In Quest of Sustainability as Holy Grail of Global Governance

***

-- / --

Introduction

Trust: Holy Grail of Governance?
Confidence: Holy Grail of Finance?
Greed: the Chalice and the Trough
Holy Blood, Holy Grail: cultivating a murky world of illusion
In-forming the Chalice as an integrative cognitive dynamic

Produced on the occasion of the G-20 Summit (Cannes, October 2011)

Introduction

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, has indicated:

In these difficult times, the biggest challenge facing governments is not a deficit of resources; it is a deficit of trust. People are losing faith in leaders and public institutions to do the right thing. The forthcoming G-20 meeting in Cannes takes place against this dramatic backdrop. (The Clock Is Ticking, International Herald Tribune, 31 October 2011)

The following exploration of “belief”, “confidence” and “trust” is undertaken in the light of an earlier reframing of “theology” as offering insights into worldwide tendencies towards faith-based governance, however that is understood or appreciated (International Institute of Advanced Studies in Mathematical Theology, 2011). There it was argued that:

Concern with the “divine”, with which theology is conventionally preoccupied, is radically reframed in this exploration in order to encompass that to which people may well attribute the term “divine” in their lives -- in which they believe most profoundly, or in which others (including politicians and economists) call upon them to have faith. Can more sophisticated mathematics offer insights into the nature of that engagement with belief and the confidence it offers -- as previously discussed (Human Values as Strange Attractors, 1993). Are such insights as relevant to the most spiritual as to those who associate their most profound beliefs with sport, friends, music, gardening, dance, wine, and ideology -- or possibly with the exemplars of that world?

Rather than the conventional “macro-religions”, these might then be understood (or caricatured) as “micro-religions”, potentially limited in space, time and dimensionality. As further clarified in an annex to that argument, the current challenge -- exemplified by the financial crisis of this period -- is indeed one of “confidence”, as so emphatically now emphasized by those responsible for seeking last minute remedies (Mathematical Theology: Future Science of Confidence in Belief, 2011).

According to the president of the European Central Bank, Jean-Claude Trichet, that body was to be understood as "an anchor of stability and confidence" (26 March 2010) -- a belief he stressed on retiring in October 2011. Concerns are however widely expressed regarding "consumer confidence", "business confidence", and in the confidence of chief financial officers (Confidence among finance chiefs tumbles, The Financial Times, 9 October 2011; Confidence ebbs to two-year low, The Guardian, 10 October 2011). The worldwide Occupy Wall Street movement is a popular recognition of lack of confidence in the current system. At the time of writing, the future of Greece, the eurozone, and the global economy was claimed to depend specifically on a "vote of confidence" in the Prime Minister of Greece and, more generally, "market confidence" in the future of European countries with excessive sovereign debt.

The trust deficit acknowledged by the UN Secretary-General is compounded by recognition that the massive worldwide investment in defence and security effectively derives from a profound lack of collective confidence -- so notably exemplified by the armament
Economic Issues

Extensive use of the legend has been made by Cyril Morong (common sense). As noted with respect to the 1992) argued:

As might be expected the Holy Grail of Governance is variously recognized. Barnabas D. Johnson (survey) is itself part of the problem (Little Boy Clothes General, the credibility of this modality if now widely questioned. This is understood as a container capable of holding the confidence of all. This is the focus of a further development of this argument (Informing the Chalice as an Integrative Cognitive Dynamic: sustaining the Holy Grail of Global Governance, 2011).

Holy Grail of Governance?

With respect to governance, the "Holy Grail" is primarily cited in relation to corporate governance. As noted by Mary Beth Kissane (High risks, big rewards, Corporate Secretary, 1 February 2006):

No one has yet found the holy grail of governance - that is, the direct link between good governance and enhanced corporate performance. Preliminary research has been conducted, but the findings may be unreliable since these studies often are commissioned by parties with a vested interest in suggesting that such a link exists. As with grail lore, many people think it is only a fable.

