Engaging with Globality through Cognitive Realignment

1st Dimension: Making points and aligning a target

Overview of Engaging with Globality

Dimension 1: Cognitive Realignment -- making points and aligning a target
- Arrogance of the "Masters of the Universe"
- Social unrest engendered by the crowned
- Complicity of authorities in dysfunctionality
- Davos as the "crowning experience" for the "Masters of the Universe"
- Symptoms of denial: gender and the underside of meetings
- Strategic implications of denial
- Cognitive pathology of the "reborn"
- Repetition, circularity and self-reflexivity
- Beyond "Mickey-Mouse" governance of crises?
- "Magna Carta": Configuring interlocking pathways for circular argumentation
- Reframing finger-pointing, the blame-game and demonization
- Literature for learning in interesting times

Dimension 2: Cognitive Circlets -- learning/action cycles

Dimension 3: Cognitive Crowns -- all-encompassing, well-rounded experience

Dimension 4: Knowing Thyself -- embodying engagement with otherness

Annex A: Engaging with Globality through Playful Re-categorizing
Annex B: Global Governance via a Double-breasted Strange Attractor
Annex C: Engaging with Globality through Complexity Dynamics
Annex D: Intercourse with Globality through Enacting a Klein bottle

References

Introduction

This is an exploration of the challenge of providing succinct integrative vehicles for significance, notably as this relates to any existential sense of coherence and identity. The focus in Dimension 1 and Dimension 2 is on the challenge more conventionally understood in terms of the knowledge management required by governance and the governors -- on behalf of the governed. This is developed in Dimension 3 with respect to those who are effectively "crowned". In Dimension 4 the inadequacies and impracticalities of such possibilities, hitherto considered realistic, are used to reframe the cognitive challenge for any individual obliged to order cognitive skills and accessible insights -- where such dependence on external authority is now clearly unrealistic. A summary of the 4-part argument is provided separately (Metaphorical Geometry in Quest of Globality, 2009).

In the light of Dimension 4, readers could consider avoiding the lengthy arguments of Dimensions 1-3 (regarding what is possible, but
increasingly improbable) -- then focus only on the annexes of Dimension 4 for proactive viability and light relief, notably Annex B (Sustainable Governance via a Double-breasted Strange Attractor). Those annexes are premised on the assumption that sustainable governance is necessarily sexy -- and if it is not then it is unlikely to be sustainable.

Arrogance of the "Masters of the Universe"

The term "Masters of the Universe" was used by novelist Tom Wolfe (The Bonfire of Vanities, 1987; film adaptation, 1990) to describe the titans of Wall Street. It has since been used, both appreciatively and critically, in other contexts (Daniel J. Kadlec. Masters of the Universe: winning strategies of America's greatest deal makers. 1999; Bev Conover (Unmasking the wannabe masters of the universe, Online Journal, 2 November 2007; Chronis Polychroniou, How the masters of the universe outsmarted themselves, but don't count them out yet, Online Journal, 21 October 2008). Those titans are now described as "self-styled" Masters of the Universe -- presumably to be understood as including the role of "Lords of Time", given their acclaimed mastery of the futures market.

With respect to the "crown" they were believed to wear, Bernard Lunn (Creative Entrepreneurs: The Next Masters of the Universe,ReadWriteWeb, 5 October 2007) asked perceptively, before the credit crunch and the collapse of the associated economic bubble: Today the crown is shared by Private Equity (PE) and Hedge Funds. When you see the PE big shots selling shares to the public, you know the PE party is nearing its riotous end. And the Hedge Fund party is getting crowded, with too many lesser talented investors dragging average returns down - to levels similar to buying an index fund (but with massively bigger fees). So who will be the next "Masters of the Universe"?

The stage had been set for their role in the crash of the financial system in 2008 by the government of the most powerful man in the universe (POTUS) in limiting any form of regulation within that system -- aided and abetted by his British sidekick. Together they also instigated, through deception, what is now considered to be the greatest and most costly foreign policy disaster of modern times -- both being sustained in doing so by their special relationship to their Maker. In enabling financial extremism, they might be said to have brought about what Osama bin Laden had only aspired to achieve through al-Qaida (Extreme Financial Risk-taking as Extremism, 2009).

The financial disaster and its consequences are appropriately described as a total global "fuck up" or "screw up" -- in the language characteristic of the culture of the Masters of the Universe (Backside to the Future: coherence and conflation of dominant strategic metaphors, 2003). The precise term is used by Alan Schwartz, former chief executive of Bear Stearns, as cited by William D. Cohan (House of Cards: how Wall Street's gamblers broke capitalism, 2009): It was a team effort. We all fucked up. Government. Rating agencies. Wall Street. Commercial banks. Regulators. Investors. Everybody. Use of such phrases would appear to justify exploration of sexual metaphor in the following investigation of modes of engaging with globalization.

The approach taken in the associated set of documents is quite distinct from the economic understanding of globalization or recognition of the socio-political consequences of globalization. It effectively contests the exclusive appropriation of "global", notably by the Masters of the Universe, that ignores its more generic significance with reference to understandings of integration. Contrasting examples include those associated with an emergent global brain, any sense of global consciousness, transdisciplinarity (perhaps framed as a Theory of Everything), global wisdom comprehension (perhaps framed as collective intelligence), global (in contrast with local) in mathematics, or even understandings of global modelling focused on the ecosystem or climate.

Social unrest engendered by the crowned

The implications of the social unrest, triggered by worsening economic conditions, have been reviewed by Nick Cohen (Be very worried - rioting's coming home, The Observer, 25 January 2009) with respect to Latvia, Iceland, and Greece. He notes how such widening unrest is destroying Europe's idea of itself. With respect to other European countries, this argument is extended by Ian Traynor (Governments across Europe tremble as angry people take to the streets, The Guardian, 31 January 2009) and by Naomi Klein Public Revolt Builds Against Rip-off Rescue Plans for the Economy, The Nation, 6 February 2009). The point is further stressed in The Economist (Some Americans are getting as mad as hell, 7 March 2009) and by the Financial Times (Agitation as middle-class Europe struggles to cope, 12 March 2009).

The unrest is of course evident in other countries around the globe as the consequences of the collapsing financial system become apparent. It is not so much that people are taking to the streets, or the numbers involved, but rather the unusual range of countries and the concurrence of the protests -- at the time of the "coronation" of Barack Obama and that offered by Davos 2009.

