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Spontaneous Initiation of Armageddon a heartfelt response to systemic negligence

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Introduction

It might be usefully said that the world has benefited from over 50 years of development according to enlightened values promoted by the United Nations and other organizations. This has been enhanced by rapidly evolving insights into complex systems -- both from a theoretical perspective and in terms of their implications for the governance and management of complex systems of institutions. Despite such development, and in the light of such insights, it might however be said that the situation for the planet, its ecosystems and its peoples continue to deteriorate -- ever more rapidly.

According to Mark Townsend and Paul Harris (*Now the Pentagon tells Bush: climate change will destroy us*, *Observer*, 22 February 2004) in "A secret report, suppressed by US defence chiefs and obtained by *The Observer*...Nuclear conflict, mega-droughts, famine and widespread rioting will erupt across the world. The document predicts that abrupt climate change could bring the planet to the edge of anarchy as countries develop a nuclear threat to defend and secure dwindling food, water and energy supplies. The threat to global stability vastly eclipses that of terrorism, say the few experts privy to its contents. 'Disruption and conflict will be endemic features of life,' concludes the Pentagon analysis. 'Once again, warfare would define human life.' ". These events, including rising seas and glacial European weather, are predicted within the next 20 years.

The report was commissioned by Pentagon defence adviser Andrew Marshall and has subsequently been downplayed by the Pentagon [[more](#), [more](#), [more](#)]. The [Global Business Network](#) (GBN) has subsequently stated that "Contrary to some recent media coverage, the report was not secret, suppressed, or predictive". It was apparently prepared by GBN for the Department of Defense under the title *An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security*, and has since become [publicly available](#). It is a characteristic of contemporary governance and its news management that it is unclear whether this report is in any sense well-researched, and whether it was deliberately leaked as a strategy in order to justify ever more repressive legislative measures, military expenditure and invasive surveillance to "safeguard civilization" (as explored elsewhere [Promoting a Singular Global Threat -- Terrorism: Strategy of choice for world governance](#), 2002). Who could credibly prove the contrary?

Much will continue to be written and envisaged in terms of a hopeful response to this situation. But it can be readily argued that the western social project, as articulated nationally and through the United Nations, is essentially bankrupt (delivery of food, health care, education and essential services; civil rights and justice; long-term commitments as with pensions; ability to constrain human activity to safeguard the environment, etc). The track record however is such that it becomes clear that any significant improvements will only be tokenistic or for the few. However well they are promoted as exemplary and as indicative of appropriate practice, it might be usefully said that although there are insights into what remedial action might be taken, such action will tend to be undertaken under exceptional circumstances only -- and possibly only to mislead the hopeful and to disguise more effectively the absence and the failure of long-term,

system-wide remedial response..

Much will continue to be written about who is to blame for the inadequacies of this response by a remarkable worldwide civilization and about how that civilization "lost the plot" and failed to get its act together. The following is an exploration of the systemic consequences - namely how the social system (notably) is already adapting creatively on its own terms to what might be labelled as systemic negligence and a broken social contract.

The following argument recognizes the importance of exploring systemic failure and its consequences. This follows from an earlier paper that highlighted the action of those who exploit this condition (*The "Dark Riders" of Social Change: a challenge for any Fellowship of the Ring*, 2002). It is not based on the increasing social orthodoxy of positive thinking that Karen Armstrong (*Look on the dark side of life*, *Guardian*, 21 February 2004), as author of *Buddha* (2001), sees as a route to spiritual and political disaster. Recognizing the Buddha's isolation from the realities of life in his childhood palace, as an extreme example of denial by his father, she argues that:

It is increasingly unacceptable to voice legitimate distress. If you lose your job, become chronically ill, or fall prey to loneliness or depression, you are likely to be told -- often abrasively -- to look on the bright side. With unseemly haste, people rush to put an optimistic gloss on a disaster or to suggest a solution that is patently unworkable. We seem to be cultivating an intolerance of pain -- even our own...In our global world we can no longer afford to edit out the uncomfortable spectacle of human misery....The pain that we ignored in some parts has hardened to murderous rage..

The argument here is that within psycho-social systems as a whole -- which are the preoccupation of future global governance -- certain functions are inadequately expressed to a degree that is forcing their spontaneous and dangerous emergence under certain circumstances. The three interwoven metaphors through which the consequences of this imbalance are explored are:

- **Armageddon, Ragnarok or the "War of the Gods"** as a metaphor of the ultimate "crisis of crises"
- **"Winds of change"**, as a metaphor of styles of change, notably as developed in the light of directional metaphors
- **Heartfelt action**, as a metaphor of both the personal consequence of stress and the capacity to respond coherently to crisis

These apparently unrelated metaphors develop a common theme given focus by the "secret" Pentagon report on climate change and the extreme worldwide crises it foresees in the near future. As a crisis of crises, it could well trigger "Armageddon" as many hope. But such "climate change" may also be explored metaphorically in terms of the "winds of change" arising from any change in the "climate of opinion". The environmental stress associated with crises, and the destruction of connecting patterns, can be understood both in terms of the "heart" and "lifeblood" of civilization and of the impact on the individual human "heart". The heart plays a central role in both internalizing such stress and in sustaining (through "heartlessness") the psycho-social fragmentation basic to a less than "wholehearted" response to the crises of the world. "Armageddon", as the "heart failure" of civilization, may therefore be spontaneously evoked by the condition of the human "heart" and its vulnerability to "heart attack" under stress.

Systemic role of interlinked pathways

Systems theory has provided many insights of practical significance into the operation of complex systems, whether in the natural or social environments. There is now a well developed understanding of the necessarily complex interdependencies of the elements of such systems -- especially well illustrated in the case of biological, production and electronic information systems.

Practical applications have however been bought at a very high price -- namely a narrow focus on the isolation of (closed) sub-systems that can be readily documented and understood in this way, to the exclusion of any understanding of more comprehensive systems with a broader range of complementary functions vital to sustainability. Typically (and wherever possible) social and environmental factors are excluded from the design of technical systems, and psychological factors are excluded from any understanding of psycho-social systems. In practice applications are designed and "cut" to fit relatively simplistic models reflecting understanding of isolated systems -- usually of the most tangible nature. The resulting challenge is most evident in the often disastrously delayed appreciation of the necessity for additional feedback control loops, notably those relating to environmental processes.

Whilst systems theory has provided remarkably detailed insights into the articulation of some systems, even at their most comprehensive (as with the set of metabolic pathways), the quality of insight available into the most comprehensive systems tends to be either low or constrained by intellectual models lacking grounded relationship to the richness of the real world. This has proven especially problematic in relationship to issues of governance.

Valuable pointers to understandings of such richness are notably to be found in traditional symbol systems with a top-down perspective. These include Celtic knots, the enneagram, the *I Ching*, rosaries, and other mnemonic holding patterns that have to be decoded in special ways to be rendered meaningful. Some of these were designed to be used in relation to governance. Sacred geometry (as described, for example, by Keith Critchlow. *Islamic Patterns: An Analytical and Cosmological Approach*, 1999), even basket work and carpet designs, may also be considered in this light.

The core argument in what follows -- expressed through symbols, such as the mandalas explored by depth psychologists (Jung, Hillman, etc) -- is that the range of functions commonly recognized in systems of governance is essentially only a subset of those represented in a mandala highlighting the necessary balance between the requisite variety of functions. Depth psychologists explore this phenomenon in terms of repressed functions in individuals -- without extending their understanding to groups and other systems (except in terms of the "collective unconscious"). In their terms, the imbalance in integrated psychic function may be expressed through "conflicted" mandalas. Implicit in these is an unexpressed "shadow" or "dark" side whose forced expression is characteristic of problematic psychological behaviour.

Armageddon, Acharit Hayami, Yawmid Din, Ragnarok and Götterdämmerung

Much is currently made of [Armageddon](#) and the associated [Apocalypse](#) [\[more\]](#)-- the final battle between the forces of good and evil -- especially by the Christian fundamentalists that have proven to be so influential in supporting the presidency of George Bush and the policies he advocates [\[more\]](#). It reportedly underlies American unconditional support for Israel [\[more\]](#). Bush's degree of concern with Armageddon has been explored by Michael Ortiz Hill (*Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: Bush's Armageddon Obsession, Revisited*, *CounterPunch* January 4, 2003). Tony Blair has also declared, in his most detailed justification of the attack on Iraq (see *Guardian*, 5 March 2004), that: "From September 11th on, I could see the threat plainly. Here were terrorists prepared to bring about Armageddon." [\[more\]](#)

Armageddon is part of the biblical [End Times](#) scenario (*Revelations* 19), also highly significant to such fundamentalists. Hill quotes S.R. Shearer of [Antipas Ministries](#) (responsible for the [EndTimes Network](#)) as calling this delusion, "Messianic leadership"-- that is to say usurping the role usually ascribed to the Messiah:

Most of the leaders of the [Promise Keepers](#) embrace a doctrine of 'end time' (eschatology), known as 'dominionism.' [Dominionism](#) pictures the seizure of earthly (temporal) power by the 'people of God' as the only means through which the world can be rescued.... It is the eschatology that Bush has imbibed; an eschatology through which he has gradually (and easily) come to see himself as an agent of God who has been called by him to 'restore the earth to God's control', a 'chosen vessel', so to speak, to bring in the Restoration of All Things.

Many religions foresee an [end of the world](#) in some form or another. It is known to Islam in the Arabic language as *Yawmid Din* (or day of reckoning), and is described in great detail in the *Qur'an*. In Judaism it is known as the *Acharit Hayami* (end of days), when tumultuous events will take place in the world, overturning the old world order and creating a new order where God is recognized by every single individual. Creation myths may also include a corresponding period described as the "war of the gods" as in the Sanskrit account of the War of the Gods and Asuras, which features in the *Mahabharata* [\[more\]](#). In Greek mythology this takes the form of the war amongst the gods of Olympus and against the Titans [\[more\]](#). The complementarity between the creation and end times myths is reminiscent of that between the hypotheses of cosmologists about the "Big Bang" and the "Big Crunch" [\[more\]](#).

