



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

10 June 2013 | Draft

Vigorous Application of Derivative Thinking to Derivative Problems

Transcending bewailing, hand-wringing and emotional blackmail

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Introduction

As many remark, the global situation is in a mess -- whether in terms of environment, resources, social services, finances, employment, housing, or conflicts. Of greater concern, however, is the extent to which the response to this mess is itself in a mess. Every specialist has a clear understanding of the causes of the problems. Unfortunately there is little consensus amongst specialists within any discipline, but especially between disciplines. The same can be said of those advocating strategic responses -- each with a sense of what should be done, if only others would act according to their wisdom and experience. Some are able to take advantage of this confusion to advance particular agendas -- of a nature which can only contribute to further destabilization.

In such a context it is clearly foolishly presumptuous to claim greater insight into the nature of the "problematique" or the possibility of a "resolutique" -- to employ terms originally promoted by the Club of Rome, as separately discussed (*Imagining the Real Challenge and Realizing the Imaginal Pathway of Sustainable Transformation*, 2007). This exploration therefore focuses on the review of one "syndrome" which seems to inhibit a more integrative approach -- if indeed that is what is appropriate in these turbulent times.

As indicated by the title, the concern here is with the nature of authoritative analysis of any problem situation such as to avoid any focus on generative factors. The subtitle is indicative of a secondary concern that this avoidance ensures every opportunity for many to wring their hands in compassionate despair for those who suffer as a consequence. For those variously claiming the highest moral authority, this may then be reinforced by their vacuous appeals to others of lesser standing to enable the resolution of the problem -- a form of emotional blackmail further reinforced by daily media coverage of that suffering.

In this situation, are current strategic responses to be understood as essentially tokenistic -- however purportedly serious and responsible they claim to be? In a period when a key challenge is articulated by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), might the prevailing response to the planetary problematique be better understood as an **Intergovernmental Palliative Care Coalition** (IPCC)? Or is there a case for recognizing the emergence of a pattern of misleadership, as separately explored (*Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council: misleading as vital to governance of the future?* 2007).

The currently acclaimed sense of responsible strategic response merits reflection in the light of the cautionary adage: *having lost sight of our objectives, we redoubled our efforts* (as attributed in another form to [George Santayana](#)). Missing would seem to be the capacity to ask new questions capable of eliciting new thinking -- rather than reinforcing a pattern of failure in everything but the remarkably increasing capacity for the targeted delivery of death. There is no concrete proof of use of information capacities -- of equivalent efficacy -- to develop ever more fruitful relationships between concepts, between people, or between remedial initiatives.

Tracing back to the source of problems as necessary due diligence?

This text has been inspired by the recent public interview on French media by [Laurent Fabius](#), regarding evidence of the use of chemical weapons in Syria (*Syria/Chemical weapons: Statement by M. Laurent Fabius, Minister of Foreign Affairs, France Diplomatie*, 4 June

2013). The announcement anticipated the evidence provided by the UK, with both giving rise to a request from the USA for stronger confirmation. In the interview with Fabius, the focus was on "*remonter la chaine*", to be understood as an assertion that the French had assiduously "gone back to the source" in some way.

There was not the slightest reference in the French announcement as to how the chemical weapons had been acquired, or whether this might even be considered relevant -- which might be understood as fundamental to any claim to have retraced the problem to its source. Is this to be understood as politically, intellectually, or systemically responsible? How does this assessment inhibit coherent understanding of a possible response? For whom is there any desire for such?

The French statement might be considered as having taken the form of a responsible acknowledgement of the "*non-dit*" -- a concept familiarly appreciated in France in the avoidance of public reference to the amorous arrangements of its leadership. The term is appropriately translated as the "unsaid". Its implications have been the subject of separate comment (*Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid"*, 2003). It can be considered essential to the viability of any society (*Varieties of the "unsaid" in sustaining psycho-social community*, 2003). Is there then a comparison to be made between this tendency and the much-publicized *omerta code* of the Mafia -- recognized to be so supportive of corruption in society?

Reasonable consideration of the French announcement, and any implications of such evidence for action by the international community, surely merit identification of how such chemical weapons had been acquired. How would assessment be modified if the weapons had been supplied directly by one or more members of the UN Security Council, all of whom have strong economic interest in the sale of weapons of any kind? What if they had been supplied by any of those members, but indirectly via allies in the Arab region? What if they had been supplied by Iran? Are the weapons of such a nature that they could be readily manufactured in Syria -- but what then of the acquisition of the constituents and of the challenging mechanisms for their dissemination?

Whilst the Syrian situation offers a current example, of more general concern is the syndrome of avoidance in exploring the roots of problem -- a failure of *due diligence*. This is clearly challenging as is evident with the manufacture and sale of arms in general. The US National Rifle Association has invested considerable effort in its slogan that *guns do not kill people, people do* -- a statement highly influential in US policy making regarding gun control and in avoiding focus on the responsibility of arms manufacturers in exacerbating gun deaths. Does this logic apply equally to chemical weapons -- and even to nuclear weapons? If not, why not?

In a society which devotes considerable resources to the highly abstruse question of the origin of the universe -- and the first seconds of its existence billions of years ago -- is there not a case for exploring the origin of whatever is understood to be problematic? An example of a more concrete nature is the early enthusiasm of geographers and explorers to "discover the source of the Nile" rather than limiting their interest to "downstream" phenomena. Even more concrete is the preoccupation with *provenance*, whether in the food chain or the art market. A more prosaic example is the assiduous concern of dentists with the possible need for *root canal* surgery.

If, however, there is a case for **not** clarifying the origin of problems, does this tendency itself merit greater attention? This case is of course in process of being implicitly made by the current trial of *Bradley Manning* for his involvement in the *publication of confidential US diplomatic cables* via *Wikileaks*. A specific charge is that Manning was thereby "aiding the enemy". Is there then a sense in which greater transparency in relation to any problem is to be construed as "aiding the enemy"? In which case, is there then merit in clarifying who is the "enemy" with respect to any problem?

A different argument could be advanced that society is centered in some fundamental manner on what might be described as the "unthought", as discussed separately (*Unthought as Cognitive Foundation of Global Civilization: implications of God, debt, overpopulation, waste, negligence, encroachment and death?* 2012). This is consistent with arguments of *John Ralston Saul* (*The Unconscious Civilization*, 1995).

Current examples of unsourced problems

Indebtedness: Attention is currently given in many countries to the need for *austerity measures* as a consequence of the accumulation of *public debt*. The appropriateness of the strategy is contested because of the wider consequences for many of the budget tightening process of institutions. Both public indebtedness and austerity measures are now recognized as problematic. Public demonstrations are currently made against austerity measures.

It is however intriguing to note how little is said about the origin of public indebtedness or of the personal indebtedness now exacerbated by austerity measures -- an enabling factor being simply framed as "easy credit", enabled by *predatory lending*. The emphasis of protestors is on alleviating the severity of austerity measures. There is little sense of the process whereby indebtedness increased in the first place -- or on why it might continue to increase if austerity measures were to be set aside. Is the "easy credit" argument to be compared with an unconstrained response to "cheap booze" -- or does the issue merit more careful attention?

On a larger scale, one response to the challenges of financial constraint has been the implementation of *quantitative easing*. Otherwise known as "printing money", this had previously been deprecated as a mark of fiscal imprudence. Increasingly seen as vital to continued economic growth, there is little exploration of the possibility that the economic model on which it is based is essentially unsustainable. Such a question would endanger the professional career of anyone asking it.

Natural disasters: Most notably hurricanes and floods, these are highly destructive of homes, enterprises, infrastructure and crops. Curiously the incidence of these phenomena is reasonably well-known, whether or not they are framed as exceptional in any given case. The damage can be readily deplored. More curious is the narrow focus of the questions regarding the phenomena in media coverage and official investigations. The consequences of progressive destruction of upstream woodlands and "river management", previously capable of mitigating floods, are avoided. The manner in which building authorizations are issued is avoided -- as is particularly evident with respect to requests for such authorization in flood plain areas subsequent to any disaster. The responsibility of those seeking to live in

such areas is avoided -- however disastrous the effects experienced -- even after they have been experienced on several previous occasions. (*Disastrous Floods as Indicators of Systemic Risk Neglect implications for authoritative response to future surprises*, 2011)

Media irresponsibility: Much is made of media responsibility in forming public opinion on any issue. There is increasing awareness of the extent to which the media may be controlled by corporations or governments, or a combination of both in support of undeclared agendas. With the development of alternative sources of information via the web, there is also increasing awareness of the extent to which coverage of particular topics may be limited or suppressed -- as exemplified by reporting in Turkey of the [2013 protests](#) there. Curiously the business model of the media is highly dependent on the advertising to which people are ever more exposed.

More curious however is the extent to which competing products each use a panoply of superlatives to acclaim their own as "the best" without there being any question that this knowingly constitutes "[misleading advertising](#)". There is little sense that this constitutes a process through which the public is systematically educated in the incredibility of information channelled by the media. A degree of legitimacy is sought through requests for feedback which it becomes increasingly obvious is culled for preferred responses -- thus exacerbating lack of confidence in what is broadcast. What is the significance of complicity in such processes for the progressive erosion of the possibility of consensus and governability (*Abuse of Faith in Governance: Mystery of the Unasked Question*, 2009, *Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011, *The Consensus Delusion*, 2011).

Terrorism and invasive surveillance as unsourced problems

The unsourced nature of these problems merits special consideration.

Terrorism: The problem which is perhaps most dramatically "unsourced" is terror -- in a global civilization now formally recognized as a battleground for engagement with [terrorism](#). There are many pointers to a "source", but exploring any of them is typically problematic.

Although scientifically unsubstantiated, these might include Barack Obama's formal declaration, on the occasion of his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize: *For make no mistake: evil does exist in the world* (*Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize*, 10 December 2009). Matching that is the terror deliberately induced on a sustained basis in prisons, made most dramatically evident in the case of [Abu Ghraib](#) -- but evident in prisons everywhere. For others, terror is induced in their own neighbourhoods through the increasing probability of urban violence -- including rape.