The degree of concern is indicated in the, normally measured, articulation of George Monbiot (Politics is broken, so what do we do? We leave it to the politicians, The Guardian, 3 February 2009) regarding payment of tax:

Until now I have seen this annual amputation as a civic duty -- like giving blood -- necessary to sustain the life of a fair society. Suddenly I see it as an imposition. Its purpose has reverted to that of the middle ages: subsidising the excesses of a parasitic class. A high proportion of the taxes I pay will be used to bail out companies which, as the Guardian's current investigation shows, have used every imaginable ruse to avoid paying any themselves.... We are trapped in a spiral of political alienation.

Politics isn't working for us, so we leave it to the politicians. The political vacuum is then filled with heartless, soulless, gutless technocrats....

The government talks of reigniting public enthusiasm for politics, of bringing out the vote, but balks at any measure which might make this happen.... Consultations are rigged. Citizens' juries are used to lend a sheen of retrospective legitimacy to decisions already taken.
As expressed by Larry Elliott (No chance of a return to the dark days of the 30s? Don't kid yourself, The Guardian, 26 February 2009):

Look around the world and what do you see? You see signs of deep economic distress and policy mistakes. You see emerging markets being starved of capital, because the big western economies are looking after their own domestic constituencies. And you see the first stirrings of real public anger at the way in which those responsible for the biggest economic catastrophe since the second world war appear to be getting away scot-free.

Elsewhere the extent to which the "credit crunch" obscures a more general "credibility crunch" has been reviewed (Credibility Crunch engendered by Hope-mongering: "credit crunch" focus as symptom of a dangerous mindset, 2008) just as "climate change" is now promoted as a less threatening tangible variant of the intangibles of a "climate of change" (Climate Change Misrepresented as Climate Change: insights from metaphorical confusion, 2008). This process effectively uses ready understandings of the "climate" issue as a form of camouflage (Climate Change as a Metaphor of Social Change: systemic implications of emissions, ozone, sunlight, greenhouse and overheating, 2008).

Complicity of authorities in dysfunctionality

Curiously, over the past decade during which the strongest political and economic arguments were made for "globalization", somehow those responsible for promoting this process failed to "keep their eye on the ball". The globalization on which they focused was not "global" but a linear, tunnel vision view of the "ball".

Systemic incompetence of regulatory authorities: Reporting on comments of the chairman of the UK Financial Services Authority, Terry Macalister (City watchdog chief admits regulators failed to spot looming financial disaster, The Guardian, 16 February, 2009) notes that he said it was a "legitimate criticism" of the FSA that during the past decade it had focused on the nitty-gritty of individual banks' processes without standing back and recognising that the expansion of credit was "too risky" for the economic system as a whole. He declared:

> With hindsight, the FSA, like other authorities throughout the world, was focused too much on individual institutions, and the processes and procedures within them, and not adequately focused on the totality of the systemic risks across the whole system, and whether there were entire business models, entire ways of operating, that were risky.

In testimony at a hearing of the US House Financial Services subcommittee, the man who waged a decade-long campaign to alert regulators to problems in the operations of money manager Bernard Madoff, reported on the failure to act by the Securities and Exchange Commission -- despite receiving credible allegations of fraud of historic proportions (Madoff tipster Harry Markopolos assails SEC, Los Angeles Times, 4 February 2009).

Complicity of authorities and denial of responsibility: The manifest failure of "authorities" to respond to systemic ills (or to determine responsibility for them) -- whilst sustaining a degree of complicity with those who benefitted most from them -- is severely diminishing respect for such authorities and the models through which governance has been so problematically ensured. The UK Chancellor declared (Alistair Darling: We made mistakes on the economy, Daily Telegraph, 3 March 2009):

> There are a lot of lessons to be learnt by regulators, governments, all of us. The key thing that went wrong was that a culture was allowed to develop over the last 15 years or so where the relationship between what people did and what they got went out of alignment, especially at the top end. If there is a fault, it is our collective responsibility. All of us have to have the humility to accept that over the last few years, things got out of alignment.

Reporting on the process in Davos 2009, Julian Glover (Shaken survivors of economic blast ask: what went wrong? The Guardian, 30 January 2009) notes:

> Alarm is not the same as contrition, and few people here will admit to have done anything personally wrong... There is no real sense of collective guilt, or serious consideration of what to do next, other than rebuild the world that has just been lost. Davos has the air of a crash inquiry into an airline that intends to keep on flying... What no one wants to admit is that perhaps there is no solution - only decline.

Paola Totaro (Davos devotees dodge the blame, The Age, 2 February 2009) notes that the leader of the free world avoided the forum, while its participants avoided a mea culpa.

In a closing BBC-moderated debate in Davos, one participant denied any personal responsibility (AIG vice chairman Jacob Frenkel indicated that the issues were not his fault because he's vice chairman in name only, TIME.com, 30 January 2009), adding that only people in La-La Land considered any form of apology for their role to be appropriate. In response to widespread social unrest, the World Economic Forum would appear to be offering the setting for the contemporary analogue to the notorious judgement widely (mis)attributed to Marie-Antoinette at the court of Louis XVI at Versailles: Let them eat cake.

Also of relevance is the insight in France, after World War II, that everybody of significance claimed to have belonged to the Resistance. Similarly few authorities would now acknowledge any complicity in sustaining the illusion that gave rise to the financial bubble. It would seem that there is a case for exploring the current role of cognitive turncoats -- as has been previously done (Marina Hyde, Turncoat of
"Winter Court" of the world

Davos as the "Masters of the Universe"

"crowning experience" for the "Masters of the Universe"

"Winter Court" of the world: As noted by Michael White (Davos man misses the bus, The Guardian, 30 January 2009) with respect to the World Economic Forum (Davos, 2009):

...the self-styled masters of the universe have been meeting in January every year since 1971 to tell each other what a great job they've been doing: a sort of group therapy for large but fragile egos.
At an alternative, concurrent forum, *Public Eye on Davos*, Susanne Leutenegger made the connection between WEF and disaster -- as the place where politicians flew under the radar, financiers networked and created informal, powerful links and the media watched agog - - stating:"

The WEF was an important fly-by-night lobby operation for the bankrupt neo-liberal business model

As the focal context within which a particular understanding of globalization was sustained and promoted -- together with the cultivation of the associated financial bubble -- the World Economic Forum dynamics and its pretensions may be fruitfully compared to those of the Court of Louis XIV of France as Sun King (Le Roi Soleil).

