El-Attractor -- Timeless Complex Dynamic

Health, Wealth, Stealth / Youth, Couth, Truth

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Introduction

This is an exploration of the complex relationship between health, wealth and stealth -- as they may be variously understood, notably in relationship to governance. They are seen here as forming a triadic pattern of relationships. The relation between any two being unstable under the influence of the one that is minimized, if not completely excluded. This dynamic pattern has as its governing focus a central attractor -- as understood by the complexity sciences. Triadically displayed the pattern highlights seven zones that merit particular reflection in relation to the whole.

As a meditation on the origin, understanding and operation of this attractor, one device used here is the phonetic commonality shared by health, wealth and stealth. They form a unique set in English rhyming dictionaries that includes no other words. In this spirit it is suggested that the common root "ealth" may be considered as related phonetically in an interesting way to "El", with its religious implications -- of notable significance in a world increasingly guided by faith-based governance. For convenience, the attractor is therefore named El-Attractor for reasons which are here made clear.

As a complement to the above exploration, its logic may also apply to the relationship between youth, couth and truth. Again it could be argued that these represent a unique set in phonetic terms with a complex pattern of relationships between them. As a complement it is argued that these too can be understood as centred on the same attractor.

The exploration was triggered by a project on the relationship between truth (faith) and wealth (prosperity) which gave rise to the value-related portion of Preliminary NetMap Studies of Databases on Questions, World Problems, Global Strategies, and Values (2006). Whilst this exploration is serious in intent, it is also to be understood as an effort to play fruitfully with possibilities (cf Humour and Play-Fullness: essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity, 2005; Playfully Changing the Prevailing Climate of Opinion: climate change as focal metaphor of effective global governance, 2005).

Poesis as a prerequisite for autopoiesis -- in psychosocial systems?

Poesis: Ian Johnston (Lecture on Plato's Republic, 1997) explores the significance of poesis as attributed to Plato. Johnston chooses to see poesis (meaning making) as referring to all common forms of artistic creativity in the visual and plastic arts, music, drama, poetry, and prose fiction. His focus is on the connections between these common activities and the political and moral order. For the purpose of the following exercise the emphasis is placed on aesthetic associations and how they enable and reinforce a particular pattern of understanding.

Additional significance to poesis (or poiesis in Greek) is acquired from contemporary use of "autopoiesis". This shares the same Greek root and is used, notably by the complexity sciences, to describe self-creation or self-organization. It was originally used by Humberto Maturana to refer to "the center of the constitutive dynamics of living systems" (cf Humberto Maturana and Francisco J Varela, Autopoiesis and cognition: the organization of the living, 1980) [more]. It now refers to the dynamics of a non-equilibrium system,
namely organized states (also called dissipative structures) that remain stable for long periods of time despite matter and energy continually flowing through them. It is this flow that maintains the organization of any such open system. (cf Humberto Mariotti Autopoiesis, Culture and Society).

In what follows, the *poesis* argument would rely solely on the mnemonic power of rhyme in constituting a pattern (or template) of significant connectedness -- and entraining a degree of identification, possibly even to a powerful degree. This is made evident in the problematic role attributed to violent lyrics (typical of rap) in promoting street violence. Rhyming chants are typical of political protest demonstrations, as notably exemplified during the Vietnam war ("Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?").

This disruptive capacity was a factor in Plato's widely-noted reservations regarding *poesis* in The Republic. Such "defensive" reservations are strangely echoed by the US military (under the neo-conservative Bush regime) for whom poetry ... presents a special risk, and DoD [Department of Defence] standards are not to approve the release of any poetry in its original form or language (Leonard Doyle, Inmates' Words: The Poems of Guantanamo, June 2007). The Republic of the United States of America is the oldest constitutional republic.

Systemic linkages, typically of the kind valued in the collective memory of cultures, may therefore be expressed and "re-membered" through rhyme.

**Epistemological role of sound** This is highlighted by Antonio de Nicolas (in a personal communication to form part of an article entitled Untenable Beliefs) as follows:

> Christians have had a great problem with the Trinity. One God changes into three forms of Father, Son, Holy Spirit. There is no reconciliation in the three from a literary perspective, a logical one, or an intelligible one, so they settled for a mystery. However, if you shift the problem from a literary culture to an oral/audial one you have the following set up (paying no attention to names for they can be exchanged at will) when the one divides (using the musical model and oral criteria) you have an octave, and divided again you have the fourth and automatically the fifth... So the mystery is solved, the three is the sacred number and (visual) forms disappear. [more]

With respect to a tone-based (musical) argument, the reasons for the precautions expressed by Plato have been highlighted in tone-based terms in unusual studies by Ernest G. McLain (*The Pythagorean Plato: prelude to the song itself*, 1978; The Myth of Invariance: the origins of the gods, mathematics and music from the Rg Veda to Plato, 1978).

