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1 September 2014 | Draft

Eradication as the Strategic Final Solution of the 21st Century?

Indicative checklist of possible domains of application

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Introduction

The purpose of this exercise is to collect together the domains in which "eradication" is somehow considered the most appropriate manner of responding to what is framed as a problem. The exercise is seen as a way of clarifying the appropriateness of current statements regarding the eradication of ISIS jihadists in their quest for the establishment of an Islamic caliphate.

A recent articulation is that of US [General John Allen](#) on the [Defense One](#) website (20 August 2014):

A comprehensive American and international response now -- now -- is vital to the destruction of this threat... The Islamic State is an entity beyond the pale of humanity and it must be eradicated. If we delay now, we will pay later. (*Obama must eradicate ISIS NOW -- or pay the price later*, [The Daily Mail](#), 22 August 2014)

A more general view is offered in the light of the warning of the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, [General Martin Dempsey](#), that Islamic State was an organization with "an apocalyptic, end-of-days strategic vision":

But if the jihadists are to be eradicated rather than just contained, General Dempsey's conclusion must be accepted that strikes against them in their strongholds in Syria are unavoidable. (*Failed states pose terror threats*, [The Australian](#), 25 August 2014)

Related uses of strategic eradication include: *How do we eradicate ISIS?* [MSNBC](#), 23 August 2014; *James Foley death: Eradicating the evil of Isis*, [The Independent](#), 21 August 2014; *Islamists Vow to Eradicate Christians From Parts of Nigeria*, [CharismaNews](#), 3 September 2012; *To Eradicate the Islamist Killers, We Must Destroy the Mechanism that Produces Them*, [The Big Picture](#), 5 September 2007; Samar Fatany, *Eradicating a Distorted 'Jihadi' Ideology*, [Jerusalem Post](#), 17 February 2014; Raymond Ibrahim, *Obama Tries to Eradicate Radical Islam*, [Pajamas Media](#), 8 April 2010; Bill Roggio, *Boko Haram plans 'to eradicate Christians' from areas in Nigeria*, [Threat Matrix](#), 4 March 2012.

Use of eradicate as the framing of a strategic modality merits reflection in the light of the argument of [Donald Schön](#) with respect to "generative metaphor", namely the figurative descriptions of social situations, usually implicit and even semi-conscious but that shape the way problems. As summarized in a separate review (*Generative metaphor and policy-making*) of his early formulation (*Generative Metaphor: a perspective on problem-setting in social policy*, 1979):

Donald Schön (1979) argues that "the essential difficulties in social policy have more to do with problem setting than with problem solving, more to do with ways in which we frame the purposes to be achieved than with the selection of optimal means for achieving them." For Schön: "the framing of problems often depends upon metaphors underlying the stories which generate problem setting and set the direction of problem solving."

As an example he explores the case of slum housing. If the underlying metaphor is a slum is a "blight" or "disease", then this

encourages an approach governed by the corresponding medical remedies, including the surgery whereby the blight is removed. On the other hand, if the underlying metaphor is that the slum is a "natural community", then this orients any response in terms of enhancing the life of that community. The two perceptions and approaches are quite distinct and have quite different consequences in practice.

In this sense problems are not given. For Schön, they are constructed by human beings in their attempts to make sense of complex and troubling situations. *Ways of describing problems move into and out of good currency*". Furthermore, new understanding of problems does not necessarily result as a logical consequence of the success or failure of instrumental responses to problems as previously defined. Rather attempts at solutions, based on partial understanding, generate other kinds of problem situations, without necessarily resolving those that existed initially. For Schön, the *"social situations confronting us have turned out to be far more complex than we had supposed, and it becomes increasingly doubtful that in the domain of social policy, we can make accurate temporal predictions, design models which converge upon a true description of reality, and carry out experiments which yield unambiguous results. Moreover, the unexpected problems created by our search for acceptable means to the ends we have chosen reveal ... a stubborn conflict of ends traceable to the problem setting itself."*

Schön's insights have been notably developed by [Frank Barrett](#) and [David Cooperrider](#) (*Generative Metaphor Intervention: a new approach for working with systems divided by conflict and caught in defensive perception*. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 1990).

Somewhat ironically with respect to the following argument, descriptions of Schön's blight/disease metaphor tend to suggest that policy is then "rooted" in a disease framework -- with "root" offered as a further metaphor. It is the latter implication that merits exploration with respect to the many uses of "eradication" in addressing policy and other problems.

The most obvious example is provided by any understanding of weeding, framed as the necessary removal of an undesirable species of plant. The use with respect to plants can be extended to culling in its many forms, as with "weeding out" animals considered unsatisfactory. This may be extended to people who do not meet a certain standard, or who do not correspond to a certain norm.

The term is most widely used with respect to the eradication of many diseases. As many gardeners are aware, the challenge of eliminating roots can be especially problematic if regrowth is to be prevented. The painful challenge of eradication with respect to any psychosocial problem can be ironically compared to the individual experience of any form of [root canal surgery](#). with the further irony that the surgical metaphor is carried over into references to surgical strikes in achieving eradication

The collection of references below serves to highlight the variety of ways in which eradication is fruitfully or misleadingly used in order to respond to a condition perceived as problematic. As an exercise, the result should be considered as primarily indicative of a possible framework through which to understand its generative implications and how it may inhibit, constrain or distort the emergence of other possibilities.

It is appropriate to precede the presentation of the checklist of domains of application of eradication by consideration of the "philosophy of weeding" -- given the unexpected literature on a process so familiar to gardeners worldwide. This is followed by discussion of the even more surprising preponderance of references to "eradication of zombies", with which an equally surprising body of music is associated.

The checklist suggests that strategic responses across many domains are curiously determined by eradication as a generative metaphor. A concluding section therefore considers whether eradication strategies should be evaluated on those terms. The question is highlighted by long use of the term to the eradication of rats in urban society -- although it is widely recognized that there are typically as many rats as people in such environments. Ironically this raises the paradoxical question as to whether it is "eradication" which should be eradicated from the cognitive frameworks by which strategies are framed -- as with use of "war" ([Review of the Range of Virtual Wars: a strategic comparison with the global war against terrorism](#), 2005).

If so many problems persist, despite decades of effort to eradicate them, is it possible that use of "eradication" may be indicative of a cognitive trap -- as highlighted by the insight of policy scientist [Geoffrey Vickers](#): *A trap is a function of the nature of the trapped* (*Freedom in a Rocking Boat: changing values in an unstable society*, 1972).