It has indeed become a form of "world court" in which the Masters of the Universe congregate and court favours from each other, aided by courtiers (and possibly courtesans) -- completely marginalizing the significance of the General Assembly of the United Nations, complicit to a degree in that displacement. Rather than the Palace of Versailles, the mountain-top venue of WEF, and its architecture and symbolic decor of group and plenary sessions, might however be better compared symbolically with the famed Neuschwanstein commissioned by Ludwig II of Bavaria -- partly as a homage to Richard Wagner.

Cultivating an exclusive consensual reality: As noted by Gideon Rachman (*Consensus melts as the crisis heats up*, Financial Times, 28 January 2009) regarding the globalization project of the leading powers:

That globalisation consensus was particularly visible at the annual meetings of the World Economic Forum in Davos. Isolated on the top of a Swiss mountain, the world's leading politicians, bureaucrats, financiers and businessmen came together and spoke a common language...in tones of sweet reasonableness....

However he added:

Yet the 2009 meeting... is taking place at a time when the "globalisation consensus" is under strain as never before... In retrospect, one of the early signs of impending big trouble at last year's Davos meeting were the sessions on the global economy, where speaker after speaker -- from banks, business and the international financial institutions -- admitted that they had no real handle on the scope of the problems hidden in the international financial system.

Impunity of the responsible: Despite the severity of the financial crisis and its consequences, surprisingly little effort would seem to have been made to identify those systemically responsible. Rather the financial crisis has been skillfully reframed as though it were a natural disaster -- a "financial tsunami", effectively the kind of Act of God welcomed by the insurance industry as a means of escaping responsibility (*Avoidance of responsibility in Systemic Crises as Keys to Systemic Remedies*, 2008).

Timothy Garton Ash (*The knives are out for Davos Man -- but the alternative is much more alarming*, The Guardian, 29 January 2009) comments on one checklist of potential responsible parties for the financial crisis consisting of: crooks, bankers, regulators, politicians, economists, journalists, "we the people", and "the system". He argues that these were typically well-represented by archetypal Davos Man -- framing a consensual reality and its means of dissemination. It is the proportion of those of the highest rank that have been implicated or indicted for malfeasance that evokes an ever increasing suspicion regarding those for whom there is less evidence, or none (*Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council: misleading as vital to governance of the future?* 2007).

Media management of a "make-believe" reality: In the case of Davos 2009, comparisons are made with those who threw lavish parties in 2008, only to disappear or be arrested since then (*Champagne on ice as sober mood engulfs Davos, The Guardian*, 24 January 2009). It is increasingly the evident degree of control by such elites of the media -- providing promotional image management of this bubble of consensual reality -- that itself serves to reveal that their initiatives have nothing to offer beyond the empty promise of press releases substantiated by token promotional examples, as explored elsewhere (*Globalization within a Global Potemkin Society: a strategic challenge to proactive participation in society*, 2000).

This characteristic image management is accompanied by the marginalization of views, now acquiring far greater credibility, such as those articulated through its concurrent counterpart -- the World Social Forum 2009 (Rory Carroll, *World Social Forum message to Davos: We told you so*, The Guardian, 30 January 2009), or even through the United Nations. A degree of cynicism is justified by the role of Kofi Annan (former Secretary-General of the UN) -- as one of the co-chairmen of Davos 2009, with Rupert Murdoch -- writing a daily diary on Davos for *The World Street Journal* (a Murdoch newspaper).

Social irresponsibility of corporations: Kofi Annan has been intimately associated with the annual Davos gathering since his announcement there (in January 1999) of the creation of the UN Global Compact ("Globalization", the UN's "Safe Haven" for the World's Marginalized: the Global Compact with Multinational Corporations as the UN's "Final Solution", 2001).

This initiative, widely lauded as appropriate engagement with multinational corporations to encourage corporate social responsibility, is now to be assessed in the light of the extent to which such corporations, in the name of United Nations social values, have actually been avoiding payment of taxes (*NGOs to Further Challenge UN Global Compact to Uphold Its 'Integrity Measures',* 19 January 2009). For example, *The Guardian's* new interactive survey reveals wide variations in the corporation tax bills for Britain's leading companies (*Tax Gap: the database: who pays - and who doesn't? The Guardian*, 2 February 2009). At the same time, as noted by George Monbiot (above), taxpayers are being asked to finance the bailouts of such corporations.

Control of some of the corporations in question is notably vested in the hands of the "uber-rich" who skillfully deploy part of their fortune in philanthropic initiatives -- for which they are esteemed above others -- whilst avoiding payment of personal tax, as reviewed
Symptoms of denial: gender and the underside of meetings

Presented in a separate document (Women and the Underside of Meetings, 2009) under the following headings:

-- "Mistresses of the Universe"?
-- Gendered financial trading
-- Role of women in sustaining dialogue
-- Sexual behavior at conferences
-- Symbolism

Strategic implications of denial

Presented in a separate document (Women and the Underside of Meetings, 2009) under the following headings:

-- Asystemic strategies
-- Metaphoric impoverishment
-- Dysfunctional compensation
-- Challenging complementarity

Cognitive pathology of the "reborn"

Of great interest at the time of writing is the capacity of the "Masters of the Universe" and "Davos Man" to reinvent themselves and reconstitute the failing financial system to enable their business as usual -- for their own continuing benefit. This was an underlying theme of Davos 2009. The demonstrably dysfunctional financial system, represented by Davos Man, may indeed prove to be the archetypal "comeback kid".

It is the process whereby this might be achieved that merits great attention. It is therefore of interest to explore situations in which an understanding of an optimistic global future has been strongly and repeatedly propagated through the media -- when the coherence and credibility of the message and its bearer are dramatically undermined.

Of great value in this respect is the detailed study by Michael James Giuliano (Thrice-born: the rhetorical comeback of Jimmy Swaggart, 1999) of the world's most watched, born-again, televangelist -- caught consorting with a prostitute in New Orleans in 1988. The study examines the rhetorical campaign of Jimmy Swaggart to salvage his ministry in the face of those actions -- identifying the rationale that he offered his doctrinal Pentecostal community to justify his claim: "I am worthy of forgiveness and continued support".

