Engaging with Globality through Playful Re-categorizing

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Annex A of Engaging with Globality through Knowing Thyself (2008), Dimension 4 of a four-fold exploration. Produced on the occasion of the "coronation" of Barack Obama (as president of the country from which insightful leadership is expected in response to global problems) and of the "crowning experience" of the Davos World Economic Forum (for the instigators and observers of the global credit crisis and its consequences). [Engaging with Globality -- Dimension 1: Cognitive Realignment; Dimension 2: Cognitive Circlets; Dimension 3: Cognitive Crowns; Dimension 4: Knowing Thyself]

Overview of Engaging with Globality

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Introduction

This Annex develops the theme of Playfully engaging with globality through re-categorizing and re-classifying (as introduced in Dimension 4).

Its purpose is to provide a context for such playfulness and to introduce the "playful examples" developed in Annex B, Annex C and Annex D.

Humour

Whereas the gods have been held to play -- even mischievously and irresponsibly -- with humanity, perhaps a more fruitful understanding is to play with the cognitive modes associated with the categories offering an interface with globality. These might indeed then be held to be represented by gods, if only for mnemonic purposes. In the Age of Unreason (1990) of Charles Handy it is then appropriate to playfully engage with his Gods of Management (1995) -- and to elaborate his modest pantheon to Hindu proportions in the "changing work of organizations" (the subtitle of the latter book).

The vital role of humour has been reviewed in Humour and Play-Fullness: Essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity (2005). Arguably the global situation is now far too serious to rely in any way on the unimaginative, simplistic manipulation of those who are excessively skilled at just that -- or even only that (as the extreme financial risk-taking has demonstrated).

Elsewhere (Issues too Important to be Left to Specialists: Selected web resources, 2004) many sectors are identified where the issues are
effectively "too serious" to be left to those who claim to deal with them seriously. It was the "seriousness" of authorities over decades, and those seriously complicit with them, that sustained the financial superbubble and the dynamics that caused it to collapse. It may well their "seriousness" that is sustaining other bubbles -- to become apparent only when they too crash.

Calling upon humour may indeed be an important strategic approach -- especially in response to paradoxical complexity. As noted by Lizzy Davies (Satirists treat Sarkozy era as a big joke, The Observer, 8 February 2009):

A newly energised legion of French comics have decided that the best way to solve a problem like Nicolas Sarkozy’s presidency is to treat it as a joke. With pencils sharpened and throats cleared, they are paving the way for a return of popular political satire.

Satirical treatment of global leaders might be seen as appropriately complementing the mockery with which authorities of any kind have long treated -- and dismissed -- the possibility of strategic "alternatives" to their conventionally, unimaginative approaches and catastrophic consequences. More generally this is a feature of Liberating Provocations: use of negative and paradoxical strategies (2005). In a hope-challenged period, this may be contrasted with the use of "serious" by Paul Watzlawick (The Situation Is Hopeless, but Not Serious: the pursuit of unhappiness, 1993) who distinguishes situations which are:

- hopeless but not serious
- serious but not hopeless

The paradoxical relationship to the "pursuit of happiness" is explored elsewhere (Happiness and Unhappiness through Naysign and Nescience: comprehending the essence of sustainability? 2008).

**Playful examples**

Following the critical argument developed in Dimension 1, the explorations of Dimension 2 (Cognitive Circlets) and Dimension 3 (Cognitive Crowns) might appropriately be considered "playful" in their own right.

The argument in Dimension 1 regarding Symptoms of denial: gender and the underside of meetings highlighted the use of sexual metaphor in conventional language relating to strategy and governance.

If arguments regarding the consequence of sex (namely population increase) are as well-founded as those which sustained the financial system prior to its crash in 2008, then the argument of economists regarding population stabilization should be viewed with the deepest suspicion. They obscure surprises as unexpected as the crash of the financial system.

Perhaps the mystification associated with "lost knowledge" could, in the case of governance, be associated with a lost capacity to integrate the complex cognitive implications of sexual dynamics into decision-making. More to the point, in the absence of the cognitive dynamic associated with sexuality, is there any indication that the international community has "engendered" anything recognizably "new"?