Eradication as primarily inspired by the philosophy of weeding

Weeding gardens: It is to be expected that some valuable philosophical insights into eradication would emerge from the gardening process with which so many are familiar. These are rare however and may well be more common in cultures with a somewhat different engagement with gardens, as in the case of the Zen gardens of Japan or in the sacred groves of some other cultures.

One western example is that of [Megan E. Riley](#) (*A Weeding Philosophy*, *MR Gardens*, 31 July 2013):

"Do you weed?" one of my garden coach clients once asked me. The answer may seem obvious, but those of us versed in holistic landscape care consider this a fair question. We view our gardens as ecological systems, and the word weed "does not exist in the language of ecology," to quote [George Bird](#), a professor at Michigan State University who writes about sustainable agriculture. Weeds are valuable on many levels:

- They clue us in to the quality and character of the soil, indicating its pH, moisture level, compaction issues, and nutrient amounts.
- They add to our "beneficial insectary", providing habitat, pollen and food for our favorite pollinators and pest predators.
- They also act as traps for insect pests -- we'd rather them devour the weeds than our crops.

-- They are sometimes edible or medicinal.

Olga Bonfiglio (*A Developing Philosophy on Weeding*, *Farm Journal*, 1 August 2010):

First of all,, there's another more romantic word for this dirty job that can make it seem more important and thus stimulate my doing it. That word is: cultivate... However, cultivating a garden also means making sure the plant gets more of the nutrients from the soil rather than waste it on weeds. So cultivation has a lot to do with caring for and nurturing the plants, which then moves me toward having a relationship with the plants and the garden in general. I know people who talk to their plants so this is another aspect involved in cultivation, which involves coaxing them to grow and produce nice, healthy fruit. Cultivating plants also inspires thoughts and meditations, which is what happened to me in the onion patch...

Weeds are wimps. They don't hold the ground like the vegetable plants do so they come out fairly easily. Of course, if I let them go too long, they will grab the soil, thicken their stems, and be more difficult to pull out...

In the expanse of the garden, I find that different parts of it have different kinds of weeds that I can expect to see.... Knowing the land helps me come to expect certain weeds and spot them more easily. I became so obsessed with weeding that I began to dream about them.... Some of the weeds actually intertwined themselves with the plant as though they thought they could hide so I had to untangle some of them and dispose of them. While the weeds are not good for my plants, some of them are good for the animals.

Understanding may be complicated by what constitutes a weed (Chris McDonald, *The Different Ways of Being a Weed*, *UC Weed Science*, 26 August 2013)

Weeding out documents from libraries: It is surprising to discover that the term "philosophy of weeding" is widely recognized in the library community. Use of "weeding" is itself in library terminology, as exemplified by a fact sheet of the American Library Association (*Weeding Library Collections: a selected annotated bibliography for library collection evaluation*, 2012), introduced as follows:

There are two aspects to weeding. The first is the writing of a collection development or selection policy that is appropriate for your community; this will serve as a guideline as you make decisions about your collection. The second is applying that policy as you make decisions about the materials in your collection. This fact sheet offers a selection of resources for collection development and evaluation, many applicable to all types of libraries and others for specific types of libraries.

Thus the [CARLI Collections Management Committee \(CMC\)](#) reports:

The CARLI Collections Management Committee (CMC) white paper 2014 details best practices in de-accessioning or "weeding" library print materials. The paper, based on a series webinars offered in the spring of 2014, provides a summary of the real situations and approaches used to complete successful weeding projects. The projects included long-term and large-scale collection projects and short-term weeding projects with special collections. Some of the [webinar](#) highlights include discussions of the philosophy of weeding, best practices and lessons learned...

While regular systematic weeding is performed to stimulate circulation, save space, enhance appeal, and respond to curricular needs, large-scale academic weeding projects often stem from initiatives such as transitioning to electronic collections and increasing student seating. Regardless of the weeding impetus, planning, pacing and open communication with all constituents, both in and outside of the library, are advised. Information - sharing both smoothes the transitions that often accompany collection reconfiguration and aids in the completion of the weeding process by highlighting potential areas of concern and offering collaborative opportunities which create efficiencies of effort

The report notes the lessons learned as:

- Have a workflow in place on how to undertake a weeding project and document/track all decisions made during the processing
- Build in flexibility for making these decisions
- Leverage technology -- such as using scanners in the process
- Plan for change (decisions may need to be reconsidered) and document these alternations
- Prepare for mistakes (they happen to everyone)
- Build in quality control and plan for clean-up once project completed (there will probably be inconsistencies)

In a well-documented report [Juris Dilevko](#) and Lisa Gottlieb (*Weed to achieve: a fundamental part of the public library mission?* *Library Collections, Acquisitions and Technical Services*, 27, 2003) note:

Weeding or deselection of materials has become an integral part of library management. Based on a nineteen-question survey about weeding practices in public libraries, this article discusses the personal perspectives of public librarians on weeding as well as the weeding practices of their institutions. The three most common criteria for weeding are circulation, physical condition, and accuracy of information. Librarians overwhelmingly believe that weeding increases use of books and patron satisfaction. In addition, the public library was framed as a venue that offers safe, clean, and fresh "product lines" with various natural life cycles and expiry dates. This discursive formation raises questions about the extent to which public libraries and their collections are becoming commodified, homogenized, and ephemeral, and whether such ephemerality and homogenization serve the interests

of all community members.

The authors include a table with the survey questions used to elicit the weeding philosophy of librarians. These included the following:

- What are the reasons that you weed the print material contained in your library's general book collection? Please list all the reasons why your library weeds.
- Are there any factors that discourage the weeding of the print material in the general book collection of your library?
- What are the criteria that you use to weed the print material in the general book collection of your library?
- How often do you weed the print material of the general book collection of your library?
- What do you do with the weeded print material from the general book collection?
- Have you ever personally saved a book or books that should have been weeded?
- Please give details regarding any complaints from members of the general public about weeded books.
- Do you personally believe that weeding increases book usage?
- Do you personally believe that weeding increases the satisfaction of your patrons?
- Do you personally think that weeding is necessary in order to make room for new technologies?
- What is your personal philosophy about weeding?
- In a perfect world, what would you personally do with the print material that your library designates for weeding?