As with some religions, esoteric traditions of course attach great importance to music and its impact on consciousness. In the Renaissance period this was recognized in terms of natural or sympathetic magic, notably as articulated and practiced by Marsilio Ficino following his translation of the Corpus Hermeticum (1471). This was a major focus of the work of Frances Yates on memory (Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, 1964; The Art of Memory, 1966; Theatre of the World, 1969). The classical Art of Memory is said to have been invented by a poet named Simonides. This process of re-membering suggests the value of exploring autopoiesis as re-membering "the pattern that connects" (in the terms of Gregory Bateson).

Music of course continues to be valued for creating ambiance and mood in support of an endeavour -- whether commercial, therapeutic or spiritual. A case may be made for its essential role in support of social change (cf A Singable Earth Charter, EU Constitution or Global Ethic? 2006). This possibility also applies to poetry (Poetry-making and Policy-making: Arranging a Marriage between Beauty and the Beast, 1993) -- hence its possible relationship to autopoiesis.

A complex case can also be made for the role of psychoactive drugs in enabling both poesis and consequently autopoiesis (cf Marcus Boon, The Road of Excess: a history of writers on drugs, 2002).

**Emotional "logic"**. The assumption is widely made that arguments, to be credible, need to be made within a framework of causal logic susceptible to certain standards of proof. Failure to do so is then held to guarantee that the arguments do not carry any weight. The difficulty is that arguments articulated according to such standards are notable for their failure to convince and for their vulnerability to counterarguments. Many policy issues -- such as climate change, over-population, environmental degradation, proliferation of weapons, injustice -- do not "carry weight" despite such articulation. The arguments do not engage with the rhythm, pace and pattern of behaviour of the individual and therefore do not enthrall people and engender action. This is the fundamental challenge of "generating the will to change".

The question might be asked how the following "work" (when they do): theory, design, song, poetry, credo, demo, chant, symbol (logo). In particular why are chants -- notably political chants -- significant in engendering work and change? What was the catalytic role of "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" in Vietnam protest, or of Metro, Boulod, Dado for 1968 French student riots? The response may lie in the manner in which they engage an emotional logic, or emotional intelligence, that offers a form of dynamic coherence that causal logic does not (cf Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ, 1996). This would be a form of dynamic gestalt engendering action where the excellent "arguments" of Michael Moore (Bowling for Columbine, 2002) and Al Gore (An Inconvenient Truth, 2006) significantly fail.

Given the role of alliteration, rhythm and rhyme in a political chant, it might be asked how many musically distinct chants are required to carry and engender the variety of changes necessary for sustainable development -- for stable change. Does the Declaration of Human Rights fail to "work" because it has not been designed to engender the requisite variety of chants -- an "octave" of chants? The challenge of integrating emotions into understanding political change is as yet at an early stage (as summarized by Emma Hutchinson and Roland Bleiker, Fear No More: emotions and world politics).

Paris Arnopoulos (Sociophysics: cosmos and chaos in nature and culture, 2005) has emphasized triadic clustering of concepts, notably in
relation to political order. R Buckminster Fuller (Synergetics: explorations in the geometry of thinking, 1975) has demonstrated the need for omnitriangulation as a fundamental requirement of system integrity:

Not until we have three noncommonly polarized, great-circle bands providing omnitriangulation as in a spherical octahedron, do we have the great circles acting structurally to self-interstabilize their respective spherical positionings

It is possible therefore that the integrity of psychosocial systems, and the connectivity of Bateson's "pattern that connects", involve an "omnitriangulated" emotional engagement. To that extent Bateson's mental focus on Mind and Nature: a necessary unity (1980) may be obscuring the need for an essentially emotional "glue" through which coherence is engendered and experienced -- as tends to be obvious from a depth ecology understanding as articulated by David Abram (Depth Ecology, 2002; The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world, 1996). In discussing depth ecology (from the perspective of Abram and others) and the use of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology in relation to reflection in a sensuous rationality, Chris Schlottmann (Embodiment and Embeddedness in Philosophies of Ecology: deep ecology, Confucian ecology, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, 2002) argues:

A significant tension develops from integrating sensuousness with rationality. Sensuousness and emotion do not seem to have the quality of self-reflection, as intellect does. Sensuous rationality is therefore not subject to this corrective mechanism, and seems to be less verifiable. Merleau-Ponty's visible-invisible reorientation allows for this disparity by differentiating the visible and invisible (thought/transcendence), yet positing their simultaneous, same-world presence. Humans can and do reflect, in order to analyze, imagine and perceive from a removed perspective, although they are sensuously embodied. The degree to which this reflection is accurate is still questionable, though, as emotions cannot reflect, whereas intellect can. According to this model, the disembodiment and abstraction of some Western rationality can be seen as a misuse of reflection, either an overuse of the faculty, or of abstraction. Reflection is vital to intellectual and psychological development and verification, but reflection has in many schools become a decontextualized tool instead of one that includes the fact that humans can never perceive from a wholly disembodied perspective. That humans perceive from within (not above) the sensuous world is an integral aspect of what would be considered proper reflection in Merleau-Ponty's model. Without it, humans become severed from the world.

**Autopoiesis:** However the case is also made in what follows for the fact that these aesthetic associations also effectively constitute a form of autopoiesis, namely that they point to, or evoke, an emergent system through which sets of values are organized to engender higher levels of significance -- notably of relevance from the perspective of the dynamics studied by the complexity sciences (cf Human Values as Strange Attractors: coevolution of classes of governance principles, 1993).

The triadic argument of Arnonoupolous has been criticized by Chris Goldspink (review of Sociocybernetics: Complexity, Autopoiesis, and Observation of Social Systems, 2001) as:

an example of what Khalil and Boulding [Evolution, Order and Complexity, 1996] call identificational slips -- associating or seeing as related, disparate phenomena on the grounds of a superficial resemblance. In this case it takes the form of suggesting a homologous relationship between a (long) list of natural science concepts and social phenomena where even metaphorical association would be stretching a point. Hence we have the suggestion of 'sociomass' and 'social inertia' and later even 'socio-sclerosis'. There is no attempt to justify the suggested homology or to argue for it. The concepts spanned include those derived from various positions, both Newtonian and complex systemic; with no recognition that these may not be incremental developments but rather are founded on incompatible assumptions.

In terms of the following argument however, this criticism may be flawed in its failure to take account of the manner in which individuals may engage emotionally to bind together sets of categories, otherwise treated as the "bloodless categories" of scholasticism. Chris Lucas (Ethics as Emotions: an evolutionary approach, 2004) argues that "ethics, as practised, are emotions and not thoughts and are in fact prior to ethical thought processes".

This is the question of how such "cognition" is "embodied" (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Philosophy in the Flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to western thought, 1999). The triangulation may be understood as thereby "grounded" or "anchored" in a manner consistent with the arguments of enactivism. The triangulated pattern is thereby given coherence from a fourth "perspective" such that the resulting tetrahedral configuration is a fundamental systemic embodiment in a sense explored by Buckminster Fuller.

The sustainability of autopoiesis in psychosocial systems -- the capacity for sustained self-organization in response to new configurations of circumstances -- is dependent on poiesis to re-member continually the factors intrinsic to that process, to the coherence of the outcome, and to its attractiveness. Autopoiesis in such systems is not sustainable if it is envisaged and designed in terms of "bloodless categories". This is the challenge of engendering and sustaining any "will to change".

**Separately: Health, Wealth and Stealth**

Curiously each of these values, as fully possessed by an individual or collectivity, shares the characteristic of manifesting as an extreme form of inequality relative to any contextual community as a whole. As such that degree of difference may constitute a powerful driver for a dynamic.

They may be viewed as distinct generic (or virtualized) forms of accumulation -- as with the economic understanding of dematerialization. In this sense each implies a form of political contradiction. In any such community the distribution of any of them is typically indicated by a Bell curve -- with few exemplifying the extreme forms, and many exemplifying them to some degree, and few
In their consideration here it is fruitful to see the three terms as indicators of more generic qualities, rather than as might be narrowly interpreted with: health encompassing a spectrum of non-physical understandings, wealth encompassing non-economic forms, and stealth reframed to include skills vital to accommodating to challenging circumstances (requiring discernment of appropriateness and opportunity, including craftiness):  

- **Health**:  
  - **Maximal**: Those most healthy are typically described as "glowing". Their health is however dependent on availability of resources (nourishment, etc) and the disciplined use of them, avoiding excess.  
  - **Minimal**: Ill-health, especially in its most chronic forms, is typically associated with lack of resources, or misuse thereof. Extremes of ill-health are of course characteristic of subsistence economies or of economic exploitation (sweatshops, bonded labour, etc)  

- **Wealth**:  
  - **Maximal**: Whether in narrow economic terms, reframed as prosperity, or extended to happiness, its acquisition is readily held to be self-justifying. This is even the case when extended to the accumulation of merit towards an award (or even a reward in a later incarnation).  
  - **Minimal**: The relative lack of material wealth may be experienced as life-threatening poverty. As poverty this may also be deployed as the relative lack of spiritual resources. Economic poverty may however be advocated as a spiritual practice.  