Expressed in terms of confidence, the quest for the Holy Grail of Governance might be understood -- by cynics -- as the quest for the ability "to fool all the people all the time". That possibility needs of course to be reframed in terms of the insight of Abraham Lincoln:

You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

The difficulty for the world's leaders, as with those meeting at the G-20 Summit, is their track record of repeatedly presenting the "Holy Grail" as the outcome of the policies in which they exhort the people of the world to have faith. As noted above by the UN Secretary-General, the credibility of this modality if now widely questioned. This is a curious confrontation between the tales of The Emperor's New Clothes (1837) and of the The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Entangled Tales of Memetic Disaster Mutual: implication of the Emperor and the Little Boy, 2009). It is however the case that the quest for a "Holy Grail" can be said to underlie the aspirations of Occupy Wall Street and Arab Spring protests -- however much this aspiration continues to be manipulated by misleadership incapable of recognizing how it is itself part of the problem (Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council, 2007).


As might be expected the Holy Grail of Governance is variously recognized. Barnabas D. Johnson (Keep in Touch (KIT) Newsletter, 1992) argued:

Informed feedback, the Holy Grail of governance (which, like cybernetics, comes from the Greek verb kubernetes, "to steer"), should focus on whatever friends and neighbors and fellow sojourners of cyberspace think is needed for wise navigation among the rocky shoals of life and circumstance. Context and feedback are closely related; the "self" needs an "environment" to supply the stuff of self-definition and self-governance: info-bits, permits for piloting, points for pondering. [more]

As noted with respect to the Business Roundtable (BRT) by John Ralston Saul (The Doubter's Companion: a dictionary of aggressive common sense, 1994):

This is not a lobby group but a corporatist organization; one of the most important in the developed world. At first glance the name of the group seems inappropriate. What possible link could there be between Arthur, Lancelot and the quest for the Holy Grail and a group of anonymous technocrats looking out for themselves and their systems? The answer is that they see themselves as the knighthood of technocracy and they claim the legitimacy of their corporatist power.

Extensive use of the legend has been made by Cyril Morong (Economists, Parsifal, and the search for the Holy Grail, Journal of Economic Issues, 1996). Other than wealth creation (discussed further below), the metaphor is used in relation to effective control. For example:


industries of Permanent Members of the UN Security Council. This is obscured by preoccupation with "security". The estimated worldwide annual military expenditure of over 1.5 trillion dollars (2.7% of World GDP) is therefore one measure of this trust deficit. Rather than the classic statement "it's the economy, stupid", it is now a case of "it's confidence, stupid" -- as implied by regular publication of the Capital Confidence Barometer and of the SIPRI Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. In the case of the USA, from such a perspective, the Holy Grail of Governance is total "system dominance" -- perhaps best understood as confidence domination, as separately argued (WikiLeaks and the First Global Condom War, 2010).

The phrase has been seen by Michael Edwards as embodying a key to the challenge of the relationship between local and global, and with learning organization development (*Meeting in the Middle, or The Search for the Holy Grail*, Global Social Policy, 2004; *Becoming a Learning Organization, or, the Search for the Holy Grail*, 1996). The theme has been used by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (*Searching for the Holy Grail? Making FDI work for Sustainable Development*, 2003). The term is to be found in relationship to establishment of a "world government" -- notably in conspiracy theories (discussed below) regarding a *New World Order*.

It could be said that the use of "Holy Grail" implies a quest, even a desperate quest, for a pattern that as yet remains elusive with respect to governance. The question is why the expression is used so prominently, even if only as a metaphor, in contrast to other possibilities? Is it asked, deliberately or unconsciously, so as to imply that more fruitful forms of governance are a fanciful illusion> What is its mysterious appeal? Does it offer echoes to buried cultural memory, for example?