As Giuliano argues:

Using Stephen Toulmin's model of informal argument as a tool to unlock the shared world view of rhetor and audience, this study argues that Swaggart's overt stance, "am solely to blame for what I did," was not the conclusion his primary audience would reach. Using stories and doctrinal arguments, Swaggart successfully argued that he was not at fault for his actions, that his actions could be accurately blamed on other individuals and the entire ordeal would lead to an improved Swaggart. However, in that the arguments were shaped out of the shared Pentecostal world view that speaker and audience share, many parts of the arguments were left unspoken, and as such, were completely missed by many outside observers.

The relevance of this study is that it also claims to demonstrate that such rhetorical strategies are not unique to Swaggart, Giuliano argues that when any celebrity, presumably including a Master of the Universe, defends himself or herself in the face of scandal, similar themes tend to emerge. As such, the analysis is arguably as timely now as it was with respect to 1988.
Repetition, circularity and self-reflexivity

With the plethora of meetings on every topic over the years, it is not to be expected that gatherings such as the World Economic Forum or the World Social Forum would escape the tendency for many arguments to be repeated, whether then to be applauded as an affirmation of faith or deprecated as misguided. Despite the financial and economic crises, and the other urgent global issues, this appears to be continuing in the gatherings of 2009.

Unpreparedness: Why has the articulation of the points for these events -- on a matter of extreme urgency for many -- taken so long? Why are such events apparently so ill-prepared in terms of substantive content? Why the "rehearsal" of arguments already articulated widely -- weeks or months previously? Why were participants not enabled to start the dialogue from where they in fact finished? How is it that their repeated articulation is valued so highly when it simply consumes that most scarce resource, time -- especially the time of busy participants? Why does such use of time inhibit any focus on new proposals? Cui bono?

Curiously argumentation does not appear to rise significantly above the morass in which discourse wallows -- nor is there any call to do so. Any evaluation of the quality of debates regarding the current economic crisis would surely demonstrate this -- boding ill for any future, and even more urgent, global crisis.

Wooly language: In an award-wining clarification of the challenges of science, Etienne Klein (Conversations with the Sphinx: paradoxes in physics, 1996) notes how the cognitive challenges of physics apply beyond the sciences, by referring to the study of "wooly language" by François-Bernard Huyghe (La Langue de Coton, 1991) whom Klein cites as pointing out that:

> ...diplomats and other politicians are increasingly using a watered-down language whose few and hence inflated words no longer have any true meaning; a consummate consensual language that panders to the taste for tautology and disables contradiction; a discourse which has an answer to everything because it says practically nothing; a language unanswerable because it churns out propositions that leave so much room for interpretation that listeners are free to hear what they hope for. In other words, a language so all-inclusive that it gives no chance to paradox -- and here there are grounds for unease, we must confess. (p. 85)

Insight capture: Curiously the degree of self-reflexivity in international gatherings, like the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum, is slight regarding the repetitive, circular processes of argumentation. This ensures that their history is constantly repeated in the response to crises -- as warned for large-scale events by George Santayana: Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it.

Whilst contributions to meetings may be recorded, little systematic effort is made to analyze and interrelate the content -- whether for any one meeting, for any sequential series of meetings, or for any concurrent set of disparate meetings. There is no lack of technology or skills to do so -- even in real time for the benefit of participants and the ongoing dialogue -- as reviewed elsewhere (Complementary Knowledge Analysis / Mapping Process, 2006). How is the collective learning of such events to be evaluated?

Outcomes: Is it any wonder that, as a crowning experience, the outcome is extremely modest? The World Economic Forum produced no new ideas, on its own admission. The World Social Forum produced an action "plan" and a set of "resolutions" (Alejandro Kir, World Social Forum: Resolution and a Plan of Action, Alternatives, 6 February 2009). These appear to correspond structurally to the myriad such devices of the past that have assumed that the "project logic" applied to the problems of the past is appropriate to the problems of the future -- rather than a symptom of the inadequacy of the cognitive approach to such complexity.

Project logic is therefore the application of yesterday's insights, beliefs and methods to tomorrow's expected problems as they are understood today. The approach is to project the past into the future and project a "positive" image of accomplishment thereafter (Metaphoric Entrapment in Time: avoiding the trap of Project Logic, 2000). Both WEF and WSF would appear to have applied a form of tunnel vision to fixing aspects of the system. Would participants have wanted it otherwise? Is there no awareness of the challenges of psychological projection? Does such "project logic" nor constitute a trap for more challenged cultures (Knowledge Gardening through Music: patterns of coherence for future African management as an alternative to Project Logic, 2000)?

Metaphor of self-exploration: In the sense that each such strategic event is its "own metaphor" (as indicated above), and especially for WEF in its mountain-top venue, the implications of reflexivity merit reflection in the light of the surrealist exploration by René Daumal (Mount Analogue: a novel of symbolically authentic non-euclidean adventures in mountain climbing, 1952). The associated challenge of mirror recognition also merits attention (Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criterion of species maturity? 2008)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Insight from a famous prison tale</th>
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<td>A man went to prison for the first time. He was in a cell with another man, and just as the lights were turned out in the evening he heard somebody from another cell shout out 'Thirty-One'. All of a sudden everybody in the cell block burst out with laughter. Then another voice shouted 'Fifty-Six!'. Again everybody burst out with laughter.</td>
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<td>The man was puzzled as to what was going on, so he turned to his cell mate and asked: 'Why is it, when somebody shouts out a number, everybody bursts out with laughter?' His cell mate replied: 'Well, you see, down in the prison library we have a joke book that contains every joke ever told. And we've all been in here so long we've all memorised all the jokes. So now, when anybody wants to tell a joke, they just have to shout out the page number from the book.'</td>
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<tr>
<td>The man thought about this and decided that he would have a look at this book. So the next day he went down to the prison library and read a few pages. He wrote down the numbers on a bit of paper because they were so good he</td>
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Beyond "Mickey-Mouse" governance of crises?

Doubtful hopes: The WEF school of thought is necessarily less confident in the bailout solutions in the pipeline, merely expressing "hope" that they will work -- a curious posture following its earlier expression of hope regarding the viability of the credit bubble (Credibility Crunch engendered by Hope-mongering: "credit crunch" focus as symptom of a dangerous mindset, 2008). More curiously those of the WSF would appear to have little doubt about the appropriateness of their own recommendations -- despite concerns about their process (Rory Carroll, World Social Forum message to Davos: We told you so, The Guardian, 30 January 2009; Peter Waterman (World Social Forum: the secret of fire, 18 June 2003; Geoffrey Pleyers, World Social Forum 2009: a generation's challenge, openDemocracy, 29 January 2009)?