There is also the sense in which governance of the world, notably of its financial system, ensures that many live on a daily basis with the terrifying prospect of not knowing how they are to feed their families. It is somewhat ironic that few of those who enabled the financial crisis -- which has had such terrifying implications for many and endangered the "national interest" of many countries -- have been considered as being effectively "terrorists" (*Extreme Financial Risk-taking as Extremism: subject to anti-terrorism legislation?* 2009).

On a larger scale, populations in some countries are terrified to an increasing degree by drone strikes. The terror-inducing patterns, most deprecated through the actions of secretive agencies and surveillance in communist regimes of the past, are increasingly replicated in the most "developed" countries -- aided by ever more sophisticated technology. As ever, religions continue to cultivate a sense of the terrifying consequences in an afterlife which await those who fail to follow their injunctions. The fearful implication of terror is evident in the mobilization of 9,000 law enforcement agents to contain a single teenager on the occasion of the Boston Marathon bombings.

This could be seen as part of the process of cultivating a [culture of fear](#), perhaps consistent with emerging recognition that the threat of "terror" is now the only viable strategy to elicit effective consensus, as separately argued (*Promoting a Singular Global Threat -- Terrorism: strategy of choice for world governance*, 2002; *Spin and Counter-spin Governance through Terrorism*, 2002). A comparison with the fear cultivated by traditional witchdoctors merits consideration, as does the threat to humanity of "invasion from Mars" -- explored in book, radio and movies based on [H. G. Wells](#) original novel ([List of works based on The War of the Worlds](#)). The potential threat of such [hypothetical extraterrestrials](#) for "unifying humanity" has been variously noted, as by US Senator [Glen Taylor](#) (10 July 1947) in response to the [1947 UFO scare in the US](#):

I almost wish the flying saucers would turn out to be space ships from another planet [because the possibility of hostility] would unify the people of the earth as nothing else could.

As with terrorism, there is no concrete proof that numerous extraterrestrial invasions have not been prevented by action of the security services. Unlike terrorism, secrecy with regard to such invasions has not ensured adequate "unification of humanity". Unfortunately the claims made by the security services that terrorist strikes have been averted are also without concrete proof.

Also of relevance are the implications for society of new studies showing how predators engender zones of fear (*Scared to death: how predators really kill*, *New Scientist*, 5 June 2013, pp. 36-39). As introduced in an editorial on *Developing a cartography of fear*:

Now it seems many animals experience dread whenever predators are in the area, with profound consequences for their ecosystems ... Ecologists describe this as a mental map of risk, overlaying the physical terrain across which animals move with "mountains" of danger and "valleys" of safety.

Little attention is however given to the conditions under which people experience terror in its different forms and how it is to be distinguished from extremism (*Varieties of Terrorism extended to the experience of the terrorized*, 2004; *Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism: "rooting for" normalization vs. "rooting out" extremism?* 2005).

In this context, far from being unwelcome, the daily diet of entertainment, widely sought via the media and the web, is characterized to a high degree by ever greater violence and exposure to terrifying experiences. It would seem that global civilization is mysteriously

nourished by terror. It could even be said that "terrorism" is a primary characteristic of the belief system of civilization as currently imagined -- a new framing of the adage: *Violence is as American as cherry pie*.

Invasive surveillance: At the time of writing much is being made of the revelation of the unprecedented extent of [electronic surveillance](#) instigated by the US National Security Agency -- beyond anything ever envisaged by the Stasi or the KGB in the depths of the Cold War. The disclosure concerned the "direct access" of the US federal intelligence agency to the data of internet service providers such as Google, Apple, Yahoo, Microsoft, and Skype.

The disclosure was made simultaneously by *The Guardian* and the *Washington Post* (Glen Greenwald, [NSA collecting phone records of millions of Verizon customers daily](#), *The Guardian*, 6 June 2013; Barton Gellman and Laura Poitras, [U.S., British intelligence mining data from nine U.S. Internet companies in broad secret program](#), *The Washington Post*, 6 June 2013; Richard Lawler, [Washington Post: NSA, FBI tapping directly into servers of 9 leading internet companies \(update\)](#), 6 June 2013). The scope and nature of the program has been confirmed by the insider who leaked the information (Matt Smith, [NSA leaker comes forward, warns of agency's 'existential threat'](#), *CNN*, 9 June 2013; Glenn Greenwald, Ewen MacAskill and Laura Poitras, [Edward Snowden: the whistleblower behind the NSA surveillance revelations](#), *The Guardian*, 9 June 2013).

There are however already strong indications of backtracking on media coverage of the matter following "damage limitation" and threats of legal action (Jonathan Hall, [Washington Post Updates, Hedges on Initial PRISM Report](#), *Forbes*, 7 June 2013; Matt Smith, [Concerns about surveillance 'fanciful', British official says](#), *CNN*, 9 June 2013; *U.S. Justice Department confirms criminal leak investigation*, *Reuters*, 10 June 2013).

Barack Obama has been explicit in his justification of this as vital to the security of Americans in the war against terrorism ([Obama defends secret NSA surveillance programs](#), *The Guardian*, 7 June 2013). Could he possibly say otherwise? Should reflection on the need for such surveillance be associated with underlying questions intimately related to those with regard to terrorism? What is the underlying factor framing this level of need for surveillance? What is the source of this profound insecurity? Is there concrete justification for this -- distinguishable from [false flag operations](#) or the quality of [evidence presented to the UN Security Council](#) by Colin Powell? The recent announcement that details of terrorist attacks supposedly averted by NSA surveillance, can only invite further questions ([Spencer Ackerman, NSA to release details of attacks it claims were foiled by surveillance](#), *The Guardian*, 13 June 2013; [Spencer Ackerman, Senators challenge NSA's claim to have foiled 'dozens' of terror attacks](#), *The Guardian*, 13 June 2013). How much would it cost to "fabricate" that evidence -- as in the case of the Collin Powell presentation? Would it be worth the price -- in the interest of national security? To what extent is "terrorism" in effect a strategic "Trojan horse" (as [understood by business](#), if not as a form of [computer malware](#))?

It is amazing to note the careful insistence that it is only "meta-data" that is collected -- according to the presidential assertion ([Obama: "Nobody is listening to your telephone calls"](#), *CBSNews*, 7 June 2013). Why should this statement be believed? There are numerous provisions for wiretapping when required -- in the interest of US national security -- possibly under a different secret executive order than that on which the assertion focuses (Glenn Greenwald and James Ball, [The top secret rules that allow NSA to use US data without a warrant](#), *The Guardian*, 20 June 2013). Will the future compare Obama's statement to that of his predecessor under oath: *I did not have sex with that woman*. In the latter case the focus of legal interpretation is on "sex". In the former it is on "your".

The most striking feature of the current response to the revelations of the extent of surveillance is the narrow focus on the specific nature of that surveillance, its legality, the existence of oversight, and the secrecy provisions under which it was authorized. The declarations of various parties are upheld as relieving concerns -- coming as they do from purportedly trustworthy parties acting in the public interest -- whom the public is naturally expected to continue to believe are trustworthy. How naive is this assumption -- or rather, how naive is the public assumed to be?

Oversight surveillance: In the response by UK Foreign Secretary [William Hague](#) to questions regarding the PRISM program, great emphasis was placed on the existence of adequate **ministerial oversight** provisions to ensure that use of personal data by government was according to UK legal provisions ([NSA Prism programme: William Hague makes statement on GCHQ](#), *The Guardian*, 10 June 2013). Could he state otherwise? Why should he be considered trustworthy? What concrete proof is there that lives have been saved -- when this is assertion is clearly a "trump card" of great convenience, completely protected by security provisions?

With respect to the track-back process, as with the Foreign Minister of France (above), the question **not** asked was how effective is the oversight process, whether conducted by an individual or by a committee. Clearly it could be assumed to work with 5 cases a day -- but what about 50 or 500? What is the procedure in the event of "case backlog" -- as is characteristic of many legal processes? How should this be related to his own declaration ([UK Foreign Secretary William Hague says he receives hundreds of operational proposals a year from security services, says each must be signed off by him](#), *BreakingNews*, 10 June 2013). On the occasion of Hague's report to Parliament, it was indicated to him that the UK oversight provisions were circumvented in practice by the NSA ([NSA 'offers intelligence to British counterparts to skirt UK law'](#), *The Guardian*, 10 June 2013). This was a claim he had previously denied ([Prism: claims of GCHQ circumventing law are 'fanciful nonsense', says Hague](#), *The Guardian*, 9 June 2013).

How many cases can be responsibly and effectively reviewed in an oversight mode? Where is the research to confirm this in practice in order to enable the public to have confidence in such assertions? How does this compare with the [Congressional oversight process](#) in the USA? As quoted by Marc A. Triebwasser ([Congressional Oversight](#)) with respect to the overall effectiveness of Congressional oversight:

So long as Congress attempts to conduct oversight through the current committee and subcommittee system, without serious mechanisms for coordination of oversight activity, the impact of oversight on the executive will probably remain minimal and the congressional committees will probably preoccupy themselves with intra-congressional struggles that leave the bureaucracy broad latitude. [Lawrence Cloyd Dodd, *Congress and the Administrative State*, 1979, p.248].

With respect to such oversight in the US, in a comment on the current disclosures, [Daniel Ellsberg](#) notes:

For the president then to say that there is judicial oversight is nonsense -- as is the alleged oversight function of the intelligence committees in Congress. Not for the first time -- as with issues of torture, kidnapping, detention, assassination by drones and death squads -- they have shown themselves to be thoroughly co-opted by the agencies they supposedly monitor. (*Edward Snowden: saving us from the United Stasi of America*, *The Guardian*, 10 June 2013)

Surveillance complicity of internet service providers: Current debate is raising questions regarding the degree of complicity of social networking and search engine facilities in the communication of personal details to the security services -- notably through the NSA [PRISM program](#) (replacing the earlier [Terrorist Surveillance Program](#)). As with Obama's declarations on the matter, these facilities are now endeavouring to make it clear that they only supply such information when specifically requested by government and according to the requirements of the law (*Google says the government has 'no access' to servers*, *BBC News*, 8 June 2013; *How Google and Facebook Cooperated with the NSA and PRISM*, *The Atlantic Wire*, 8 June 2013). Would they be expected (or authorized) to say otherwise? There is necessarily no way whatsoever of verifying any such declarations -- especially when so much is explicitly covered by legal requirements and unquestionable security provisions.