To the extent that "Holy Grail" is understood merely as a convenient metaphor within current practice, those advocating alternatives to the present pattern of governance seemingly make little use of it. This is somewhat surprising in that the alternatives envisaged could be said to be even more elusive -- although potentially more closely associated with the imagined qualities deriving from the Grail legend.

**Holy Grail of Finance?**

J. P. Donlon (*The Grail of Governance, AllBusiness.com*, 1 January 2005) reports on the analysis by Paul Moxey (*Corporate Governance and Wealth Creation*, Certified Accountants Educational Trust, 2004) to "get at the holy grail of governance, i.e., does it lead to wealth creation?". Moxey does not now however use that metaphor.

"Holy Grail" is widely used in finance and banking. For example:

- Indra Birkswood (*The Lender's Holy Grail*, 1 October 2008)
- Joseph Tham and Ignacio Velez-Pareja, *The Holy Grail in the Quest for Value (with Alpha Methods and Omega Theories)*, (2003)
- Bloomberg (*Hunt for debt holy grail pits ECB against naked banks*, The Financial Express, 18 June 2011)

**Financial integration**: In a key speech by a member of the Executive Board of the *European Central Bank*, Gertrude Tumpel-Gugerell (*The Quest for the Holy Grail? European Financial Integration: Achievements and Hurdles*, 16 March 2009) indicated:

> The Holy Grail of Financial Integration: Analogously to the Holy Grail, which was believed to have magical properties, one could argue that financial integration brings many, almost magical, economic benefits. But let me explain briefly, why the economic benefits of financial integration are far from magic, but real....

**Challenges in the Quest for Financial Integration**: Any quest has its challenges and the greater the challenge the greater the fascination of the quest. The Holy Grail was believed to be kept in a mysterious castle surrounded by a wasteland and hardly accessible. The questing knights had to go through all sort of mental and physical tests. Lack of integration reflects more prosaically the existence of barriers to cross-border activities. While the physical efforts necessary for our quest are certainly less demanding, overcoming these barriers still requires considerable mental energy and intellectual power.... As a result, we have come within reach of the grail by having an integrated and highly efficient large-value payments landscape in Europe today...

The fascination of the Holy Grail may be due to its very elusiveness. In contrast to that, and despite the recent setback, bringing
Confidence and trust: As the Holy Grail of finance and banking, the generation of wealth has indeed been seen as fundamentally linked to sustaining confidence and trust -- cited as a key to resolving the liquidity crisis and sustaining inter-bank lending. Trust is inherent in understanding of the viability of any traditional gift economy, prior to its replacement by market economies based on commodity money.


Financial "confidence trick": Critical reaction to the current financial crisis has highlighted the nature of the "confidence trick" of wealth creation in the financial and banking system with which governance is currently so intimately related. This focuses on the manner by which "wealth" is created "out of thin air":

- by governments effectively "printing money", however this is reframed and renamed -- most notably as "quantitative easing" where money ("fiat currency") is created by government decree
- by bank lending against assets of which they only possess a percentage
- by repackaging and reselling "assets" -- readily apparent as bad debts in times of crisis. Appropriately recognized as "toxic assets", financial assets whose value has fallen significantly and for which there is no longer a functioning market, so that such assets cannot be sold at a price satisfactory to the holder.

As helpfully articulated by one anonymous blogger (Money and the illusion of wealth):

