distributed Group Environments: the role of social identity*, *Behaviour and Information Technology*, 24, 2005, 2; Joel Schwartzberg, *How to Elevate Your Presence in a Virtual Meeting*, *Harvard Business Review*, 8 April 2020). In contrast to absenteeism, reference is now made to presenteeism (Charmi Patel, et al, *Presenteeism at Work: Developments and Avenues for Future Research*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 44, 2023, 6).

Corresponding consideration could be given to "degrees of absence", especially in the cognitive terms more relevant to this argument, as in descriptions of dialogue with another experienced as someone who was "not there". This is exemplified by a characteristic commonly attributed to zombies. Ironically it could be speculated that humans may well be experienced as such by extraterrestrials, as discussed below

As a contrast to any degree of meta-communication, those endeavouring to communicate a subtle insight are familiar with such a dynamic -- whether or not they are aware of the manner in which they are engaged and entangled in the process.

Potential of technology and AI? Much is now made of the rapidly developing role of AI as a conversation partner of major significance for the future (*Use of ChatGPT to Clarify Possibility of Dialogue of Higher Quality*, 2023; *Forthcoming Major Revolution in Global Dialogue*, 2013).

Possibilities are increasingly recognized (*What is meta-communication? Can it benefit virtual and international teams?* *European Market Link*, 26 July 2020). An AI application is already proposed for meeting note-taking (*Magical: the calendar that takes meeting notes for you; Magical: meeting scheduling and coordination automation*).

An indicative example is offered from a Japanese context by Koichi Takeuchi and colleagues:

The key to effective communication at Japanese business meetings in particular is a proper awareness and maintenance of the communication context. We constructed the CHAIRPERSON computer system to help us grasp the dynamic structure of the meeting process. The main idea of our research revolves around classifying utterances at a meeting into meta-utterances (utterances which indicate context) and object-level utterances (utterances which indicate the content of the discussion itself). We have represented the meeting context using a tree diagram with meta-utterances as the nodes. We suggest an algorithm to bring out this idea. (*Computer-Supported Meta-Communication Analysis of Meetings*, *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce*, 7, 1997, 1)

Such examples do not indicate the manner in which AI might be engaged supportively and proactively in a conversation -- taking on many of the "midwifing" functions of a professional communication facilitator or "coach". Especially intriguing is the possibility of also encompassing and developing some functions of a "reporter", "chairperson", and "commentator" (Kristi Hines, *OpenAI Publishes Tutorial For AI-Generated Meeting Minutes*, *Search Engine Journal*, 28 July 2023). Is it to be expected that AI may shortly offer more proficient keynote speeches -- whether or not the script is provided to a human intermediary, as can be speculatively explored (*Governance of Pandemic Response by Artificial Intelligence*, 2021).

Despite deep concerns regarding copyright and plagiarism, of particular interest is the possibility that AI may be able to simulate dialogue between two or more esteemed individuals, even long after they have passed away -- and may well have never met. It may then be possible for AI to "enhance" the quality of such dialogue in ways that have not yet been imagined, much as it is envisaged that this can be done for music. Dialogues between iconic leaders of opposing belief systems would then be especially instructive.

Just as AI technology may be adapted to the further sophistication of the current analysis and visualization of "passing patterns" in ball games, this approach may be applied to discourse and the "point passing" and "scoring" that it involves. Just as it is now common for participants in a conference to complement conventional communications with parallel communications through their smartphones and computers, it is to be expected that the communication dynamics as a whole will be analyzed and visualized as a means of enabling participants to navigate the pattern of topics and interventions. Alternative commentaries on the pattern may be available, just as alternative interpretation channels are offered at international conferences. AI facilities may be embodied in smartphone applications in order to enable any conversation to be recorded and enhanced.

Beyond discourse polarization? Especially relevant is the possibility that AI may enable the prevailing commitment to discourse polarization to be "transcended" -- however that may come to be understood (*Discovering Richer Patterns of Comprehension to Reframe Polarization*, 1998; *Framing Dynamic Transcendence of Simplistic Cognitive Polarization*, 2021; *Dynamic reframing of discourse polarization?* 2019).

Rather than modelling discourse on competitive ball games, AI may enable communication to be reframed comprehensibly as a dance -- thereby eliciting processes characteristic of "meeting magic". This would be consistent with understandings of **complementarity** in fundamental physics. The relation between positive and negative, as creatively understood and articulated in physics, may prove to be adaptable to their seemingly irreconcilable understanding in psychosocial dynamics -- imagining charged conditions otherwise (*Reimagining Tesla's Creativity through Technomimicry*, 2014).

Especially intriguing is the role that AI may play in enabling an enactive reframing by participants of the communication process, transcending divisiveness by systematic embodiment of metaphor in discourse (*Metaphorizing Dialogue to Enact a Flow Culture*, 2019; *Enactivating Multiversal Community: hearing a pattern of voices in the global wilderness*, 2012; *Enacting Transformative Integral Thinking through Playful Elegance*, 2010)

Embodying meta-communication in discourse? Although implied to a degree in the processes of Bohmian dialogue, and the "po" of de Bono, apparently missing is a style of communication which encourages meta-commentary on the process as it develops. This could be contrasted with the style of "talk therapy" of psychiatrists in which the patient may be asked "why did you say that?" -- with no acceptance of any corresponding question by the patient.

How might second order communication (or "higher") be interwoven with first order discourse? Does this skill feature in expectations of the role of a chairperson or facilitator?