In Norse mythology there is a corresponding condition labelled metaphorically as [Ragnarok](#) ("doom of the gods", "doom of the powers" or "destruction of the powers") and also called Götterdämmerung, signifying the end of the cosmos. Conflicts and feuds will break out, even between families, and all morality will disappear. This is the beginning of the end. The earth will shudder with earthquakes, and every bond and fetter will burst, freeing the terrible wolf Fenrir. The sea will rise up. Like Armageddon, Ragnarok is the ultimate battle between good and evil from which a new order will come. It will however be waged between the "gods" (the Aesir, led by Odin) and the "evils" (the fire giants, the Jotuns and various monsters, led by [Loki](#)). Not only will the gods, giants, and monsters perish in this apocalyptic conflagration, but almost everything in the universe will be torn asunder. After all of the devastation, however, the land will return, and the world will be repopulated, and a new set of gods will be worshipped. Some may however view this as a process of regeneration rather than total destruction.

Modern fantasy occasionally describes the condition of relative peace that currently prevails as having been achieved by "sealing off" access to an earlier chaotic condition -- in which "evil" magical powers are active -- by what amounts to "magical gates". The images of sacred patterns ([Celtic knots](#), for example) might then be understood as the design of the seal on such a gate. But of greater significance, these designs may also be understood as system diagrams -- with the interweaving loops of the patterns to be understood as encoding understanding of the "bonds" that are the necessary dynamic interdependencies required to ensure that the gate remains "locked". Such diagrams might also be seen as maps of the interrelationships between the warring factions. A curious feature of Ragnarok, for example, is that the gods already understand the symmetries of who will be killed and by whom, who will survive, and what will happen to those in the other world [\[more\]](#).

"Forces of good" vs "Forces of evil"

Taken together, these perspectives highlight a degree of ambiguity:

- **Time:** In the timeless world of the "gods" and eternity, to what extent are processes presented as "creation" and "destruction" to be considered to be occurring all the time rather than at the extreme "ends" of the cosmos?
- **Amongst vs Against:** To what extent is it foreseen as a war **amongst** the gods, rather than a war of the gods **against** the "forces of evil"?
 - When the "gods" are seen as uniquely associated with the "good", any war amongst them resonates with the unprecedented and chaotic degree of fragmentation, even amongst those acting for "good" in their various ways. Is it not their dynamics of fragmentation and polarization that then implicitly holds "evil" (in the absence of any other vehicle for "evil forces")?
 - When the "gods" act together in a war of the "forces of good" against the "forces of evil", to what extent is the nature of the "gods" that transcend this polarization then obscured?
- **Pairing of good and evil:** How are the "forces of good" related to the "forces of evil", given the understanding concerning Ragnarok that each "god" knew the enemy giant with whom it had to do battle -- with which it was paired?
 - Is this simply a matter of polarization, in which one pole is overwhelmed by the other? This would imply that the "forces of good" entering the battle are in some way transformed by the process of the battle. In some sense they then need the "forces of evil" for that transformative process to occur.

- Are the "forces of evil" to be understood, in depth psychology terms, as the unintegrated "shadow" of the "forces of good"? The battle is then more a battle of integration, echoing some of the challenges of creation myths?
 - Are the elements of the "forces of evil" then the "fallen brothers" (or "sisters") of the corresponding "forces of good" -- perhaps to be understood as that aspect that has become overidentified with the mundane to the exclusion of the divine?
 - Given the systemic negligence that is a theme of this argument, are the "forces of good" to be considered as free of any responsibility in that regard, or in any way tainted by such neglect to a degree that effectively defines them as part of the "forces of evil"? At what point is deliberately withholding assistance to those in need to be considered as "evil"? And if it is done out of ignorance?
- **Discernment:** In the confusion of such end times scenarios, how are the "forces of good" to be identified and distinguished unambiguously from the "forces of evil", especially given the marked tendency of the "forces of evil" to masquerade most cunningly as the "forces of good" -- and the recognition that the "forces of good", in seeking the triumph of the "good", may need to adopt (Machiavellian) strategies which may at least seem to be "evil" to many? In that respect, it is important to recall that everything which the Inquisition did, as self-acclaimed representatives of the "forces of good" -- and but a few centuries ago -- was for the "good" of the souls of those perceived to be associated in some way with "evil".
 - How are accusations by one group, defining itself as a core constituent of the "forces of good", to be handled when it labels another group as a constituent of the "forces of evil" -- especially when the second group frames the situation in reverse? Many religious groups are concerned that others are "infidels" and treated accordingly -- whilst at the same time extolling both their own spirit of tolerance and the need to act firmly in response to such anathema?
 - What weight is to be accorded to the various indications of the need for caution, such as *Let him who is without sin cast the first stone* (John 8: 7), or the recognition in psychotherapy that people tend to see problematic qualities in others -- which (because of blindspots) are especially characteristic of themselves -- a phenomenon known as projection? Is there any question that those claiming others are "evil" may well themselves, in some measure, be part of the "forces of evil" if only because of their negligence in response to other parts of the system in need?
 - How does bigotry, namely the obstinate and unreasoning attachment to one's own belief and opinions (with narrow-minded intolerance of beliefs opposed to them) hinder the process of distinguishing unambiguously the "forces of good" from the "forces of evil"? How does history evaluate the judgement of those qualifying their own actions as "good" and those of others as "evil"? What role does sanctimoniousness and righteousness play in this context ?
 - **Capacity of judgement:** Is it more appropriate to assume that those aspiring to (or claiming to be part of) the "forces of good" are necessarily fully integrated personalities -- free of "sin" or of any personality disorders affecting their judgement -- rather than assuming that they are an, only too human, complex of "good" and "evil" tendencies?
 - Would the greater the tendency of a person to identify with the "good" not lead to a more complete repression of any recognition within themselves of such "evil" tendencies -- and their projection onto others?
 - To what extent is the war to be considered, to a high degree, as within every individual as the final battle between their higher principles and their venal tendencies?
 - **Differentiation of forces:** How is it that it is the monotheistic religions, such as Christianity, which fail to describe how the "forces of good" are differentiated, given the use of the plural, when otherwise the term "force of good" (in the singular) would have been more appropriate? Whereas in the case of Ragnarok, the "gods" participating as the "force for good" are identified?
 - If, in military terms, the "forces" have a number of components, how are they to be identified and distinguished -- or are they to be understood as uniform in nature, and not characterized by any diversity?
 - Under what conditions is it appropriate to transform the harmony within requisite diversity become transformed into uniformity? What kind of unity supersedes the need for diversity? How is this unity to be distinguished from that exemplified by [Nazi Nuremberg rallies](#)?
 - Given the characteristic (friendly) rivalries between the various components of any (military) campaign, what are the dynamics between the different components of the "forces of good" if their separate identities as groups are preserved? How are such dynamics then to be compared with those between different religions (if only of Christian persuasion) perceiving themselves to be part of the "forces of good"?

Neglect of systemic imbalance

The above prophetic and mythological perspectives provide another way of looking at the systemic imbalance of the current global society. Those focused on Armageddon already see current disasters as its precursors. The imbalance might then be understood as effectively destroying some of the feedback loops that are essential to the construction of the "seal on the magical gate" -- the seal that ensures that it remains locked.

The "war of the gods" may then be understood as already emergent within contemporary civilization. The seal may be otherwise understood as the necessary underlying interdependence of the various societal projects in which humanity has invested to sustain these loops. The features of the seal include the seemingly independent projects such as: civil rights and justice, delivery of health and other essential services, etc -- the bankruptcy of which is effectively the dissolution of the elements of the seal.

The primary feature of the "war of the gods" is effectively the disorder of the feedback loops. They shift from functioning "in sync", or in rhythm with each other, to a dangerous condition of clashing with each other. It is not however necessary to give any metaphysical connotation to the "gods":

- **Disciplines:** their degree of abstraction is quite adequately represented by the academic and other disciplines whose elaboration

has been a major achievement of this civilization. Their leading lights are occasionally described as "gods" in secular society. The consequences of the fragmentation of their systems of knowledge may increasingly be understood as a "war" within knowledge society that is undermining the operation and coherence of society. This fragmentation is echoed in the mindsets of "specialists"

- **Belief systems:** the same might be said more broadly of the intangible subtleties of all belief systems -- of which bloody religious conflict has now become most indicative. Again the echoes in individual thinking manifest most blatantly as intolerance.
- **Institutions:** at a more obvious level, the major institutions of governance (such as the UN Specialized Agencies or their regional or national analogues) may also be understood as the "temples" in which particular feedback loops are recognized -- if not "worshipped" in some way (as in the World Bank). They are the contemporary equivalent (often to the point of sharing classical architectural features) of the temples, honouring different gods, that figured so much more prominently in ancient cities. The well-recognized fragmentation, jealousies and rivalry amongst these institutional perspectives, and the manner in which their initiatives (deliberately) undermine each other through bureaucratic warfare, may be seen as offering a foretaste of Ragnarok.
- **Values:** more subtly, given the "common values" advanced as the guiding principle of any collective strategy, it is perhaps such values which should be understood as the "gods" of civilization. Any "war **amongst** the gods" is then characteristic of the relationship between competing values as the "warring principles" so characteristic of the many strategic dilemmas that bedevil global governance (see *Configuring Strategic Dilemmas in Intersectoral Dialogue*, 1992) -- whereas any "war of the gods" **against** the "forces of evil" is then that between transcendental values (as the "forces of good") and their vehicles of expression or reflection in the mundane word (as the "forces of evil"). Within the individual this is echoed in the classic struggle with one's conscience and its "principles" -- whether reconciling conflict **amongst** them or in the struggle **against** one's venal tendencies and practices.

There is increasingly no credible constraint on the destructive conflict amongst the (sub)systems which humanity chooses to deify. The gate to Ragnarok is swinging open unchecked. This is a systemic consequence of systemic negligence.

