



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

8 September 2007 | Draft

Daimon, Djinn, Muse and Duende

Variations on a timeless experience

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Extract from *Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity Sustainability as "psychically" defined* (2007)

Kairos -- the opportune moment for self-referential re-identification

A qualitatively significant period of time, possibly experienced as timeless, was termed *kairos* by the Greeks in contrast to *chronos* as sequential quantitative time. Modern echoes are to be found in:

- injunctions and efforts to "make space for quality time",
- the challenge of seizing the moment (*Carpe Diem*),
- the importance attached to detecting auspicious moments (notably amongst those of eastern cultures) and associated [auspicious symbols](#),
- the timeless moments celebrated by haiku poetry (cf *Ensuring Strategic Resilience through Haiku Patterns*, 2006),
- "taking courage" in a desperate crisis situation (an emergency, going "over the top"), possibly to be subsequently celebrated by a fourfold medal (such as the [Victoria Cross](#) or the [Iron Cross](#)),
- certain forms of suicide: self-immolation (notably as practiced by Buddhist monks), *seppuku* (in the Japanese tradition), and possibly *kamikaze* acts (by Japanese pilots) and suicide bombing (inspired by *jihad*),
- an overriding sense of fate or destiny,
- transformative moments of discovery, realization or conversion (satori, etc)
- the moment of *duende* as the transformative experience of flamenco.

Kairos may be described as an "irreducible singularity" -- an experiential singularity in contrast with, or by analogy to, a [technological singularity](#). How the singularity of experience can be thought through the concept of a "technics of the self" is explored by Jean-Philippe Milet (*Experience as Technique of the Self, Tekhnema 2: Technics and Finitude*, Spring 1995). It could be understood as a cycle of periodicity zero -- perhaps as implied by the final image in the series of 10 [Zen ox-herding pictures](#).

It is perhaps no coincidence that this transformative moment is echoed in the spirit of flamenco -- as described in a review by Stephanie Merritt of Jason Webster's *Duende: A Journey in Search of Flamenco* (2002)

'Duende' is one of those words that is almost impossible to translate into English, because its meaning relies on a wide frame of reference that even many Spaniards would have difficulty explaining, so intimately is it rooted in Andalusian culture, particularly the music and lifestyle of flamenco. Perhaps the closest rendering would be 'spirit', but duende is far more than this -- it is the essence of flamenco, a moment of transcendence, almost possession, that is produced as the singer, dancer and guitarist merge into each other's rhythm. But its meaning spills over from the music into a way of life, as Jason Webster reveals in his memoir of a search for the elusive spirit of Spain and its music....It is impossible to convey the feel of *cante jondo* (the 'deep song') in any language.... [\[more\]](#)

As famously described by the Spanish poet, [Federico Garcia Lorca](#) (*Play and Theory of the Duende*, 1933):

These dark sounds are the mystery, the roots thrusting into the fertile loam known to all of us, ignored by all of us, but from which we get what is real in art. . . . Thus duende is a power and not a behavior, it is a struggle and not a concept. I have heard an old master guitarist say: *Duende is not in the throat; duende surges up from the soles of the feet*. Which means it is not a matter of ability, but of real live form; of blood; of ancient culture; of creative action.

In an account of the Greek deities of time, Amanda Núñez (*Los pliegues del tiempo: Kronos, Aión y Kairós*), notes with respect to Kairos: *Esta tercera divinidad es menor (en el mejor de los sentidos de la palabra). No es un gran dios de lo eterno, sino un diosecillo, un duende, un daimon o demonio, que llamarían los griegos*. As notably adopted by Andalusian gypsies, the account of *duende* by

Joseph Rouzel (*L'éthique dans les pratiques sociales*, 2004) relates it to an Iberian adaptation of the *djinn* of Arab culture, itself related to the *daimon* of Mediterranean cultures -- to which Socrates famously accorded attention at his death.

For the Greeks of Plato's time, the "gods" were understood to be archetypal or imaginal figures accessed through the arts, dreams, oracles and other forms of active imagination. It was considered that their invocation called on imaginal personifications with autonomous natures, capable of imparting information -- inspiration -- not easily accessible to the ego. A form of communication with such a *daimon* was possible -- much as modern artists may attentively cultivate communication with their "muse". With the establishment of the church, the *daimon* was "demonized" and its more "agreeable" (less mischievous) aspect was transformed into a "guardian angel." [more more]. It has however been argued from a psychotherapeutic perspective by James Hillman (*The Soul's Code*, 1996) that such demonization arose from a focus on situations of dysfunctional relationship with a personal *daimon*.

The nature and role of the early understanding of the Platonic *daimon* -- the "inner voice" -- and its aesthetic evocation, was a central theme of the Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino (cf *Composing the Present Moment: celebrating the insights of Marsilio Ficino interpreted by Thomas Moore*, 2001). Neil Mann (*The System of W. B. Yeats's A Vision*) provides a helpful account of the relevant understanding of the Irish poet W B Yeats (*The Daimon*). As might be expected a relationship of his fourfold vision to that of Ezekiel and William Blake is noted, in commenting on Blake's fourfold symmetries (*Yeats's Vision and William Blake*) -- as by Kathleen Raine (*W. B. Yeats and the Learning of the Imagination*, 1999).

Rouzel's commentary on Lorca's account offers useful insights into how the *duende* or *daimon* might be apprehended and embodied as an autonomous, elusive, time-centred "entity", evoked by the aesthetics and rhythm of poetry and music -- in the moment.

A related embodiment of rhythm through song -- of great cognitive significance -- has been well-described by poet-philosopher Antonio de Nicolas (*Meditations through the Rg Veda*, 1978) in relation to a fourfold tone-based language of Vedic culture (as quoted with regard to *Playing with fundamental quaternaries* in: *Dynamic Reframing of "Union": implications for the coherence of knowledge, social organization and personal identity*, 2007).

It is in such a temporal condition of *kairos* that the above-mentioned fourfold strategic initiatives are meaningfully interwoven as an imaginative cognitive fusion, embodying environmental cycles, and reframing conventional understanding (seemingly mischievously). Their comprehension, otherwise, as disparate incompatible initiatives is characteristic of what Magoroh Maruyama terms "sub-understanding" -- a failure of "polyocular vision". It is their qualitative fusion that enables imaginal transformation of energy resourcing -- to which psychic time is the key.

Given the cross-cultural, management cybernetic perspective from which he argues (Magoroh Maruyama, Polyocular Vision or Subunderstanding, *Organization Studies*, 25, 2004, 3, pp. 467-480), it is possible that many modern problems of governance -- environment, resources, health, energy, education, employment, overpopulation -- could be fruitfully reframed as sub-understanding of psychicity and the embodiment of rhythm. Such sub-understanding is a failure to "re-member" and see Bateson's "pattern that connects" -- where "see" and "pattern" are necessarily to be reframed through a kind of cognitive synaesthesia, rather than through Maruyama's uni-modal poly-"ocular" (cf *Cyclopean Vision vs Poly-sensual Engagement*, 2006).



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