The difficulty for conventional modalities of discourse is that even challenging a participant for dwelling at excessive length on a particular topic is readily felt to be somewhat insulting -- and therefore typically avoided. The difficulty is all the greater when the discourse evolves in a manner held to be pointless or unfruitful by many -- with facilitation handicapped by the need for consideration and sensitivity variously understood.

Again, given the precedence of interpretation facilities, the future role of one or more "meta-commentators" on the process (with a diversity of insights) merits consideration in offering perspective on first order discourse. Use might well be made of AI to that end, with one meta-interpretation potentially challenging another. This avoids the problematic embarrassment of direct challenge within the first order process. It can also be understood as engaging alternative critical perspectives which would otherwise be conveyed separately through other media.

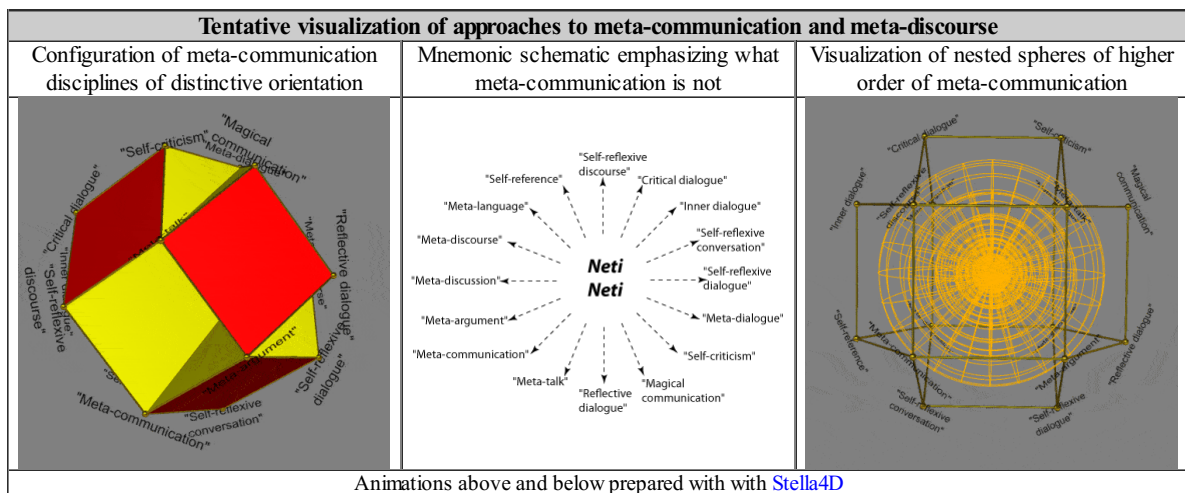
Such possibilities highlight the question of how embodied meta-commentary within any discourse might be censored, rather than enabled. What is not to be said -- as a form of unsaying? Could AI meta-commentary be filtered in this way in order to craft the [filter bubble](#) supportive of the agenda of meeting organizers?

Curiously the possibility of designing into discourse any form of meta-commentary recalls the appreciation variously attached to "mirroring", as may otherwise be a feature of external critical commentary. Ironically any reference to that metaphor in relation to "meeting magic" recalls the role of a mirror in traditional folk tales (*Stepping into, or through, the Mirror: embodying alternative scenario patterns*, 2008).

Visualizing the "locus" of meta-communication? The distinction emphasized in this argument calls for creative visualization, especially when concerns are expressed with regard to "deep communication" (G. Endro, *The Problem of Deep Communication in Contemporary Ethics Education*, *Journal Communication Spectrum: Capturing New Perspectives in Communication*, 12, 2022, 1).

The central image below suggests that the objectivity characteristic of its exploration -- as Bohm's "explicate order" -- can be appropriately challenged. This can be done by emphasizing what any transcendent modality is not -- traditionally exemplified by the Sanskrit dictum *Neti Neti* ("not this, not that").

The animation on the right suggests how the various disciplines preoccupied with meta-communication might be provocatively configured for mnemonic purposes -- as "superficial" -- in this case with use of a polyhedron (named as the "simplest torus").



Given the variety of modalities of communication, there is a case for recognizing that meta-communication is especially characterized in some way by the interplay between them, inviting adaptation of musical metaphors, as discussed separately (*Envisaging a Comprehensible Global Brain -- as a Playful Organ*, 2019). Again, for mnemonic purposes, such disparate modalities may be suggestively configured together in order to frame a context for that interplay as variously represented below. The animation on the right below then suggests the sense of higher orders of such play -- possibly characterized by progressively subtler forms of "unsaying".

One sense of such play, especially as implied in ball games, is usefully offered in terms of what "circulates" under conditions of "meeting magic", as discussed separately (*Circulation of the Light: essential metaphor of global sustainability?* 2010).

As metaphors, the nested spheres in the animations on the right (above and below) are also usefully reminiscent of the nesting of [atomic orbitals](#) from the perspective of quantum mechanics -- ironically distinguishing between the simple polarization of the most fundamental and the interweaving orbital patterns of the "heavier" elements so evident in nature.

This could suggest a degree of periodicity to degrees of [meta-cognition](#), as speculatively explored (*Periodic Pattern of Human Knowing*, 2009; *Towards a Periodic Table of Ways of Knowing*, 2009). The merits of the quantum framing have been argued by [Alexander Wendt](#)

with respect to international relations (*Quantum Mind and Social Science: unifying physical and social ontology*, 2015).