- **"Stealth"**: At a number of points below, "facilitative deception" is understood in relation to efficacy and learning:  
  - **Maximal**: Under these conditions it may be deployed as characteristic of many societies overly dependent on secrecy (cover-up) and confidentiality for the viability of their operations (where evident contradictions would otherwise be considered unacceptable). Framed as discretion, it may however be seen as vital to many initiatives, starting with the skills required of a hunter is acquiring food, but notably involving negotiation and diplomacy -- whether or not these are subsequently associated with broken promises. Many would argue that constitutional progress within the European Union has been undertaken, and is dependent upon, stealth -- exemplified by extreme reluctance to consult its citizens through referenda.  
  - **Minimal**: The possibility of functioning in the absence of any form of stealth is best considered in the light of the role of discretion (notably on the part of therapists or lawyers), excessive frankness, "white lies", "stolen moments" and any form of game-playing (including flirtation) dependent upon cultivating (and benefiting from) the uncertainty of others.  

As these pointers indicate (and those to follow), there is indeed an advantage in exploring generic rather than restrictive connotations of each of them -- notably to avoid premature closure on polarized positive or negative connotations (as with "stealth").

Each may also be understood as the preoccupation or expression of institutions, whether at the national or the international level:  

- **Health**: Notable examples include the World Health Organization and its various regional manifestations. Curiously debate within the WHO has tended to focus on ill-health, with relatively little focus on the nature of health -- except as defined by its absence.  

- **Wealth**: These include the international economic institutions, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as their functional analogues at the regional level. The Commonwealth community of nations offers and interesting example. Many institutions and programmes of course focus on the economic development of peoples and communities. Again the more general significance of "wealth" has typically not been a preoccupation, although recent years have seen an increasing focus on "happiness" -- notably in Bhutan where Gross National Happiness (GNH) is framed as an attempt to define quality of life in more holistic and psychological terms than Gross National Product. "Wealth" is recognized to be not necessarily a characteristic of well-being. It is however curious that poverty is independently advocated as a meritorious condition by many religions  

- **Stealth**: This is exemplified institutionally by the secret services and the covert operations of the international intelligence community, possibly through such security bodies as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or its analogues. Stealth is vaunted as an attribute of certain military technologies and, "for reasons of security" is a prime characteristic of the restricted accessibility of "classified" documents of government -- and the level of "confidentiality" expected in many large institutions. In this case it is its opposite, namely "truth" or "openness" that is relatively poorly reflected in institutions, despite claims to the contrary and efforts to promote "freedom of information". It is for this reason that the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and of Transparency International is so frequently cited as exceptional. Such clarification of truth may also be seen as the role of international tribunals. The promotion of truth through strategic leaking of confidential documents merits attention.

**Binary combination dynamics**

Reflection on the three extremes becomes more interesting when they are considered in their three dynamic binary combinations -- and in the light of the exclusion of the third (especially when the subtlety of these dynamics is illustrated by aphorisms and proverbs):

- **Health-Wealth**: As noted above, there is a degree of co-dependency between these:
  
  - **Privileged**: Wealth may indeed ensure the resources necessary for a form of health. The problem that has been encountered is that wealth is not a guarantee of health. Many of only modest wealth may be forced to adopt practices that are more conducive to health. Furthermore, health is not necessarily a condition for achieving wealth, as many health-
challenged have courageously demonstrated. Understood more generically, wealth may take the form of the acquisition of merit (in Buddhist terms, for example), with health then understood in terms of greater wholeness (as articulated by some forms of psychotherapy or by some spiritual traditions)

- **Underprivileged**: For the underprivileged achieving health and wealth is a natural aspiration. Many are however caught in a spiral of poverty and ill-health which severely impedes their possibility of getting out of the poverty trap.