Ingenuity: As with the more general expectation that humanity will rise to all challenges through "human ingenuity", it is curious how inadequate such ingenuity has proven to be over decades in the Middle East (Thomas Homer-Dixon, The Ingenuity Gap, Jonathan Cape, 2000). Why should anyone invest in the hopes of others when these ignore experience and understandings that he or she considers vital?

How are the processes to gather ingenuity to be evaluated -- given their success in relation to the Middle East?

How is it that almost no effort is made to collect and order ideas and proposals -- with open access facilities as modelled by Wikipedia -- as anticipated by the Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential? Where such effort is made, why is it primarily governed by political, administrative and academic criteria of logistics to ensure answers "fit" within the current mindset (that engendered the crisis)? What does this imply about the nature of collective intelligence from which human ingenuity is expected to emerge?

Does this not suggest that there is more learning -- of relevance to the resilience required by the adaptive cycle -- to be obtained from an understanding of why attention is not devoted to such questions?

Asystemic solutions: Solutions as currently envisaged seem to involve pouring tax payer resources down conventional hierarchies of "targeted" industrial sectors ("laundry lists" of priority categories) without considering:

- the cross-impact relationship between sectoral categories, as representing functions within an integrated system necessarily linked by feedback loops (an explicit theme of the Inter-Sectoral Dialogue on the occasion of the Earth Summit, 1992)
- whether the choice of categories so funded is indicative of in-the-box cognition and tunnel vision
- the possibility of more fruitful configuration of categories to reflect desirable integrity and robustness
- whether the nature of "categories", and the collective relationship to them, should be rethought given that, in a period of climate change and unforeseen global warming, framing the world in terms of essentially "frozen" categories may be inadequate to the challenge

These issues were addressed in response to the large set of recommendations engendered by the Earth Summit of 1992 (Configuring Globally and Contending Locally: shaping the global network of local bargains by decoding and mapping Earth Summit inter-sectoral issues, 1992).

Application of intelligence: A "higher" order of intelligence and technology (as was required in the development and marketing of financial derivatives) was what got a globalized society into the current mess. John Kay (Introduce professional standards for bankers, Financial Times, 17 February 2009) points out:

The skills required to understand the advanced products of the modern financial system are of a different kind, perhaps of a different order. The requirement was for an understanding of the mechanics of structured products combined with the economic knowledge to put them in context and the management skills to run the organisations that marketed them....

Of course, the financial services industry attracts smart people. In the last two decades it has sucked up a high proportion of the best graduates in Europe and America. Business schools offer finance courses and the designers of complex products often have advanced degrees in maths and physics. Investment banks have offered some of the best and most comprehensive graduate training programmes available.

Why then is it seemingly assumed that a "lower" order of intelligence, technology and training programmes (as exhibited in remedial strategic gatherings) will get the world out of the mess? As noted by The Economist (The spiral of ignorance, 19 February 2009) with respect to the UK, lack of understanding of the credit crunch is magnifying its damage, and specifically:

The tide has gone out and, with a very few exceptions, Britain is swimming naked: almost nobody appears to know what he is talking about. The havoc of the financial crisis has stretched and outrrippled even most economists. The British political class is befogged. Ordinary people are overwhelmed. And just as the interaction between banking and economic woes is proving
poisonous, so the interplay of public and political ignorance is damaging the country's prospects....

The truth is that hardly any MPs in any party have more than a rudimentary grasp of the crisis; indeed, their inability to track the City's baroque excesses helped to foment it. (The intellectual background of MPs, few of whom have much training in economics or commerce, may contribute to this deficiency.)...

Meanwhile, the bodies and advisers appointed by the politicians to do the understanding for them have been largely discredited...A layman might conclude that there is almost no one in Britain capable of comprehending the financial mess, and at the same time sufficiently uncontaminated by the mistakes and ruses that caused it to be entrusted with the job of fixing it.... The public is scared and uncertain; the politicians are panicky and confused. They are leading each other around and down a worrying spiral of ignorance.

Unfortunately, those that claim to have a clue as to what should be done tend to be precisely those who were most complicit in the uncritical mindset that created and sustained the financial bubble.

As expressed by Larry Elliott (No chance of a return to the dark days of the 30s? Don't kid yourself, The Guardian, 26 February 2009):

Sadly, however, there are no longer any risk-free options. Policymakers are preoccupied by the need to avoid debt deflation and depression, but they have never been in control of this crisis and are now making it up as they go along... The plan to revive the banking system is sketchy, and bears all the hallmarks of being made up on the hoof.

The oversimplistic approach currently taken may constitute a case of "throwing the baby out with the bath water". Where are the inputs to resolution of the crisis from more subtle perspectives, notably from the complexity sciences? Or are these also to be understood as contaminated and discredited because of their association with the mathematics of financial derivatives?

**Issue avoidance:** The bailout approach may well constitute inadequate strategic thinking -- a model of Mickey-Mouse governance, perhaps best exemplified by the response to the disaster of Hurricane Katrina? The challenges it would appear to ignore are:

- need for joined-up thinking: increasingly recognized as essential for governance -- in contrast to "tunnel vision"; clearly, whether or not governance is "joined-up", the problematic (which it purports to deal certainly is (foreseen or not)
- recognition of the challenge of systems dynamics. The slogan of the World Economic Forum, widely displayed, is: Commited to Improving the State of the World. However, as the credit crisis has so clearly demonstrated, it is not the state of the world that needs improving but rather the architectural dynamics of exchange sustained -- of whatever nature. A similar point may be made with regard to the forthcoming State of the World Forum (Washington DC, 2009). In the tradition of "parallel events" at summits, is there no case for a complementary event -- maybe a "Dynamics of the World Forum" -- given that current challenges are "dynamic" rather than "static"?
- the challenge of interrelating incommensurables, whether in the form of strategic dilemmas or the intractable disagreement between political factions regarding appropriate strategic options

Curiously, at the time of writing and in conformity with an international agreement, it was announced that India is prohibiting the traditional practice of snake charming -- effectively putting an estimated 800,000 people out of gainful employment in the interest of concerns regarding cruelty to animals. The snakes will of course be killed, being dangerous and having no further function. This might prove to be symbolic of dis-jointed linear thinking thinking at its best. The example is especially ironic in the light of the symbolism with which snakes are associated (as discussed in Dimension 2: Cognitive Circles).