For Mary Kelly (*Instead of weeding how about "pruning" or "shifting"?* *The Practical Librarian*, 12 December 2009):

I really do think we probably need to be more proactive in educating everyone about the value of a good weed. Keep a few examples of some dated material ready for show and tell. Check [Awful Library Books](#) for some possible ideas. Maybe we can start by calling it "pruning" or even "shifting"

Weeding out ideas: An early understanding of this process is provided by the physiologist and psychologist [Walter Cooper Dendy](#) (*Psyche; a Discourse on the Birth and Pilgrimage of Thought*, 1853) in a chapter on the *Philosophy of Mystery* -- written to reconcile, if possible, two classes of philosophers, "pathologists" and "divines":

The Works which, from time to time, have been written on Psychology, have been often very unsatisfactory, as their Authors have been fettered by the exclusive adoption of physical or metaphysical argument. This Work is written with a hope of reconciling these discrepancies, and weeding philosophy of those false data which tend to hoodwink the mind, and prevent the elucidation of truth.

Weeding out has been associated with [superstition](#), as in the comment attributed to [Joseph Lewis](#): *As superstition is the weed of the brain, it grows profusely, once started*. Clearly many forms of education and censorship -- as consensus formation -- can be framed in terms of weeding out unacceptable views. This would extend to the [Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign](#) in China, or those regarding [heresy](#) in Christianity, Islam and Judaism..

Of current concern would be the efforts to mould public opinion in favour of liberalism or its alternatives -- by weeding out opposing views and key concepts in each case.

Weeding out people from groups: Use of "weeding out" is widely evident in the management of human resources. It may be applied to:

- those whose skills do not meet a required standard, as in work groups, teams, or in any process of education. This may be achieved by tests, examinations and quality control results
- those considered socially undesirable and failing to correspond to some norm. This was exemplified in the Nazi philosophy
- those framed as "losers" in a competitive environment may be subject to direct or indirect processes of weeding out
- those whose criticism or opposition -- voiced or otherwise -- may be weeded out, notably as caricatured by the tendency of some in power to surround themselves by "[yes men](#)".

Of curious relevance to this argument are the ways in which an individual may be framed as a "weed". As a mode of deprecation it can refer to a contemptibly feeble person. However, from a philosophical perspective, a question has been raised by [David Livingstone Smith](#) (*Is Being Human More Like Being a Weed than Like Being Water?* *Philosophy Talk*)

In the quest for alternative metaphors to weeding, the above-mentioned suggestion of Mary Kelly with respect to "pruning" or "shifting" merits reflection in the case of human resources. This is especially controversial in the case of policies of the Catholic Church with regard to those clergy successfully accused of sexual abuse of children ([UN panel confronts Vatican on child sex abuse by clergy](#), *BBC News*, 16 January 2014).

The controversy arises notably because of the policy of "shifting" such individuals from one diocese to another -- without any effort to either "prune" or "weed out", as might otherwise be expected through [excommunication](#), namely their "eradication" from the priesthood. This would correspond to eradication from other professions through being "[struck off the register](#)".

Abusive clergy in many countries had simply been moved from one diocese to another, allowing "*many priests to remain in contact with children and to continue to abuse them*". As a consequence the UN has demanded that the Vatican "immediately remove" all clergy who are known or suspected child abusers and turn them over to police (Nick Squires, [UN accuses Vatican of adopting policies that allowed priests to rape children](#), *The Telegraph*, 5 February 2014). The strategy of excommunication in relation to heresy offers insights into that of eradication, as does that of the handling of blasphemy and unbelievers advocated by Islam..

Eumemetics as corresponding to eugenics?: Use of weeding with respect to ideas recalls its use with respect to people in the form of [eugenics](#). It is therefore not surprising to find some reference to eumemetics (or eumetics) -- with meme as the better recognized analogy to gene. Thus on the site of [Eumetics.com](#):

Eumetics extends Korzybskian [general semantics](#) using the conceptual tools of modern [memetics](#) in order to develop practical methods for optimising culture. At its most expansive eumetics is a Theory of Everything with a cosmogeny, ethics and an ongoing self-optimisation process. At its simplest, it is the conviction that this is not "as good as it gets".

However with respect to the following argument, eugenics frames people as the carriers of certain propensities which merit cultivation -- or exclusion through "weeding out", effectively through some form of culling. Thus "positive eugenics" is understood as the improvement of human genetic traits by the selective promotion of higher reproduction of people with desired traits -- as in the Nazi [Lebensborn](#) programme. So-called "negative eugenics" is then the reduced reproduction of people with less-desired or undesired traits. The latter constitutes its most proactive and controversial sense -- notably resulting in Nazi genocidal policies -- or less evidently in sterilization and termination of pregnancies as has been promoted and practiced in some European countries. Although these are now deprecated, recent developments in genetic, genomic, and reproductive technologies are raising numerous new questions regarding the ethical status of eugenics, effectively creating a resurgence of interest in the subject.

More obviously controversial is the current practice of [targetted killing](#) (or selective assassination) namely the premeditated killing of an individual by a state organization or institution outside a judicial procedure or a battlefield. Use of targeted killings by conventional military forces has become commonplace in Israel as a tactic to kill Palestinian opponents. Though initially opposed by the Bush Administration, targeted killings have become a frequent tactic of the USA in the [War on Terror](#). Rather than being necessarily the bearers of undesirable genes, and the subject of eugenic "weeding out" policies, those so selected are clearly the bearers of undesirable memes. **Selective assassination is then usefully to be recognized as radical implementation of eumemetics** -- through which bearers of undesirable memes are eradicated.

Preponderance of references to the eradication of zombies

Preoccupation with zombie eradication: A totally unexpected feature of this exercise proved to be the remarkable number of references to the eradication of [zombies](#) -- as indicated by the following table.

Indicative search results on zombie eradication			
(from Google at the time of writing, with undetermined possibility of double counting)			
"no music" (without mp3)		"with music" (with mp3)	
zombie eradication 218,000	"zombie eradication" 66,400	zombie eradication mp3 4,270,000	"zombie eradication" mp3 5,700
eradication zombies 309,000	"eradication of zombies" 23,400	eradication zombies mp3 6,490,000	"eradication of zombies" mp3 9
eradicating zombies 641,000	"eradicating zombies" 3,300	eradicating zombies mp3 16,100,000	"eradicating zombies" mp3 118
zombie eradicator 2,720,000	"zombie eradicator" 4,400	zombie eradicator mp3 343,000	"zombie eradicator" mp3 56

The credibility in popular imagination is further illustrated by the recent declaration of the governor of Kansas in naming October the state's [Zombie Preparedness Month](#) (*Kansas Will Be Prepared for the Zombie Apocalypse*, *Time*, 24 September 2014).