- **Wealth-Stealth**: Again a degree of co-dependency may be recognized between these:
  - **Privileged**: For wealthy individuals and communities, there is a marked need to avoid drawing attention to their condition - recommendations in relation to kidnapping are a case in point. Stealth is vital to the protection of intellectual property, whether or not it is protected by patent. Both countries and corporations, together or collaboration, are assiduous in ensuring the confidentiality of some transactions in order to protect their competitive advantage, or to advance their interests. Legal proceedings typically depend on confidentiality prior to timely disclosure. However, of great interest in recent years has been recognition that wealth can be generated through openness, as exemplified by the open-source software community and the development of projects characteristic of the knowledge society, namely open source directories (Wikipedia, etc). These have challenged the assumption that wealth was necessarily dependent on stealth. They have also pointed to non-economic forms of wealth. In a more generic sense, with wealth understood as the acquisition of learning and insight, "stealth" may then take the form of the "trickery" used by educators (including mentors and spiritual guides) to enable such insight to be gained.
  - **Underprivileged**: The tendency to secretiveness in economically underprivileged communities has been well-recognized. This has been exemplified by "secrets" which it has been assumed could be exploited through patenting -- as in the issue of patenting traditional knowledge. Again such secrets, where they are central to the cultural identity of individuals and communities, point to other forms of wealth, even amongst the most economically impoverished.

- **Stealth-Health**: Surprisingly there is a degree of co-dependency here as well:
  - **Privileged**: The condition of health of the privileged is often a matter of secrecy, especially for those suffering from chronic, terminal or infectious illness -- the case of the HIV-positive is an example. Sustaining health may also be seen as requiring stealth, as with the use of prohibited drugs, obtaining organs for transplantation, or other practices of which others may not approve, or may find ridiculous. Where health encompasses spiritual health, the role of stealth has been well-framed in the iconic account of Carlos Castaneda (The Fire From Within, 1984) concerning mastery of awareness through systematic control of behaviour ("stalking") -- "behavior that could be categorized as surreptitious". However such "stalking is merely behavior with other people".
  - **Underprivileged**: Especially when defined in terms of nourishment necessary for health, stealth may be essential -- as exemplified by educators (including mentors and spiritual guides) to enable such insight to be gained.

**Triadic combination -- the dynamics of the attractor**

Each of the above binary combinations is curiously dependent on the missing third:

- **Health-Wealth**: As noted these call into question their dependency on stealth on the one hand, whilst implying a degree of association with openness and transparency for their fulfillment on the other.

- **Wealth-Stealth**: The dynamic between them raises the issue of the degree of health, or ill-health, achieved in seeking to resolve any conflicts between them.

- **Stealth-Health**: Again the dynamic between them raises the issue of the degree of wealth, or poverty, achieved in seeking to resolve any conflicts between them. ("Is the game worth the candle?"")

Together these dynamics are exemplified in the complex processes around those who combine these attributes in unique ways. The least problematic example is provided by "gurus". In various ways, but notably in order to sustain and enhance their status, their relationship to stealth ("secrets" to be imparted to an inner circle), health (engendered as a result of following prescribed practices), or wealth (in requirements of gifts from followers, advocacy of poverty, and the use of resources so accumulated), perceptions of the guru's resolution of these issues is complex and controversial and characterized by ambiguity. This is typically also the case with many traditional priesthoods.

In this sense it is the guru -- as an attractor -- who incarnates (to some degree) the fundamental dynamics of El-Attractor and the challenge to its comprehension. Typically it is the guru who also makes that very point.
Symbolic origins

Is there any feature of the terms health, wealth and stealth which is indicative of a more fundamental symbolic development of the argument?

It could be suggested that there is indeed fundamental significance to be attached to "el" -- from which the common root element "elth" or "ealth". In what way might 'el' then be considered fundamental -- or usefully associated with the name of an attractor for fundamental processes?

Curiously "El", is translated into English from pre-biblical languages as either 'god' or 'God' -- or left untranslated as El, depending on the context. In the Levant as a whole, El or El was the supreme god, the father of mankind and all creatures. Cognate forms are found throughout the Semitic languages. Elohim is a Hebrew word expressing concepts of divinity (being apparently related to the Hebrew word El), notably understood to means the powers of divinity. It has been attested to be the first word spoken by Adam. Among orthodox Trinitarian Christian writers it is sometimes used as evidence for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

A theophoric name (from the Greek: "bearing a deity") is such as to embed the name of a god, both invoking and displaying the protection of that deity. The practice, called theophory in onomastics, refers to this naming convention of adding a god's name (or the local equivalent of the generic term for god) to an individual's proper name. El theophory is especially significant in biblical names.