It should not however be forgotten that instigation of the explosive development of social networking facilities is very closely related in time to the formal scale-back of the US [Total Information Awareness](#) program in 2003. It can be readily understood that the emergence of such facilities over the past decade has been directly or indirectly "enabled" as a substitute for the earlier discredited approaches to the collection of personal information. Social networking and search engine facilities (whether they like it or not) are fruitfully to be recognized as the popularly acceptable "friendly face" of long-term surveillance programs -- and are unable to prove otherwise. For example Facebook claims it received almost 10,000 US government requests for user data in the second half of 2012 (*Facebook, Microsoft reveal surveillance request figures*, *Reuters*, 15 June 2013). Is there the remotest possibility of verifying such claims with any confidence?

Is there a sense in which the powerful are becoming pathologically insecure, engendering an overriding need for control -- as exemplified in the case of the most powerful nations, especially those represented on the UN Security Council? Do the opportunities for invasive surveillance reduce those fears? Just as taxation ensures revenue essential to the economic viability of government, should populations recognize that ensuring a continuing supply of intimate details is a means of reducing the existential anxieties of those in government? Personal information as vital "therapeutic medication" for government -- best understood as uncontrollably addicted to regular "fixes"?

Surveillance implications: With respect to the "unsourced" nature of the surveillance issue, **no questions are raised as to what other initiatives and institutions might have analogous programs in other domains covered by similar security provisions.** This failure will now reinforce every argument of conspiracy theorists -- however seemingly incredible, as with those regarding use of the [HAARP facility](#) to trigger earthquakes as a means of "encouraging" strategic collaboration ([Christchurch?](#), [Fukushima?](#)). These have previously been all too easily discredited, although such action could readily be framed as in the American interest.

The difficulty for those in authority with the power to deceive, as demonstrated with respect to previous denial of the extent of surveillance, is that they are completely unable to provide concrete proof that they do not have other initiatives which a significant proportion of the public would find reprehensible in the extreme. It is appropriate to note that "reprehensible" was the descriptor used by Obama's director of national intelligence with respect to the public disclosure of the secret directives enabling the ongoing surveillance program (*Clapper admits secret NSA surveillance program to access user data*, *The Guardian*, 7 June 2013). Would *Dr Strangelove* have argued differently in the 1964 movie? Could the full title of that movie now be adapted to *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Surveillance*?

Given the extent to which the surveillance issue is driven by the framing of the threat of terrorism arising from 9/11, it is appropriate to note that authorities have as yet been unable to provide concrete proof in response to the very extensive documentation regarding the questionable conclusions of the official inquiry into 9/11. These have notably been compiled by [David Ray Griffin](#) (*The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions About the Bush Administration and 9-11*, 2004; *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*, 2004; *New Pearl Harbor Revisited: 9/11, the Cover-up and the Exposé*, 2008; *9/11 Ten Years Later: When State Crimes Against Democracy Succeed*, 2011). Griffin is a leading spokesperson of the [9/11 Truth Movement](#).

Exclusivism: gerrymandering, question avoidance, denial

There would seem to be a number of ways through which inability to trace problems back to their source can be explored.

Question avoidance: The most obvious way is to engage with the sense of aversion to troubling questions. This might start with the question as to what is a "question" and why it can be sensed to be so existentially threatening and a source of insecurity in its own right. Why might a possible answer be even more threatening -- if not terrifying? Is recognition of who one is (or is not) potentially the source of the greatest terror? (*Am I Question or Answer?* 2006). This could well be related to the unsourced nature of terror indicated above.

Is it possible that an effective solution to the "terrorism", addressed so assiduously by the "global war against terror", could be even more terrifying? Religion might have emerged as a means of "magically holding off" such recognition and the engagement with that reality, as tentatively discussed separately (*Thinking in Terror: refocusing the interreligious challenge*, 2005) in response to the argument of Richard Kearney (*Thinking after Terror: an interreligious challenge*, *Journal of the Interdisciplinary Crossroads* (2, 1, April 2005). Or could the promotion of the threat of terror be seen as a means of disguising the emergence of issues which constituted an even greater challenge (*Terror as Distractant from More Deadly Global Threats: bewitching world of definitional game-playing*, 2009)?

Avoiding the problematic nature of the religious dimension for non-believers, the issue might also be explored from a psychological perspective (*Question Avoidance, Evasion, Aversion and Phobia: why we are unable to escape from traps*, 2006). This focuses on the traps created by question evasion with the suggestion that society might well be considered as "trapped" in unrecognized patterns of thinking and behaviour -- indicated to a degree by the calls for "new thinking". This would frame the case for recognizing the nature of such "traps" -- if the solution is to be understood in terms of how to "escape" from them.

The advantage of this metaphor is that it recognizes the particular attitudes presented in many dramatisations of the process of escaping from traps and prisons. How might such attitudes be evoked in the case of the global problematique? Who is typically reluctant to "escape" and why -- as indicated in those dramatisations? Who are the "security guards" who have to be bypassed?

This meta-questioning approach could be taken further through inquiry into the nature of "unasked questions" as a set -- and the implications of failure to engage with them, as discussed separately (*Strategic Implications of 12 Unasked Questions in Response to Disaster*, 2013)

Conceptual gerrymandering: One potentially useful approach is to explore ways of manoeuvring around a core issue without addressing it directly. The argument for doing so is recognized in a number of domains from mathematics to business -- readily phrased as *picking the low-hanging fruit* as a priority. A variant is evident in the tendency to *blame the little guy* to avoid the challenge of blaming the person really responsible.

The technique of "gerrymandering", to reframe political district boundaries surreptitiously (and advantageously for some), can be "borrowed" to reframe the system of strategic concerns to be rigorously examined. By so doing the most problematic issues can be marginalized or ignored as not being "within the mandate" of the investigation -- or simply "too complex". This avoids the obligation to focus on systemic issues which might be discovered to be the embarrassing root cause of those "easy" issues on which it is preferred to focus as "priorities".

One approach to this was argued in a review of the recent report, *People and the Planet* (2012), produced by a commission convened by the Royal Society (*Scientific Gerrymandering of Boundaries of Overpopulation Debate*, 2012). The argument in the review was that the report framed its investigations to avoid any systemic tracing back of its other concerns to the psychodynamics of population increase which were a factor in engendering them.

A related approach exploited the art form explored by the French *Oulipo Movement* of writers and mathematicians. This has achieved some renown by producing novels which avoid any use of one common letter of the alphabet. With that inspiration, the challenge could be reframed in terms of how to design a viable strategy which omitted consideration of a key problem (*Lipoproblems: Developing a Strategy Omitting a Key Problem: the systemic challenge of climate change and resource issues*, 2009).

Ignoring systematically: A variant of the previous possibilities, although effectively characteristic of the most extreme form of conceptual gerrymandering, is to ignore alternative perspectives and other possible ways of reframing the strategic challenge. This can be done very effectively whilst vigorously acclaiming the rigorous deployment of expertise whereby "no stone has been left unturned" in the quest for viable alternatives, as argued separately (*Framing the Global Future by Ignoring Alternatives unfreezing categories as a vital necessity*, 2009; *Considering All the Strategic Options -- whilst ignoring alternatives and disclaiming cognitive protectionism*, 2009).

Of particular interest in the strategic consideration of (critical) problems, and the (urgent) need for resources, is the manner by which these are framed in terms of "**increase in demand**". This is effectively a euphemism for increasing population engendering that demand for resources, or reducing the availability of resources it is assumed the population can "share". in some way. There is then no need whatsoever to consider why the demand is increasing or whether that increase might be contained, addressed in any way, or even discussed.

Such strategic consideration is inextricably entangled with the assumption that the only viable response to current difficulties is to increase "growth" as rapidly as possible. In the absence of any appropriately examined alternatives, "**growth**" is seen as the only viable strategy -- the only viable business model, and effectively a socioeconomic panacea.

Curiously it is extremely difficult to distinguish between the arguments for macro-economic growth and those in support of the pattern of growth on which any *Ponzi scheme* is dependent. In a period in which the previously deprecated strategy of "printing money" has been reinvented as the "quantitative easing" on which macro-economics has become dependent, there is a case for recognizing the potential for reinventing the "Ponzi scheme" as effectively fundamental to growth economics as currently promoted.

Psychoactive questions: Following from the arguments above regarding any (intuitive) sense of the inherently terrifying or dangerous nature of certain questions and issues, these could be fruitfully recognized as being "psychoactive" by analogy to hazardous "radioactive" materials for which society has developed "safety procedures". The approach can be variously argued (*Psychoactive Text Warning: emneagram of precautionary attitudes*, 2007; *Overpopulation Debate as a Psychosocial Hazard: development of safety guidelines from handling other hazardous materials*, 2009). There is a degree of irony to this analogy given the current major challenge of disposal of radioactive waste. Is there then a case for comparing terrorism to the accumulation of psychoactive "nuclear waste"?

Given recognition of the valuable role of "radioactive" materials in certain contexts, this approach also suggests the possibility that the conventional diagrams through which so many systems are designed could themselves incorporate "psychoactive" properties to enable them to function cognitively as more effective vehicles (*Magic Carpets as Psychoactive System Diagrams*, 2010).

One "psychoactively proactive" consideration is the remarkable correspondence between preoccupation with economic "growth" (and "sustainability") and the sexual preoccupation addressed by aphrodisiacs. This has been recognized to a degree in arguments for "economic viagra" (*Doubts surface about economic Viagra*, *Market Watch*, 28 January 2009).

Unexamined psychosocial pattern: The arguments here regarding the failure of concern with diligent trace-back, and the

characteristics of "downstream thinking" on derivative issues, could be understood as following from the modalities only too evident in the relationships between disciplines and between sciences. These give rise to the continuing unfruitful dynamics of interdisciplinary discourse and interfaith discourse. Attention is focused on minor, superficial achievements -- framed as being "positive" -- ignoring more fundamental issues which are seldom even named. Any calls for recognition of them would be framed as "negative". There is no capacity to transcend such oversimplification in discourse.

In the case of religions, these issues continue to exacerbate sectarian violence and mutual demonisation -- neither of which currently evoke trace-back investigations. In the case of disciplines, this is most evident in the mutual challenge of the natural and social sciences - - appropriately to be described as pathetic in such troubled times. The population is expected to achieve whatever degree of coherence and integration is possible in the absence of the ability of either disciplines or religions to "get their act together", as discussed separately (*Self-reflexive Challenges of Integrative Futures*, 2008).