- When money replaced barter, and especially when usury (charging interest to lend money) became moral and legal, the definition of "wealth" became blurry.
- The abstract concept of money has allowed people to become rich by depleting natural resources, marking up land prices, manipulating financial data, selling disposable goods, deliberately rendering products obsolete, pushing illegal drugs and exterminating species for body parts.
- Over 90% of money is "created out of thin air" via loans and the expectation of debt repayment. This "fiat currency" is the foundation of the modern grow-forever economic system, which has been pillaging the natural world in the name of phony "growth."
- After anti-usury laws were overturned centuries ago, people came to accept virtual money as real, ethical and sustainable.
- People believe that because money is exchanged for work performed, said work is somehow adding to our pool of resources, but paper-money is just a form of compensation, not something with intrinsic value.
- Stock-ownership creates paper wealth that can rise and fall dramatically on a whim and may have little to do with the actual value of a company or its products.
- The insurance industry rakes in billions of dollars from perceived risk and produces nothing but debt for the majority of customers.
- Perpetual economic growth assures a vicious cycle of rising expenditures and debt, which nature can no longer sustain in the physical realm. We go deeper into debt every time we divert a river, drain an oil field, deplete an ocean fishery or strip a forest beyond renewal. We need a steady-state system where prices are calculated from an ecological viewpoint, not just an economic one.

Especially telling (given the date) is the account of David Damant as President of the European Federation of Financial Analysts Societies (Creating Wealth from Thin Air, Balance Sheet, 2000, 8 1, pp. 37 - 39). He argued that the arrival of derivatives posed three dangers: systemic risk; lack of control of the use of derivatives; and the risk of capital market mis-reporting. He concluded that there is a chance to create enormous wealth but there is also scope for disaster.


Greed: the Chalice and the Trough

Much has been made of the (self) perception of financial speculators as "masters of the universe" (Are 'masters of the universe' born or bred? The Financial Times, 15 October 2010; Financial turmoil even hits the masters of the universe, The Guardian, 11 August 2011). This has been influenced by the predominance of men on trading floors and in the financial community -- challenged by feminist arguments regarding the "mistresses of the universe" in waiting (Mistresses of the Universe, The New York Times, 7 February 2009).

It is therefore appropriate to note a much-cited study of cultures of gender domination by Riane Eisler (The Chalice and the Blade, 1987). In the context of competitive greed -- the "trough" noted here -- the violent connotations of that title are relevant: "putting the knife in", "back-stabbing".

The image of "pigs" at the "trough" in a "feeding frenzy" resonates widely with critics as descriptive of those operating speculatively on financial markets (Arianna Huffington, Pigs at the Trough: how corporate greed and political corruption are undermining America,
Greenspan's diagnosis is the focus of a recent book by Frank Partnoy (Infectious Greed: how deceit and risk corrupted the financial

Poisoned Chalice: The Holy Grail theme recurs in the context of the current financial crisis through association of "toxic assets" with a "poisoned chalice". As variously noted:

- Tim Geithner has been given a poisoned chalice. The new US Treasury secretary has inherited a financial system still weakened by uncertainty about the value of banks' toxic assets (Drawing poison, The Financial Times, 2 February 2009).
- The challenge for all main parties at the next election is to describe in detail how the public debt is to be reduced. How much work should be done by cuts in public spending and how much by tax increases?... The terms of the asset protection scheme, the insurance policy covering toxic assets, could be changed. (Poisoned chalice for the Tories, The Guardian, 20 May 2009)
- The Stock Research Portal on the poisoned chalice of redeeming "toxic assets": "I can't see where the incentive will be for private investors to 'buy into it' without government guarantees which, if offered, would be tantamount to the U.S. government simply buying the 'toxic assets' directly." (Raging Bull, March 2009)
- Barack Obama will face a "poisoned chalice" of an economy heading to recession and a massive budget deficit as he takes office as the 44th president of the United States (Obama faces 'poisoned chalice', my.finances.co.uk, 5 November 2008)

Infectious greed: It is most curious to note the seemingly distinct uses of "trough" in relation to the financial crisis;

- as a regrettable fall in financial benefits, perceptible on graphs of a business cycle as a "trough":
  - Everyone these days seems to be trying to get out of the global financial trough by pushing exports. (Fixing global economic imbalances, East Asia Forum, 21 February 2011)
- in the treatment of the opportunities of the current financial system as a "trough" -- and the widespread use of this metaphor with respect to the greedy:
  - Anyone who doubts that the political class are akin to pigs with their snouts in the financial trough of taxpayer largesse... (Noses in the Trough... A Tangled Web, 31 October 2006)
  - Thus, no real choice is offered at all. As the politicians of the Democratic Party foxes and the Republican Party wolves feed, like swine, from the bottomless blood-drenched financial trough of the corporate / military elite, democracy is rendered null and void. (David Icke, Democrat or Republican: The Choice to Be Drowned or Hanged, 16 October 2010)