Deriving from Haitian folklore, a zombie is understood to be an [animated corpse](#) raised by magical means, such as [witchcraft](#) and [voodoo](#). This is of potential significance given the manner in which use of such terms in video game culture readily transfers into strategic games and beyond. It might even be hypothesized that eradication strategies acquire credibility through the manner in which public relations expertise is occasionally caricatured in terms of voodoo and magic.

Of further potential relevance with respect to strategic uptake is the manner in which such zombie eradication in online gaming is extensively associated with supportive music (as variously indicated in the table). Curiously consistent with the online gaming experience is the alleged use of music by tank commanders during the [2003 invasion of Iraq](#) in seeking rapid military dominance according to the [shock and awe](#) strategic doctrine. Such musical accompaniment is typically lacking in the case of conventional strategies, as separately noted (*A Singable Earth Charter, EU Constitution or Global Ethic?* 2006).

Engendering a predisposition to eradicate: The question here is the controversial issue of how video gaming, with its destruction of enemies of every imaginable form, translates into a predisposition to eradication -- whether of zombies or otherwise. The issue was highlighted by the [massacre of less than a hundred Norwegians](#) by [Anders Behring Breivik](#) -- in a global society characterized by daily reporting of instances of tragic deaths of every kind and number. Curiously however the Norwegian was an enthusiast of online war games -- *World of Warcraft* and *Modern Warfare 2* -- in which millions engage daily, often for many hours at a time (*Norway Terrorist Used World Of Warcraft As A Training Simulator*, 27 July 2011; *Terrorist Anders Behring Breivik Used Modern Warfare 2 as "Training-Simulation"*, 23 July 2011).

More curiously, the justification offered for the slaughter was that it was *"gruesome but necessary"*. That phrase figured prominently in any web search relating to *World of Warcraft* -- preceding any reference to Breivik. It would appear to be recognized as a slogan, as discussed separately (*Gruesome but Necessary: Global Governance in the 21st Century? Extreme normality as indicator of systemic negligence*, 2011).

Reframing undesirables and nonconformists as zombies: This example helps to frame the sense in which those seemingly calling for eradication are imaginatively defined in terms of an extensive range of undesirables -- extending from the psychosocially afflicted, to those framed as intellectually misguided or incompetent. These may well be caricatured as "morons" or "zombies", as with those

perceived as a threat in some way through their advocacy of alternatives of some kind, or problematically imbued with some other faith. Their eradication, framed in terms of what amounts to a combination of eugenics and eumemetics, is then readily understood as "gruesome but necessary". Curiously this evokes less controversy than has been associated with eugenics -- or with advocacy of euthanasia or assisted dying. These are perhaps to be reframed with suicide as self-eradication, consistent with instances of [self-immolation](#), as in the case of Tibetans (*Self-immolations by Tibetans*, 16 April 2014). More thought provoking is the sense in which civilization may as a whole be on course for some form of self-eradication -- usefully contrasted with the collapse so widely discussed (*Mind Map of Global Civilizational Collapse*, 2011; *Metaphors To Die By: correspondences between a collapsing civilization, culture or group, and a dying person*, 2013).

Especially problematic, given the variety of beliefs, is the sense in which **everyone is potentially to be considered "moronic" (or a "zombie") in the eyes of some other** -- and therefore presumably worthy of eradication from the perspective of the latter. Caricature may go as far as defining those who fail to comprehend an argument as "brain dead". Unfortunately the term may be used to frame and deprecate those who are the primary target of consumer marketing -- the so-called unthinking masses characterized by susceptibility to gullibility and erroneous belief ([John Ralston Saul](#), *The Unconscious Civilization*, 1999).

Imaginative reframing of eradication: The focus on zombies in relation to eradication is given further significance to the extent that they are understood to be creatures of the imagination -- as are so many characters in video gaming and related media. This frames the question as to the extent to which much of the articulation of global culture and its preoccupations -- whether in terms of perceived problems, advocated strategies or fundamental beliefs -- is itself a consequence of various forms of individual and collective imagination (*Global Civilization of Vampires: governance through demons and vampires on spin*, 2005). In the case of religion, this is highlighted by its critics, notably [Richard Dawkins](#) (*The God Delusion*, 2006).

Relevance to international relations: Engagement with zombies has been explored by Daniel Drezner (*Theories of International Politics and Zombies*, 2011) through examining how well-known theories from international relations might be applied to a hypothetical war with zombies arising from the dead. Using the plots of popular zombie films, songs, and books, the author predicts realistic scenarios for the political stage in the face of a zombie threat and considers how valid -- or how rotten -- such scenarios might be. Drezner considers the likely responses of national governments, the UN and other international organizations, and nongovernment organizations (NGOs).

Through the manner in which Islamic jihadists are now strategically framed as the epitome of evil, Drezner's exercise merits consideration. Some would of course argue that many in positions of governance could be as fruitfully compared to the "living dead" ([David Stockman](#), *Bombs Away Over Syria! Washington Has Gone Stark Raving Mad*, *Information Clearing House*, 28 August 2014).

Indicative checklist of domains of strategic predisposition to eradication

The following checklist is intended only to be **suggestive of a wide spectrum of references** to problems, conditions, behaviours or beliefs -- variously held by some to require "eradication". References cited are best considered as an arbitrary selection of **examples** from a wider range, some of which might well be more appropriately included. Web links are **not** included in a systematic manner. The clustering is also merely indicative.

Some categories have been populated with references, some are left as sub-headings with no examples given -- although readily to be found with any search engine, if there was a case for amplifying the checklist. Others are undoubtedly missing. However there is every reason to suspect that "eradicating" could potentially be applied to the spectrum of 56,000 "world problems" profiled by the [World Problems Project](#) as a strategic qualifier to frame action in response. This might even be a preferred alternative to terms favoured for many of the 33,000 global strategies profiled in the complementary [Global Strategies Project](#).

Taken together, eradication in the specific instances below implies a preoccupation with eradication of pain and suffering beyond its physical manifestations (*World Pain Symposium 2013: Global Pain Suffering and Solutions to its Eradication*). Understood in their most general sense, they are a long-standing theme of philosophy and religion (*Eradication of Human Suffering, Religious Forums*). Buddhism in particular offers a specific focus on the "eradication of the causes of suffering".

Competition and opposition: There is a widespread tendency to frame competitive action in terms of eradicating any opposition or dissidents -- and their representatives. This applies especially in politics and business -- and is reinforced by attitudes engendered in sport (*Elimination of the opposition: Mao and Stalin*; Peta Thornycroft, *Mugabe vows to eradicate opposition after observers endorse election victory*, *The Telegraph*, 3 Apr 2005).