Recognizing the pattern of entanglement

Sectoral problems ensured by increasing population: Several of the separate documents indicated above make reference to "population" as somehow associated with a root problem to which trace-back could be explored. What aspects of "population" might merit consideration is a matter for such exploration. Especially relevant to this argument is the extent to which even considering how to explore that possibility is itself psychoactively challenging -- by analogy with the challenging dangers of "radioactivity" (as mentioned above). Specifically, for any institution or professional, any such consideration can endanger careers, research funding and reputation.

To frame the challenge more specifically, there is therefore a case for exploiting a form of *via negativa*, namely to determine what sectors and institutions would **not** favour such an exploration, especially due to their inherent interest in population increase, possibly undeclared.

Clearly many religions have a fundamental commitment to population increase -- irrespective of any other considerations whatsoever. This is most evident in the case of the Abrahamic religions in the light of the injunction in the *Book of Genesis* which they hold in common, variously framed as: *go forth and multiply* -- as discussed below. The possibility of "objective" discussion of the consequences of population increase with religious institutions is therefore questionable with current dialogue modalities.

With respect to the range of economic sectors, and the businesses so heavily invested in them (via their leaders and their shareholders), the dependence on population increase essential to their continuing viability is illustrated by the following examples (unclustered and in no particular order)

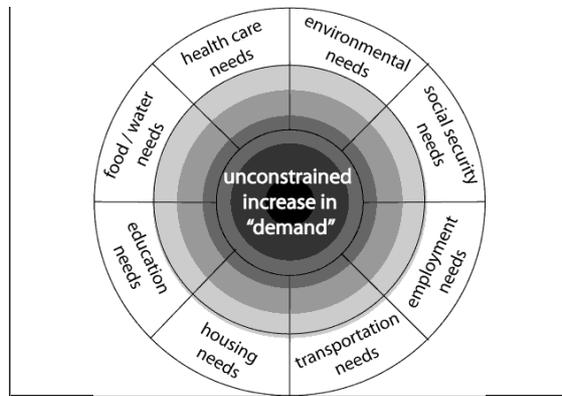
Indicative pattern of complicity in engendering systemic challenges (exploratory presentation)		
Unconstrained aspirations of people (as imagined and cultivated)	Systemic implications (evident and forecast as issues)	Growth dependency of business model (as competitively promoted and envisaged)
Want more and better food	Deforestation, greenspace loss, pollution	Growth of agriculture
	Overfishing and overhunting; species loss	Growth of fishing industry
Want an automobile (and/or transportation)	Energy, materials, waste, roads, pollution	Growth of automobile industry
Want consumer goods	Energy, materials, waste	Growth of manufacturing industry
Want housing	Disaster prone construction, green space loss	Growth of construction industry
Want infrastructure facilities	Urban overcrowding, green space loss	
Want energy	Deforestation, pollution	Growth of energy industry
Want employment	Diminishing opportunities due to increasing numbers and automation	Cost reduction by sourcing elsewhere and automation
Want social security	Inadequate resources for safety nets	Growth of insurance industry
Want health care	Development of costly dependencies	Dependency development by medical / pharmaceutical industry

This presentation offers an indication of how the desires of increasing numbers of people are complicit with the growth dependency of various economic sectors -- together exacerbating the systemic challenges of the central column. Clearly the economic sectors named would consider the growth of their businesses vulnerable to any limitations on "increasing demand" -- irrespective of the systemic consequences. Their objectivity in any possible discussion of the matter would then be questionable -- part of the challenge in the modalities of such a discussion.

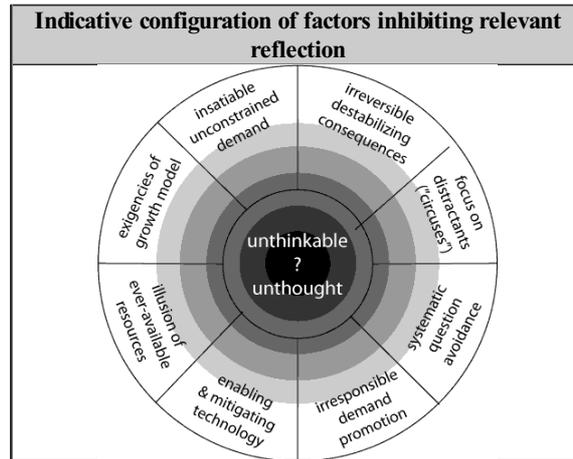
There is a case for exploring the extent to which intergovernmental agencies are variously complicit in these processes with respect to their sectoral mandates and their definition of "development". The UN preoccupation with climate change offers one example, as separately argued (*United Nations Overpopulation Denial Conference: exploring the underside of climate change*, 2009).

Human desires at risk

Indication of increasing risk to dimensions of desirable human environment (as engendered euphemistically by unconstrained increase in "demand")



Factors inhibiting consideration of risk



Whinging, bewailing and hand-wringing: In the context described, there is a case for giving a degree of attention to the processes which are triggered, enabled and sustained by the nature of the issues as well as by both the nature and quality of responses to them. These may be caricatured as follows.

The variety of relationships of an individual to the environment is given a meaningful policy dimension in the following table, whether through personal behaviours (Part I) or collective policy (Part II). The table was previously presented separately (*Combining Clues to 'Ascent' and 'Escape'*, 2002). It was developed by the combination of two separate tables developed by Nadia McLaren (*In the Global Village: options for moving beyond Binge, Whinge, Cringe or Stinge in local green accounting*) in the light of initial work by Peter Harper (Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales). Further commentary is provided there on the "caricatural" terms proposed here for mnemonic purposes.

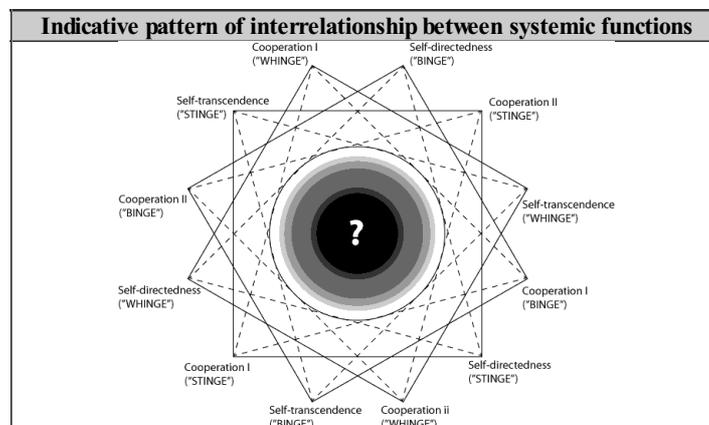
Stages in relationship of individuals to the environment									
	Part I: Evolution of personal behaviours				Part II: Evolution of policy types and their corresponding indicators				
	'Cringe'	'Binge'	'Whinge'	'Stinge'	'Singe'	'Tinge'	'Fringe'	'Hinge'	
	Harm avoidance Behavioural inhibition	Reward dependence behavioural maintenance	Novelty-seeking Behavioural activation	Persistence Continuity, consistency	Harm avoidance Behavioural inhibition	Reward dependence Behavioural maintenance	Novelty-seeking Behavioural activation	Persistence Continuity and consistency	
A	Self-directedness Individualism Unenlightened Short-term Narrow view	Denial Abstinence Stick to rules Depression Projection of problems onto others Avoid strangers	Seek material reward Selfishness / greed Conspicuous consumption Indulgence	Self-serving complaints Blame others Impulsive, and often overwhelmed by events	Scrooge Minimalism "Do just enough to get by"	Blanket restriction "No exceptions" Scorched earth 'The pain is worth it'	Mutual reinforcement Disinformation	Fanaticism Zealotry Anti-establishment	Hidebound Status quo "Business as usual"
B	Cooperation I My family / Our mob Reluctant reformism Tokenism	Avoidance Reduction Respect for authority Stress Procrastination	End justifies means Personal improvement Personal gratification "Keeping up with Jones"	Protest NIMBY Experimental "No pain, no gain"	Prudence Routine Accept others weaknesses	"Tough love" "This hurts me more than it hurts you"	Spin Cosmetic Growth is good for us	Unrealistic Eccentric "Blue sky"	Historically determined Precedent Incrementalism
	Cooperation II Selective	Protection Reflection Apology	"Do unto others..." Dematerialization,	Activism "Put money where mouth	Austerity Stay within means	Facing up to the truth Sharing the	Vision Image building	Imaginative Exploring alternate	Test all possibilities Proven link

C Philanthropy Enlightened conservatism Pre- sustainability		Reuse, Recycling Repair	is"	Accept own weaknesses	load "We'll tighten our belts together"		models Favour variety	Experimentally tested
D Self- transcendence Global community Sustainability Long-term Broader view	"Bite the bullet" Implement tough decisions Mending damage Act according to conscience	Personal fulfilment Spiritual nourishment Affirmation Celebration	Initiation Instigation Open to change Test the limits Multitasking	Discipline	Remediation Sharing responsibility Precautionary principle Internalisation of environmental costs	Vision embodiment Collective fulfilment Shared celebration Intragenerational equity	Creativity Risk taking In touch with minority views	Reconciling existing with emergent Carrying the load Intergenerational equity

In the quest for more focused comprehensibility of the interplay of the factors in the table, selected columns (as denoted by caricatural terms) can be experimentally "collapsed" together to highlight three distinct processes:

- **"binge"** (including "tinge"): This may be used to hold the processes of individual and collective indulgence in unconstrained exploitation of resources -- as exemplified by consumerism and the response to "easy credit".
- **"whinge"** (including "fringe"): The current situation naturally offers immense scope for **"whinging"** -- a slang term for complaints regarding inadequacies and the inappropriate action of "them". The process of complaining features prominently in many interpersonal conversations and calls for recognition of how rewarding it may be. Of further interest is the the manner in which the process is also evident (under other terms) in official reports and resolutions. The content of criticism offered by any democratic opposition in parliamentary assemblies may be so caricatured. Whilst whinging typically takes the form of a specific complaint, **"bewailing"** can be recognized as a more agonized collective response to crisis and disaster -- especially when personally experienced. Popular demonstrations variously feature such "bewailing".
- **"stinge"** (including "cringe", "singe" and "hinge"): This caricatures the response to recognition of the need to act in response to resource constraints -- as is evident in some environmental programs but especially in proposed austerity measures as a consequence of earlier exploitation of "easy credit" .