"Winds of Change": Time of the "South Wind"

The notion of the "winds of change" (dating from a speech in South Africa by Harold Macmillan in 1960) has long been widely accepted in the promotion of the development process. Indeed the probable climate change foreseen by the Pentagon report (above) may indeed be matched by a dramatic change in the "climate" of global governance and public opinion -- in ways already indicated by the shift in attitudes in response to the issue of Iraq. Much has also been made metaphorically of the geopolitical significance of certain compass directions. These two metaphors may be usefully combined as a way of pointing simplistically to the different kinds of change commonly recognized in society:

- **North wind:** This might be understood as the kind of change associated with "northerners", notably a degree of inflexible, instrumentalism in response to system recognition and design, primarily characterized by closed system thinking -- highly efficient (with respect to the systems it recognizes)
- **West wind:** This might be understood as the kind of change associated with "westerners", notably a degree of preoccupation with material advantages, property and the search for individual well-being. This might be caricatured by the original pursuit of gold and Eldorado by the Conquistadors. The approach is essentially acquisitive and focused on the imposition of "western values" as necessarily universal -- and to the exclusion of any others. There is an ironic twist to the illusory belief that in going "West" the early explorers had effectively circumnavigated the world and arrived in the Indies to the "East".
- **East wind:** This might be understood as the kind of change associated with Eastern community-oriented value systems and ways of thinking -- perhaps basic to alternative approaches to community lifestyles. Early effects of this are evident in the cultural implications of the Silk Route and the transfer of knowledge to Europe via the Arab world. The effects of such an East wind have been most recently evident in (if not caricatured by) the uptake of "eastern" ways of thinking in places like California and within "New Age" movements. More recently however the particular style of development so successfully explored within major countries of the East suggests that other styles of thinking are operative (cf Susantha Goonatilake. *Toward a Global Science: mining civilizational knowledge*, 1999)
- **South wind:** Although recognized geopolitically, notably in relation to the challenge of the development of "least developed countries" (LDCs) and the desirability of "south-south" exchanges, little has been articulated regarding the kind of change characteristic of the South (a theme explored below). It might be well be associated with emphasis on local development in contrast with global -- or with zero growth approaches to voluntary simplicity (as practiced in some communities) in contrast with obsession with growth and dependence on it. It may well have been best expressed in the the programme inspired by E F Schumacher (*Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, 1973)

It would be worth examining these types of change in terms of various categorizations of cultural and pre-logical predispositions (see *Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases*, 1993), notably in the work of Magoroh Maruyama on 4 (or 5) mindscapes (*Mindscapes, social patterns and future development of scientific theory types*. *Cybernetica*, 1980, 23, 1, pp. 5-25). The crude system based on four compass directions might be usefully expanded -- just as the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTI) expands Jung's original four psychological styles into 16. Much might then be made of the recent dominance of the "North-West wind" as an operating approach to change now challenged again by the "East wind".

The "winds" may be explored in terms of understandings in various cultures:

- **China:** the symbolism associated with compass directions in many cultures, notably the Chinese where it is integral to the game of Mah Jong [[more](#), [more](#)] and to the geomancy of *feng shui* [[more](#)]. Good *feng shui* results from the "winds" and the "waters" surrounding the home and work place are harmonious. The 5 "elements" (earth, metal, fire, wood and water) basic to Taoist insight are also recognized as "winds". They are best understood as phases of a constantly moving cycle -- each grows and replaces the next in much the same way as the seasons progress [[more](#)].

- **Greek mythology:** the four directional wind gods (**Anemoi**) were the North Wind (**Boreas**), the West Wind (**Zephyros**), the South Wind (**Notos**) and the East Wind (**Euros**). An additional four were also identified: the North-East Wind (Kaikias), the East Wind (Apeliotes), the South-West Wind (Lips), and the North-West (Skiron). These were distinct from the violent **storm winds** kept "locked away" and released only at the command of the gods to wreak their havoc.
- **Amerindians:** Cherokee people see the the Four Winds as spirit beings, the Creator's messengers, that were placed at the four corners of the world in the beginning of time by the Creator with the task of attending to the cycle of the four seasons of the year [\[more\]](#).

The suggestion here, within a context of Ragnarok, is that all such "winds" will then blow freely, chaotically and uncontrollably. As the most repressed wind, that of the South will then express itself -- perhaps with most force and effect. The desirable condition in which the winds blow such as to complement and feed into one another -- as suggested by any global map of wind directions -- might be seen as visually isomorphic with the necessary systemic loops (as symbolized by Celtic knots) preventing the emergence of Ragnarok. It is this systemic integration that is in process of collapsing into violently chaotic wind forces appropriate to the emergence of new systemic balance.

The particular association of the South with the least developed and most impoverished has been more clearly recognized in terms of the underprivileged within western societies. They are of course a tiny proportion of the under-resourced in other countries, known as the South. The transformative wind from the South features significantly in a much-translated novel by **Paul Coelho** (*The Alchemist*, 1988). There has long been a recognition of the future internal security risk to western societies from their underprivileged. Many such societies are familiar with social unrest the phenomenon of "revolution" in which people "rise up" -- like the sea. The disruptive nature of the "South Wind" as evoked by the systemic negligence of the consequences of change associated with the other winds will not however be constrained by conventional security procedures -- despite the ever-increasing investment of resources, foreseen as necessary by the Pentagon, to this end. In fact it is precisely such security features that may be simplistically understood as forming part of the breaking "seal" against Ragnarok. They will however be totally inadequate against the fury of the "South Wind".

A foretaste of the global challenge has been articulated as "terrorism" -- and the viability of any response has become evident in the "war against terrorism" and its inherent capacity to contribute perversely to acceleration of the breakdown of the integrity of global society. The apparent unreasonableness of the suicide bomber may then be understood as but one expression of the emergent fury of the previously repressed "South Wind" -- of which others may quickly become evident (eg extensive rioting, as in Liberia in 2003, Haiti in 2004). Indeed efforts by the US-led Coalition of the Willing to hold the "South Wind" in check through the "war against terrorism" may be seen as being as vain as King Canute's arrogant attempt to hold back the tide. The fact that the Coalition has been formed in part by perverse secretive agreements to ignore extreme repressive actions by some of its members (Russia with respect to Chechnya, China with respect to Tibet, etc) is indicative of the increasingly shaky response to the challenge of the "South Wind".

To date the "South Wind" has essentially been held in check by a pattern of promises (another way of viewing the "seal") repeatedly offering new hope to the underprivileged (if only for their grandchildren) for future alleviation of their condition -- accompanied in the short-term by the Roman strategy of "bread and circuses". The mendacious basis for the attack on Iraq has however highlighted the pattern of lies (labelled euphemistically as "spin") that is now fundamental to the approach to modern governance. The implicit social contract has been torn up -- not to be remedied by such Orwellian creations as the USA's new "Ministry of Human Rights" (2004). Trust has been lost, if not destroyed -- as articulated by philosopher Onora O'Neill, in her 2002 BBC Reith Lectures, for whom "we suffer not so much from a crisis of trust, as a culture of suspicion" [\[more\]](#).

Aside from "terrorism" (as extreme dissidence will always be labelled), what form will the unchecked fury of the "South Wind" take? The question might be better framed as what form of action might be expected from those that have nothing to lose given the emptiness of promises made to them? What is to be expected from those without food or water, without shelter, without health care, without employment, without education -- and whose pensions and other benefits, if any, have been mismanaged to the point at which they no longer meet survival needs? Just as the attack on Iraq was labelled as a "whirlwind", the unchecked "South Wind" may be as destructive as any hurricane, and as indiscriminate. It is not to be expected that it will appear purposeful -- as past examples of the action of hordes have shown. Indeed the action individuals may take, as an expression of the "South Wind", will reflect extremely short-term views on their aspirations to remedy their underprivileged condition (whether via pillage, murder, rape, or other classical examples of extreme social disorder), perhaps augmented by high tech use of computer technology and biochemical weaponry as envisaged in many science fiction novels.

Given its repression to date, the action of the "South Wind" could be understood as the "dark side" of the pursuit of alternatives to the systemic negligence of the other winds of change. It is an example of spontaneous global systems healing, of the global system healing itself -- seeking a healthy condition of balance. Its violence might be seen as a purgative of negative by-products that have built up through failure to process the products of the other winds of change;

Heartfelt action

In human physical terms:

- the circulation of blood, by the action of the heart, is basic to life -- and was a major discovery for western medicine
- disorders of the heart (including arrhythmia and tachycardia) are a major focus of modern cardiac surgery, notably in the form of replacing valves, bypasses, and even heart transplants
- heart failure is a major cause of death, especially in industrialized societies -- it is the leading cause of death in the USA.