Of relevance is the recognition by Opposition Watch International that opposition:

... is also a concept. I tend to describe it in a somewhat Newtonian way - whenever a political action is taken, there is the potential for it to provoke a contrary view amongst those who dissent from it. They may not have the means or ability to express their disagreement, or mount an effective challenge to those taking the decision, but they still harbour opposition, if only in their hearts and minds. That's why dictators who seek to eradicate opposition can never truly succeed - they can ban the institutions and suppress the activity, but they can never eliminate the phenomenon. (*Miliband and the Window-smashing Anarchist: what is opposition anyway?*, 15 September 2013)

As noted by Stephanie L. McKinney (*Joseph Stalin, 20th Century History*):

Despite Stalin's attempts to eradicate all dissent, some opposition emerged, particularly among party leaders who understood the devastating nature of Stalin's policies. Nevertheless, Stalin was reelected in 1934. This election made Stalin keenly aware of his

critics and he soon began to eliminate anyone he perceived as opposition, including his most substantial political rival, Sergi Kerov.

Belief systems: Following from the competitive focus of the previous category, belief systems -- most especially religions -- have a long history of endeavouring to eradicate alternative beliefs, and even those subscribing to them. This is most evident through the extent to which alternative beliefs are defined as falsely upheld by unbelievers -- themselves especially vulnerable to eradication (Elizabeth Rios: *Don't Buy the Lie: Eradicating False Belief Systems that Keep You From Your Destiny*. Amazon Digital Services, 2012)

- Abrahamic religions: The tragic history of the efforts by the Abrahamic religions to eradicate each other has been extensively documented and interpreted (*Systemic Reliance of World Religions on Human Sacrifice: covert use of fatal conflict to ensure vital resource management*, 2014). It is currently translated into new forms
 - Muslims:
 - Independent Voices: *James Foley death: Eradicating the evil of Isis* (21 August 2014)
 - Ali Sina: *The Eradication of Islam: a response to JihadWatch.com* (FaithFreedom.org)
 - Calvin Freiburger: *"Eradicating Islam" Reconsidered* (NewsRealBlog, 23 July 2010)
 - *Santorum Calls for a Long War' to Eradicate' Islam* (The Seeker, 10 January 2012)
 - *The Final Crusade - Eradicating Islam* (Paradox Interactive, 13 April 2009)
 - *Rights group warns Iraq jihadists want to eradicate minorities* (AFP, 19 July 2014)
 - David Alton: *Jihadists are embarking on Final Solution' in Middle East* (Catholic Herald, 10 April 2014)
 - Jews:
 - *Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood leader calls for the eradication of Israel* (The Tavern Keepers, 20 July 2014)
 - PZ Abdul Raheem Umary: *Israel Eradication Process by Hamas, Izzuddeen Al Qassam and Islamic Jihad of Palestine* (YouTube, 13 July 2014)
 - Rabbi Jack Abramowitz: *Jihad?: The obligation to eradicate Amalek* (Orthodox Union)
 - Gideon Levy: *Eradicate the Jewish state* (Haaretz, 16 February 2014)
 - Christians:
 - *We are witnessing the eradication of Christianity in Muslim lands* (The Christians.com, 23 Apr 23, 2014)
- Science / Religion: Curiously science is emerging as a new belief system, as promoted by atheism (Sam Harris, *The Eradication of Religion*, 8 December 2013; Austin Cline, *Myth: Atheists Want to Eradicate Public Religion, Driving it Underground*, About.com; *Hitchens, Dawkins, and eradicating religion*, The Richard Dawkins Foundation, 24 April 2011).

Politics: As with the previous categories, efforts have been noted to eradicate opposing political ideologies. For each such ideology the belief is readily cultivated that there is a need to eradicate alternative views:

- socialism would readily seek to eradicate capitalism, notably in the form of neo-liberalism
- capitalism would readily seek to eradicate socialism, especially when framed as communism
- communism would readily seek to eradicate capitalism and the inadequacies of some interpretations of socialism:
 - O. Piatnitsky: *The Bolshevization of the Communist Parties by Eradicating the Social-Democratic Traditions* (Workers Library Publishers, 1932)
- liberalism, especially in its neo-liberal form, would readily seek to eradicate socialism
- democracy: George Ann Potter and Linda Farling: *Bolivia: Eradicating Democracy* (Foreign Policy in Focus, 2005)

Violence-related problems: There is a major preoccupation with eradication of violence both in its physical forms and in the form of structural violence or cultural violence.

- terrorism: This is the focus for the [War on Terror](#) and the eradication of both terrorism and terrorists:
 - *Killing Terrorists vs. Eradicating Terrorism. Assassination Science.*
 - Kate Brannen with Nathaniel Sobel. *FP's Situation Report: Flynn says eradicating Hamas could lead to something worse* (Foreign Policy, 28 July 2014)
 - Litofe Sloj Silika: *Model for the Eradication of Terrorism* (Trafford Publishing, 2012)
- bullying: Isaac Amoah: *Eliminating Bullying and Suicide in Schools: A Universal Guide to Eradicating EVIL in Schools* (Amazon Digital Services, 2014)
- violence against children / child maltreatment:
 - Arnon Bentovim, Jenny Gray and Harriet Ward: *Eradicating Child Maltreatment: Evidence-Based Approaches to Prevention and Intervention Across Services* (Amazon Digital Services, 2014)
 - Council of Europe: *Eradicating Violence Against Children* (2008)
- slavery: Kevin Bales: *Winning the fight: eradicating slavery in the modern age* (Harvard International Review, 2009)
- human trafficking:
 - UNODC: *Abolishing slavery, eradicating human trafficking* (2014)
 - European Commission: *The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016* (2012)
- trafficking in children: United States Congress House of Representatives: *To provide United States assistance for the purpose of eradicating trafficking in children in eligible countries through the implementation of Child Protection Compacts, and for other purposes* (2010)
- sex trafficking: Iris Yen: *Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation.* (*Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 98, 2008)
- violence against women / domestic violence / rape:
 - African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights: *Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children* (1998)

- Organization of American States: *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women "Convntion of Belem do Para"* (1994)
- Ministry of Human Resources (Malaysia): *Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual harassment in the Workplace*. 1999
- UNICEF: *Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation* (2004)

Ethics, morality, evil and rights: There is clearly a long tradition of effort to eradicate evil, especially through the various religions and most explicitly through Christianity and the Catholic Church. This may be translated into ethical and moral variants -- most notably with respect to corruption and injustice.