Tentative visualization of communication modalities framing meta-communication and meta-discourse (using the geometric duality of dodecahedron and icosahedron)		
Dodecahedral configuration of modalities of communication	Mnemonic schematic emphasizing the interplay of communication modalities	Icosahedral configuration of modalities of communication

Potentially misleading (as with the disciplines above), "meta-play" is already variously appropriated in relation to online video gaming, although there is a developing association with "meta-cognition" (Bokyeong Kim, et al, *Not just Fun, but serious Strategies: using meta-cognitive strategies in game-based learning*, *Computers and Education*, 52, 2009; Samaneh Karamali Esmaili, et al, *Effect of Play-based Therapy on Meta-cognitive and Behavioral Aspects of Executive Function*, *Basic and Clinical Neuroscience*, 8, 2017, 3). Play of that nature has been remarkably explored by James P. Carse (*Finite and Infinite Games: a vision of life as play and possibility*, 1994).

Of potential relevance is consideration of the requisite variety of communication modalities, especially in the light of any understanding of knowledge cybernetics. This highlights the question of how distinctive those modalities need to be for optimum benefit, as discussed separately (*Global Coherence by Interrelating Disparate Strategic Patterns Dynamically*, 2019; *Polyhedral clues to the dynamics of relating disparate ways of looking*, 2022).

Somewhat ironically, importance is attached to the process of "talking up" strategic initiatives and possibilities, as is so widely done in the case of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In the light of the above argument, there is similarly **a case for "talking up" the possibilities of higher order discourse to engage with the chaotic complexities of the future** to which the UN's envisaged goals are deemed to be especially relevant.

ETs and "dialogue" -- assuming they might frame it so

Potential challenges: As indicated above, the nature of communications between ETs, and the possible process of human communication with them, has long been a matter of speculation (*Communicating with Aliens: the psychological dimension of dialogue*, 2000). Given the recognized difficulties of communication with any other humans only too readily framed as "aliens", the potential challenges are all too evident -- and liable to be even greater in unforeseen ways. Ironically, in dramatic terms, such aliens could even be (in)appropriately perceived as "terrestrial extras".

The difficulties are potentially aggravated by assumptions regarding the appreciation of ETs for the insights of science. These are deemed by science to be necessarily fundamental, universal, and considered a primary opportunity for effective contact (through recent discoveries of number theory and fundamental equations of physics).

Problematic from another perspective is the tendency to frame the search for ETs as a "hunt", when ETs may have little appreciation for being framed as a "target" (*The Hunt for ET: Leading scientists join forces to hunt for alien life*, 2023). This follows from the unfortunate human enthusiasm for military metaphors (*Enhancing Sustainable Development Strategies through Avoidance of Military Metaphors*, 1998)

Ironically it can be speculated that humans may well be experienced as cognitively limited by extraterrestrials, as poignantly suggested by [Doris Lessing](#). This features in a fictionalized description of the encounter of a "development specialist" from an advanced galactic culture with a leading representative of a "developing" planet:

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

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

That encounter insightfully frames the familiar experience of those upheld as "change agents" in their encounters with policy-makers in the current period -- with respect to issues such as climate change, resource constraints, environmental pollution, and various forms of injustice. Given insights into degrees of "meta-ignorance" associated with the Dunning-Kruger effect (as noted above), the cognitive limitations of humans, to which ETs may be especially sensitive, may be intimately related to the forms of "meta-communication" unfamiliar to humans.

Requisite meta-communication? Missing from speculation regarding potential communication with ETs is the possibility that this may call upon degrees of meta-communication, intersubjectivity and implication that is quite alien to the sciences which have given greatest consideration to the matter -- or would expect their expertise to be most valued in any "first contact".

This suggests the need for a broader spectrum of communications skills (*Designing a Team for Alien Encounter*, 2000). Science fiction has proven to be far more imaginative with respect to forms of non-verbal communication with ETs -- for whom the implications of ritual, game-playing, musical harmony, body language and smell may be of far greater importance.

With respect to game-playing, the insights offered by *Hermann Hesse* (*The Glass Bead Game*, 1943) are of particular relevance, especially since that book has also been published under the title *Magister Ludi*, an honorific title awarded to the central character as "Master of the Game". It is quite possible that ETs could be so characterized -- consistent with the appreciation accorded to "grand masters" in chess and the game of go. There is of course the irony that those so distinguished have been out-manoeuvred by artificial intelligence -- by which ETs may also be enabled.

Apparent absence of communication? Any speculation with regard to the modes of communication favoured by ETs can be usefully informed by their apparent failure to engage with humanity -- using the forms of "communication" authoritatively recognized by humanity as appropriate. There is also the possibility that ETs are "in communication" with humanity on their own terms through modes to be understood otherwise. Rather than "extraterrestrial" they may already be "embedded", as can be speculatively explored (*Sensing Epiterrestrial Intelligence (SETI): embedding of "extraterrestrials" in episystemic dynamics?* 2013).

ETs may value other characteristics of communication as a precondition for its viability (*Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criterion of species maturity?* 2008). They could well have a far more insightful approach to ignorance and the dangers of its deprecation by those claiming greater insight.

The challenge of communication with ETs can be fruitfully explored in terms of that long-evident in communication with the wise and the devious -- or even the ignorant. It is therefore of particular relevance to consider how ETs may be especially "wise", "devious" or "ignorant" -- whether from a human perspective or that of ETs. What may either consider it appropriate "not to say" -- or recognize that there is "nothing to be said"?

Rather than "extraterrestrials" as a speculative paradigm (or *denkmodel*), the potential of meta-communication can be evoked in relation to the modalities which may be favoured by humanity in future centuries or millennia. What might our descendants say to us -- or avoid saying? What modalities would they consider appropriate, as may be speculatively explored (Barry Dainton, et al, *Minding the Future: artificial intelligence, philosophical visions and science fiction*, 2021; *Minding the Future: thought experiment on presenting new information*, 1980).