A number of religions, including that of Ancient Egypt, Judaism and Islam, relate the metaphor of the "heart" to conscience -- expressing the inner centre of man - capable of moral judgements and self-evaluation as well as of personal communication with God, and in need of

purification [more]. Many religions have attached special importance to symbolism associated with the heart, and even to "awakening the heart" as explored by Roger Walsh (*Essential Spirituality : The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind*, 2000):

- **Aztecs:** At the heart of Aztec religion lay the belief that the world had previously been created and demolished by the gods several times. To the Aztecs the human heart was the symbol of life itself, and Huitzilopochtli, the sun god needed to be fed both blood and human hearts so he would not wreak his anger on the Aztec people once again. Aztecs believed that it was their sacred duty to provide the gods with *chalchihuatl*, a precious form of nectar found in human blood. Each day, night, week, month and year had its own deity demanding blood. The sacrifices on their pyramids given to the Greatest God(esses) usually required the living heart to be cut from the body of a human and shown to the Sun. [more]
- **Egyptian:** Ancient Egyptian religion saw the metaphor of the heart as source of mortal decisions -- central to the belief in a transcendental death.
- **Hinduism:** According to the *Katha Upanishad*: When all desires that cling to the heart are surrendered, then a mortal becomes immortal, and even in this world he is one with Brahman. In the *Atharva Veda*, the human heart is compared with the lotus flower -- the flower most sacred to Hindus [more]. The *Bhagavad Gita* explains in detail, the ways and means to surrender the heart at the lotus feet of Krishna, in exchange for filling one's heart with peace and contentment.
- **Buddhism:** The *Heart Sutra* is the shortest and the most popular sutra in Buddhism, and is recited daily by many [more | more]
- **Islam:** Islam is notable for its emphasis on learning the *Qur'an* by heart. Those who do so are considered to be the first of those who will be called to account, on the Day of Resurrection. The purification of the soul is explored in relation to the condition of the heart [more]. The *Qur'an* has been defined as the heart of Islam (Thomas F. Cleary, ed. *Essential Koran: The Heart of Islam*, 1998), as has Sufism (Khaled Bentounes, etc *Sufism, the Heart of Islam: The Heart of Islam*, 2002). Islam is itself perceived as having a heart (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: enduring values for humanity*, 2002). Placing the hand on the heart is a characteristic symbolic gesture.
- **Judaism:** In text on *Israel as Leader of the Nations*, disseminated by Gal Einai Institute of Israel, based on the teachings of Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburgh, on the inner dimension of the *Torah* in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora, it is stated that: "In the *Kuzari*, one of the classic books of Jewish philosophy from the middle ages, Israel is described as the heart and the nations as the limbs of the body. The metaphor of the heart pumping life force to the body parallels that of the head directing the emotions. *Chassidut* explains the difference in images as that between the exile and redemption. While in exile the Jewish People, due to circumstance, function more like the heart, feeling the suffering of the world and in a deep, allegorical and mystical fashion suffer for the world. Many Jewish and non-Jewish authors have employed the expression of Jews as the 'conscience of the world'. In a redemptive state the Jewish People will reassume their more natural role as the head, leading the world to a new age."
- **Christianity:** The heart metaphor is extensively used (for exmple, Marcus J.Borg. *The Heart of Christianity*). The "Sacred Heart" is a devotional name used by some Roman Catholics to refer to Jesus Christ. Devotion to the Sacred Heart, in focusing on Christ's heart, metaphorically focuses on the emotional and moral life of Jesus and especially his love for humanity [more]. The Catholic Church obligates Christians to adore the infinite love of Jesus Christ through the image of "His wounded Heart" [more]. This devotion dates back to the Church Fathers and Divine Revelation itself, though popularized by the revelations to St. Margaret Mary (1673-75). While in recent times devotion to the Sacred Heart has been downplayed as unnecessary and outdated, or even ridiculed as superstitious and sentimental, every Pope since Clement XIII (1765) has exhorted Catholics to adore Jesus in "His Sacred Heart" as explained in Pope Pius XII's encyclical, *On Devotion to the Sacred Heart [Haurietis Aquas]*, written in 1956. To deny devotion to the Sacred Heart is seen as a denial of the humanity of Christ.[more | more | more]. In his encyclical *Annum Sacrum* (25 May 1899) Pope Leo XIII decreed that the consecration of the entire human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus should take place -- it took place on 11 June 1899. Also distinguished as aspects of the Sacred Heart are the "Merciful Heart" and the "Suffering Heart" [more]. A focus on personal spiritual prayer through the [Prayer of the Heart](#), or Jesus Prayer, has long been a tradition in the spirituality of the Eastern Orthodox Church. In the light of this argument, the action of the heart may be understood as, in different and intimately personal ways, exemplifying the process of sustaining the feedback loops fundamental to the systemic balance discussed earlier.

For the Congregationalist Charlotte Russell (*A Gift from the Heart*): "In the Biblical view, the heart is an organ, part of the body. But it carries great significance beyond this: the heart was for them, and symbolizes for us, the very core of who we are, the seat of the totality of all our feelings and emotions, our desires. It is the deepest source of the inner life-what shapes our personality, our will, our intellect, and our moral life. It is also the point of contact with God, the place where God touches our lives, and the place from which to turn-or refuse to turn-to God. Everything-love as well as hate, trust and fear, anger, and forgiveness-all come from the heart. God's grace and power meets us there."

It is curious that the symbolism of the heart tends to focus on the heart as a whole (as with the lack of differentiation of the "forces of good", discussed above) and takes no account of its "chambers", "valves" and dynamics -- that are so vital to its functioning and so significant in any form of failure. It is indeed the capacity of the heart to "pump", selectively opening and closing "valves", that is vital to ensuring circulation of blood -- the "lifeblood". The symbolic focus on the heart as a whole can therefore impede understanding of the need for its distinct and differentiated elements, and of the need for a particular dynamic between them to sustain its operation as a whole. This kind of thinking obscures analogous insights with regard to the circulation of information in society -- as its "lifeblood" (see Orrin Klapp, *Opening and Closing: Strategies of Information Adaptation in Society*, 1978; Valerie Malhotra. *Critical Dimensions in Symbolic Interaction Theory: Mead, Duncan, Burke, Habermas and Klapp*, 1979) [more]

Metaphor has been described as the "heart of poetic knowing". The heart has a special role in the history of self-image through the self-book metaphor as explored by Eric Jager (*Reading the Book of the Heart from the Middle Ages to the Twenty-First Century*, 2001; also *The Book of the Heart*, 2000). Texts are still learnt "by heart," and the word "record" (from the Latin *cor*) links the heart with both memory (its original meaning) and written documents. The "book of the heart" was a common and influential metaphor from antiquity until early modern times. Especially during the Middle Ages, the "book of the heart", modeled on the manuscript codex, attained its most

vivid expressions in literature and art. Medieval saints' legends tell of martyrs whose hearts recorded divine inscriptions; lyrics and romances feature lovers whose hearts are inscribed with their passion; paintings depict hearts as books; and medieval scribes even produced manuscript codices shaped like hearts [more].

The metaphorical use of the heart is also important in modern secular society:

- **Heartlessness:** Much is made of the necessary balance between the "head" and the "heart" and of the marked tendency to neglect the latter in favour of the former in "hard headed" industrialized societies -- and in the attitude towards those suffering or in need. Some groups go to the other extreme of focussing on the "heart" to the exclusion of the "head" -- even to the point of seeing the latter condition as a pathology of well-being. As a consequence they may be caricatured as "bleeding hearts". In these terms a basic, unresolved conflict in society may be described in terms of an ongoing battle between the "heartless heads" and the "headless hearts". It is perhaps the "hard hearted", and "heartless", who through their lifestyles are most surprised by their vulnerability to "heart attack".
- **Commitment:** Full commitment to another person, to a group, or to a project, is described as being "wholehearted". This is contrasted with "halfhearted" commitment or support which may identify a form of tokenism. Pledges may be made "upon my heart".-- marked symbolically by physically placing the hand on the heart, or even by sharing blood. Any conflict of commitment may expressed in terms of a "divided heart". Support for the underprivileged is typically "halfhearted" in practice, however "wholehearted" the verbal expressions of support. But successful charity fund-raising appeals are designed to "tug at the heart (- strings)" of any potential donor.
- **Courage:** In response to any condition, people may be described as "good hearted" or "stout hearted", in contrast with the "faint hearted". They be "heated" or "take heart as a result of encouragement.
- **Conversion:** A shift in commitment, or conversion to a new pattern of belief, may be described in terms of a "change of heart". It is this "change of heart" which change agents seek to bring about -- through the much sought "paradigm shift" -- in remedying unsustainable patterns of behaviour. Conversion for Christians, for example, may be described in terms "taking Jesus into one's heart". The process of falling in love is frequently described in terms of the "heart".
- **Core:** A central role may be described, in the case of a person, as being the "heart of a group". Similarly a group may be described as the "heart of a coalition". There is recognition of the "heartland" of a country or region, and of the "heart of the matter". The metaphor is also used with respect to business, as in Stafford Beer's study of management cybernetics (*The Heart of Enterprise*, 1979)
- **Embodiment:** Conditions external to an individual or a group may have such an impact, through being "taken to heart", that they are described as "heartfelt" (see *My Reflecting Mirror World: making Joburg worthwhile*, 2002). For Alexander Solzhenitsyn "good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being"
- **Impact of disaster:** Loss of any kind, including the failure of a relationship (the demise of a person, a group, or a project) may be described in terms "heartache", of "being heartsick", of a "broken heart", or it "breaks one's heart". There is the notion of "crying one's heart out". Many aspire to "peace of heart".
 - Recent research shows that even the stress of heartache can kill.(Alok Jha. *Love will tear us apart*. *Guardian*, 12 February 2004).
 - In Taoism the 5 "winds" (see above) have their correspondence in the human body. The cycles in which they engage can move creatively or destructively and the balance is a prime focus of traditional Chinese medicine.It is recognized that these "winds" can become trapped and attack the "heart".
 - It is possible that the focus on the heart within the Aztec culture, and the recognition of how it was affected in time of disaster brought about by the gods, led them to see sacrifices (such as cutting out the living heart for the gods) as a form of "pre-emptive" palliative in ways that have not been previously considered
 - Some modern psychotherapy, particularly that associated with abuse, is concerned with healing the "wounded heart" (see also: Chuck Spezzano, *Whole Heartedness: Healing Your Heartbreak*)

The heart metaphor continues to be of importance in geopolitical discourse. For example, Andreas Musolff (*The heart of the European matter*), on the basis of a corpus of British and German press coverage of EU politics (see [pilot version](#)), analyses uses of the geopolitical heart-metaphor in the context of the EU-related debates in Britain and Germany. In particular, it focuses on the argumentative and ideological functions of texts allocating heart of Europe-status to places in East Germany and to Eastern European places and countries. Elsewhere, in discussing the "heart of Europe", Musolff concludes that of the altogether nine body parts in texts of the [EUROMETA corpora](#), only the heart constitutes a significant (as well as the overall most frequent) single source concept for Euro-metaphors; the remaining body parts concepts appear in one-off formulations. He also disucses understanig of "heart failure" in this context. [more].