It is significant that little consideration is given to the systemic relationship between these three processes -- as with "binge" eventually engendering the need for "stinge", for example, irrespective of any consideration of whinging and bewailing



It is appropriate to note a "meta-process" characteristic of the behaviour of authorities -- caricatured here as **"hand-wringing"**. Whether physically or metaphorically, this modality is characteristic of those authorities wishing both to ensure recognition of their deep concern with some "terrible" tragic development and to ensure recognition that matters could have been otherwise -- if only they had been appropriately empowered and heeded. It is most evident in the behaviour of religious leaders -- as upholders of human values -- in expressing their deep compassion for the suffering. In the latter case the hand-wringing is typically accompanied by prayers to the divine and appeals for urgent action by others.

Immoral responsibility of Abrahamic religions?

In the effort to trace-back to the engendering factors of the problems which are the focus of public debate, a degree of prominence has been given (above) to "population" as implicated in some way -- to whatever extent this may or may not be the case. The concern is however the manner in which the effort to debate controversial problems with personal implications is itself inhibited, deprecated and avoided to the extent possible. For the Abrahamic religions the matter is simple and beyond question. The divine injunction of *The Book of Genesis*, frequently framed as **go forth and multiply** despite its variants (1:22, 1:28, 6:8, 9:1, 9:7), brooks no argument.

From this perspective the possibilities of interpreting the injunction otherwise are not worthy of consideration. As a divine injunction, it is necessarily innocent of all problematic consequences for which religions might have a degree of responsibility through failure to comprehend it appropriately (especially given its variants). Theologians are necessarily "right" in their interpretation -- despite their challenge in engaging with each other. There is then no imaginable possibility that the injunction may reflect a higher order of

mathematics than that with which theologians are familiar, as discussed separately ("*Be Fruitful and Multiply*": *the most tragic translation error?* 1995; *Mathematical Theology: Future Science of Confidence in Belief*, 2011).

Put as simply as possible: **the more children the better**. The argument is well-made by a movement of conservative evangelical Christians (*The Quiverfull: the evangelical Christians opposed to contraception*, *BBC News*, 17 May 2013), reinforced by former US presidential candidate **Mitt Romney** (and father-of-five) in a recent speech to graduates: *Get married. Have a quiver full of kids if you can*. It was a conscious echo of *Psalms 127*, where children are compared to arrows for war. The psalm is the inspiration for the **Quiverfull** movement:

Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They shall not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.

The strategy is considered appropriate irrespective of whether the children can be fed, housed, educated, offered health care, or employed -- or whether their use of resources, and the waste they generate, can be handled. Such considerations are beyond the focus of the injunction, as is the possibility that these issues may engender bloody tension and death through any misunderstanding which religions carefully fail to take into account as being beyond their responsibility. Curiously, in a period of faith-inspired conflict, this injunction may be one of the only religious precepts on which the Abrahamic religions agree in practice.

Upheld as they are as protectors and promoters of fundamental human values, **the role of the Abrahamic religions in preventing dialogue on these matters merits very careful consideration -- especially in terms of their influence on faith-based governance** (*Future Challenge of Faith-based Governance*, 2003) and the implication of their adherents in exacerbating faith-based terrorism, however that is to be understood (*Resolving the Challenge of Faith-based Terrorism*, 2005) .

The response of those religions to suffering and death, consequent on increasing numbers has been discussed separately (*Root Irresponsibility for Major World Problems: the unexamined role of Abrahamic faiths in sustaining unrestrained population growth*, 2007; *Begetting: challenges and responsibilities of overpopulation*, 2007). It takes three forms:

- the outcome of obedience to divine injunction is not the responsibility of the religions advocating respect for that injunction
- as an injunction from God, the larger responsibility for the outcome is necessarily that of God -- and is not for mortals to question or challenge
- any consequences for society, in its seeming inability to handle ever increasing numbers, are to be understood as a challenge it is called upon to address -- especially in the light of the fact that God has provided the resources and ingenuity to be appropriately exploited

The concerns noted above with respect to the welfare of progeny might well be considered prudent and appropriate -- if individuals, families, communities, or society as a whole, are variously challenged to "make ends meet". Under these circumstances, despite the level of violence over centuries (whether inter-faith or sectarian), there is currently no question that religious authorities should recognize the value of a degree of modesty with respect to their forthright understanding of these matters. Would spiritual humility be consistent with admission of the possibility of a "blindspot" regarding current framing of the challenge by religions?

One conclusion is that, in the absence of such insight in practice, **religions directly enable many problems in the expectation that they will be solved by "others" or by divine intervention**. The absence of any such resolution is then framed by religions as being beyond their concern -- a matter for repeated "hand-wringing" -- having drawn attention to such possibilities and recognizing the failure to heed the wisdom offered.

More problematic is the sense in which such religions are implicated, consciously or unconsciously, in the escalation of societal problems in order to "provoke" the much anticipated divine intervention as soon possible. Various authors have even argued that an "**Armageddon lobby**" of religious groups are specifically interested in "helping God" by engendering Armageddon in the immediate future (*Spontaneous Initiation of Armageddon: a heartfelt response to systemic negligence*, 2004).

It is in this sense that the Abrahamic **religions can be understood as having a measure of direct responsibility for those problems arising from increasing population which society has as yet proven unable to handle** -- irrespective of whether religions expect divine understanding of their proactive efforts to create the conditions requiring divine intervention.

Following from the argument above, the Abrahamic religions can be seen to have a degree of responsibility for:

- inadequate:
 - food supplies, engendering malnourishment, disease and death
 - freshwater supplies
 - fuel for cooking
 - housing
 - sewage facilities
- unmanageable levels of:
 - child mortality
 - illness and disease, as well as the associated suffering (especially when prolonged against the will of the individual)
 - exposure to violence, rape, etc
- inadequate facilities for:
 - education
 - health care

- care of the elderly
- high levels of:
 - deforestation
 - overfishing
 - environmental degradation
 - unemployment
 - unprocessed pollutants and waste
 - sectarian and inter-faith violence

It is within this enabling context that care is required in assessing the newly elected Pope's declared preoccupation with "poverty" -- since "poverty" on a global scale is one problem which Catholic Church policies have been most directly influential in enabling. Much respect is due to the dedication of missions and missionaries. This does however need to be set within a context in which population increase is encouraged to an unmanageable degree -- thus exacerbating the problems so remarkably remedied in token environments. The Pope has himself dramatised the inequalities embodied within the Church itself and its processes.

Simulation of consequences and possibilities of cognitive engagement

Dating from the pioneering efforts of the Club of Rome publication of *The Limits to Growth* (1972), there have been a variety of approaches to the simulation of the nature of the "problematique" and the possibilities of a "resolutique" (*Club of Rome Reports and Bifurcations: a 40-year overview*, 2012). Missing has been any adequate exploration of the nature of the failure of remedial action, as argued separately (*Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action: constraints on ensuring a safe operating space for humanity*, 2012). This pattern is reflected in the most recent report to the Club of Rome (Johan Rockstrom and Anders Wijkman, *Bankrupting Nature: Denying our Planetary Boundaries*, 2012).

In particular there has been a failure to incorporate "embarrassing" issues into simulations, especially those relating to population dynamics (*Map of Systemic Interdependencies None Dares Name: 12-fold challenge of global life and death*, 2011; *Mapping the Global Underground: articulating Insightful Population Constraint Consideration (IPCC)*, 2010). Also missing is their relationship to the process of electing creativity and to the destabilizing effects of (bureaucratic) game-playing. To complement the "problematique" and the "resolutique", these might be framed as an "imaginatique" and a "ludique" -- in considering the possibility of understanding in terms of complex system dynamics (*Imagining the Real Challenge and Realizing the Imaginal Pathway of Sustainable Transformation*, 2007).

These challenges are relevant given the considerable resources now being allocated to new forms of simulation -- questionably related to the data mining commitments of the security services (as mentioned above). Notable initiatives include:

- the GDELT Penn State Event Data Project (*Global Data on Events, Location and Tone*)
- the projected "Living Earth Simulator", of the FuturICt EU research initiative "to explore social life on earth and everything it relates to".

The challenge can be represented otherwise when consideration is given to the nature of the questions which might be asked of the supercomputers required for such simulations, especially those of the NSA, as discussed separately (*Superquestions for Supercomputers: avoiding terra flops from misguided dependence on teraflops?* 2010).

The nature of the disclosures regarding the secret NSA/PRISM data mining and intelligence sharing agreements, and the extent to which internet service providers are effectively "front-ends" for such processes, suggests that emerging supercomputer projects (such as those above) may also function as "front-ends" -- whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Given the above-mentioned reliance on legislative "oversight" to guard against abuse, **what provision is made for simulating oversight in terms of its effectiveness with case loads of varying sizes and complexity, involving oversight committees of different sizes, or the possibilities of loopholes** (as noted above)? Could vulnerabilities to oversight failure be detected -- as possibly exacerbated by human error, incompetence, and conflict of interest? **How might such simulation contribute to appropriate risk analysis with respect to a vital systemic role?**

The current controversy over the "least truthful answer" made in response to questioning by James Clapper, US Director of National Intelligence, offers an example (*James Clapper: Obama stands by intelligence chief as criticism mounts*, *The Guardian*, 12 June 2013). As presented by David Sirota:

James Clapper is now the embodiment of perjury before Congress. Indeed, when you couple Edward Snowden's disclosures with the video of Clapper's Senate testimony denying that the National Security Administration collects "any type of data on millions (of Americans)," Clapper has become American history's most explicit and verifiable example of an executive branch deliberately lying to the legislative branch that is supposed to be overseeing it. (*James Clapper Should Be Fired -- And Prosecuted*, *AlterNet*, 12 June 2013)

The controversy has evoked discussion over how exactly the oversight is ensured (*Paddy Ashdown, NSA surveillance: who watches the watchers?* *The Guardian*, 12 June 2013). The quality of the points made, and the associated comments in that example, are an indication of how simplistic is the apprehension of the matter in comparison with its possible complexity. Hence the case for simulation to enable and inform more adequate discussion regarding oversight provisions.