Speculation towards a framework of meta-communication

As argued above, there is a case for recognizing that higher orders of communication and dialogue necessarily constitute a major challenge to comprehension from any conventional perspective -- as may be apparent in the distant future (or from an "extraterrestrial" perspective).

Comprehensibility? There is seemingly little interest in the possibility, if not the probability, that the insights required for viable global governance (in the face of complex crises) may require that the widespread aversion to the seemingly incomprehensible be more proactively addressed. There is the strange assumption that, if the strategic implications cannot be immediately comprehended, they must necessarily be irrelevant.

This is matched by the assumption that if strategies can be rationally articulated from an expert perspective their credibility can only be questioned by the ignorant. **The widespread discussion of any requisite "paradigm shift" tends to avoid issues of its comprehensibility and credibility from prevailing perspectives.** There is a naive assumption that what is required is an immediately comprehensible "silver bullet".

As noted above, there is however a sense in which the nature of meta-communication may be vaguely indicated through intuition and inference from familiar processes -- otherwise understood. Hence the importance of an aesthetic approach to the comprehension of meta-communication through metaphor, figures of speech, and the like, whilst avoiding the misleading distraction they may encourage through the investment of enthusiastic proponents.

Reconciliation of disparate patterns: The question is then how to present and juxtapose such indications as a speculative framework to evoke discussion -- whilst avoiding closure (necessarily premature). Such indications can be potentially and tentatively offered by a variety of disparate patterns:

- the pattern of distinctions relating to degrees of self-reference, as noted above by Cadell Last -- as an extension of the array of higher orders of cybernetics
- the set of distinctions offered by Zen Buddhism as articulated through the traditional imagery and commentary relating to ox-herding (*Phases in the "Re-cognition" of "Bull" according to Zen?* 2017)
- the framework articulated by *Arthur Young* (*Geometry of Meaning*, 1975) as a generalization of insights into physical measures as

derived from his initiative with respect to helicopter development, and discussed separately (*From helicopters to quadcopters and more: psychopter implications through technomimicry*, 2023). Of relevance to communication is the adaptation with respect to dialogue (*Typology of 12 complementary dialogue modes essential to sustainable dialogue*, 1998).

- the set of distinctions familiar as interpretation of the zodiac, especially as adapted by Young as indicative of a Rosetta Stone of meaning (*The Rosetta Stone of Meaning*, *Mind Fire*, 1976; Martin K. Jones, *The Rosetta Stone of Arthur M. Young*, *Equivalent eXchange*, 27 January 2019).
- the set of distinctions made by Paris Arnopoulos from a perspective framed as sociophysics (*Sociophysics: Cosmos and Chaos in Nature and Culture*, 1993)
- the fundamental pattern of 15 transformations distinguished by Christopher Alexander, as discussed separately (*Tentative adaptation of Alexander's 15 transformations to the psychosocial realm*, 2010).
- the role of metaphor in indicating cognitive distinctions, as variously implied by the patterns above, most evidently in familiarity with engagement with the traditional pattern of the elements (*Cognitive Navigation of the Elements as Indicative Strategic Metaphors*, 2023)
- metaphorical reference to "rebirth" (*Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being "born again"*, 2004).

The emphasis on interweaving disparate patterns of qualitative distinctions is suggestive of a valuable metaphor in its own right in a period in which efforts are made to avoid contrasting perspectives as inherently problematic (*Interweaving Thematic Threads and Learning Pathways*, 2010; *Dynamics of N-fold Integration of Disparate Cognitive Modalities*, 2021). Such interweaving can be explored in the light of "correspondences" (*Theories of Correspondences -- and potential equivalences between them in correlative thinking*, 2007).

Their potential implications with respect to meta-communication are variously explored (and illustrated) in the following discussions:

- *Reframing a 12-fold pattern of discourse in 3D*. 2019
- *Spherical mapping of conditions traditionally associated with the zodiac*. 2014
- *Associating significance with a dodecahedron*, 2018
- *Cognitive Implication of Globality via Temporal Inversion: Embodying the future through higher derivatives of time*, 2018

Configuring disparate patterns: The possibility of a "speculative" framework can be further developed through configuration of the distinctions made by Young as contrasting metaphors of communication modalities. Young configured the distinctions in tabular form, subsequently presented in circular form -- associating them with the familiar pattern of the zodiac to constitute a Rosetta Stone. Such an association can be appreciated in terms of framing the complex by using a widely familiar pattern -- despite the marked tendency to reject it as pseudo-scientific. Unfortunately such rejection tends to be framed by disciplines whose capacity to address critical global issues is increasingly called into question (*Pseudo-relevance: science, scientism and pseudo-science?* 2021).

As may be imagined, both Young's particular use of physical measures and his association of them with the zodiac are anathema to many constituencies valuing those distinctions otherwise -- however irrelevant they have seemingly proved to be to the challenges of communication and governance at this time. The focus here is however on the meaning that may be potentially derived from cognitive patterns in support of higher orders of communication -- irrespective of to what they may be applied.

The suggestion here is that the modalities of communication of different orders may be usefully distinguished -- at least for discussion purposes -- by metaphorical consideration of the 3 "elements" variously combined by Young as 12 standard measures of physics, namely mass, distance and time. These merit reconciliation with traditional articulations in terms of 4 such elements (*Cognitive Navigation of the Elements as Indicative Strategic Metaphors*, 2023).