- evil: Gary K. Waite: *Eradicating the Devil's Minions: Anabaptists and Witches in Reformation Europe, 1535-1600* (University of Toronto Press, 2009)
- immorality: B. K. Eakman and Bev Eakman: *Cloning of the American Mind: Eradicating Morality through Education* (Huntington House, 1998)
- infringement of rights: Ron Taylor: *Right to Bear Arms: An Expose of the United Nations' Arms Trade Treaty and the Potential Eradication of the Second Amendment and Your Gun Rights* (Amazon Digital Services, 2013)
- injustice: Helen Duffy: *Toward Eradicating Impunity: The Establishment of an International Criminal Court. Social Justice* (2005)

The difficulty with this category is that behaviours considered evil or inappropriate from one cultural perspective may be promoted and favoured by another. It then becomes controversial as to what or who could be usefully eradicated.

Lifestyle and resource-related problems: This cluster offers examples of the less controversial uses of eradication and of the extensive strategic dependence on an eradication mindset.

- disease: Every disease is susceptible to strategic arguments for its eradication, as well as disease in general:
 - Nancy Leys Stepan: *Eradication: Ridding the World of Diseases Forever?* (Cornell University Press, 2011)
 - Cynthia A. Needham: *Global Disease Eradication The Race for the Last Child* (ASM Press, 2003)
 - Donald Hopkins and W. R. Dowdle (Eds.): *The Eradication of Infectious Diseases* (Wiley, 1998)
 - Stephen L. Cochi and Walter R. Dowdle (Eds.). *Disease Eradication in the 21st Century: Implications for Global Health* (MIT Press, 2011)
 - Forum on Emerging Infections. *Considerations for Viral Disease Eradication: Lessons Learned and Future Strategies* (National Academies Press, 2002)
 - specific diseases and conditions:
 - Hervé Bazin: *The Eradication of Smallpox: Edward Jenner and The First and Only Eradication of a Human Infectious Disease* (Academic Press, 2000)
 - D. A. Henderson and Richard Preston: *Smallpox: The Death of a Disease: The Inside Story of Eradicating a Worldwide Killer* (Prometheus Books, 2009)
 - UNICEF: *Eradicating Polio* (2013)
 - erectile dysfunction: Dale Ovenstone: *The Healthy Penis Guide, The Prostate: The Penis: The Mind: Eradicating Erectile Dysfunction* (Amazon Digital Services, 2012)
 - others: malaria, AIDS, poliomyelitis, heart disease, rinderpest, genital warts, bed farts, ebola, dracunculiasis, tuberculosis, measles, tumours, hepatitis, ringworm, obesity
 - animal diseases: aquatic animal disease
- hunger: Clearly there is a long-standing commitment to the eradication of hunger through a variety of programmes over decades:
 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2005: Eradicating World Hunger - Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (2006)
 - United Nations: *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2006: Eradicating World Hunger Taking Stock Ten Years After the World Food Summit* (2006)
 - The Hunger Project: *MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*
 - UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: *Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition* (1974)
- shortages: More generally, there is a natural strategic concern for the eradication of resource shortages of any kind.

Behavioural and management problems: As with the previous cluster, the domains here readily invite a strategic preoccupation with eradication:

- crime
 - fraud, counterfeit
- corruption:
 - Anwar Shah and Mark Schacter: *Combating Corruption: look before you leap: a lack of progress in eradicating corruption could be due to misguided strategies* (*Finance and Development*, 2005)
 - Republic of Indonesia: *Commission for the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Corruption* (2002)
- questionable behaviour:
 - substance dependency
 - alcohol addiction and intemperance
 - drug addiction:
 - William Wilkerson: *The Eradication Dilemma* (Telemachus Press, 2011)
 - Roger Conner: *The Winnable War: A Community Guide to Eradicating Street Drug Markets* (American Alliance Rights and Responsibilities, 1991)

- sex-related: pedophilia, prostitution, pornography:
 - Victoria Jonah: *Let's Heal the World: A joint effort in eradicating pornography* (Amazon Digital Services, 2013)
- gender inequality: Naila Kabeer: *Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals: A Handbook for Policy-Makers and Other Stakeholders* (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003)
- management: Tom Santi: *Eradicating Fantasyland Management: Achieving Better Business Results by More Effectively Managing People* (Amazon Digital Services, 2014)

Educational and attitudinal problems: Again, as with the previous cluster, the domains here readily invite a strategic preoccupation with eradication:

- ignorance and illiteracy:
 - UNESCO: *Declaration on the Eradication of Illiteracy in the United Nations Development Decade*.
 - UNESCO: *Towards a Regional Strategy for Eradicating Illiteracy in the Asia Pacific Region* (1985)
 - Susan McCrossin: *Breaking the Learning Barrier: Eradicating Add, ADHD, and Dyslexia* (Learning Enhancement Center, 2004)
 - Edmund Gardiner Fishbourne: *Stability: The Seaman's Safeguard: Being a Contribution Towards Eradicating the Ignorance That Occasions Annually the Loss of Very Many Valuable Lives* (Ulan Press, 2011)
- misunderstanding / superstition / stupidity:
 - Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri: *The Islamic State: True Concept and Eradicating Misconceptions (Khilafah)* (Minhaj-ul-Quran Productions, 2005)
 - Ben She Bian: *Eradicating superstitions Answers 100 Questions Collection* (Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2000)
 - Harry Flowers: *Eradicating Stupidity: A Handbook for Smart IT Management* (Amazon Digital Services, 2014)
- incivility: Martina Carroll-Garrison: *Workplace Incivility Is Bad For Business: What Managers Need To Know Toward Eradicating Incivility, Creating a Civil Workplace, and Improving the Bottom Line* (Scholars' Press, 2014)
- discrimination / intolerance / racism / differences:
 - Anton Weiss-Wendt (Ed.): *Eradicating Differences: The Treatment of Minorities in Nazi-Dominated Europe* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010)
- emotional conditions:
 - hate: A K Smith: *The Eradication of Hate* (Amazon Digital Services, 2014)
 - entitlement mentality
 - dependency: Chad Jordan: *Shut Up and Give?: Eradicating global poverty by breaking the cycle of dependency we created* (Boxless Creative Publishing, 2012)
 - anger: Michael A. Gray: *Eradicating The Seeds Of Anger In The Prison Population: A Independent Learning Workbook For The (DOC) Department Of Corrections Inmate Population* (Amazon Digital Services, 2014)
 - negativity: Michael Herlache: *On Monitoring Empire, Opportunity Orientation and Eradicating "Negatives"* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013)
 - fear:
 - Robert Neff, and Pauline Handly: *Beyond Fear : A Dramatic New Program for Eradicating Panic Attacks and Phobias* (Macmillan Publishing, 1987)
 - Islamophobia
 - loneliness