In these terms the heart clearly provides some useful leads in exploring the consequences of systemic imbalance and negligence. Briefly, the "South Wind" is evoked by a persistent pattern of "heartlessness" in response to vital parts of the system (whether underprivileged people or endangered species), despite token expressions of "wholehearted" support. Any necessary "change of heart" is either too little or too late in safeguarding the circulation of the "lifeblood" of civilization (as suggested by Gregory Bateson's insight into the dangers to all quality of "breaking the pattern that connects") [more | more | more]. Any resulting disaster may then indeed "break one's heart". The spontaneous systemic response for the "heart of civilization", as for the individual heart, may then indeed be "heart failure" or a "heart attack" (as was arguably demonstrated by the Aztec civilization with arrival of the Conquistadors). Armageddon might then be understood as a form civilizational "heart failure" -- a fatal war between the complementary parts of the "heart of civilization" in the light of what they have come to embody. The current debate about the "clash of civilizations" (also offered as a [strategy game](#)) could usefully be seen in this light.

The warring components may then offer insights into the dynamics of the pattern of fragmentation that has been inappropriately

embodied by the "heart", namely "taken to heart" -- or else ignored:

- This is dramatically evident with the [Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse](#) (*Book of Revelation*, 6): *War, Famine, Pestilence*, and *Death* [\[more\]](#). Each is associated with a magical seal that is opened as their powers are unleashed. Their action illustrates the systemic consequence of the failure of civilization to use its insights and resources to respond appropriately to the corresponding challenges of *Diversity, Nourishment, Well-being*, and *Population control* (see [perspective of Judaism](#))
- As noted earlier, the rivalry between the "temples" (agencies for food, education, employment, refugees, etc) and their priesthoods, and the relative importance and resources variously accorded to them, undermines any "wholehearted" systemic approach. The dynamics of such fragmentation might be better described in terms of cardiac dysfunction as "arrhythmia" or "fibrillation". How is requisite diversity transformed into dysfunctional "fibrillation"?
- Concern with the level of "environmental stress" to ecosystems and species has its counterpart in the contemporary concern with the personal or collective stress associated notably with the pace of life. A recent survey in the UK concluded that 25% of children from 4-6 claimed to be "stressed out", rising to over 50% of those under 16 [\[more\]](#). Here too the dysfunctional resonances between the engendered disharmonies of a wider world, and the "heartfelt" response of the individual, give rise to "disorders of the heart" and "heart attacks". Ecosystems, like civilizations, may also have the equivalent of "heart failure" (notably as in [ecosystem collapse](#)). Efforts to avoid "taking in" such disharmonies by narrow specialization and "heartlessness" merely postpone and focus the impact.

Curiously, in the case of the term "heart attack", it is ambiguous as to whether it is the heart which is attacked, or whether the rest of the system is attacked by the heart.

Systemic response to systemic imbalance from negligence

The negligence noted above might be presented summarily in the following terms (see also [introduction](#) to the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*) :

- **Broken commitments:** Breakdown of trust and consequently of confidence-based systems, despite ever more intense use of news management to justify such confidence:
 - much more acute recognition of the suspect nature of promises by leadership.
 - sharper recognition of the lack of commitment in the promises made by modern leadership in striking contrast with the binding contracts through which people are called upon to express their commitment -- and to whose penalty clauses they are held by law.
 - increasing awareness of relative impunity of leadership, even following the most flagrant abuses
- **Failure of enlightened models of leadership:** The inadequacy of the variety of exemplars of leadership might be summarized as follows:
 - **individual heroes:** It is clear that the classical hero no longer has anything to offer in the leadership of modern societies, despite efforts to benefit from the hero-image in American presidential politics [\[more\]](#). See also Orrin Klapp (*Heroes, Villains, and Fools: The Changing American Character*, 1962). The [Right Livelihood Foundation](#) has explored the possibility of promoting heroic leadership of local initiatives but with little possibility of extending this to larger collectives. There are no Nelson Mandelas relevant to the global challenge, although children do indeed distinguish the merits of those like Martin Luther King. Indeed those (self)promoted as relevant are increasingly characterized as tainted. The heroic function is however now variously recognized in the form of prize winners (Nobel, etc), sport and media stars, and whistleblowers. The status of suicide bombers is a case in point -- given the absence of any constructive equivalent.
 - **heroic groups of the wise and powerful:** The classical model of the mythical Arthurian roundtable has been followed in various ways by a variety of analogues: mythical groups ([Sarmoung](#)), Templars, secret societies (including freemasons and esoteric groups), enlightened NGOs (Association for a New Humanity), NGOs of the powerful (Club of Rome, Trilateral Commission, etc), councils of the wise, wisdom keepers. The esoteric groups underlying the Nazi imitative should not be forgotten.
 - **networks of excellence**, as promoted by the European Commission to interlink those with key technical expertise -- but which have not been successfully extended to those of governance
 - **organizational boards**, as the modern roundtable par excellence, which have been significantly challenged to look responsibly beyond their often self-interested mandates -- or, in the case of the use of such roundtables at meetings, to transcend meaningfully and integrate the vital differences of the participants
 - **media representation of individual leadership:** The desire for real heroes has been transformed by the media into packaging of surrogate heroes (007, Clint Eastwood, etc), whether as media stars, in storylines, or in virtual entities (avatars). Such heroes are portrayed as playing key roles in containing the "bad guys" and safeguarding society. . It is unfortunate that the plots have had to be developed in ways that illustrate the ambiguity of the hero role without indicating how it might be more fruitfully taken up as an exemplar in response to social conditions.
 - **media representation of collective leadership:** The desire for real groups acting with integrity has been transformed by the media into packaging of surrogate heroic groups, such as special force and secret intelligence teams.
- **Promotion of closed system pseudo achievements:** At a time when many challenges facing individuals and human society are associated with the complexities of broad, open systems, it is striking to observe the extent to which widely publicized innovative "achievements" and "breakthroughs" are in almost all cases associated with narrow, closed systems ("neater" problems). It might readily be assumed that such closed system challenges (of tractable problems) are selected because of the probability of success -

- implicitly recognizing the difficulty of responding effectively to the real challenges of society and the environment. For example:
 - **expertise:** the solutions achieved typically call upon a narrow range of (usually technical) expertise to the exclusion of challenges that can only be met with a wider range of expertise (including biological and psycho-social skills). Such solutions respond successfully to challenges of predictable dynamics, avoiding those characterized by unpredictable dynamics (intractable problems). The approach might be caricatured as "fiddling while Rome burns" in response to the "winds of change" (even if the "fiddling" is characterized by extremes of technical genius in instrument design, composition and performance).
 - **profiteering:** typically only those solutions are sought and developed which contribute significantly to the profit margin needs of a narrow range of corporations (and, through taxation, to governments) -- pleased to be able to develop and patent saleable hi-tech products and to prevent the development of any lower cost alternatives based on intermediate technology.. Although technically feasible, delivery of solutions (such as health) is then focused on the few who can sustain those profit margins and precludes their extension to the underprivileged (as illustrated by the delivery of pharmaceutical drugs in Africa). In Japan, for example, a high cost robotic washing machine has been developed to bathe the elderly, to avoid the socio-economic implications of importing nurses from countries such as Thailand and the Philippines.
 - **resources:** the status and resources attached to focussing on the "very big" (galaxies and the universe, global weather systems, or macro-economics), or "very small" (fundamental particles, molecules) -- or the "very distant" past (first seconds of the universe), or the "very brief" (elusive particles) -- far exceeds that attached to systems of human dimensionality (relationships, quality of life, food supply) that are fundamental to daily experience. The "cutting edge" of the advancement of knowledge has been dissociated from human scale preoccupations.
 - **hyping achievements:** the landings on the Moon or Mars, hyped as a "major achievement" offers a range of specific technical challenges in what might almost be defined as an ideal, highly controlled laboratory environment attractive to the "hard sciences" and to the high tech corporations in the "military-industrial complex". Typically the investment in funds and expertise is totally out of proportion to that accorded to more pressing issues on the ground for which a wider range of expertise is required. The hyped "value to humanity" of "exploring the final frontier" is used to obscure military and financial agendas, with the complicity of relevant disciplines.
 - **action substitutes:** the focus on repeated monitoring of complex (weather patterns, etc) and problematic (endangered species, etc) conditions as a feasible technical activity (suggesting that "action is being taken" with regard to the problem) that requires no attention to the challenges of developing and implementing effective responses within an open socio-political system with many conflicting priorities. The focus is on discovering what action should be taken and not on how to undertake that action, and the need to respect or remove the constraints on that action. This form of research is fundamentally irresponsible especially when used to disguise other agendas (as with "scientific whaling").
 - **misframing:** the metaphorical framing of the response to some major social problem (drugs, terrorism, etc) on which action is taken as a "war". This points to the intellectual, attitudinal, and organizational skills (borrowed from the polarized technicalities of conventional warfare) that are deemed appropriate to any action, notably avoiding psycho-social systemic issues of why people are driven to consume drugs or engage in suicidal terrorism. (see *Enhancing Sustainable Development Strategies through Avoidance of Military Metaphors*, 1998)
 - **false claims:** the justification of claims on scarce resources for product development in terms of "vital" security or health criteria, or "the advancement of knowledge", that preclude any evaluation of such claims against the wider needs of greater numbers -- and typically in situations where the results of such development will only benefit the few (for reasons of cost, claimed to be beyond the social responsibility of those engaged in such development)

Each of these is in many ways a distraction from the inability to handle the challenges faced by the many.