The effectiveness of the oversight function might be formulated otherwise through questions such as: **would members of oversight committees be prepared to travel in a plane subject to the quality of safety checks characteristic of their own oversight**

procedures? Exploiting that vehicle safety metaphor, for the wider population the question can be related to that of the trustworthiness of used car salesman, as highlighted by a recent survey which noted that the only profession that Americans trusted less than Congressmen was used car salespersons (*Car Salesmen Trusted Even Less Than Congressmen: Gallup, The Huffington Post*, 3 December 2012). Presumably it is "Congressmen" who are represented on oversight committees in the USA. The issues can be related to the concerns regarding "intelligence failure" prior to 9/11 -- as documented by a [US Senate inquiry](#) (cf Kjetil Anders Hatlebrekke and M. L.R. Smith, *Towards a New Theory of Intelligence Failure? The Impact of Cognitive Closure and Discourse Failure, Intelligence and National Security*, 2010).

The issue is whether such data mining and simulation can address the possibility of "vicious cycles". and assist in "breaking" them (*Dysfunctional Cycles and Spirals: web resources on "breaking the cycle"*, 2002). In metaphoric terms the challenge might be framed in terms of the capacity to detect whether civilization is effectively "walking in circles" in a strategic desert -- and whether appropriate creative thinking and relationships can be enabled as separately suggested (*From ECHELON to NOLEHCE: enabling a strategic conversion to a faith-based global brain*, 2007).

In their use by the "intelligence agencies", simulations are notably valued for their potential capacity to detect terrorist groups and rings. Of great interest is whether such simulations are capable of detecting dysfunctional behavioural loops embedded in networks of perceived problems and collective initiatives. Pointers in that direction have been offered by a EU-funded development of the databases of the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* as separately described (*Feedback Loops Interlinking World Problems and Global Strategies*).

This notably experimented with the software produced by [Netmap Analytics](#), specifically designed to detect questionable patterns of interaction in the kinds of transactional meta-data currently collected by the NSA (*Preliminary NetMap Studies of Databases on Questions, World Problems, Global Strategies, and Values*, 2006; *Visualization: Holistic network mapping using NETMAP*, 1995). The early experiments with analysis of such complex networks gave rise to a proposal by a university in the USA, involving the developers of Netmap, for a Global Knowledge Grid ("a new infrastructure for understanding globalization") -- effectively a precursor of the Penn State Event Data Project (mentioned above).

Detection of points of interest in questions relating to faith and prosperity using Netmap software
(using 2980 questions with 4804 links) [click image for zoomable enlargement]

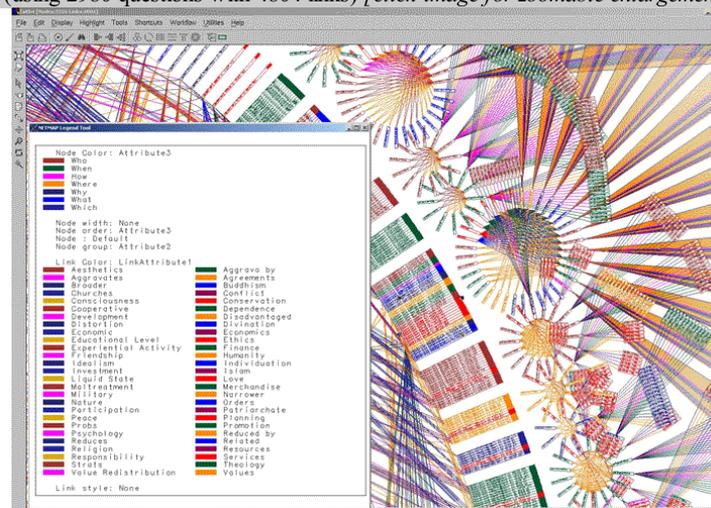


Image from *Preliminary NetMap Studies of Databases on Questions, World Problems, Global Strategies, and Values* (2006), originally included as an example in the [Wikipedia profile](#) of the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, but under pressure for its removal (coincidentally in the aftermath of the NSA surveillance disclosures)

Given the intimate relationship between emerging global simulation initiatives and the continuing development of artificial intelligence, further questions are highlighted by the emergence of "global brain" capacity, as separately discussed (*Simulating a Global Brain -- using networks of international organizations, world problems, strategies, and values*, 2001). Will such capacity impact on "democratic oversight", given the possibility that it may be considered more effective to "take it out of human hands" -- perhaps provoked by recognition in relation to oversight of the challenges of [information overload](#), as separately discussed (*Incomprehension in the face of information overload*, 2012).?

Of relevance to the concentration of supercomputers and simulation capacity is the final stages of implementation of a "super-secret" NSA facility nearing completion deep in the Utah desert as variously described ([James Bamford, *The Black Box: inside America's massive new surveillance centre*, Wired](#), April 2012; [Ian Black, *NSA spying scandal: what we have learned*, The Guardian](#), 10 June 2013; [Rory Carroll, *Welcome to Utah, the NSA's desert home for eavesdropping on America*, The Guardian](#), 14 June 2013). Under a cover title *Inside the Matrix*. Bamford notes that this is *the final piece in a complex puzzle assembled over the past decade*. Its purpose: to intercept, decipher, analyse and this store vast amounts of the world's communications from satellites and underground and undersea cables of international, foreign and domestic networks. Expressed otherwise, the question is whether the remarkable capacity in information management will enable and enhance any capacity in interpretation and insight management,

There is a certain irony to the symbols which characterize these initiatives, namely Pentagon, and Prism -- together with Bamford's reference to "matrix" and "box" -- in the light of the far more sophisticated geometry required for supercomputers. Do such descriptors reinforce the question as to whether surveillance and its oversight will involve a requisite degree of "out-of-the-box" thinking? What kinds of insight might be enabled by toroidal configurations, for example, as discussed separately (*Comprehension of Requisite Variety for Sustainable Psychosocial Dynamics: transforming a matrix classification onto intertwined tori*, 2006)? Are the disclosures by Edward Snowden regarding NSA surveillance effectively a consequence of "out-of-the-box" thinking?

More provocative is whether the 5-fold thinking implied by a 2D "pentagon", could progress (via its current 3D projection into a "prism") to a 3D "dodecahedron" -- especially in the light of the contrasting French identification with a 2D "hexagon", of which the 3D variant (the icosahedron) is the complement of the dodecahedron. Is "prism" the first phase in NSA efforts to think in 3D (*Towards Polyhedral Global Governance: complexifying oversimplistic strategic metaphors*, 2008)? It is then curious to note the early configuration of the deities of classical Greece as a Dodekathion. These considerations have some relevance to neglected strategic possibilities (*Middle East Peace Potential through Dynamics in Spherical Geometry: engendering connectivity from incommensurable 5-fold and 6-fold conceptual frameworks*, 2012).

Aside from the implications of the name of its location in Utah -- Bluffdale-- a profoundly significant symbolic irony may be recognized in the fact that the secret NSA facility is located in the heart of Mormon country: *where religious pioneers arrived more than 160 years ago. They came to escape the world, to understand the mysterious words sent from their god as revealed on golden plates, and to practise what has become known as "the principle", marriage to multiple wives.* This clearly constitutes a development of conventional family "geometry" into a "polyhedral" form. The irony is nicely completed by the fact that the following paragraph in the printed version in *Wired* has been "redacted" from the online version cited above:

Today Bluffdale is home to one of the nation's largest sects of polygamists, the [Apostolic United Brethren](#)... Membership has doubled since 1978 -- and the number of plural marriages has tripled -- so the sect has recently been looking for ways to purchase more land and expand throughout the town.

Such seemingly irrelevant considerations offer an appropriate introduction to the following speculation.

Psycho-sexual reframing of "growth" in response to "demand" in society

Requisite imagination: The highly problematic condition of global civilization calls for reflection that is radically imaginative. The "requisite imagination" could be compared to the "requisite variety" considered essential to governance in cybernetic terms. In this case the question is one of the cybernetics of collective human cognition, as variously studied (Heinz Von Foerster, *Understanding Understanding: essays on cybernetics and cognition*, Springer, 2003; Tom Froese, *From Second-order Cybernetics to Enactive Cognitive Science: Varela's turn from epistemology to phenomenology*, *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 2011; Maurice Yolles and Gerhard Fink, *Exploring the Common Roots of Culture, Politics and Economics*, *Business Systems Review*, 2, 2013, 2).

As framed above, "radical" should arguably respond to the "unconscious" collective condition in a manner analogous to the early psychoanalytic approaches of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. The approach could be considered consistent with the quest for generative metaphors, as articulated by Donald Schon (*Generative Metaphor: a perspective on problem setting in social policy*, 1998), as discussed separately (*Generative metaphor and policy-making*, 1995).

Engaging with sexual reality as a fundamental driver: Of particular interest in this respect are the possibilities of a "sexual" interpretation of the relationship between a number of factors distinguished above. Most striking is then the complementarity between "growth" and "demand". The former characterizes the obsession of governments and business enterprises -- given concrete form in the construction of ever larger skyscrapers, and the symbolism of national prestige attached to them in competitive comparisons between them.

The concern with "bigger is better" is consistent with this, especially given its genital connotations with respect to "performance" -- and despite authoritative reservations (Regina Nuzzo, *Bigger not always better for penis size*, *Nature*, 08 April 2013). This offers an explanation of the limited attraction of the alternative framing proposed by E. F. Schumacher (*Small Is Beautiful: a study of economics as if people mattered*, 1973). It may indeed be "beautiful", but "size does make a difference" in the experience of many (Cowan Coventry, *Small is dangerous? Schumacher, science, and social development*, *OpenDemocracy*, 3 September 2003).

Similarly the euphemism of "demand" can be understood in terms of the dominant male fantasy regarding female desire for sex -- to which the quest for greater "growth" is an overriding response. Framed in this way, male-dominated business is necessarily obsessed with "increasing demand" and "meeting the demand" -- a fantasy cultivated regarding consumers, in which the population is encouraged to be imaginatively complicit through a vast array of creative marketing ploys with well-recognized sexual overtones and undertones, deliberately exploited.