Socio-economic problems: This cluster includes those conditions in which there is least controversy about their eradication and on which most strategic effort has been deployed through the eradication mindset:

- poverty:
 - Xavier Godinot (Ed.): *Eradicating Extreme Poverty: Democracy, Globalisation and Human Rights* (Pluto Press, 2012)
 - C.K. Prahalad: *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty Through Profits* (Wharton School Publishing, 2006)
 - Allan Afuah: *The African Paradox. Is China the Solution?: New Game Strategies For Eradicating Poverty In Africa* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010)
 - UNICEF: *Goal: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*
 - UN Development Group Task Force on the MDGs: *Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger* (2000)
 - FAO: *Poverty Eradication (The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals)* (2014)
 - International Labour Office: *Meeting Basic Needs: Strategies for Eradicating Mass Poverty and Unemployment* (1977)
 - Global Community: *Eradicating Poverty* (2007)
 - William Julius Wilson and Christopher Winship: *Eradicating Extreme Poverty* (ATD Fourth World)
 - ECOSOC/DESA: *Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty*
- homelessness: Gordon Campbell: *Eradicating homelessness* (4BC.com, 4 August, 2014)
- inequality
- slums: Marie Huchzermeyer: *Cities with Slums: From Informal Settlement Eradication to a Right to the City in Africa* (Juta Academic, 2011)
- girls' labour: The Womanity Foundation: *Eradicating girls' labour*
- immigration

Technology-related problems: This cluster could include those technologies whose eradication is advocated by some constituencies.

Somewhat ironically it is of course with the aid of technology that eradication is typically effected.

- arms and weapons
 - small arms
 - biological and chemical weapons
 - nuclear weapons (stockpiles)
- nuclear power
- coal-fired power stations
- structures condemned in terms of health and safety norms

Environmental problems: Eradication is typically advocated in strategic response to a wide variety of threats to the natural environment.

- pests: Defined as pests, use of eradication is readily extended to both plants and animals (Donald L. Dahlsten: *Eradication of Exotic Pests: Analysis with Case Histories*, Yale University Press, 1989):
 - animals: ants, termites, mites, rodents (rats, mice, rabbits), fleas, head lice, flies, bed bugs, mosquitoes, parasites, intestinal worms, wild animals (pigeons, cane toads, wild dogs, feral cats, wolves, coypus)
 - plants: invasive algae, poisonous plants, exotic pest plants, lantana, kudzu
- ecocide: Polly Higgins: *Eradicating Ecocide: Exposing the Corporate and Political Practices Destroying the Planet and Proposing the Laws Needed to Eradicate Ecocide* (Shepherd-Walwyn, 2010)
- introduced and invasive species
- pollutants: emissions, dust, smog, noise, calcification, water seepage, waste

Miscellaneous problems

- zombie eradication, as noted above
- impurities: Latoya "Boyce" Wells: *Eradicating Impurities* (lulu.com, 2013)
- self-sabotage: Dorothy W. Parker: *Divine Acceptance: Building Abundant Lives/Eradicating Self Sabotage* (Amazon Digital Services, 2009)
- animal habits: O. S. Pratt: *The Horse's Friend: the only practical method of educating the horse and eradicating vicious habits* (University of California Libraries, 1876)
- public debt
- risk / surprise: Their eradication is a primary concern in many fields, notably explored by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (*The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*, 2007). With respect to the eradication of flaws through quality control, it is notably a theme of Six Sigma methodology
- "bullshit": Ironically its eradication is the focus of a range of references (*Viable Global Governance through Bullfighting: challenge of transcendence*, 2009)

Evaluation of strategies of eradication and the possibility of alternatives

Efficacy of eradication: As the checklist indicates, there have been many initiatives defined in terms of eradication, notably including those relating to poverty and hunger. Many focus on diseases and pests of every kind -- with cancer and rats as striking examples. **The question is how successful can eradication be claimed to be as a strategy -- whether in the shorter or longer term -- despite the finality implied as its objective.** This is evident 14 years after its formulation with respect to Goal 1 of the [UN Millennium Development Goals](#), namely to [Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger](#).

The case of rats is especially usefully given the number of campaigns to eradicate them as pests -- and the manner in which deprecated people, such as jihadists or greedy bankers, may well be framed as "rats". Most urban areas battle rat infestations through eradication initiatives. *Wikipedia* devotes an entry to [Rats in New York City](#).

Despite such campaigns, the exact number of rats there is unknown, but it has been alleged that there are at least as many rats as people, with some estimating the number as far higher -- as many as four rats per person. Similar statistics could be cited with respect to eradication of cockroaches -- to which deprecated people are also frequently compared.

A number of countries face similar concerns with respect to [invasive species](#) (*List of invasive species*). This has been especially notable in the case of rabbits and cane toads in Australia, for which eradication initiatives have been variously undertaken. These included endeavouring eradication through the introduction of the [myxomatosis](#) disease -- rendered highly controversial through the obvious cruelty to the animals in question. Jihadism could easily be framed as a memetic disease by some (*Memetic and Information Diseases in a Knowledge Society: speculations towards the development of cures and preventive measures*, 2005). As such is there any doubt that there would be little compunction in introducing a memetic equivalent to myxomatosis in order to eradicate jihadism? Appropriate to the above argument however, a degree of resistance to the disease has now developed amongst rabbits.

Given the manner in which the war on jihadism is framed as an extension of the War on Terror, there is a case for exploring the metaphorical use of war with respect to other domains, such as those in the checklist above (*Review of the Range of Virtual Wars: a strategic comparison with the global war against terrorism*, 2005). The latter included the following table.