Does the case of health, wealth and stealth represent an interesting example of embedding in the names of fundamental values of an indicator of divinity? Does this in some way imply an understanding, through that symbolism, of the operation of divinity as an attractor - - as it might be understood within the framework of the complexity sciences? And in this case is that attractor "defined" in some way by the complex dynamics between health, wealth and stealth?

Truth (Sooth), "Couth" ("Ruth"), and Youth

As noted above the original trigger for this exploration was a project on the relation between truth (faith) and wealth (prosperity). "Truth" contrasts with "Stealth" in suggestive ways. This pointed to the possibility of a matching set of rhyming values -- using poiesis as a possible means of evoking autopoiesis. And indeed a limited matching set for consideration is:

- **Truth**: understood again in a more generic sense to include "sooth" and faith.
- **Couth**: understood as a relatively rare antonym of "uncouth". It may be usefully associated, in the context of this argument, with "truth" (occasionally noted as the missing antonym of "truthless"), implying a form of mercy, compassion and care. As with the relation between "truth" and "truthful", the archaic form "truthful" is occasionally used to mean full of pity or compassion (deriving from "rue", as does "truth" from "true"). In its strategic collective form this might be fruitfully extended to include notions of stewardship and sustainability -- with a "human face" (employing the famous qualifier introduced by UNICEF).
- **Youth**: perhaps to be understood to include potential and the future

As with the previous set, their binary relations may be explored, namely:

- **Truth-Couth**:
- **Couth-Youth**:
- **Youth-Truth**:

And again the argument with respect to the triadic relation may also be fruitfully explored to note how each of the binary relations is essentially unstable and dependent on the missing third in the set. These dynamics are also exemplified in the complex processes around those who promote the combination of these attributes in unique ways -- again the case of a "guru" is fruitful as with many traditional priesthoods. In this sense, again, it is the guru -- as an attractor -- who incarnates (to some degree) the fundamental dynamics of an attractor and the challenge to its comprehension. Typically it is the guru who also makes that very point.
**Common attractor**

This approach becomes very intriguing if the "attractor" governing the value dynamic of the first set -- El-Attractor -- is considered as necessarily identical with that governing the second. In other the above schematics are co-centric.

The result is especially striking when the triadic representations are superimposed, rotating one 180 degrees with respect to the other.

Within this framework a number of systemic features can be explored:

- **down-pointing triad**: a clockwise attractor cycle here might be understood to be driven by:
  - the aspiration of the empowered (healthy) to greater prosperity (wealth), perhaps including symbols of wealth such as children, property or heritage -- possible involving a degree of disempowerment or exploitation of others
  - the need for the relatively prosperous to develop skills to enhance and protect their condition -- developing a competitive advantage over others or engaging with their environment strategically to that end
  - the problematic impact on health, through such stressful endeavour

- **up-pointing triad**: a counter-clockwise attractor cycle here might be understood to be driven by:
  - the search by youth for truth (insight, wisdom) regarding their situation in the world
  - the sense of compassion and pressure to care evoked by the discrepancies highlighted by knowledge and truth
  - concern for the future, represented by youth, possibly evoking a protective need to reproduce and thereby to nourish an emergent future

- **complementarity of opposites**:
  - **Truth-Stealth**: the tension between these opposites derives from the abstract nature of truth and transparency in contrast with a need to engage in strategic action, applying intelligence, possibly using "facilitative deception" and surprise, in order to obtain resources necessary for sustenance -- partially associated with efficacy and operacy. This may be exemplified by the case of animal survival processes, whether as predators or in defence against them. The contrast might be highlight by the relation between con-ception (through truth) and de-ception (through stealth). It is a question of what is revealed (truth) or concealed (stealth) in order to enable. The challenge is evident in corruption, whether framed as "tipping" (to improve performance) or as "gracing the occasion".
  - **Youth-Health**: the tension between these opposites derives from the natural health of youth in contrast with the maintenance processes required to sustain health, especially with advancing age. More generally "health" here includes forms of the "past" surviving into the "present" in contrast with the forms of the "future" implicit in the "present" (or ageless) as a potential and emerging from it.
  - **Couth-Wealth**: the tension between these opposites derives from the contrast between the "ruthless" and "uncouth" nature of acquiring and maintaining prosperity (necessarily at the expense of others) and the compassion evoked in response to such actions (and the consequent condition of others and the environment). This opposition is to be recognized in the contrast between "for-profit" initiatives and "not-for-profit" (or altruistic) initiatives