In the frenzy of such a fundamental sexual encounter, any problematic, boundary-breaching, systemic consequences are naturally all too readily forgotten. The dynamic engagement of "growth" with "demand" is necessarily understood (if not "felt") to be "the solution" to the anxieties of the day and a positive reframing of future potential in the moment. The underlying psychology of consumerism, and any obsession with "shopping until you drop", can be considered in these terms.

Mysterious attraction of the "hole": As an imaginative framing, configurations such as those presented schematically above emphasize appropriately the fundamental nature of the collective behavioural attractor of the mysterious central "hole" -- through which "demand" is imaginatively "satisfied" by suitable "growth".

The dynamics of the encounter are then consistent with the interaction suggested above between the cognitive implications of "problematique", "resolutive", "imaginative" and "ludique" which can be **schematically presented** as framing a "complex hole". The dynamic is fruitfully understood as fundamentally "sexual" -- if only as a collective echo of individual sexual fantasies.

Reflection on the complex nature of the "hole" can be considerably enriched by the remarkable discussion by Roberto Casati and Achille C. Varzi (*Holes and Other Superficialities*, 1994) -- with respect to the borderlines of metaphysics, everyday geometry, and the theory of perception (as they summarize in the **entry on holes** in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). They seek to answer two basic questions: **Do holes really exist? And if so, what are they?** Arguing in favour of the "existence" of such absences as full-fledged cognitive entities, the authors examine the ontology of holes, their geometry, their part-whole relations, their identity, their causal role, and the ways they are perceived.

Religious ambiguity: This framing is also consistent with the seemingly incompatible roles of religion, security and terrorism. Religion is necessarily ambiguous in framing the encounter as divinely "enjoyed" -- as echoed by various religiously inspired authors (Wayne Grudem, *Business for the Glory of God*, 2003; Jeff Van Duzer, *Why Business Matters to God*, 2010; Christian Business Association, *God's Word on Business*). However its modalities must necessarily be circumscribed through various forms and degrees of prudery -- avoiding "transparency" with regard to the *sanctum sanctorum*.

Clearly the "hole" as the central cognitive attractor should be "covered" (and reference to it avoided) except under very special circumstances when consummation and procreation are appropriately sought, in an effort to "be fruitful and multiply". It is this emphasis which justifies security concerns regarding "disclosure" and its "reprehensible" nature.

Religion has long cultivated the image of the terrifying nature of God -- of the Wrath of God -- whilst promoting a complementary image of a God of Love. This ambiguity has featured in the terrifying abuse of the vulnerable by clerics, as God's representatives -- compounded (with respect to this argument) by the manner in which it has been systematically "covered up". Covering the female body has of course long been a preoccupation of the Abrahamic religions -- now a particular focus with respect to the face (*Facism as Superficial Intercultural Extremism: burkha, toplessness, sunglasses, beards, and flu masks*, 2009).

Terrifying ambiguity: The fundamentally intimate relationship between security and terrorism then becomes clearer. Security is then an evident preoccupation in creating the conditions for the satisfaction of "demand". The "terror" frequently associated with sexual relationships is then fully understandable in this collective analogy. A degree of terror -- whether induced or anticipated -- is a feature of satisfying "the demand" through a "terrific" experience. This is consistent with the ambiguity of both the "thrill" of "being terrified" and the "terror" of potential underperformance -- namely the "impotence" of the powerful in the face of insatiable demand.

Extensive use is made of sexual metaphor in the language of business with reference to consumers -- typically extending into terminology associated with rape, as with the framing of any "enemy" (*Backside to the Future: coherence and conflation of dominant strategic metaphors*, 2003). There is no lack of recognition, expressed metaphorically, on the part of the public of the extent of rape by business and "the suits", as speculatively explored (*Global Governance via a Double-breasted Strange Attractor: cognitive implication in a dynamic sexual metaphor*, 2009).

There is an unexplored possibility that collective initiatives in general may be unconsciously enabled by use of sexual metaphor -- of which military metaphors may be the more obvious form (*Enhancing Sustainable Development Strategies through Avoidance of Military Metaphors*, 1998). It would be profoundly ironic if this proved to be especially the case with "development" itself -- especially given widespread use of "extension officers" in an enabling capacity. This would be consistent with claims of countries having been "raped" by development programs and structural adjustment, as noted separately (*Pre-Judging an Institution's Implicit Strategy by the Director's Private Behaviour: remarkable parallels in the case of the IMF and Dominique Strauss-Kahn*, 2011).

There is a further curious implication in use of "quantitative easing" (as a "stimulus package") to enable continuing growth, despite measures of constraint in the face of the increasing dimensions of the "hole" (understood in terms of public indebtedness) -- measures associated with use of the phrase "too big to fail". This remedial process itself frames consideration of the implications of a corresponding "qualitative easing" (or "moral easing"), as separately discussed (*From Quantitative Easing (QE) to Moral Easing (ME): a stimulus package to avert moral bankruptcy?* 2010). This would be consistent with recognition of a moral "hole" evident in discussion of the immorality in growth-demand inequalities -- most notably with respect to the indebtedness of developing countries.

Cultivating consent: The macho world of "growth" and its symbols then lends itself to a controversial degree of comparison with **sadomasochism** -- reminiscent of concerns expressed regarding the **military-industrial complex**. The invasion of privacy (now highlighted by the NSA disclosure) has long been recognized in the case of business marketing and its tracking of the personal details of consumers.

Especially curious is the sense in which such invasive surveillance is to be compared with **voyeurism** in a sexual context. This offers the complementary sense in which the increasing degree of surveillance can be considered as systematically "grooming" the population into a mode of **exhibitionism**. Such grooming offers an appropriate sexual interpretation of the seminal study by **Noam Chomsky** and **Edward S. Herman** (*Manufacturing Consent: the political economy of the mass media*, 1988).

Cognitive embodiment of sexual dynamics? The sexual framing of the encounter between "growth" and "demand" can be explored even more imaginatively as the challenge of the fruitful engagement with "otherness" ("*Human Intercourse: Intercourse with Nature and Intercourse with the Other*", 2007).

There is then a case for interrelating insight from systemic understanding of sexual dynamics with systemic encodings of cognitive relationships -- especially as offered by non-Western cultures, as discussed separately (*Reframing the Dynamics of Engaging with Otherness: triadic correspondences between topology, Kama Sutra and I Ching*, 2011). This argument can be usefully "informed" by the topological work of **René Thom** (*Structural Stability and Morphogenesis: an outline of a general theory of models*, 1972) and the case for **enactivism** (*Intercourse with Globality through Enacting a Klein bottle*, 2009).

Such exploration offers the further possibility of recognizing that the sexuality of the relationship between "growth" and "demand", as fundamental to civilization, might well benefit from cautionary learnings from [sexual harassment](#) in daily life (*Beyond Harassment of Reality and Grasping Future Possibilities: learnings from sexual harassment as a metaphor*. 2006).

Recognition of the planetary "hole": In a period in which a degree of recognition is accorded to various "holes" (in national budgets, in the ozone layer, etc), all so carefully ignored by specialists in the past, it is appropriate to note the hole implied in relation to planetary boundaries. The latter has been framed by the work recently presented to the Club of Rome, as mentioned above (Johan Rockstrom and Anders Wijkman, *Bankrupting Nature: denying our planetary boundaries*, 2012) and separately discussed (*Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action: constraints on ensuring a safe operating space for humanity*, 2009). Is the hole indeed to be understood as a "safe space" -- as might be inferred from anti-austerity enthusiasts, for example? Back to the womb?

Of further relevance to this reframing is the adaptation of it offered in the form of a "doughnut" by Kate Raworth (*A Safe and Just Space for Humanity: can we live within the doughnut?* 2012). The cognitive mystery of the "hole" in that doughnut can then be considered consistent with the above reframing, as discussed separately (*Exploring the Hidden Mysteries of Oxfam's Doughnut: recognizing the systemic negligence of an Earth Summit*, 2012).

In the light of the above-mentioned comment by Daniel Ellsberg on the NSA surveillance disclosure, the curious global implication of "holes" is well-framed by the following emphasis in that comment:

Not for the first time -- as with issues of torture, kidnapping, detention, assassination by drones and death squads -- [intelligence committees] have shown themselves to be thoroughly co-opted by the agencies they supposedly monitor. **They are also black holes for information that the public needs to know.** (*Edward Snowden: saving us from the United Stasi of America*, *The Guardian*, 10 June 2013)

Conclusion

Derivative thinking: The concern of this argument, as indicated by the title, is the unchallenged extent of "derivative thinking" -- subscribing unimaginatively to established patterns that are proving only too unfruitful. This merits a careful contrast with the [derivatives](#) which were at the origin of the current financial crisis, as described by Gillian Tett (*Derivative Thinking*, *FT Magazine*, 30 May 2008). The distinction from innovative thinking is well made by D. Stewart Armstrong (*Innovative versus Derivative Thinking*, *GoldSeek.com*, 8 December 2005):

Derivative thinking... stems from innovative thinking and as such is a rehash of the "same ole, same ole". It is thinking that is lacking in originality and imitative. It is a repeat of what we've learned in the past and a regurgitation of the ideas of others. Too often it is a regurgitation of facts, or worse, what others perceive as reality and have presented as facts.... Before we begin to think in an original fashion we have to recognize our current way of thinking so identification of our own behavioral patterns is important. If we never challenge ourselves, or follow blindly in the path of others, then perhaps a review of our own cognitive methodology is required.

Whether financial or otherwise, both variants of "derivative thinking" do however merit the criticism made by [Warren Buffet](#), as cited by *The Wall Street Journal* (*Derivative Thinking*, 11 March 2003):

Derivatives are... weapons of mass destruction, carrying dangers that, while now latent, are potentially lethal.

Where are the new questions which need to be asked which could enable the messy strategic reality to be fruitfully reframed? Is a form of ["shock learning"](#) required, by contrast with "maintenance learning", as suggested by an early report to the Club of Rome (James W Botkin, et al, *No Limits to Learning; bridging the human gap*, 1979). Does this learning indeed require triggering by a "crisis of crises" -- an Armageddon?