The assertion by speculator Ivan Boesky in 1985 that "greed is healthy" was widely acclaimed in financial circles. The subsequent resonance of the oft-quoted phrase "greed is good" with those on Wall Street, and the observers of their behaviour and motivations, is associated with Gordon Gekko. As the main character in the films Wall Street (1987) and Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps (2010), he articulated the sentiment as follows:

Greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right. Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures, the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms; greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge, has marked the upward surge of mankind and greed, you mark my words, will not only save Teldar Paper, but that other malfunctioning corporation called the U.S.A.

The sentiment is variously echoed and justified (Robert Pagliarini (Greed is Good: why you need to tap into your inner Gordon Gekko, CBS moneywatch.com, 15 February 2010; Greed is Good, The Rational Optimist, October 2011; Is Greed Ever Good? ABC News).

The justification for the sentiment has been extensively developed by Roy C. Smith, professor of finance at New York University's Stern School of Business and a former partner of Goldman Sachs (Greed Is Good, The Wall Street Journal, 7 February 2009), arguing that:

Wall Street bonuses are getting a bad rap, but they're an important and useful part of the financial services industry. Taking them away could hamper the economic comeback... Finally, the controversy over bonuses should remind everyone that a system of free-market capitalism operating inside a vibrant democracy can only succeed if the people accept its benefits and are not offended by what they may perceive (rightly or not) as abusive, greedy or in-your-face behavior... Still, the people are telling us they're mad as hell and are not going to take it any more. Public anger is hard to deny, but we shouldn't let it weaken an important industry. Sensible restraints and market forces will cause the industry to reinvent itself.

However the Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, diagnosed "infectious greed" as the reason for current business crises (Testimony of Chairman Alan Greenspan, Federal Reserve Board, U.S. Senate, 16 July 2002):

Why did corporate governance checks and balances that served us reasonably well in the past break down? At root was the rapid enlargement of stock market capitalizations in the latter part of the 1990s that arguably engendered an outsized increase in opportunities for avarice. An infectious greed seemed to grip much of our business community. Our historical guardians of financial information were overwhelmed. Too many corporate executives sought ways to "harvest" some of those stock market gains. As a result, the highly desirable spread of shareholding and options among business managers perversely created incentives to artificially inflate reported earnings in order to keep stock prices high and rising. This outcome suggests that the options were poorly structured, and, consequently, they failed to properly align the long-term interests of shareholders and managers, the paradigm so essential for effective corporate governance. The incentives they created overcame the good judgment of too many corporate managers. It is not that humans have become any more greedy than in generations past. It is that the avenues to express greed had grown so enormously.
markets, 2010) examines how a greed-driven culture led to the generation of massive profits, but also to unprecedented levels of risk, widespread deception, and high profile disasters like Enron and Worldcom. In the wake of the 2008-9 financial crisis, the analysis shows how major companies obscured the reality from shareholders by disguising risk through dangerous manipulations and side-stepping regulations

**Holy Blood, Holy Grail: cultivating a murky world of illusion**

The Grail and The Chalice are widely associated with every variety of mysticism, mystification and conspiracy theory. Curiously an early innovation in banking was the work of one group on which mystification continues to focus, namely the original Knights Templar. They seemingly introduced the first formal system to support the use of cheques. This both improved the safety of pilgrims by making them less attractive targets for thieves, and also contributed to the Templar coffers. In its modern incarnation the Knights Templar is an international philanthropic chivalric order affiliated with Freemasonry.