**Symbolic representation of generic systems centred on attractors**

The above schematic, of obvious symbolic associations within western cultures, is also to be found within the vedic tradition where it corresponds to the Anahata chakra. This is the fourth primary chakra -- the heart chakra -- according to the Hindu Yogic and Tantric (Shakta) traditions. In Sanskrit the word anahata means unhurt, un-struck and unbeaten. Anahata Nad refers to the Vedic concept of unstruck sound, the sound of the celestial realm. The six-pointed star is indeed found in many traditions. In the Hebrew tradition, as the
Star of David, it also symbolizes the sphere of the heart. In the chakra tradition, the upright and inverted triangles symbolize balance, notably between polar opposites such as male and female, consciousness (spirituality) and creativity (practicality).

The traditional chakra representation offers further possible indicators, since the outer "petals" are labelled with the first 12 con-sonants of the Sanskrit alphabet: Kang, Khang, Gang, Ghang, Nang, Chang, Ching, Jung, Jiang, Nan, Tang, and Thang. With these are associated values described respectively as: lustfulness, fraudulentness, indecision, repentance, hope, anxiety, longing, impartiality, arrogance, incompetency, discrimination, and an attitude of defiance. These are presumably best to be interpreted in a more generic sense (Navigating Alternative Conceptual Realities: clues to the dynamics of enacting new paradigms through movement, 2002).

The bi-directional cycle is reminiscent of the distinction made by Arthur Young between learning and action through a 12-phase learning-action cycle, namely a cycle that could be traversed in either direction. The above schematic visually highlights these 12 phases (cf Characteristics of phases in 12-phase learning-action cycle, 1998).

More generally, given that the anahata chakra is the fourth in a set of seven, there is perhaps a case for seeing it as a generic representation of one kind of dynamic system (each centred on an attractor), which together with the others constitutes a typology of the range of systems of different complexity. Such an approach also points to the possibility of reflecting on the function of "deities", notably in any pantheon, understood as fundamental value-attractors of different types -- as with the Olympian dodekatheon.

Comprehension of the attractor dynamic as a resonance hybrid

The weakness of a schematic representation is that it obscures the nature of the dynamic. It is perhaps not for nothing that the above schematic is associated with the heart in quite different cultures. The essential characteristic of the heart is the dynamic which is the organic "motor" of the body. A heart is defined by that dynamic rather than as a static "thing". Whilst its role in that respect is fully documented as the preoccupation of the various cardiological disciplines, comprehension of its dynamic when used as a metaphor is less susceptible to disciplined reflection. However the challenges "of the heart" are well recognized in ever variety of romantic literature.

The question here is whether greater insight into the dynamic can be achieved by deliberately introducing a dynamic into the apparently static schematic above. One approach to this is offered through the counter-intuitive structural dynamic of the benzene molecule which is so fundamental to all organic forms (being effectively a definition of their fundamental constituent) and notably to human life. Of value in this approach are the learnings from the historical challenge to comprehending the structural integrity of that molecule -- despite extensive prior "analysis" of its composition as a supposedly static phenomenon.

As proposed by quantum chemist Linus Pauling, the integrity of the benzene molecule derives from its essential dynamic as a resonance hybrid [more]. The "bonds" between its six atoms may be understood to be in constantly shifting (re)configuration. It may in fact be understood as not one single schematic structure but as the alternation or oscillation between a set of distinct structures characterized by different configurations of bonds. No one of those structures is stable -- or even exists in reality. The gain in stability over the particular (non-existent) configurations is termed the resonance energy. This increases with the number of hypothetically (logical) "static" structures that are possible, especially when these (non-existent) structures are equal in energy.

Resonance therefore involves representing or modelling the structure of a molecule as an intermediate between several simpler but incorrect structures. Instead, the molecule exists in a single unchanging (quantum) "state", intermediate between the resonance structures and only partially described by any one of them. The challenge of comprehending and describing resonance in chemistry offers healthy precautionary insight into inappropriate assumptions about schematic representations and descriptions of a more complex reality -- especially that of psychosocial systems. The understanding is exemplified by the Sanskrit adage (and mantra) Neti Neti, meaning Not This, Not That.

Also unusual about the structure of the benzene molecule is the manner in which the atoms are bonded into a circular configuration. This was the profound insight of its original discoverer Friedrich Kekulé. It is has been frequently associated with the symbolism of the Ouroboros.