Dis-jointed thinking is also evident in the exceptionalism with which sexual abuse by clergy has been confronted in recent years. Any such abuse by the eminent in international gatherings would presumably be similarly framed. This is the same systemic approach as has been evident in the discovery of supposedly isolated incidents of massive investment fraud in the cases of Bernard Madoff and Allen Stanford. Curiously isolated incidents of terrorism are however seen as part of a massive conspiracy justifying an array of measures.

**Eliminating "disagreement":** It is curious, as noted above, that when there is a strategic challenge of any kind, the focus is on producing a strategy with which all are in "agreement" -- or who can be democratically "persuaded" to that view by marginalizing any minority that is in "disagreement" -- and Getting to Yes. There is no consideration of the value of holding alternative views in a complex system or any understanding of how to do so. Response to the Irish "No" vote on the EU Lisbon Reform Treaty is a remarkable illustration of this; the demonization of "extremism" is another. (Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism "rooting for" normalization vs. "rooting out" extremism? 2005)

No thought is given to the possibility that this simplistic binary logic of agreement-disagreement undermines so many initiatives, and could be usefully questioned (most notably in relation to the Middle East). Is there a more complex spectrum of relationships that frames"agreement" and "disagreement" in a more fruitful context in order to enable more inclusive strategies appropriate to the complexity of the challenges of governance? (Using Disagreements for Superordinate Frame Configuration, 1992)

Where are resources invested in such a possibility -- whatever the belief in the probability of success -- in contrast with the investment in either the "elimination" of those who disagree or in "harmonization", "normalization", "reconciliation", and "conflict resolution"? Why is there seemingly no exploration of this possibility -- when there are numerous technologies dependent on "difference", and the relationship between male and female is even a celebration of this?

"Magna Carta": Configuring interlocking pathways of circular argumentation
Proposal: Rather than regret this process, about which nothing can seemingly be done, the proposal here is:

- to accept the circularity of such arguments as they progress through a pathway of points, and the predictability of the questions and answers which drive them.
- to map the many such pathways, perhaps to be creatively displayed at such gatherings, as inputs to them or as outputs from them
- to explore ways to configure the set of such circular pathways, such that they interlock to give form to a structure in more than two dimensions, a structure that provides imaginative support for the "architecture" of new paradigm thinking -- a "crowning experience" responsive to global challenges

Available techniques: Many of the techniques mentioned in Dimension 2 and Dimension 3 could be fruitfully brought to bear on the challenge of giving birth to such a new architecture. The web now offers ever richer possibilities for doing so than suggested in the past (Coherent Policy-making Beyond the Information Barrier: circumventing dependence on access, classification, penetration, dissemination, property, surveillance, interpretation, disinformation, and credibility, 1999; Spherical Configuration of Interlocking Roundtables: internet enhancement of global self-organization through patterns of dialogue, 1998).

One website, Global Sensemaking, identifies a range of tools for dialogue and deliberation on wicked problems -- the fruit of the containing work of a network of people dedicated to helping humanity address complex, interrelated global problems (climate change, energy policy, poverty, and food security) by developing and applying new web-based technology to assist collaborative decision making and cooperative problem solving. This initiative gives focus to the question as to why these tools are not used, and seen to be used, in response to global crises.

Examples:

- **Passing patterns**: In this respect (as discussed in Dimension 2), it is astounding that greater sophistication is applied to the analysis of patterns of interaction in various sports -- passing patterns -- than is applied to the patterns of dialogue at vital strategic gatherings. The fact that the justification of any focus on "passing patterns" would be comprehensible and relevant to any cafe or pub discussion of sport -- or a beach scene of frisbee or juggling -- suggests that the opportunity is being deliberately lost to give enhanced credibility to dialogue and its improvement in response to issues that are of concern to all. Is the strategic challenge not essentially one of "juggling" priorities in ways that should be rendered more transparent for all to appreciate? It is in response to these issues that the "solution" is currently being extracted from the pockets of those in the cafe or pub.

- **Mapping dialogue / Argument mapping**: Why is no mind map immediately available on a CNN or BBC website after a key panel debate on a controversial theme of governance -- or why is no argument map generated as the debate evolves to trigger better informed comments? There is a curious tolerance of the repeated statement of the same point in different contributions to any debate -- necessarily made in linear text, in spoken presentations, or in video recordings -- all demanding attention in linear time. It is as though people felt impelled to constantly restate their perception that "London" was on the map.

"Argument mapping" is the process of producing "boxes and arrows" diagrams of reasoning, especially complex arguments and debates -- thereby improving ability to articulate, comprehend and communicate reasoning, in order to promote critical thinking. Once a "box" is made for "London", it is then no longer to embed the assertion that it is on the map in linear presentations demanding consumption of that scarcest of resources -- attention time.

It is not the range of relevant and readily available tools (such as Netmap Analytics, Leximancer, Decision Explorer, or Net-Map) that is of interest, but rather the question *why is there no call to use them in strategic debates* (as with respect to the current economic crisis) -- instead accepting debates as a totally amorphous experience of "shooting stars". Is it simply that the focus of the latter is on "making points" and "aligning targets" -- avoiding articulation of any sense of context?

Examples of facilities include:

- **Mapping Dialogue**: a research project profiling dialogue tools and processes for social change, by Pioneers of Change Associates (2006)
- **Dialogue Mapping**: building shared understanding of wicked problems (2005) by Jeff Conklin
- **Argument Mapping**: summary of relevant web-based resources, produced by AusThink (Australia)

As is discussed in Dimension 4 (Knowing Thyself), especially in a faith-based context of governance, there is a curious association between action towards "the goal" of any undertaking (notably through controlling movement of "the ball") and the transformation of identity it enables in relation to some sense of "globality" (as discussed in Understanding Sustainable Dialogue: the Secret within Bucky's Ball? 1996).

**Mapping global dynamics**: In a global system with very high dependence on the understanding and design of complex technical systems, it is curious that this understanding is not applied to the challenges of dialogue between those who disagree and hold incommensurable positions. It is also curious that any mapping of such systems focuses on communication in its most technical sense. *There is no "map" of the globe that captures the variety of systems on which the viability of the global system depends.

The pioneering attempt towards understanding of "world dynamics" was promoted by the Club of Rome from 1972 in the form of the study of *Limits to Growth* based on innovative global modelling. As shown by Graham Turner (*A Comparison of the Limits to Growth with Thirty Years of Reality*, CSIRO 2007), the original study provoked many criticisms which falsely stated its conclusions in order to
discredit it. Despite the repeated substantiation of its conclusions, including warnings of overshoot and collapse, recommendations of fundamental changes of policy and behaviour for sustainability have not been taken up. One of its principal areas of focus was population.