Exploring sexual metaphor further, in the spirit of "guiding the canoe" -- rather than "pushing the river" -- two other exercises have been developed as an illustration of possibilities in the light of the dynamics associated with the 4th dimension. The approach is framed here below (in this Annex A). In Annex B these dynamics are "superficially" explicit although the significant cognitive processes are implicit. More complex cognitive "implications" are discussed in Annex C which provides a bridge to the challenging possibility of Annex D.

- **Annex A:** Engaging with Globality through Playful Re-categorizing
  - Humour
  - Playful examples
  - Logical vs Aesthetic correspondences
  - Meaningful connectivity
  - Surfaces and orifices
  - Consumption and consumerism
  - "Knowing" another
  - Courtship
  - Kama Sutra

- **Annex B:** Global Governance via a Double-breasted Strange Attractor
  - Strategic compass
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  - Global strategy and governance modelled by constraining local breast movement?
  - Double-breasted vs Single-breasted?
  - Tensional integrity of bubbles -- and their chirality?
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  - Implications for design of a regulated financial system?
  - Alternation
  - Globality, cosmology and birth
  - As "above", so "below"?

- **Annex C:** Engaging with Globality through Complexity Dynamics
  - Multi-global system?
  - "Bailouts" as "Pornbroking"?
  - Intimations of fruitful intercourse?


• Geometry and topology of thinking and valuing
• "Globalizing" the matrix
• Closest packing of spheres
• Institutional "pantheons"
• "Sexual relations" within "pantheons"?
• Internalizing a "dodekatheon" to inform the "dodecameral mind"
• Communicating globality through paradoxical complementarity
• Integrating "real" and "imaginary" through the plane of complexity

• Annex D: Intercourse with Globality through Enacting a Klein bottle
• Klein bottle: enacting a cognitive process
• "Distracting" aids to comprehension
• Psychodynamics of sexual experience

Given the challenge of rendering the governance of a complex dynamic system comprehensible, sexual metaphors offer a valuable and accessible cognitive interface worldwide. The annexes can be understood as complementary explorations of the same process. These subsequent annexes (B, C and D) can therefore be fruitfully understood in the light of the following remarks.

**Logical vs Aesthetic correspondences**

The role of humour emphasizes the need for **engaging attention** and **alleviating boredom** inherent in conventional, repetitive articulation of remedial strategies -- a boredom which reinforces the apathy that undermines democratic processes.

However, beyond attracting attention, there is a need to provide **comprehensible memorable patterns** through which complexity can be "re-membered" -- with interest -- over an extended period in order to enable appropriate action (In Quest of Mnemonic Catalysts -- for comprehension of complex psychosocial dynamics, 2007).

In advocating such use of mnemonic patterns there is a creative compromise to be made between **logical precision** and aesthetic **memorability** -- especially in relation to comprehension and communication of the initiatives of governance. The former is potentially long and boring whereas the latter may rely questionably, as in poetry, on "correspondences", "associations" and "resonances", that depend to a degree on "poetic licence", in order to suggest an integrative pattern where more is not feasible. Especially intriguing is the coherence offered by what is framed by some as "superstition" or inappropriate "suspicion" -- in a society in which paranoia regarding the implications of conspiracy theories has proven to be as healthy as not. Also intriguing is the semblance of satisfactory coherence offered by questionable forms of argument, typically identified in any focus on **critical thinking**. The inadequacy of problematic chains of arguments in no way prevents them from being used in strategic discourse, as documented by Julian Baggini (The Duck That Won the Lottery: and 99 other bad arguments, 2008).

The challenging comparison between the correspondences tolerated by science and those associated in symbolist and mythopoetic discourse is explored elsewhere (Theories of Correspondences -- and potential equivalences between them in correlative thinking, 2007). Some distinct approaches to the adequacy of "proof" include:

• proofs in mathematics based primarily on computer "number crunching", possibly over many days
• proofs requiring many hundreds of pages, possibly published in a wide variety of journals
• proofs which are comprehensible to very few and require many days to read/verify
• proofs of problems whose significance itself requires many years of study to comprehend
• proofs that selected large corporations are in vital need of bailouts using taxpayer funds

Aesthetics points to an interesting cognitive challenge in that much contemporary poetry and music now explores discordance and dissonance (in short time periods) rather than developing rhyme, harmony and consonance (integrating the work as a whole). No more than those of the UN Specialized Agencies, T-shirt slogans do not need to be in harmony with one another or some larger context -- a situation foreseen in the reference to a "blip culture" by Alvin Toffler (The Third Wave, 1981). This may correspond to the challenge of discontinuity to mathematics through the work of Heisenberg, Bohr and Schrödinger. **Assumptions about meaningful meaning may need to take the discontinuities of correspondences into account in order to be sustainably credible.**

**Meaningful connectivity**

The question is what constitutes meaningful connectivity capable of sustaining psycho-social coherence -- in contrast to the degree of connectivity on which the crashed financial system (of the past) was based. The criterion is whether the result forms a memorable, integrative whole of operational relevance.