Freemasonry: There are many references to the association of Freemasonry with the Holy Grail. For example Freemasonry and the Holy Grail, a classic text by W. M. Don Falconer (The Square and the Compasses, 2002, ch. 43), is introduced with the phrase:

Freemasonry's association with the Holy Grail began with the building of the temple at Jerusalem. The fundamental tenets of freemasonry reflect the Grail Code, which is a desire to serve and in serving to achieve.

There are numerous references to the current involvement of Freemasonry in banking worldwide. A relevant description of the questionable independence of democratic oversight of the world's financial centre of London, ruled by the Corporation of the City of London, is provided by George Monbiot (The Medieval, Unaccountable Corporation of London is Ripe for Protest, The Guardian, 1 November 2011). Since 1905, according to Yasha Beresiner (The City of London: a Masonic Guide; 2006), 71 Lord Mayors of the City have been Master Masons. Monbiot points out:

There are four layers of elected representatives in the Corporation: common councillors, aldermen, sheriffs and the Lord Mayor. To qualify for any of these offices, you must be a freeman of the City of London. To become a freeman you must be approved by the aldermen. You're most likely to qualify if you belong to one of the City's livery companies: medieval guilds such as the worshipful company of costermongers, cutpurses and safecrackers. To become a sheriff, you must be elected from among the aldermen by the Livery. How do you join a livery company? Don't even ask.

The "livery companies" offer a charming sense of the possible future ceremonial institutionalization of the many lobby's around the European Commission in Brussels. Beresiner notes that 21 of the livery companies have their own masonic lodges. Only too appropriately, "livery" derives from the allowances delivered to servants or retainers -- specialists at the "trough"? It is readily to be associated with the focus on "deliverables" so widely characteristic of government contracts.

Transparency: The City of London is literally a law unto itself in many respects. It is even capable of directing debate in the House of Commons through the office of a "Rememberancer" -- an official lobbyist (a parliamentary agent) who sits behind the Speaker's chair and ensures that, whatever the elected representatives might think, the City's rights and privileges are protected. It could then be said that democratic policy-making is "well-encompassed".

It is little wonder that the UK government fails to call London's financial institutions effectively to account in relation to their implication in the financial crisis (David Cameron threatens veto if EU treaty fails to protect City of London, The Guardian, 7 December 2011; Britain may seek EU veto precedent to protect City, The Guardian, 28 October 2011). It might be said that "Wall Street" has a lot to learn from such institutionalized perversity, whatever the degree of its present influence on US policy. At the time of the 6th G20 Summit (Cannes, 2011), it is appropriate to note the many references to Freemasonry in relation to the 4th Summit (Toronto, 2010). Who knows or cares -- or is prepared to say -- how many of those involved are Freemasons?

The report of Monbiot emerges in the midst of the Occupy London protest on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral at the centre of the City of London (nicknamed, with appropriate masonic connotations, the "Square Mile"). This has proved morally controversial for the Church of England (resulting in three resignations), notably in the light of the extensive financial support received by the Cathedral from the banking community, against which the protest in support of the world's impoverished is made (John Milbank, Anglican Church Spectacularly Blind to Protest Symbolism, ABC Religion and Ethics, 2 November 2011).

Symbolism: Given the symbolism so valued by both the Freemasons and the City of London, there is a degree of irony to the formal similarity between the the bowl of the Chalice and the dome of St Paul's, as designed by Christopher Wren, a Master Mason. Offering a powerful image, the Cup is not upright upon its base. Curiously it is upturned upon the "Square Mile" -- whatever that juxtaposition may imply with regard to the spiritual cornucopia of the Chalice. Is the celebration of Mass there an effort to reverse the imagery and imply the contrary to comfort the gullible? However this is to be interpreted, there is a strong case for recognizing that the psychosocial complex there is very much its own metaphor in the sense articulated by Gregory Bateson (noted by Mary Catherine Bateson, Our Own Metaphor: a personal account of a conference on the effects of conscious purpose on human adaptation, 1972).