- **Failure of "Standard Development Model":** As noted by many critics, the development model favoured and imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (for example) has proven to be highly problematic and has effectively failed to respond to the rising tide of deprivation. Whilst such development has magnificently rewarded the consultants and politicians involved in its implementation, the longer term consequences have been ignored or systematically denied. Any "new and better model", presented to remedy acknowledged defects, is only acceptable to the extent that it fails to address more fundamental issues. The possibility of viable alternative approaches, adapted to local conditions, has been precluded. Those seeking to adopt them, if only experimentally, tend to be subject to (possibly severe) pressures of one form or another. Their achievements go unpublicized and their failures are exaggerated. As experiments, the possibility of their improvement goes unexplored.
- **Failure of delivery systems.** The many ambitious programmes to deliver food, water, health, essential services, pensions, etc to populations are severely challenged in industrialized countries and are essentially a failure in developing countries. This has been especially evident in the case of privatization -- as for example in the case of railway transportation and health services in the UK. It is increasingly evident worldwide in the highly problematic situation with regard to pensions (and the contract with those obliged to subscribe to them over long decades).
- **Failure of interpretative ability:** : It is increasingly clear that the capacity to interpret meaningfully the available information (on disasters facing social systems and the planet) are inadequate to the challenge -- as dramatically illustrated by the problematic capacity of the intelligence services, aided and abetted by their political masters, to interpret information relating to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Ironically the lessons learnt from Iraq are the need for ever more invasive surveillance information without any increase in interpretative ability beyond that relating to immediate security preoccupations. There is no record of intelligence services offering insights into solutions to the non-security challenges of society.

- **Failure to act effectively:** As partly illustrated by the case of delivery systems, and the token responses to many problematic situations, the failure of interpretative ability exacerbates the inherent challenges of effective action. The relationship between the conclusions of such interpretation and effective political action remains highly problematic as evident from the inability of bodies such as the United Nations to act effectively in response to reported problems (eg widespread starvation in Ethiopia). What effective action will be taken in response to the suppressed Pentagon report on climate change? More often than not, "resolutions" are at best indicative of wishful thinking. The ineffectiveness is compounded by the tendency to focus on remedying the problems of others, such as through effective "regime change" dependent on new weaponry, whilst being unable to address one's own systemic problems and dysfunctional behaviour.
- **"Tinkering" approaches to institutional and strategic reform:** As typified by the decades of exploration into the reform of the United Nations, efforts at institutional reform, if they take place, may be validly described as "tinkering". They essentially fail to address fundamental issues, are primarily respectful of vested interests, and fail to take account of the significant organizational implications of new and emerging communication technologies. The challenges to the reform of the European Commission provide a second striking example.
- **Denial of systemic nature of institutional corruption:** Although corruption of various forms is now widely recognized (after long denial) within institutions and their leadership, the focus is on the specific individuals involved. Prime examples include the European Statistical Office (Eurostat) and the leadership of some western political parties (increasingly to be caricatured as "tainted merchandise"). Such exceptionalism precludes the exploration of systemic corruption and the creation of an atmosphere of corruption within institutions. In the case of Eurostat, for example, no questions are raised about the distortion of statistical data in response to the pressures of corruption.
- **Tolerance of "basket case" conditions:** There is an increasing acceptance that nothing effective can be done about certain social situations, whether groups within a country (such as indigenous peoples, or HIV cases) or whole countries (eg Bangladesh)
- **Failure of dialogue:** Despite repeated calls for "dialogue" (even at the highest level) and repeated claims that effective dialogue is underway, it is clear that such "dialogue" is interpreted as narrowly as possible in order to justify claims of efficacy. It is however essentially and fundamentally tokenistic -- in order to be able to claim that dialogue and "consultation" has taken place. It is designed to preclude effective discourse amongst those of dissident views -- into which very little research is undertaken. Terrorism might be usefully labelled as a direct consequence of the failure of dialogue -- exacerbated by a failure of dialogue amongst religions viewing each other as "satanic". Such failure contributes directly to the perceptions of the "unreasonableness" of terrorists and the failure to acknowledge the realities out of which they act.
- **Secrecy, lying, cover-up, misrepresentation and denial:** As discussed separately, these severely inhibit any capacity for wholehearted remedial action (see *Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid": from myth-making towards a "wisdom society"*, 2003; *Politicization of Evidence in the Plastic Turkey Era: al-Qaida, Saddam, Assassination and the Hijab*, 2003; *Complementary Truth-handling Strategies: Mediating the relationship between the "Last class" and the "Liar class"*). Especially from the highest levels, it has now become difficult to make credible statements about any credible threat or viable mode of action.

A common thread in many of the above is the narrow, asystemic selection of the systems to which attention is accorded -- precluding any consideration to wider systems of which they are part.

Shift from conventional constraints under the "South Wind" of change

Perhaps of most significance, the "South Wind" will not be constrained by approaches to change that have been favoured by the other winds:

- **Strategic coherence:** The assumption that any social plan of action should be based on a coherent framework will be set aside. This assumption has been widely used to manipulate debate in response to problems by aspiring to conditions of coherence that could not be achieved -- and thus avoiding action. No attempt will be made to develop a common "map" of the way forward -- although many maps may be advocated. The "South Wind" will in many ways be perceived as illogical in its approach to change -- perhaps to be perceived by history as being as illogical and incoherent as the systemic negligence effectively practiced by the other winds. The expectation that change agents, to be effective, will necessarily "sing from the same hymn sheet" will therefore be ignored.
- **Shared values:** The assumption that appropriate change will be achieved in the light of shared universal values will be set aside. Their acclaimed universality will be perceived as a device to manipulate discourse in favour of those promoting such values.
- **Academic legitimacy:** The assumption that effective action requires legitimization by academic research and debate will be perceived as an irrelevant delaying tactic employed by those primarily motivated to collect data and generate models that serve their academic careers -- rather than respond to the problems people experience
- **Authentication:** Processes of widespread authentication, certification and accreditation, including institutional "self-regulatory systems", will be ignored. Ironically this is liable to be matched by a much heightened emphasis on individual authenticity in a context in which mendacity and corruption are increasingly seen as survival options.
- **Leadership:** The assumption of the need for clear cut leadership will be set aside. Disagreement about chains of command and responsibility have focused attention on the politics of remedial action, often to the exclusion of any focus on the action itself.
- **Value of life:** The value currently attached to life in theory (in privileged locations) will be set aside in favour of the more pragmatic one corresponding to that attached to life where remedial action is not feasible and responsible parties are indifferent.

- **Legality:** Respect for law will be set aside, or only valued locally. The early evidence of this can be seen in the attitude towards international law of the leadership of the Coalition of the Willing -- and the their reflection of this attitude in national legislative measures constraining human rights.
- management systems ***
- decision-making systems ***

The above all point to the emergence of a far more disorderly ("organic") approach to change. This may well be perceived as a regrettable failure to integrate valuable insights and approaches to change developed in association with the other "winds". The latter can however be said to have had their opportunity -- and vast resources in support of it -- and to have failed to develop that opportunity appropriately. It is their systemic negligence that is evoking the "incoherent" remedial response of the "South Wind".

Precursors of the "South Wind"

The action of the "South Wind" has already been effectively evoked to some degree in the blindspots left by the other approaches to change. To date however it has primarily been a mild force readily neglected. As noted in the introduction above, the Pentagon report foresees many features of the "South Wind" in the immediate years to come. Some examples illustrate how its precursors may increasingly exert a prime role:

- **Alternative globalization initiatives:** These have been taken a variety of forms from anti-globalization demonstrations to the annual World Forum on Social Development (Porto Alegre and Mumbai) with its disparate and uncoordinated factions. It provides a striking contrast with the World Economic Forum which is the final bastion of the other winds. The structural violence of the latter is to be contrasted with the latent violence associated with many of the factions loosely associated with the Social Forum
- **Dissidents:** This wider and more disparate cluster reflects the many perspectives that no longer buy into the approaches to change of the other winds. They may overlap with alternative approaches to globalization but they may reflect radically different belief systems that cannot be effectively integrated into the other approaches to change. They notably include various types of ideological and religious fundamentalism.
- **"Terrorism":** As noted earlier, this is perhaps the most obvious example of the developing power of the "South Wind" of change. The inability to seek or develop any new mode of dialogue with such radically opposed perspectives (except with the aid of modern methods of torture-assisted interrogation) is indicative of the emerging degree of dissociation of the "South Wind" from other approaches to change. The emergence of "suicide bombers", and of individuals prepared to die for their beliefs, is a characteristic of the "South Wind" to be strongly contrasted with the diffidence of the other approaches to change that strongly prefer to unleash their destructive power from a distance and avoid any personal implication. Terrorism, as it is now known, may prove to be merely the visible part of an iceberg of more radical personal engagement in change. This is likely to be accelerated rather than hindered by legal efforts in the name of "national security" to associate any forms of dissidence with a disposition to terrorism.
- **Promotion of a variety of plans:** Recent decades have witnessed the enthusiastic promotion of a variety of maps, with some efforts to impose particular plans to the exclusion of others. This is the case with respect to intellectual models, belief systems and "best practice". The inability to interrelate these maps, and the lack of interest in doing so, is indicative of the emergent mindset of the "South Wind".
- **"Immigration":** The existing movements of people, including "boat people", whether into industrialized countries, or as refugees between neighbouring developing countries, is a precursor of the movements that will characterize the "South Wind" -- as people seek zones where they can survive and thrive.
- **Disaffection of youth:** This emergent characteristic will become increasingly evident as young people come more rapidly to recognize how little the approaches of the other winds of change are addressed to their visions of the future. A striking example is young Katherine Gun, the UK intelligence service whistleblower who reported in 2003 on UK-USA spying on UN Security Council members prior to the Iraq conflict. She declared the Tony Blair had lost all moral credibility [more]. This will undoubtedly be triggered by resentment at the levels of taxation applied to young people to sustain the social security benefits of later generations with which they experience little affinity. Young people will then swell the ranks of the "dissidents" -- even though their parents may be the strongest advocates of approaches to change other than those of the "South Wind". Already the behaviour of some young people leads to them being labelled at home as "terrorists" by their parents or neighbours.
- **Undisciplined enthusiasms of the young:** In contrast to the approaches of the other winds, the huge gatherings of the young in response to pop singers point to a characteristic of the "South Wind" -- as are raves. Such gatherings are to be contrasted with religious rallies (such as those of the Promise Keepers) which have more disciplined features characteristic of currently prevalent approaches to change.
- **Use of psychedelic drugs and other stimulants:** Currently growing trends (despite the "war against drugs") will lead to much wider and more unpredictable use of stimulants, and their increasing effect on behaviour. Recent use of alcohol by airline pilots is an indicator of the trend as well as the incidence of "date rape" as a consequence of placing drugs in beverages.
- **Genetic modification:** The "South Wind" will ensure the failure of any restrictive or regulatory measures on genetic engineering which will then take every variety of form -- resulting in "invasions" analogous to examples of problematic introduction of species (rabbits into Australia, etc). This will exacerbate problems resulting from extinction of species vital to the balance of ecological systems. The personal implications of this perspective have been extensively explored in science fiction, notably the consequence of "genetic enhancements" -- whether as a result of choice, by accident, or imposed by some group. The number of genetic deformities -- whether amongst humans or animals -- is liable to increase dramatically. The massive and uncritical support by some governments for the dissemination of genetically modified organisms is typical of a form of complicity between the chaotic approaches of the "South Wind" and the more conventional winds of change.
- **Biochemical agents:** Whether in relation to biochemical terrorism or genetic modification, the proliferation of such agents is likely