Pattern memorability: Young's framework is therefore proposed as a tentative "carrier" of distinctions which are readily lost in other approaches (*Metaphors as Transdisciplinary Vehicles of the Future*, 1991). There is a useful irony to Young's effort to reconcile his Rosetta pattern of communication with the zodiac -- given the degree to which this is held to exemplify the magical thinking conventionally deprecated as pseudoscientific (as noted above).

However it is appropriate to note that the 12-fold zodiac pattern can also be recognized as exemplifying a form of psychosocial sustainability appreciated across cultures over millennia. As separately explored, the UN's pattern of 17 Sustainable Development Goals has yet to demonstrate its own sustainability in communication terms, especially having so recently replaced the UN's 8 Millennium Development Goals (*Coherence of Sustainable Development Goals through Artificial Intelligence*, 2023).

Does the current manner of their consideration suggest that the SDGs lack memorability and the requisite "magic" to make them attractively viable? Do meetings in that regard then lack "meeting magic" (as noted above)?

As metaphors, from Young's perspective, the following may therefore be considered:

- **"mass"**: as implying the "weight" of a communication, most commonly recognized through qualification of a topic as "heavy". Related use is made in referring to a "massive" amount of information. That metaphor is curiously adapted to the sense of a "mass" of people, and to the controversial arguments for "mass formation" by Mattias Desmet (*The Psychology of Totalitarianism*, 2022; *Mattias Desmet on the Totalitarianism of Mass Panic*, *Brownstone Institute*, 12 June 2022). Especially intriguing is any sense in which this is an indication of "how much" of reality is taken into consideration -- of what is "encompassed" -- potentially extending through the variety of modes of knowing to "the universe" (notably through psychotropically enabled experience). There is therefore a case for exploring the metaphors for **mass**, **weight**, and **heaviness** as vehicles of potentially relevant insight.
- **"distance"**: as implying the separation between participants in any communication process, or the positions with which they are associated. It may be further implied by the sense in which there is any "disconnect" between two such perspectives. Such a

sense is evident in distinguishing participants in a negotiation process as being "far apart". Again there is a case for exploring the metaphors for **distance** and **length** -- in contrast with **proximity**, togetherness, and efforts to ensure that people are "on the same page" (or "singing from the same hymn sheet"). (Craig Locatis, et al, *Communication and proximity effects on outcomes attributable to sense of presence in distance bioinformatics education*, *BMC Medical Education*, 11, 2011, 10)

- **"time"**: whether implying the time required for insight to travel from one participant to another, or especially for the time required for the "distant" perspective of one participant or discipline to be recognized by another. The metaphorical use of **time** may prove suggestive. The relevance is obvious when distance is translated into time, as when participants in a conflict are said to be "light years apart".

Young used the measure formulae of physics to interweave these 3 experientially-related "insights" to form a pattern of 12 -- distinguished as 3 groups of 4, and as 4 groups of 3. One adaptation of his configuration to dialogue is presented separately in tabular form (*Typology of 12 complementary dialogue modes essential to sustainable dialogue*, 1998).

Relevance to meta-communication: In adapting that pattern to articulate a meta-communication framework, those "physical" distinctions, understood as metaphors, might be further explored as follows:

- **distance (L)**: is potentially suggestive of a form of cognitive separation (or "distance") from immediately observable otherness, possibly to be understood in terms of the array of distinctions articulated by the Zen ox-herding pictures, or by Cadell Last (as noted above)
- **distance "squared" (L²)**: this invites consideration of the "complexification" of distance, possibly to be understood in terms of circularity or self-reference, again as suggested by Cadell Last, and potentially by the focus of Freemasonry with respect to "on the square". No use is however seemingly made of distance "cubed" (L³). However of potential relevance, it is appropriate to note the significance accorded to the role of a **"power law"** in communication:
 - Shahadat Uddin, et al: *Power-law behavior in complex organizational communication networks during crisis*, (*Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications*, 390,2011, 15)
 - Steven L. Johnson, et al: *Emergence of Power Laws in Online Communities* (*MIS Quarterly*, 38, 2014, 3)
 - Marc Serra-Peralta, et al: *Lognormals, power laws and double power laws in the distribution of frequencies of harmonic codewords from classical music* (*Scientific Reports*, 12, 2022, 2615)
 - Iván G. Torre, et al: *Can Menzerath's law be a criterion of complexity in communication?* (*PLOS ONE*, 20 August 2021)
 - *Power Law Indicator Hypothesis for Social Systems* (*Love Design and Research*)
- **time (T)**: is conventionally understood in terms of change and movement, readily recognized in the development of any dialogue or communication process -- and the rate at which distance is traversed. It may be associated with what is recognized as the "speed" of a communication.
- **time (T²)**: is potentially suggestive of what is experienced as the **"intensity"** of a communication process, or "spontaneity", as suggested by the reference above to communication in crisis. As L/T² it is suggestive of the "velocity" of communication.
- **time (T³)**: this is particularly suggestive of the elusive nature of self-reflective consideration of a communication process, as might be inferred to be the perspective of the experienced or wise -- who may well choose to remain silent, avoiding communication of a "lower" order. As L/T³ it is then suggestive of a more considered appreciation in the light of learning over time -- hence an association with control. It may be especially associated with appreciation of timeliness and *kairos* -- in qualitative terms. Such subtlety, appropriately framed in relation to the "spirit of now", has been explored by **Peter Russell** as a physicist (*Waking Up in Time: finding inner peace in times of accelerating change*, Origin Press, 2008)