Irresponsible tokenism: Possibly most offensive at this time is the "hand-wringing" by authorities as discussed above. This is reminiscent of that given prominence by [Pontius Pilate](#) in "washing his hands" to show that he was not responsible for the execution of Jesus, and in thereby reluctantly sending him to his death (*Matthew 27:24*). Associated with this process is the [emotional blackmail](#) by which responsibility for the current global condition is thereby allocated to others.

Especially significant to the current argument is the manner in which human rights and the law are increasingly used as a form of decorative "fig leaf", variously adjusted to conceal the "erogenous zones" through which the problematique is engendered and sustained. Appeals to the "law" and its constraints then obscure the extent to which behaviour is conditioned by some form of "lore" to which little reference is made, as separately discussed (*Law and Order vs. Lore and Orders? Imagining otherwise the forceful engagement of singularity with plurality*, 2013).

Unconscious framing of collective discourse: The suggestion for a "psycho-sexual" reframing of the challenge is an invitation to further reflection. One aspect of interest is the extent to which traces of this perspective are evident in the very language of discourse regarding problems -- most strikingly within a context of a "congress" or "seminar" (and consequently "dissemination"), as discussed separately (*Dialogue: policy forums as metaphors; Women and the Underside of Meetings: symptoms of denial in considering strategic options*, 2009).

The terms are too readily assumed to be innocent of unconscious associations through which change is envisaged. Similar questions can

be raised regarding the physical layout and decor of meeting halls in relation to a podium framed by a proscenium -- as well as the body language of a microphone-enabled vertical speaker and an attentive audience, [legs well-splayed](#), in expectation of being "moved".

Requisite self-reference: The preoccupation can be taken further in the light of the insights into the fundamental role of analogy recently offered by [Douglas Hofstadter](#) and [Emmanuel Sander](#) (*Surfaces and Essences: analogy as the fuel and fire of thinking*, 2013). Hofstadter in particular has drawn attention to the manner in which people are implicated self-referentially in any cognitive articulation such as that above (*Gödel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid*, 1979). To what extent do the psychosocial challenges of the times call for a shift beyond "explanation/explication" into some form of "implantation/implication" (*i.e. Defining the objective ∞ Refining the subjective ?!: Explaining reality ∞ Embodying realization*, 2011).

This might be implied by the case for third order cybernetics ([Vincent Kenny](#), *"There's Nothing Like the Real Thing": revisiting the need for a third-order cybernetics, Constructivist Foundations*, 2009) with implications discussed separately (*Consciously Self-reflexive Global Initiatives: Renaissance zones, complex adaptive systems, and third order organizations*, 2007)

"Hole" as container: Associating a **collective** cognitive "hole" (of such a mysteriously fundamental nature) with a hole so extremely familiar to **individuals** -- constituting a primary behavioural attractor (of a correspondingly mysterious nature) -- helps to frame the paradox of how the current challenge to civilization is engendered. The cognitive qualities common to both also help to frame the nature of the aspirations to "fill" the "hole" -- raising questions regarding the meaning to be associated with that "fulfillment".

The "hole" then takes on the attributes of a strange "container" or "conduit", formed and bounded psychoactively in ways which are far from obvious. The fundamental nature of the "**conduit metaphor**" has long been a focus of the much-cited **cognitive linguistics** of [George Lakoff](#) and [Mark Johnson](#) (*Metaphors We Live By*, 1980). Of relevance here is the essentially paradoxical form of that container/conduit -- as required by the cognitive mystery with which it is experientially associated.

Paradoxical container: The challenging topology of the container/conduit in question is variously indicated by the insights regarding the **Möbius strip** of Douglas Hofstadter (*I Am a Strange Loop*, 2007) and related consideration of the implications of the form of the **Klein bottle** by [Steven M. Rosen](#) (*Topologies of the Flesh: a multidimensional exploration of the lifeworld*, 2006; *Science, Paradox and the Möbius Principle: the evolution of the transcultural approach to wholeness*, 1994). There is a charming coincidence to the topologically related form of conduit/containers now considered relevant to the future energy needs of humanity in the light of fundamental physics, namely the toroidal form of the **ITER nuclear fusion reactor** .

That toroidal design ensures that the nuclear plasma it contains does not come in contact with the wall of the container. This is reminiscent of the traditional alchemical challenge of developing a container for **alkahest** (the solvent that dissolves everything) -- a theme currently explored by Rosen (*Dreams, Death, Rebirth: a multimedia topological odyssey into alchemy's hidden dimensions*, 2013). Such indications call for further exploration, as separately suggested (*Sustaining a Community of Strange Loops: comprehension and engagement through aesthetic ring transformation*, 2010; *Enactivating a Cognitive Fusion Reactor: Imaginal Transformation of Energy Resourcing (ITER-8)*, 2006)

Cognitive disciplines as exemplifying derivative thinking: In challenging the quality of "derivative thinking", and its focus on "derivative problems", this argument could be considered as simply highlighting the consequence of specialization. However, **disciplines are necessarily "derivative" and must necessarily deal with derivative problems** -- being (by definition, and in the light of [Gödel's incompleteness theorems](#)) unable to recognize and engage with the integrative modality from which they hypothetically emerge (*Knowledge Processes Neglected by Science: Insights from the crisis of science and belief*, 2012).

The criticism of religion above is consistent with this argument in that religions only too evidently are unable to engage together with the "supernatural" reality they recognize (and from which they claim to emerge) -- despite the complementarity of the insights they represent, as argued by [Stephen Prothero](#) (*God Is Not One: the eight rival religions that run the world -- and why their differences matter*, 2010). Hence the potential importance of "mathematical theology" (*Mathematical Theology: Future Science of Confidence in Belief*, 2011).

The mysterious nature of "nothingness", as potentially characteristic of an originating "hole", is a preoccupation for the cosmologists of both astrophysics and theology -- the **Big Bang** of the former and the precautionary **apophatic discourse** of the latter (*Emerging Significance of Nothing*, 2012). In contrast to apophatic discourse, it might be said that the primary characteristic of both the sciences and religions corresponds to a **cataphatic mode** -- emphasizing definitional closure.

Play and humour as missing dimensions: Strangely missing from either the scientific or the religious perspective is the importance attached to playfulness and humour in popular culture. Separately or together these can be considered fundamental to the more integrative understanding lacking in both religions and sciences, as argued separately (*Humour and Play-Fullness: essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity*, 2005). Play and humour are associated with forms of elegance by which the disciplines are challenged (*Enacting Transformative Integral Thinking through Playful Elegance*, 2010). Even more curious is the manner in which the dynamics of collective play are typically associated with an **arena** -- of ever increasing proportions in a global society -- effectively circumscribing what has been framed above as a hole.

Perhaps most ironic in interweaving elements of this argument is the universal admiration accorded to the TV comedy series *The Big Bang Theory* (*Big Bang Theory scoops Critics' Choice TV Awards, BBC News*, 11 June 2013). Delightfully understated is its preoccupation with the sexual connotations of "bang" in urban slang. In the critique of scientific gerrymandering, mentioned above as characterizing The Royal Society's report on *People and the Planet* (2012), it was noted that the series -- in which "coitus" is a frequent theme -- has featured as guest stars the renowned physicists [Brian Greene](#), [George Smoot](#), [Neil deGrasse Tyson](#) and [Stephen Hawking](#), most recently (*Stephen Hawking Corrects Sheldon's Math On 'The Big Bang Theory', The Huffington Post*, April 2012).

Whereas The Royal Society is unable to take account of psycho-sexual dynamics fundamental to the argument above, Hawking and Greene are **Fellows of the Royal Society**. How far can "scientific" pretence be usefully taken in a world in crisis? The sitcom is attractive

to such physicists, and to many hard scientists, precisely because the main male actors portray scientists of exceptionally high IQ -- but much challenged by normal social interaction of every kind.

Terrifying nature of the "hole": The psycho-sexual framing helps to understand engagement with the cognitive challenge of the "hole" -- especially given hopes for the future expressed through phrases such as "seeing a light at the end of the tunnel". The phrase implies a linearity to the "cognitive topology" of the tunnel when, as argued above, it is better understood as characterized by some form of curvature. It is this which evokes a degree of terror -- through fear of the unseen "around the corner".

Worse still is the more complex possibility suggested by the paradoxical topology of the Mobius strip and the Klein bottle. Terror is then induced by fear of what might come from behind -- of a need to "watch one's back". Even more terrifying is any sense that the threat may actually come from a distortion of oneself (as a consequence of [enantiodromia](#)). This is suggested by the symbol of the tail-eating snake, the [Ouroboros](#), common to many cultures. Such an implication is evident in the argument of [Nafeez Ahmed](#) (*Peak soil: industrial civilisation is on the verge of eating itself*, *The Guardian*, 7 June 2013). As a clue to new ways of thinking, such topology does however suggest unexplored opportunities (*Psychosocial Energy from Polarization within a Cyclic Pattern of Enantiodromia*, 2007; *Explanation vs. Inplanation: multiversal embodiment through the Ouroboros*, 2012).

Such an approach helps to reframe concerns with "security" in relation to potential "terror" -- beyond any collective unconscious sense that the primary threat may be civilization itself. Civilization as the ultimate "terrorist" -- even a "suicide bomber", as implied by [Jared Diamond](#) (*Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*, 2005)?

Mysteriously bounded "secure container": The indications above regarding the design of a "secure container", to enable nuclear fusion, then helpfully draw attention to the very unusual nature of the boundary of the container -- effectively of the cognitive "hole" -- and the new thinking required for its "definition" and "design". This is a valuable cognitive reframing of the overly simplistic restrictive connotations of "security" -- as conventionally promoted by such as the US "National Security Agency" and "Homeland Security", or by the UN "Security Council". Their thinking might be provocatively compared to that associated with [erotophobia](#), [genophobia](#), or the traumatic prospect of *vagina dentata*.

Curiously the "security" called for, as noted above, is enriched by alchemical imaginings regarding a "container" with strange cognitive implications -- a [strange attractor](#) in its own right, consistent with the values it embodies (*Human Values as Strange Attractors: coevolution of classes of governance principles*, 1993). A speculative approach to its mysterious nature is made separately, in terms of a *Geometry of meaning: an alchemical Rosetta Stone?*, in concluding the discussion of a more fundamental challenge (*Eliciting a Universe of Meaning -- within a global information society of fragmenting knowledge and relationships*, 2013).

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