to provoke a variety of epidemics and pandemics and render face-to-face communication between strangers highly problematic. Current concerns about BSE, a new influenza outbreak, and "bird flu" are indicative of the problem and the future impact of the "South Wind". Computer "viruses" and their impact on information systems offers a valuable insight into the impact of the "South Wind" on the conventional approaches to change and the social structures dependent on the absence of such agents.

- **Feudal warlordism:** The instability of the social system, and the opportunities offered by eroding forces of order, will see a massive reversion to feudal structures and competing warlords exploiting their environments. It is ironic to note how the USA, a prime supporter of the order characteristic of the prevailing winds of change, has adopted a strategy of continuing complicity in relation to the warlords of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan (despite their dubious involvement in asphyxiating prisoners in sealed containers reminiscent of the gas chambers of Nazi concentration camps). Such complicity will be characteristic of the transition period during which the force of the "South Wind" comes to be widely felt (as with government links to organized crime). It could be argued that the leaders of a number of countries, whether industrialized or developing, whether democratic or not, are already adopting a feudal approach, notably in their exploitation of their positions for personal economic advantage.
- **Rising sea levels:** Symbolically at least (in rising "from below", as from the "collective unconscious"), the rising sea levels associated with global warming are indicative of the invasive quality of the "South Wind". The level of denial in refusal to attach credibility to evidence for such climate change, within the scientific community and government agencies, is typical of the other winds of change.

In contrast with the fundamentalist end times scenario, a number of constituencies focus on various predictions of major transformation in association with the year 2012 -- a date consistent with the period covered by the Pentagon report. This focus has notably been articulated by Peter Russell (*A White Hole in Time*, 1992). From a different perspective it has been promoted by Jose Arguelles in fulfilment of a Mayan prophecy, and specifically in relation to the need for calendar reform [[more](#), [more](#), [more](#)]

<p><i>Be charitable and deliver justice too: Africa lacks the drama of the tsunami, but its needs are greater</i> Madeleine Bunting, <i>The Guardian</i>, 7 January 2005</p>
<p>The only word which can capture this strange moment of horror and hope in human history is <i>kairos</i>, the Greek word for time, the closest translation of which is crisis. The Greek understanding of <i>kairos</i>, as opposed to the <i>chronos</i> of ordinary time, is time laden with meaning and choices. It offers a dramatic opportunity for action and for change. What the tsunami and its aftermath has done is crash through the entrenched self-absorption of western nations.</p>

Leadership in chaos

Aside from the isolated "fortresses" reflecting older styles of organization, leadership under the "South Wind" is liable to be chaotic. There will of course be a regression to feudal warlordism (as currently sustained by the USA in Afghanistan). Curiously there have been many management studies anticipating the leadership challenges of chaos (for example: Mark Youngblood, *Life at the Edge of Chaos: Creating the Quantum Organization*, *Strategy and Leadership Magazine*, Sept. 1997; Tom Heuerman and Diane Olson, *Leading in Chaos*, 1999; Kim Sbarcea, *Living leadership: the dance between chaos and stasis: A guide for complexity leaders*, 2003; Robert W. Terry and Harlan Cleveland, *Seven Zones for Leadership: Acting Authentically in Stability and Chaos*, 2001; Daryl Conner, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos: How to Create the Nimble Organization*, 1998; Emmet C. Murphy, *Leadership on the Edge of Chaos: The 10 Critical Elements for Succeeding in Volatile Times*; Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, 1992).

The question is how relevant these are to the conditions foreseen by the Pentagon report. There appears to be an assumption that a degree of order will prevail through which chaos can be "managed" (perhaps from orbit). Given the failure of management in response to many current mildly chaotic situations, it is unclear how such insights are to be adapted to the much more severe conditions of the future.

The conditions envisaged under the "South Wind" are mildly illustrated by the leadership challenges of the World Social Forum (see Jai Sen, et al (Eds). *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, 2004) [[more](#)]. Any effort at conventional leadership will be questioned in the light of such perspectives as offered by Naomi Klein (*What Happened to the New Left? The Hijacking of the WSF*, January 2003):

How on earth did a gathering that was supposed to be a showcase for new grassroots movements become a celebration of men with a penchant for three-hour speeches about smashing the oligarchy?

It may then be useful to explore the subtler "leadership" functions offered by practitioners of "crazy wisdom" and "wise fools" (for example: Nasruddin, Rabbi Wolf, Ivan Andrejevich Krylov, Aesop, la Fontaine, [Tibetan tales](#), Panchatantra, Jataka tales, [[more](#)]), notably in the light of Russell L Ackoff's *The Art of Problem Solving: Accompanied by Ackoff's Fables*, 1987. What was the effective "leadership" role of the traditional troubadour in distributing memes appropriate to the challenge of chaotic societies? Even under a high degree of disorder the non-threatening role of a travelling bard or teller of (teaching) stories will be welcome. Carl Jung believed that myths were not merely fanciful, but universally true and applicable. Traditionally, the bard has, with disarming levity and brevity, provided unexpected access to a penetrating understanding of the riddle of existence, thus fulfilling an important social role. Insights into the behaviour of legendary [tricksters](#) may provide the kind and degree of "leadership" that is required.

Current preoccupation with leadership training gives little attention to training followers -- which many of the leaders will also have to be in larger institutions. With the rise of the "South Wind", conventional understanding of leadership and followership will be much tested. Indulging in wordplay, there is a case for exploring both the (dyslexic) transformation of "followership" into "flowership" and the (alchemical) transformation of "leadership" into "goldership" (see *Promoting Sustainable Followership*, 2001). As suggested by the former role of the troubadour, and the increasingly central role of music across cultures (and notably in the South, from which much musical inspiration derives), "leadership" under chaos may be more viably and fruitfully undertaken in terms of insights common to

music and gardening (see, for example, *Knowledge Gardening through Music: patterns of coherence for future African management as an alternative to Project Logic*, 2000)

Thrival of the Left-behind

"Thrival" of the "Left-behind". There is a degree of similarity between the Christian understanding of "rapture" [more, more] in the "end-times" scenarios (when the faithful are "taken up" by God to their rightful place in Heaven) and the Islamic understanding of the direct route to Heaven offered to those who sacrifice themselves in holy war (*jihād*) [more]. The concern here is however with those defined by Christians as the "left behind" (see *Post Rapture Checklist*), namely those who do not meet the criteria of being part of the "forces of good" according to Christian understanding -- and are consequently considered to be allied with the "forces of evil" over which the "forces of good" will triumph at Armageddon. This reflects the kind of understanding promoted by US foreign policy and defined by George W Bush after September 2001 as "either you are with us, or you are against us" [more]. Once the prophesied 144,000 seats in Heaven have been filled by those "taken up" during the "end-times", the concern here is with the many that may remain -- and not with their survival but with their "thrival".

Those with a survivalist mindset are well-prepared for the kind of chaos predicted in the Pentagon report and would see those conditions as a justification for their preparatory measures in safeguarding their own security and food supplies. Whilst many may survive, it is useful to reflect on the psychology of those who may thrive. The focus is not on those who may successfully "thrive" by exploiting the chaotic situation to improve their personal capacity to survive (as explored in the *The "Dark Riders" of Social Change: a challenge for any Fellowship of the Ring*, 2002). The concern here is rather with those who do not meet the particular Christian (or Islamic) criteria for the "good", but do indeed hold to broader understandings that transcend their personal survival. Such understandings would be of the kind that emerged from effective inter-faith dialogue (from which fundamentalist Christians and Muslims exclude themselves), if it could also successfully include humanist perspectives. Abandoned by God, according to Christian understanding, what is the basis for the "thrival" of the "left-behind"?

In determining who will be "left behind", and faced with this challenge, there is of course a problem in reconciling the fundamentalist Christian and Islamic perspectives (for example) on access to Heaven, since each tends to define the other as "evil" -- even "satanic". This raises the issue of the interpretation accorded to Jesus's statement "*My father's house has many mansions*", *John* 14:2), and, according to several cultures: "*there are many ways to the top of the mountain, but the view from the top is the same*". This has been symbolized by the wheel whose spokes metaphorically signify the different "ways" to the common hub.

The constraints of the mountain / wheel metaphor have been put forward by Jacob Needleman (*Why philosophy is easy* in: *The Indestructible Question*, 1994) as follows:

Our simile shall be geographical, we locate the center at some" point on the surface of the earth, say at the top of a particular mountain. Instead of spokes, we shall speak of paths or routes proceeding from a number of locations quite distant both from each other and from the mountain, and which therefore exhibit great differences with respect to climate, terrain, social and biological conditions, and so forth. One path proceeds from from the tropics, another from the polar regions, another from the desert, another from a large city. We shall therefore assume that, compared to the conditions on the mountain, the state of wisdom, these other places are bad places: the desert is dry and barren; the jungle dangerous; the arctic cold and isolated; the cities crowded and artificial, and so forth. It is therefore the ultimate task of religion to enable the inhabitants of these regions to find their way to the mountain. To this end, certain sets of directions, handbooks, maps, practical advice, and -- most important -- guides are made available to the various inhabitants.