Significance of "mass"? Clearly of interest is then how "mass" (M) -- especially as "how much" -- is reframed in relation to the above and with respect to a "meta" perspective on communication, potentially as "massive significance"):

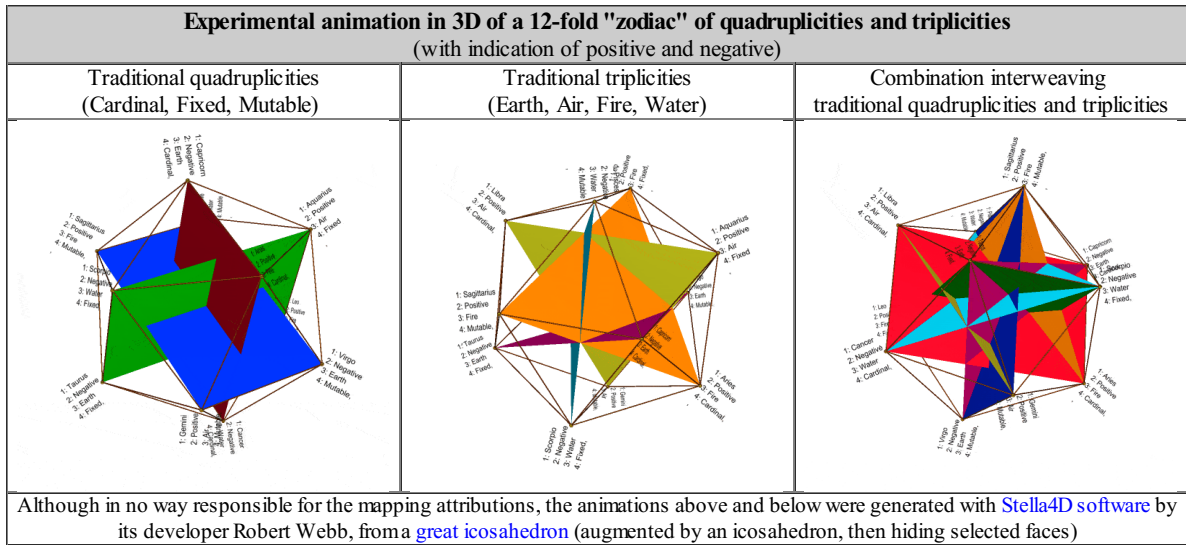
- **"fixed"?** the sequence ML, ML/T, ML/T², and ML/T³ suggests a progression in communication which could be recognized in the development of a conservative perspective, culminating through "matters of moment", in that of the "establishment".
- **"changing"?** the sequence ML², ML²/T, ML²/T², and ML²/T³ suggests a progression in communication which could be recognized in the development of faith (inertia), impulse (purpose), work (fact), knowledge (power)
- **"principled"?** by contrast the sequence L, L/T, L/T², and L/T³, in the absence of "mass", frames implications for observation, change (reaction), spontaneous act, and control

Non-hierarchical configuration of meta-communication modalities? There is a questionable bias associated with use of "levels" and "degrees" in conjunction with "higher" or "lower". There is therefore a case for considering how any sense of subtlety implied by meta-communication should be understood "otherwise" -- rather than being comprehensible only to the "initiated".

This can be usefully visualized by employing distinctive "planes" in a spherical configuration. The plane metaphor features in common parlance where difficulties of communication are attributed to people being "on different planes" -- without necessarily implying that one plane is "higher" or "lower" than another. The difference can be visualized by presenting the distinctive planes as variously oriented to one another -- but within the same sphere.

As discussed and illustrated separately, the 12 conditions which Young associated with the zodiac can be usefully mapped into an

icosahedron (given its 12 vertices) -- as one significant approximation to a sphere (as indicated below). This could then be considered both as a **3D presentation of the zodiac, with its experiential implications**, and as an indication of the distinct control functions envisaged by Young with respect to any "psychopter", as previously discussed (*Spherical mapping of conditions traditionally associated with the zodiac*, 2014).

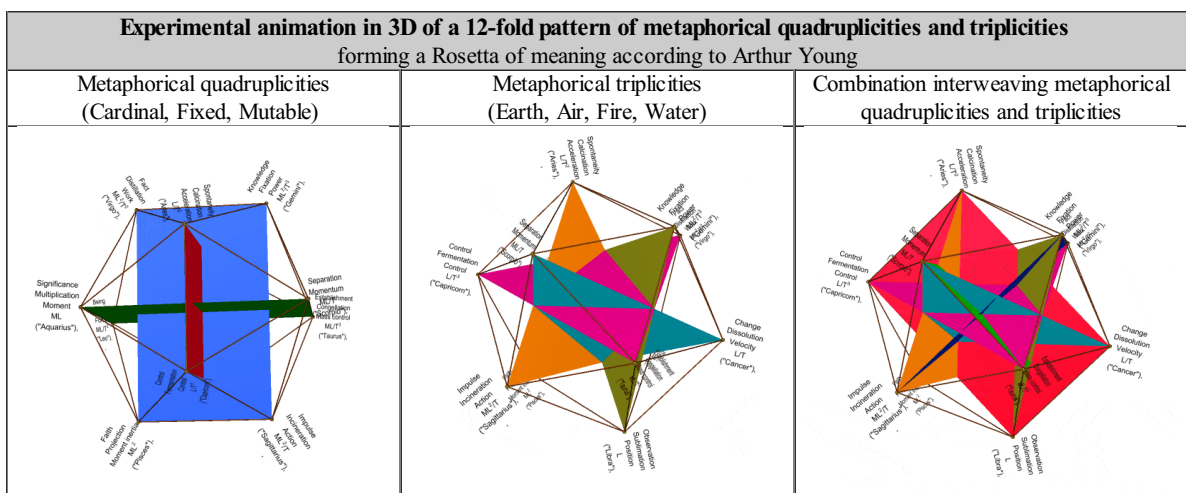


A Rosetta of meaning in 3D? The attributions above can be replaced by those suggested by Arthur Young in his circular Rosetta of meaning. Given Young's original helicopter inspiration, the animations are reminiscent of requirements of **aircraft control in 3D** (**yaw**, **pitch**, and **roll**). As in the above animation, a distinction is made below between 4 sets of contrasting threefold qualities ("**triplicities**") and 3 sets of contrasting fourfold modality ("**quadruplicities**"). In the right hand animation, the rectangles have long been recognized as having the proportion of **golden rectangles**.