Traditionally the upturned cup is held to symbolize a birthplace or womb -- a place where new life comes into being and is sheltered throughout its early stages. As a cauldron-image, or a crucible, it is a place for inner transformation. With the crescent moon, it is associated with power and wealth derived through the force of will -- the gathering of energy in concrete form and its pouring forth to enable growth. How is this constrained by the "square" of Freemasonry? Perhaps it is no wonder that sustainability does not "fly", recalling the ditty:
Da spring is sprung
Da grass is riz
I wanna where da bodied iz
Da bodied is not up on da wing
But dat's absoid
Da wings iz on da bodied

Mystification: The book by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln (The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, 1982) proved to be a catalyst for mystification on a massive scale. As noted by Alex Burns (Holy Blood, Holy Grail, Disinformation, 2000) in commenting on the book, it spawned an international media industry and entirely new academic disciplines:

Many of its themes have become part of conspiriology's substrate, including political secret societies, the Knights Templar and the search for fragments of an Alternative Christianity. Embarking on the Holy Blood, Holy Grail mystery means exploring where Pop Culture and the Sacred intersect in an infinite regressing nest of quantum combinations. The original book spawned several television documentaries and brought contemporary occult subcultures into the mainstream..., foreshadowing the impact of the X-Files television series with a combination of foreboding and wonder that entranced audiences worldwide.

The theme -- implicating the Catholic Church, Freemasonry, together with many other secretive groups purportedly associated with aspirations to governance of the world -- was further developed in the controversial cult novels by Dan Brown (The Da Vinci Code, 2003; The Lost Symbol, 2009) and by other imitators. The arguments are reinforced by recognition of the membership it draws from the financial and banking communities. Despite the complicity of St Paul's Cathedral, confusion is reinforced by the critical attitude of religions to Freemasonry by a variety of sources, themselves questionable (Freemasonry: a concise appraisal by Ecclesia Apostolica Jesu Christi).

Mystery of "confidence" and "belief": Such references then raise the question as to why the "Holy Grail" and "Chalice" are so frequently mentioned with respect to the operations or aspirations of the financial community -- and to the confidence and trust on which they are based. As with Isaac Newton's preoccupation with alchemy and the occult, as an exemplar of science, one may wonder at the preoccupations of an exemplar of finance such as George Soros (The Alchemy of Finance, 1987).

As noted by Vincent Bridges (The High History of the Holy Grail)

The Grail would seem to be the ultimate slippery idea. Even the word itself has a half-dozen different derivations: from gradual, gradulis in Latin, to a wide plate or dish, gradule in Old French, to the really strange meanings such as Sang Real or royal blood. A persistent whiff of Sufism lingers on, along with traces of other arcane undercurrents, such as Goddess worship, "witchcraft," and contact with such megalithic concepts as landscape zodiacs. To approach the Grail is to enter into Fairyland, the Magic Kingdom, but one such as Walt Disney could never have imagined. The Grail is, or becomes, all things to all seekers. Perhaps it is best seen as a state of mind, one in which the numinous exists in sharp and bright detail, while the mundane becomes charged with significance and meaning.

In-forming the Chalice as an integrative cognitive dynamic

The argument is developed further in a separate document (In-forming the Chalice as an Integrative Cognitive Dynamic: sustaining the Holy Grail of Global Governance, 2011) in the following sections:

- Tangible and intangible varieties of "Chalice" and "Grail"
- The Chalice as an "elephant"
- Subunderstanding of the nature of the "Chalice"
- Questionable confidence of whom?
- Containing appropriate belief: a dynamic "Chalice"?
- Complementary visual metaphors of "Chalice"
- Morphic resonance hybrid of complementary metaphor
- Embodying the paradoxical dynamics of polarization
- Cognitive singularity: ensuring nothing matter

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

For further updates on this site, subscribe here