Over recent decades, however, a variety of "universal declarations", "global plans" and "global ethics" have been produced as an invitation to consensus amongst those who disagree -- without endeavouring adequately to reflect their disagreement in such articulations, or to reflect the dynamics between such worldviews. There is therefore a disconnect between levels of operation (and technical control) and the challenges of governance in ensuring appropriate feedback loops between systems reflecting different disciplines and beliefs.

Responsibility for system failure: Whereas any such mapping is considered virtually irrelevant to current approaches to the challenges of governance -- and a threat to any particular belief system -- the global financial crisis and its economic consequences is held to be a systemic failure for which "no one can be held responsible". Should a Magna Carta have lines of responsibility embedded in it? (Universal Declaration of Responsibilities of Human Intercourse, 2007; Universal Declaration of Patent Responsibilities, 2007)

Curiously, in historic terms, the current Masters of the Universe are most appropriately to be compared with the "robber barons" of the European feudal period -- an understanding echoed in recent simplistic calls for a global "sheriff" (Time for a Global Regulatory 'Sheriff'? International Herald Tribune (Davos Diary), 27 January 2009). Rather than vainly seeking to criminalize them for financial malfeasance, there is possibly a stronger case for indicting them for aiding and abetting terrorism, however inadvertently (Extreme Financial Risk-taking as Extremism -- subject to anti-terrorism legislation?, 2009).

It is recognized to some degree that the dynamics leading to such failure were driven by classically intangible "sins", including especially "greed" -- framed as "good" -- as exciting attractors for initiatives. No effort has been made to integrate such "subjective" dimensions into understanding global systems processes -- despite recognition by John Maynard Keynes of the significance of "animal spirits", discussed in Dimension 4 (Interfacing confidently between locality and globality).

Learnings from "animal spirits": The relevance of "animal spirits" might be considered to have been insightfully clarified by a report in The Economist (Animal behaviour: Decisions, decisions, 14th February 2009) on studies of computer-modelled decision-making by large numbers of insects:

...they found that computerised bees that were very good at finding nesting sites, but did not share their information, dramatically slowed down the migration, leaving the swarm homeless and vulnerable. Conversely, computerised bees that blindly followed the waggle dances of others without first checking whether the site was, in fact, as advertised, led to a swift but mistaken decision. The researchers concluded that the ability of bees to identify quickly the best site depends on the interplay of bees' interdependence in communicating the whereabouts of the best site and their dependence in confirming this information.

The Economist commentary concluded that "This is something members of the European Parliament should think about" to avoid dangerous forms of "groupthink". The commentary also notes the relevance to understanding investor behaviour and the vulnerability of financial systems to bubbles.

It is extremely doubtful that new thinking on the financial system will take account of the insights of animals acquired over millions of years. It is perhaps no coincidence that a new social networking initiative is being widely promoted, even by The Economist, as Twittering. Echoing the learnings of birds rather than insects, this is to be related to the potential of web-enhanced crowdsourcing (Jeff Howe, Crowdsourcing: why the power of the crowd is driving the future of business, 2008) -- through which insights are systematically gathered from society as a whole (Practicalities of Participatory Democracy with International Institutions: attitudinal, quantitative and qualitative challenges, 2003).

Recognizing subjective drives: Arguments for a "new financial system" -- a new "Bretton Woods" arrangement -- would seem to be simplistic in that they honour "subjective" drivers only in terms of how they are to be controlled and restrained. They do not reflect the spirit which is supposedly underlying broader declarations, charters and ethical manifestos -- whatever their defects. And yet it has become apparent that everything is dependent on the intangibles of "trust", "confidence" and "credibility" -- that no physicist would deign to measure -- in a global system characterized by "loss of faith" in the systems of governance with the responsibility to sustain it. Ironically this occurs at a time when the world's acclaimed superpower celebrates -- at a coronation -- the primordial importance of another form of "faith" (although itself in "holy" conflict with alternative worldviews).

But, to the extent that a new "Bretton Woods" reflects a wider range of systemic factors, including ethical and other drivers, any new regulatory "charter" should take the form of a global system "map" -- or be integrated with one. "Charter" (as a static asystemic text) should then be understood in a more generic sense englobing "Map" (in a dynamic global systemic sense) -- such as to take on the historic significance of the "Magna Carta" of 1215. This would constitute an integration of technical considerations and values (as subjective drivers) -- a more comprehensive understanding of globality.

Reframing finger-pointing, the blame-game and demonization

Linearity vs Loop recognition: The responsibility for the financial crisis might indeed be presented as a large map of linear finger-pointing -- each blaming another. This would be a perverted global map of echoes of the vital feedback loops -- the systemic pathways now only recognized through tunnel-vision focus on their separate linear segments (Feedback Loop Analysis in the Encyclopedia Project, 2000; Vicious Cycles and Loops, 1995; Strategic Ecosystem: feedback loops and dependent co-arising, 1995).

This might even be understood as reinforced by the linearity of spreadsheet accounting, "line items", and "bottom lines" -- through failure
Viable options for the future

It is unfortunate that remedies to the financial system crisis are then embedded in this linear logic. The focus is again on applying a "stimulus" to a suitably aligned "target" on the assumption that this will get the system as a whole "up again". "Target" may be precisely the metaphor which inhibits realization of the goal of rehabilitating globality (Enhancing Sustainable Development Strategies through Avoidance of Military Metaphors, 1998). The process of aligning points to enable target acquisition can be considered inherently risky given how "connecting up the dots" to frame a suitable enemy was at the root of the intelligence failure in the "confirmation" (through such groupthink) of the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq (Groupthink: the Search for Archaeoraptor as a Metaphoric Tale, 2002).

Somewhat ironically this argument has been developed as a consequence of the acclaimed intelligence failure relating to the "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, Josh Kerbel (Thinking Straight: cognitive bias in the US Debate about China - Rethinking Thinking, CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence, Studies in Intelligence, 48, 3, 2004). Although focused on China, conclude with arguments that merit more general consideration, notably with respect to the issues of the G20:

If the debates such as the one taking place over China are ever to reasonably reflect reality, they must first incorporate the nonlinear complements of the linear characteristics on which such debates have tended to focus. In other words, analysts, policymakers, and commentators must appreciate the distinct behavioral characteristics of nonlinear systems as well as their analytical and policymaking implications.