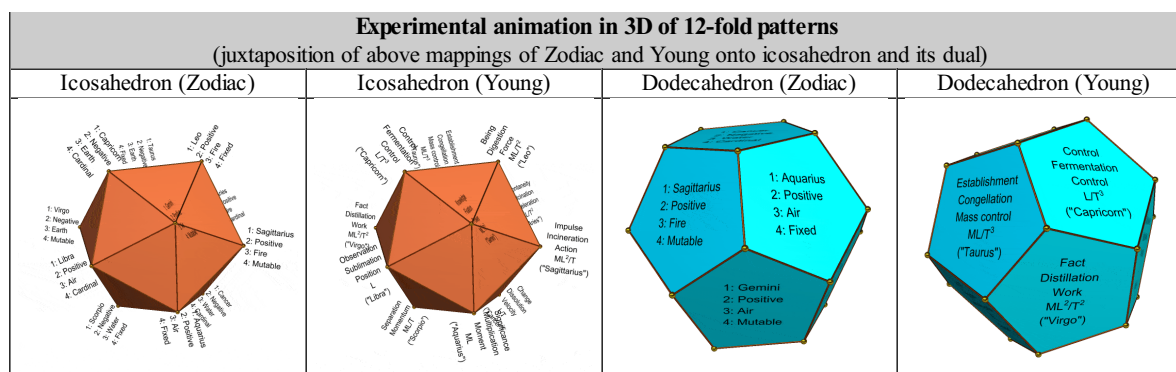
With respect to the quadruplicities, Young distinguishes the "cardinal" pattern as **four acts**, the "fixed" as **four states**, and the "mutable" as **four relationships**.

The "negative" signs are clustered by two of the traditional triplicities (termed **earth** and **water**); the "positive" by the two other triplicities ("fire" and "air"). The two types are combined in the following animation (again the work of Robert Webb) -- but with addition of a circumsphere and attribution of labels to the 12 vertices (not to be attributed to Robert Webb).

Each triplicity or quadruplicity is a distinct configuration of "positive" and "negative" -- as otherwise represented in the preceding 2D circular animation. As argued here, these are indicative more generally of contrasting values -- dualities, polarities, binaries. The vertices are then distinguished in terms of a 4-fold pattern (of 3 quadruplicities), a 3-fold pattern (of 4 triplicities), a 2-fold pattern (of positive and negative). For mnemonic purposes the singular quality of each vertex is also labelled with the zodiac sign -- given widespread familiarity with each.



The images above can be rendered below (without their use of face transparency). As indicated below right, with the dodecahedron as the geometric dual of the icosahedron, a similar mapping can be made of the distinctive modalities onto its 12 differently oriented faces -- suggestive of different "planes". The potential significance of the dodecahedron in this respect is discussed separately (*Time for Provocative Mnemonic Aids to Systemic Connectivity?* 2018) -- notably with regard to *Increasing the dimensionality of the archetypal Round Table?*



The indicative mapping exercise above highlights a question which it was not immediately sought to resolve, namely the possibility of alternative configurations. This is made evident by the traditional association of polarity with the pattern of signs, and how it translates into representation by the planes.

Although not explicitly associated with the 12 positions of the zodiac, it is appropriate to consider how the 6 polarities could be understood in terms of the arguments of [Edward de Bono](#) (*Six Frames For Thinking About Information*, 2008). Similarly, consideration could be given to the 15 fundamental transformations distinguished by [Christopher Alexander](#), for which icosahedral mappings were separately explored and illustrated in relation to the associated *Fifteen Great Circles on a Sphere* (*Tentative adaptation of Alexander's 15 transformations to the psychosocial realm*, 2010).

With respect to any recognition of distinctive "planes", and their challenge to comprehension, consideration can be given to representing their relationship as mutually orthogonal, as in separate exercises (*Mutually orthogonal Abrahamic symbols from the perspective of projective geometry*, 2017; *Mandelbrot sets rendered in a mutually orthogonal configuration of 3 complex planes*, 2019).

Higher derivatives of time? Especially intriguing with respect to any understanding of degrees or levels of meta-communication is the possibility of insight corresponding to physical phenomena potentially to be recognized in relation to T^{-4} , T^{-5} , or "greater", as discussed separately in terms of *Clues to distinguishing "degrees of intensity"* in the light of Young's articulation (*Cognitive Implication of Globality via Temporal Inversion: embodying the future through higher derivatives of time*, 2018).