Especially interesting is to contrast the connectivity of "rock solid" rational arguments with a looser degree of bonding amongst a set of points in an argument -- the "alignment" reviewed in Dimension 1 (and so vital to groupthink). This may be compared to the emphasis by Edward de Bono (I Am Right-You Are Wrong: from Rock Logic to Water Logic, 1992) regarding the merit of such a shift -- primarily in response to governance situations in which the rigidity of "rock logic" is dysfunctional in comparison with the advantages to be gained from "water logic". Such a framing might be especially relevant with respect to financial "bubbles" -- calling for "air logic"? As noted Dimension 4, a form of "fire logic" is even suggested by Peter Waterman (World Social Forum: the secret of fire, 18 June 2003).

In Dimension 1, the arguments of Richard Bronk (The Romantic Economist: imagination in economics, 2009) were noted with respect to the need by economists, in the light of the failure of their standard model, to explore other ways of framing their preoccupations, including biology and psychology.
The mnemonic and aesthetic value of sexual metaphors has been explored on that basis -- recalling that they are in some form fundamental to discourse within male-dominated strategic decision-making environments.

Surfaces and orifices

Framed in this way, interfacing with the otherness of globality takes place through the **surfaces** associated with the sensitivity of the various senses. However the higher degrees of engagement are associated with the sensitivity of these senses through **orifices**. In generic terms, this sensitivity is controlled and protected by opening and closing such orifices -- as clarified by Orrin E. Klapp (*Opening and Closing: strategies of information adaptation in society*, 1978). Issues of opening (as in "free trade") and closing (as in "protectionism") are of course a continuing focus of debate -- especially in the response to the economic consequences of failure of the financial system in 2008.

Generically orifices offering openings are to be understood in terms of the "intercourse" so fundamental to the significance of psychosocial processes, whether as dialogue, in sexual behavior or otherwise ("*Human Intercourse*" "Intercourse with Nature" and "Intercourse with the Other", 2007). Sexual behaviour is widely used in descriptions of interactions between competing perspectives and worldviews, notably in the political, corporate and sporting worlds (*Backside to the Future: coherence and conflation of dominant strategic metaphors*, 2003). However the mediating role of women in traditional "salons" (as mentioned in **Dimension 1**) is highlighted by the Une Reader (*Salons: The Joy of Conversation*, 2000) with a title that alludes to *The Joy of Sex* (1972) by Alex Comfort.

A much more powerful analysis of orifices in relation to comprehension and communications processes is that of mathematician Ron Akin (*Multidimensional Man: can man live in three dimensional space?* 1981), as discussed in **Dimension 2**. Any repetitive movement in relation to such an orifice is then distinguished according to that analysis in terms of "re-cognition" of cognitive and communication dynamics in relation to a "hole" or an "object".

Consumption and consumerism

A generic understanding of the operation of orifices is also vital to comprehension of processes of consumption, whether of commodities, services, insights or sensations. Perhaps most fundamental in this respect are the cognitive modalities associated with sexual intercourse. They provide the most powerful "model" of direct engagement with reality and otherness through a variety of interfaces.

However, in contrast with other "models", these have the unique merit of being widely comprehensible -- with the minimum of conventional education on which other understandings are dependent. Furthermore romance, flirtation, courtship, sex, pornography, etc are more immediately meaningful to most than the purportedly urgent issues of "distant" global society, supposedly vital to the survival of humanity as it is currently known. As a readily comprehensible process, it is one of the few to transcend binary logic by encompassing paradoxical patterns of acceptance and denial: Yes, No, Yes-and-No, neither-Yes-nor-No. The importance of this quadrilemma has been highlighted by Kimide Mushakoji (*Global Issues and Interparadigmatic Dialogue*, 1988).