Specifically (with the injunction Stop Trying to Think Straight) Kerbel notes:

- Nonlinear systems are synergistic, not additive; the big picture must be kept in mind and urges to simplify controlled.
- Nonlinear systems have uncertain cause-and-effect relationships; side effects and unintended consequences must be considered inevitable.
- The behavior of nonlinear systems cannot be repeated; arguments by analogy will never apply precisely.
- Movements in nonlinear systems are the result of disproportionate inputs and outputs; ripeness (timing), reinforcement, and resistance must all be weighed.

Kerbel lists a set of "Tools to counter linear bias and mind-set in the intelligence community".

Curiously in the focus on the 'stimulus' of particular "sectors", references to the systemic interconnectivity of sectors are extremely rare -- the following brief remark in an editorial of The Economist (The collapse of manufacturing, 19 February 2009) being an exception:

Nothing to lose but their supply chains: Some say that manufacturing is special, because the rest of the economy depends on it. In fact, the economy is more like a network in which everything is connected to everything else, and in which every producer is also a consumer.

The systemic structure of this network has not figured in any public debate regarding the special pleading of particular sectors -- with only amorphous references to the economy as a whole.

Problematic detachment and disengagement: The detachment of "objective" cognition, and the cognitive discipline of objectivity, enables a parallel process of attribution of responsibility and consequently of blaming -- reminiscent of what is deprecated in anismism. Whether phenomena of the natural environment (heat, cold, drought, flooding, wild animals, etc), of the human-engendered environment (pollution, overcrowding, etc), or of psychosocial relations (competition, government, "others" or "they"), all may then be framed as constituting a blameworthy obstacle to change. This process is curiously reminiscent of that recognized in urban jargon as "stitching up" -- basic to many miscarriages of justice.

By delinking from such detachment, taking ownership of the categories in question evokes a different relationship -- more akin to that with a child one has engendered (as discussed in Dimension 4) or with an elder (an "ancestor") by whom one was oneself engendered. Curiously the challenge is mirrored by that for any individual faced with the continuing incoherence of the global system -- elicting dependence on distant coronations, groups or institutions from which little relief is forthcoming (other than in the form of promises). Somehow both WEF and WSF claim to represent the individual and his or her interests, whilst making it the individual's responsibility to ensure that those interests are taken into account. Hence the focus in Dimension 4: Engaging with Globality: Knowing Thyself.

Transcending the blame-game: The arguments in Dimension 2 and Dimension 3 explore cognitive strategies to transcend the fingerpointing and blame-game associated with the linear thinking of Dimension 1 -- the style of argument above. These feature "re-cognition" of understandings implicit in a range of symbols, notably those associated with the highest psychosocial values, and including those exemplified by "coronation".

They also point to the extent to which such understanding is already widely understood through media such as music. It is in the latter sense that it has been suggested that "declarations" regarding some of the evident strategic challenges and dilemmas could lend themselves to complementary mediation through music, song and poetry (A Singable Earth Charter, EU Constitution or Global Ethic? 2006; All Blacks of Davos vs All Greens of Porto Alegre re-framing global strategic discord through polyphony? 2007).

Viable options for the future: However, it appears unlikely that any such approaches will be taken -- except by the intelligence services
to inhibit unrest -- whatever the more fruitful possibilities (From ECHELON to NOLEHCE: enabling a strategic conversion to a faith-based global brain, 2007). One example of an expanded initiative by the US National Security Agency is described by James Bamford (The Spy Factory -- the New Thought Police: the NSA wants to know how and what you think, 2009). Known as AQUAINT (“Advanced Qestion Answering for INTelligence”), the project has been under development for many years at the NSA Advanced Research and Development Activity.

Hence the concluding focus of Dimension 4 (Engaging with Globality through Knowing Thyself) and its various Annexes. It ends with the question **where are questions being asked about:**

- what vital questions are not being asked?
- what inappropriate assumptions are still being made?
- why are more appropriate questions not being asked?
- who has a vested interest in not asking them, and why?

Curiously the emerging consensus regarding the origins of the worldwide financial crisis of 2008-9 is that an inappropriate "culture" had been allowed to develop -- of whose nature and implications presumably few chose to be aware. That culture was of course considered totally appropriate by all that were in any way associated with it. But this raises two questions:

- the nature of the distinction between this newly emergent "consensus" and the incipient "culture" it may itself be seen as constituting -- possibly to be considered inappropriate in the future.
- the existence of other non-apparent "cultures" -- "which have been allowed to emerge" -- that may be the cause of dramatic systemic crises in the future; possible examples might include: the gendering of global governance (notably its meetings), the culture relating to substance abuse, the emergent paranoia regarding any form of extremism, the lack of attention to the consequences of population overshoot.

The challenge is well expressed by Olivia Judson (To expand knowledge, we must first admit ignorance, The Guardian, 26 February 2009):

> Of all the limits on expanding our knowledge, unexamined, misplaced assumptions are the most insidious. Often, we don't even know that we have them: they are essentially invisible. Discovering them and investigating them takes curiosity, imagination, and the willingness to risk looking ridiculous. And that, perhaps, is one of the hardest tasks in science.

It is not only a challenge for science. It is also a challenge for global governance.

**Literature for learning in interesting times**

- Karen A. Cerulo. Never Saw It Coming: cultural challenges to envisioning the worst, 2006
- Jared M. Diamond. Collapse: how societies choose to fail or succeed, 2005
- Charles Handy. The Age of Unreason, 1990
- Thomas Homer-Dixon. The Upside of Down: catastrophe, creativity, and the renewal of civilization, 2006
- Donald N. Michael. Learning to Plan-And Planning to Learn, 1997
- Paul Ormerod. Why Most Things Fail: evolution, extinction and economics, 2005 [extracts].
- Nassim Nicholas Taleb. The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable, 2007 [contents]
- John Ralston Saul. The Unconscious Civilization, 1995

A major challenge for many -- in the face of the dramatic problems of society and the planet -- is the inherently boring nature of the "plans" envisaged as a means of responding to them. These do not invite engagement or learning. As an echo of the linear mindset that engendered the problems, they lack the **requisite variety** to encompass the problematique and transcend it. As such the attractions of variety are engendered elsewhere -- contributing to the problems rather than to the emergence of viable solutions.