Higher derivatives (as suggested by the following extension) are necessarily a challenge to what can be unambiguously named, explained and experienced. The terms in the scientific literature necessarily emerge from an (unfortunate) technocratic bias, typically disinclined to explore any experiential implications -- despite a degree of recognition that planes may well be piloted "by the seat of the pants". With respect to the rate of change of acceleration, Young notes:

But what name and what meaning can we give to this? The name given by aeronautical engineers is **jerk**, probably because when acceleration is changed by automatic control, it does so in an all-or-nothing fashion which results in a jerk. **But in the general case, as in human control, it need not be a jerk... a change in acceleration is what we mean by control...** (pp. 15-16) [emphasis added]

This confusion is evident in the discussion below with respect jolt, jerk, jounce and snap. Thus some authors treat jolt, jerk and jounce as synonymous, and corresponding to L/T^3 . Jounce may more commonly be understood as the rate of change of jerk (L/T^4). **Crackle** is assertively recognized as the fifth derivative (L/T^5), with **pop** as the sixth derivative (L/T^6).

Psychosocial implications? The lack of clarity is especially relevant to the confusion in any psychosocial systemic analogue. Young's insight that, under human control, a jerk **need not be a jerk**, is fundamental to the argument which follows -- as with the implications in jargon usage of the term. It is however possible that traditional Eastern disciplines of meditation, may have recognized and named these quite otherwise.

Forms of meta-communication potentially associated with higher derivatives of time as identified by little known jargon terms in physics and engineering			
T^{-4}	L/T^4 --- [Jounce]	ML/T^4	ML^2/T^4
T^{-5}	L/T^5 --- [Snap?]	ML/T^5	ML^2/T^5
T^{-6}	L/T^6 --- [Crackle?]	ML/T^6	ML^2/T^6
T^{-7}	L/T^7 --- [Pop?]	ML/T^7	ML^2/T^7
T^{-8}	L/T^8 --- [Lock?]	ML/T^8	ML^2/T^8
T^{-9}	L/T^9 --- [Drop?]	ML/T^9	ML^2/T^9

Of relevance to degrees of meta-communication are the earlier discussions of these seemingly obscure physical distinctions:

- Psychosocial implication of jerk, jolt, jounce and snap?
- From sociophysics to learning to jounce?
- Varieties of recognition in practice of an elusive missing dimension
- Clues to experience of higher derivatives of time
- Higher degrees of comprehension and their "compactification"?

How indeed is a "flash of insight" to be associated with a meta-communication framework and the possibilities of collective "meeting

magic"?

Memetic code and/or Mnemonic code? Familiarity with the genetic code, and related insight with regard to [memetics](#), has inspired some consideration of the possibility of a memetic code -- to be organized in some manner yet to be highlighted (M. Pitkänen, *Could one find a geometric realization for genetic and memetic codes?* 30 March 2013; *Dynamic Societies: Innovation is a Bug in Memetic Code*, *World Creation Society*, 3 April 2020; Jim Ritchie-Dunham, *The Memetic Code of an Agreements Field*, 15 August 2016; Paul Kordis, *The Memetic Code and Genetic Survival*, Caristas Consciousness Center).

Of related interest with respect to discourse is the role of a mnemonic code in a society exposed to increasing erosion of collective memory and historical amnesia (*Societal Learning and the Erosion of Collective Memory*, 1980). As clarified in a particular case by Martin H. Weik (*Mnemonic Code*, *Computer Science and Communications Dictionary*):

A code that can be remembered comparatively easily and that aids its user in recalling the information it represents... Mnemonic codes are widely used in computer programming and communications system operations to specify instructions. The systems can be designed to be responsive to arbitrary sets of symbols, but the mnemonic codes are used to help the programmers and operators remember the codes that represent the instructions and commands...

It could be argued that traditional patterns like the zodiac have proven to be of considerable mnemonic value by associating memes with its elements to form memetic patterns. By contrast, Chinese culture notably offers the 8-fold *BaGua* pattern. That pattern of memes has been extended to form that of the 64-fold *Yi Jing* -- potentially calling for its recognition as a mnemonic code. Speculatively it might then be asked how Young's 12-fold Rosetta pattern, as a mnemonic code, might be related to the Chinese pattern -- assuming a degree of universality to any mnemonic code (as for the genetic code).

The genetic code is based on 4-fold nucleotide triplets or [codons](#). Correspondences of their 64-fold pattern with the elements of the *Yi Jing* have been extensively discussed (*Proof of concept: use of drilled truncated cube as a mapping framework for 64 elements*, 2015). One approach to a reconciliation of the 8-fold *BaGua* with Young's 12-fold pattern is to consider only those 8 functions which include "mass", "distance" and "time" together -- excluding the four which do not include "mass". It can then be asked how Young's 8 could be encoded otherwise for mnemonic purposes -- using the binary line coding characteristic of the *BaGua*.

One clue to such mnemonic reconciliation is through the classic elements (earth, air, fire, water) which feature as metaphors in both the zodiac pattern (as noted above) and in the *BaGua*. In the latter they are however associated with the 5-fold *WuXing*. Of particular value to the relevance to dialogue and discourse is the 64-fold adaptation of the *Yi Jing* commentary to dialogue (*Interrelationships between 64 Complementary Approaches to Dialogue*, 2007) -- and the manner in which it might be reconciled with that of Young (*Typology of 12 complementary dialogue modes essential to sustainable dialogue*, 1998).

With respect to the envisaged renewed focus on the 17 SDGs, of potential relevance is the manner in which these patterns merit consideration in terms of the [UN Summit of the Future](#) planned for 2024 -- in the light of the UN Secretary-General's vision for the future of global cooperation in the form of a report titled *Our Common Agenda* (2021). This builds on the *12 commitments contained in the Declaration on the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations*. The aspiration to "commonality" could be understood as implying the recognition of some form of universal memetic/mnemonic code.

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