These characteristic elements suggest the possibility of interpreting the above schematic pattern around El-Attractor as taking the dynamic form of a resonance hybrid -- a structure in continual oscillation. As noted by William H. Calvin (Resonating with Your Chaotic Memories, 1996): Chaotic attractors are a more general way of thinking about resonance. Hence a focus on "resonance attractors".

Relevant to this discussion of the hexagonal configuration of the benzene molecule, Calvin presents his arguments in terms of a hexagon's activity as an example of a relevant spatiotemporal pattern, raising the question of how this might be represented as a spatial-only pattern that could recreate it. He comments: It is presumably the synaptic connectivity within the hexagon (in actuality, within a minimum of two adjacent hexagons but, most of the time, likely spanning dozens):

In any one hexagon of cortex, we can distinguish between internally generated spatiotemporal patterns and imposed ones (such as those that are due to recruitment from neighboring hexagons). It's the same distinction as in learning a new dance step, where traditional locomotion spatiotemporal patterns get in the way of copying the instructions from the caller. It's not an either-or situation: each hexagon's connectivity can either aid or hinder an imposed melody via resonance phenomena.
A fundamental psychosocial system in which to explore understanding of resonance is the family -- especially in the light of so-called "family values". Consider the possibility that the generic connotations of the six values configured in the schematic above could in fact operate together as a resonance hybrid. This contrasts with -- but possibly helps to encompass and explain -- the typically fuzzy articulations of "family values", whether by priesthoods, by politicians, by cultures or by those associated with families. It offers the possibility of a pattern of dynamic integrity to the set of family values which (as with the benzene molecule) elude efforts at static representations -- and appropriately honours that dynamic at the heart of the psychosocial system.

The focus would then be on:

- "health" of the family: here understood not only in its physical sense but also in the terms well articulated by family therapists. It would necessarily include the many issues relating to aging. This might also be extended to what some traditions would see as the "spiritual health" of the family.
- "wealth" of the family: here understood to include not only its material resources (property, goods, chattels, etc) but also the psychocultural resources, stories, traditions and rituals that were valued as essential to its recognized integrity and coherence
- "stealth" of the family: here understood in terms of its capacity to act as a team to ensure its survival in a potentially hostile environment -- the secret of its survival as a family, possibly over many generations and through highly turbulent conditions. Clearly in some families this collective intelligence and efficacy would primarily be seen in terms of "cunningness" or even "cunning" -- possibly termed secretiveness. Within the family"stealth" would also include the elegance with which information was shared or withheld in the interests of each -- even regarding whether fairies, bogeys, or "Father Christmas" were real.
- "truth" of the family: here understood to include not only comprehension of its essential integrity, but also that which may be so fiercely defended as its honour
- "couth" ("ruth") of the family: here understood to include not only the capacity of family members to care for each other but also their capacity to act appropriately in relation to others.
- "youth" of the family: here understood to include not only the commitment to reproduction and the care for the young, but also the potential that a new generation represents for the future.

Curiously one of the most systematic approaches to introducing a dynamic into a static six-fold schematic is that of one of the central classics of Chinese culture, namely the I Ching (or Book of Changes). Its 64 hexagrams are understood to encode the variety of configurations in any psychosocial system and the patterns of transformation between them (Transformation Metaphors: derived experimentally from the Chinese Book of Changes (I Ching) for sustainable dialogue, vision, conferencing, policy, network, community and lifestyle, 1997). The abstraction of this logical code inspired Leibniz in reflections contributing finally to binary computer coding. These are rendered comprehensible and relevant by repeated explicit explanatory references to the dynamics of the family.

Ironically early expectations that determination of the static coding structure of the human genome would be a sufficient basis for explanation of variance were frustrated by recognition that some variance of significance could only be explained by the dynamics of protein folding. Inappropriate folding usually produces inactive proteins with different properties. This recent discovery can perhaps be fruitfully associated with the earlier discovery of the relationship between the binary coding of the I Ching and the genetic code, especially with respect to the vitamins basic to human life (Martin Schonberger. I Ching and the Genetic Code, 1992; Katya Walter, Tao of Chaos -- DNA and the I Ching: unlocking the code of the universe, 1996). It has been shown how the binary coding of the Book of Changes (I Ching), as a representation of the DNA genetic code, can be transformed in a natural way to an I Ching representation of the RNA genetic code. Does this suggest a key essential to psychosocial systems?

It is indeed possible that the Chinese culture would be inherently more capable of articulating a comprehension of the complex dynamics associated with El-Attractor. This possibility might follow from the arguments of Susantha Goonatilake (Toward a Global Science: mining civilizational knowledge, 1999).

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