Thus, the farther away from the mountain, the greater will be the difference in the travel advice. Those starting from the desert, for example, might be told "Thou shalt carry great quantities of water," something that might be unnecessary and even a hindrance to those proceeding from the jungle. And prescription to wear warm clothing would be disastrous to both these groups, whereas it would be vital to those starting in the polar regions.

A crucial element in this interpretation of religion is already apparent -- namely that the primal significance of religious forms (ad imperatives) is their *instrumentality*, that their root function is to serve as a means toward psychological transformation....So that, *for someone who does not wish to leave the region*, these instructions could be taken as ways to improve his life *in* the region. Obviously, much of what would help us travel *out* of the desert could also serve to make life *in* the desert easier or more efficient, thus reinforcing our satisfaction with where we are....What is being suggested here as a possibility is that dogmatic theology, as we generally understand it, is an instance of transforming the instrumental into the finalistic

How God makes his final triage selection in the "end-times" therefore remains a mystery -- as with other "Acts of God" (see *Is God a Terrorist?: Definitional game-playing by the Coalition of the Willing*, 2004). Will it be those from the "jungle", those from the "polar regions", or those from the "desert"? Are some "Chosen People" to be considered "pre-chosen" in this selection, as explored by *Johan Galtung*? The challenge for God is well illustrated by that of identifying the "Best of Breed", "Best of Group" and "Best of Show" in *dog shows*. Different breeds are clustered into seven "groups" (Working, Terrier, Toy, Non-Sporting, Sporting, Hound, Herding). Judges endeavour to identify dogs that best epitomize the published standards for each breed, in the first instance -- then for each group. The final challenge is to select the dog that is "Best of Show" from amongst the seven totally disparate group winners. Will God be obliged to select those who best epitomize the standards articulated by their respective religions ("breeds"), groups of religions, or to select from across all disparate groups of religions..

Given that the wise of other religions will (necessarily, notably from a Christian perspective) be amongst the "left-behind", it is perhaps amongst them that clues to the psychology of post-collapse "thrival" should be sought. Typically, whether from a Buddhist (and notably

Zen) perspective, or that articulated in the *Upanishads*, the prime characteristic is a shift in understanding of self (as the knower) and of the mundane world (as the known) -- and of the nature of their relationship. Clues also emerge from the rapprochement between phenomenology and neuroscience [more] envisaged by Francisco Varela and his **enactivist** colleagues (*The Embodied Mind: cognitive science and human expression*, 1991, and encapsulated in his study of *Laying Down a Path in Walking: essays on enactive cognition*, 1997) as explored elsewhere (*En-minding the Extended Body: Enactive engagement in conceptual shapeshifting and deep ecology*, 2003; *Making (the) Present and Thriving in the Moment*, 2001).

Philosopher Isabelle Stengers has urged those interested in the creation of "artificial life" to ensure that any definition of life necessarily implies an interpretive interaction between knower and known, an interaction which must always call into question boundaries between what is intrinsic and what is extrinsic to (the result of concerned interpretation of) organisms. Stengers asserts that this questioning, this flow of interpretation that blurred boundaries between inside and outside, should involve the "heart." She borrowed the figure of the "heart" from artificial life scientist Stuart Kauffman, who used it in defining his own interests in being a theoretical biologist. Stengers takes the metaphor of the heart to be one that demands that we think of how our concepts of "life" are emotional, based on interactions: "It seems to me that 'heart' in its many meanings is related to some kind of an 'inside,' but not to a self-sufficient closed inside. It is related to the way this inside is actually, and not potentially, interacting with the outside" [more]

Citing Varela and his colleagues, Jorge N Ferrer (*Participatory spirituality: an introduction*, In: *Network Review*, 83, 2003; author of *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: a participatory vision of human spirituality*, 2002), and using a different geographical metaphor from Needleman, has also criticized the "perspectivist" approach to religion that he sees as characteristic of the non-participatory understanding of "perennial philosophy" as advanced by "perennialists" -- and more subtly by Needleman:

It is very reassuring to think that all the different religions and spiritual traditions in the world are aimed at sharing the same basic truths -- and that we are all heading in the same direction...I would like to suggest that human spirituality emerges from our co-creative participation in an always dynamic and indeterminate spiritual power. This participatory understanding not only makes hierarchical rankings of spiritual traditions appear misconceived, but also re-establishes our direct connection with the source of our being and expands the range of valid spiritual choices that we as individuals can make

For depth psychologists and others, much of the discussion of systemic imbalance maybe understood in terms of repressed functions. For philosopher Antonio de Nicolas (*Habits of Mind*, 2000), the condition evoking the "South Wind" is the currently excessive dominance of the "interpreter module" -- as that part of the left neo-cortex attached to the left neocortex with access only to the left neo-cortex, theories, and names -- has taken over contemporary culture. Furthermore this culture is pronouncing on the cultures of the predominant right neocortex by marginalizing, denigrating or suppressing them in various ways.

Basic to the post-collapse era, the "thrival" psychology would then involve a special kind of "streetwise" detachment from the mundane world -- a shift in the psychological centre of gravity -- perhaps most simply expressed by poet Henry David Thoreau: "*If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away*" -- a theme developed by M Scott Peck (*The Different Drummer: Community-making and Peace*, 1987). This would also extend to the understanding of time and the rhythm of life as explored elsewhere (*The Isdom of the Wisdom Society: Embodying time as the heartland of humanity*, 2004). According to Hindu culture this corresponds to the ideal attitude of the *sanyasins*. In Western culture it bears a relationship to the ideal attitude of a troubadour, or perhaps to the condition of being "lost in the wilderness" on a "vision quest". It is also reflected in new understandings of authenticity. It has been argued elsewhere (see *Authentic Grokking: Emergence of Homo conjugens*, 2003) that the pressure of the "end times" will give rise to *homo conjugans* to supersede *homo sapiens*. It is the characteristics of *homo conjugans* that are most appropriate to individual "thrival" amongst the "left-behind". (see also Marcus Anthony. *Integrated Intelligence*, 2003)

But what of collective "thrival"? Most evident would be an attitude to alternative perspectives beyond that of "tolerance". It is suggested by the best of California-style New Age psychology and is best articulated by the proactive methodology of **appreciative inquiry** -- of approaches to "group magic" (for example, the doctoral dissertation by Renee A. Levi, *Group Magic: An Inquiry into Experiences of Collective Resonance*, 2003). The prime characteristic would be the avoidance of the kind of marginalization and "put down" to which alternative perspectives are currently subject by fundamentalists of all persuasions. Collective "thrival" may also be explored in the light of the post-Armageddon challenge of sustainability (see *Psychology of Sustainability: Embodying cyclic environmental processes*, 2002).

Conclusion

The apparently unrelated metaphors (above) interweave to develop a common theme that is given focus by the "secret" Pentagon report on climate change and the extreme worldwide crises it foresees in the near future. Such a crisis of crises was first envisaged by John Platt:

What finally makes all of our crises still more dangerous is that they are now coming on top of each other. Most administrations...are not prepared to deal with...multiple crises, a crisis of crises all at one time...Every problem may escalate because those involved no longer have time to think straight. (John Platt. What we must do. *Science*, 28 November 1969, p.1115-1121).

Such a crisis could well trigger "Armageddon" -- as many hope in the "**hurry up God**" lobby [more]. They might be understood to be employing what could become known as the "Aristide maneuver" (practiced in Haiti in 2004) in which sufficient chaos is encouraged to catalyze the intervention of God. But the Pentagon's "climate change" may also be explored metaphorically in terms of the "winds of

change" affecting public opinion. The environmental stress associated with such crisis, and the destruction of connecting patterns, can be understood both in terms of the "heart" and "lifeblood" of civilization and of the impact on the individual human "heart". This plays a central role in both internalizing such stress and in sustaining the psycho-social fragmentation basic to a less than "wholehearted" response to the crises of the world. "Armageddon", as the "heart failure" of civilization, is therefore spontaneously evoked by the condition of the human "heart" and its vulnerability to "heart attack" under stress.

What are the prospects for "wholehearted" coherent action as explored elsewhere (*Coherent Policy-making Beyond the Information Barrier*, 1999)? Fundamentalists of every persuasion will have ready answers to the question. The more systemically sensitive prospects may offer some potential in isolated "Renaissance Zones" as discussed elsewhere (*Renaissance Zones: experimenting with the intentional significance of the Damanhur community*, 2003) notably given the possibility of some form of "rebirth" after Armageddon (*Challenges of Renaissance suggestive pattern of concerns in the light of the birth metaphor*, 2003). Much may depend on the collective ability to move beyond linear agendas like the UNs *Agenda 21* (1992). Again centro-symmetric agendas inspired by certain religious patterns (rose windows, mandalas, lotus flower, etc) may be viable in providing coherence in isolated communities, but it is too late for their global consideration (see *Future Generation through Global Conversation*, 1997). The same applies in the case of the potentially more relevant patterns of organization based on insights from quantum and chaos theories, and from the study of complexity.

But it appears it will quickly prove too late for any global coherent response in **practice**, as illustrated by the limited follow up to Platt's early warning. Typically any analyses (such as those by the Club of Rome), and proposals for collective action, will prove non-viable in the light of the tendencies noted above. Furthermore, as the "South Wind" rises, any analysis taking the form of this paper will be justly rejected as meaningless (see, for example, Terry Eagleton. *Why ideas no longer matter: Modern politicians deal only in facts, not philosophical reasoning*. *The Guardian*, 23 March 2004).

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