There is an irony to the fact that the same term "model" is applied to the exemplars of highly valued beauty in the fashion industry. The metaphorical implications are notably worth exploring given that one of the original futurists, and articulator of models, Herman Kahn, was based at the *Hudson Institute* in Croton-on-Hudson (a little-known town named after the base of Pythagoras) -- as was the World Modelling Association, whose preoccupation was the world of fashion models. To what extent then can conceptual models be usefully understood as versions of reality variously "dressed up" for fashionably particular purposes? Both versions of course elicit patterns of consumption and consumerism.

"Knowing" another

Curiously, from a cognitive perspective, the Delphic injunction *Know Thyself* might be fruitfully understood as a complement to "knowing" another, in the classical Biblical euphemism. The challenge is how to integrate these two modes of cognition -- such as to engender both oneself and any other (cf *Existential challenge of "The Other*, 2007). From an epistemological perspective, many leads may be offered in the study by George Lakoff with Rafael Núñez (*Where Mathematics Comes From: how the embodied mind brings mathematics into being*, 2000). Two complementary approaches may be considered:

- **metaphor**: the generic significance of sexual behavior, notably in relation to mystical insight into the globality cognitively associated with an omnipresent deity, has long been explored in many traditions. More concretely than the poetic allusions typically used, it is the primary theme of the *tantra* of South Asian cultures for example. A significant use of metaphor has been explored by the feminist scholar Salle McFague (*Metaphorical Theology: models of god in religious language*, 1983). She discusses the considerable advantages of using metaphors of God as mother, as lover, and as friend, in contrast to the traditional patriarchal model. Her point being that no one metaphor is appropriate for all or appropriate for one person all the time.

More generally the question might be raised as to the appropriate set of metaphors to enable understanding of globality, perhaps through those of globalization (Markus Kornprobst, *et al. Metaphors of Globalization: mirrors, magicians and mutinies*, 2007; Natalia Pecherskaya, *Globalization as a metaphor*, 2005; Center for Global Studies, *A Battle of Metaphors: Is Globalization a 'Rising Tide that Lifts All Boats' or 'a Race to the Bottom'?* 2008).

Any such metaphors could be fruitfully explored in relation to globalization as a process of individual engagement with globality (*Personal Globalization*, 2001).
• mathematics: a more formal approach, also with its mystical associations through number symbolism, is the literature on sacred geometry and mathematical theology as enabling an understanding of the globality represented by transcendent divinity (Sarah Voss, Mathematical Theology, 2003). Of interest in this respect is the work of Anthony Blake (The Supreme Art of Dialogue: structures of meaning, 2008). The cognitive challenges are highlighted in Distinguishing Levels of Declarations of Principles (1980) in the light of the Representation, Comprehension and Communication of Sets: the Role of Number (1978) and Patterns of Conceptual Integration (1984).

However, in the potentially complementary concern, the literature on mathematics and sex is typically focused on depersonalized externalities relating to population dynamics, courtship behaviour, and partnership choice -- as with the exploration by Clio Cresswell (Mathematics and Sex, 2004), appropriately chosen as a keynote speaker at a conference "down under" of the Mathematical Association of New South Wales (2006).

The question of the "geometry of sex", or the "topology of sex", is seemingly avoided -- as with any mathematical modelling of sexual intercourse through those disciplines. The same would appear to be true of the complexity sciences -- with the possible exception of genetic algorithms -- despite the potentially central role of strange attractors in any such modelling.

On the other hand, given the focus on virtual sexual intercourse in the highly popular Second Life (and the haptic possibilities of the future), it is presumably the case that considerable effort is now invested in the mathematical modelling relevant to intercourse algorithms for avatars in that context -- as in any Massively Multiplayer Online Virtual Sex Game (MMOVSG). A playful review by one blogger (Math is like sex, but more so, 7 October 2008) points to the use of such algorithms by Peter Miller (Eros ex Mathematica, Perpetual Ocean Digital Image Gallery) to generate erotic images, suggesting that intercourse might indeed be emulated in this way.

Courtship

Although applications of mathematics to sexual behaviour focus on the depersonalized externalities of the process and not on the cognitive processes (through which the externalities are framed), a recent study uses game theory to distinguish the optimal strategies for male and female (Robert Seymour and Peter D. Sozou, Duration of courtship effort as a costly signal. Journal of Theoretical Biology, 256, 2009).

The analysis has some relevance to the generic question of the nature, quality and duration of any fruitful engagement with global reality - globality. Especially given its egg-like symbolism, it is useful to consider that globality may effectively adopt the feminine strategic option ("when-I'm-good-and-ready"), leading to a child and an enduringly supportive relationship. This could then be contrasted with the opportunistic male strategic preference ("mating-with-any-woman"), irrespective of the consequences to be irresponsibly avoided -- as in most socio-economic approaches to "globalization" currently advocated (notably by Davos Man, as discussed in Dimension 1).

These contrasting perspectives suggest the merits of reflecting on courtship patterns as offering readily comprehensible insights into the quest for sustainability (Beyond Harassment of Reality and Grasping Future Possibilities: learnings from sexual harassment as a metaphor, 1996). Such behaviour is of course traditionally associated with "courts", being notably defined -- if only as an inspiration -- by the practice of the medieval nobility of courtly love, enabled and sustained by the troubadours. The current perversion of any such practice -- in the "courts" of global society, with their courtiers and courtesans -- was highlighted in Dimension 1, and is consistent with the critical argument of Richard Bronk (The Romantic Economist: imagination in economics, 2009) as reviewed there.

Such an approach might lead to a far more fruitful way of framing the challenge of "climate change", especially given the many insights into "sexual climate" (whether "warming" or "cooling"). The question is then one of acquiring an understanding of the relationship between ensuring a "climate of change" in order to manage an appropriate "sexual climate" (whether "warming" or "cooling"). This could then be contrasted with the opportunistic male strategic preference ("mating-with-any-woman"), irrespective of the consequences to be irresponsibly avoided -- as in most socio-economic approaches to "globalization" currently advocated (notably by Davos Man, as discussed in Dimension 1).

Kama Sutra

Clifford A. Pickover (A Passion for Mathematics: numbers, puzzles, madness, religion, and the quest for reality, 2005) highlights the difficult mathematical problems lurking in the ancient Indian sex manual, the Kama Sutra. Also from "down under", however, Janice Padula (The Kama Sutra, Romeo and Juliet, and mathematics: studying mathematics for pleasure, Australian Senior Mathematics Journal, July 2005) emphasizes that mathematics may be better appreciated through the relevance to students' lives -- notably in terms of sex and romance.

Padula refers to the interests of New Zealand mathematician Robyn Williams (Kama Sutra and Mathematics, 2003) in relation to the study of Indian mathematics by George Gheverghese Joseph (The Crest of the Peacock: Non-European Roots of Mathematics, 2000). A blogger has gone further in outlining the scope of a possible book (Riemann and Lobachevsky's Kama Sutra, Halfbakery, 2002), with positions, freed from the constraints of Euclidian flat space, to include those in positively curved spaces.

As a sequel to the hypertext cult novel (Cong Huyen Ron Nu Nha Trang and Willia L Pensinger, The Moon of Hoa Binh, 1994), of highly unusual structure, the protagonist, Derek Dillon (Strategic Assessment Part 8) offers this comment:

The purpose behind the Kama Sutra, unlike that of internet porn, is to move conscious awareness back up the Tree of Life from its genitally-fixated and fetishized bottom-end state.
Implication of Globality by the Tree of Life?
(an 1847 depiction of the Norse Yggdrasil as described in the Icelandic Prose Edda by Oluf Olufsen Bagge; image from Wikipedia)

Tree of Life / Yggdrasil

As discussed in *Conformality of 7 WH-questions to 7 Elementary Catastrophes: an exploration of potential psychosocial implications* (2006):

As implied by T. van Gelder and R. Port (*Beyond symbolic: towards a kama-sutra of compositionality*. In: Symbol processing and connectionist network models in artificial intelligence and cognitive modeling: steps towards principled integration, 1994), is there a cognitive dynamic to interpersonal encounters of which the 64 positions of the *Kama Sutra* could be considered an enactable code for multi-dimensional understandings that cannot be verbally articulated? (cf Boris Saulnier, *Au-delà du représentationnalisme symbolique: la modélisation constructiviste et morphodynamique des systèmes, et le défi de la compositionnalité*, 2003). Such possibilities relate to the explorations of tantric yoga. Intercourse might then be understood as "dancing with discontinuity" and with the associated questions and answers -- expressed non-verbally through to their consummation and "semantic" union (cf O E Rasmussen. *The Dance of Meaning: the fundamentals of interpersonal reasoning and sense-making*. European Chaos/Complexity in Organisations Network (ECCON), 2005).

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