"Official Virtual Wars"	
Examples of "wars on X" declared by governments and international bodies, other than the "war on terrorism" (and excluding "trade wars"),	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• war on want [more]• war on poverty [more] [more] [more] [more]• war on drugs [more] [more] [more] [more] [more] [more]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• war on crime [more] [more]• war on disease [more] [more]• war on malaria [more]

- war on waste [[more](#) | [more](#) | [more](#)]
- war on hate [[more](#) | [more](#)]
- war on weapons of mass destruction [[more](#)]
- war on pornography [[more](#) | [more](#)]
- war on illiteracy [[more](#)] [[more](#)]
- war on ignorance [[more](#)]
- war on traffic [[more](#)]
- war on noise [[more](#)]
- war on corruption [[more](#) | [more](#)]
- war on forced labour [[more](#)]
- war on slavery [[more](#)]

- war on hunger [[more](#)]
- war on landmines [[more](#)]
- war against child labour [[more](#) | [more](#)]
- war against locusts [[more](#)]
- war against racism [[more](#)]
- war on homelessness [[more](#)]
- war on desertification [[more](#)]
- war on pollution [[more](#) | [more](#)]
- war on pests [[more](#)]
- war on evil [[more](#) | [more](#) | [more](#)]
- war on HIV/AIDS [[more](#) | [more](#)]

Other kinds of "wars on..." have been identified, or "declared", by groups of varying degrees of legitimacy (as presented in a more extensive [second table](#) in the above-mentioned document). A contrast was made in that case between "wars" declared by protagonists and those "wars" noted by groups whose interests are targeted. Some "wars" may be acknowledged -- differently -- by both protagonists and targeted. Those in impoverished conditions would, for example, tend to perceive that "war" has been effectively engaged against them. Some may respond by declaring a "holy war" -- or a "crusade". This can give rise to what is labelled as "terrorism" -- against which "war" can in its turn be declared. "Evil" may be variously detected and itself result in the declaration of a "war" in response -- hence preferences for the "crusader" and "jihadi" terminology.

If such wars are understood as exercises in eradication, they then offer guidance on the evaluation of its efficacy. Given their relatively limited success, this suggests the merit of rethinking the probable success of eradicating radical Islamist jihadism. A different framework would appear to be called for -- as has been variously argued in response to the limited success of many of the virtual wars.

The history of the [temperance movement](#) seeking to eradicate or constrain alcohol consumption offers further insights -- especially in the light of early legislative initiatives in the USA and the current prohibition in Islamic countries. During the Victorian period, the temperance movement is recognized as having become "more radical", advocating the legal prohibition of all alcohol, rather than just calling for moderation. Following World War I, the [18th Amendment](#) to the US Constitution introduced [prohibition](#). Following its adoption, prohibition effectively resulted in a public demand for illegal alcohol, making criminals of producers and distributors. The criminal justice system was swamped although police forces and courts had expanded in recent years. The [21st Amendment](#) repealed the 18th Amendment on 5 December 1933.

A contrasting argument is offered by the case of [smallpox](#) -- widely cited as indicative of the possibility of [successful eradication](#) through development of a [smallpox vaccine](#). With any framing of jihadism as a disease, this offers the prospect of restricting its last exemplars to a suitable laboratory, as has been done with smallpox. Ironically this has given rise to a [smallpox virus retention controversy](#) -- perhaps to be envisaged with respect to any form of dissidence.

There is of course a degree of speculation regarding the possibility of a "vaccine", metaphorically understood, which might be used as a remedy for inappropriate views. It is to be assumed that the possibility has encouraged use of the [Guantanamo Bay detention camp](#) as a research facility -- especially given the controversial complicity of the [American Psychological Association](#) with enhanced interrogation as described by Roy Eidelson and Stephen Soldz (*Hawaiian Mind Games: APA fiddles while psychology burns*, *Psychology Today*, 5 August 2013) .

Eradication mindset: How is the eradication mindset to be understood in cognitive psychological terms? Is it to be recognized as locked into some form of shell -- an outmoded vehicle for motivations which may have served well in the past, irrespective of the prospect of its success? Is it to be compared to the optimism required of those in World War I trench warfare -- in the expectation of eradicating the enemy?

As with the old adage with respect to [hammer and nail](#), if the only tool of strategic thinking is an "eradicator", then every problem looks as though it calls for eradication. Is there a sense in which, like shells, such cognitive vehicles are successively abandoned by humanity as civilization "moves on" and is variously renewed? This would contrast with defensive efforts to maintain the status quo -- as exemplifying the height of human values. Should the image of military eradicators be equated in the popular imagination with that of pest controllers?

Substitution and replacement: Curiously, whether as a focus of "eradication" or "war", there is little sense of what is to replace what has been eliminated. On the larger scale this has been illustrated by the remarkable failure in nation-building consequent on the eradication of Saddam Hussein -- despite the declaration of [mission accomplished](#) in 2003. Arguably the pattern is being repeated with respect to the eradication of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

By what is so-called [substance abuse](#) (smoking, drugs, alcohol, over-eating, etc.) to be replaced, if the respective eradication campaigns were to be a success? Eradication creates a vacuum -- typically with little consideration of its consequences in practice. A similar question relates to problematic behaviours (prostitution, pornography, etc.). What might be the consequence of the eradication of religion -- as favoured by hardened scientists?

Is there every possibility that the cognitive and behavioural vacuum created by successful eradication engenders substitutes which could come to be recognized as equally problematic? The point is made by Richard Norton-Taylor (*Iraq, Syria, Libya, UK - Intelligence failures all*, *The Guardian*, 27 August 2014):

For more than a decade, the US -- backed by successive British governments, to the horror of many in Whitehall, notably the Foreign Office and some MI6 officers -- adopted a simplistic, easy, and entirely misguided, approach towards a most complex and unstable part of the world. Whether it was bombing (Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan), or demonising dictators (Saddam in Iraq,

Gaddafi in Libya, Assad in Syria) it was as though the US and UK **governments never contemplated the extraordinary dangerous consequences of a power vacuum.** [*emphasis added*]

From static to dynamic framing of conditions: It is curious to note the manner in which targets of eradication are framed in static terms in any evaluation of progress. The conditions are however typically dynamic, as with any eradication process in practice. They could be compared to the extensively studied predator/prey dynamics in the wild. Separately it has been argued that better collective understanding would emerge from dynamic reporting of conditions to which the eradication mindset is applied (*Dynamic Transformation of Static Reporting of Global Processes: suggestions for process-oriented titles of global issue reports*, 2013).

Alternatives to eradication: As implied with respect to the control of garden weeds, clues may lie in terms such as "pruning" and "cultivation". Especially interesting are the arguments of **permaculture** as extensively developed by David Holmgren (*Weeds or Wild Nature: a permaculture perspective*, Permaculture Research Institute, 12 November 2013). These notably reframe "weed" as being "out of place" and therefore indicative of a questionable description of human preferences without scientific validity as a descriptor. A superficial ecological concept is then built on a foundation that has no ecological basis. The debate within the permaculture movement is of wider relevance with respect to eradication in other domains (Adam Grubb, *Contentious Perspectives on Weeds*, Permaculture Research Institute, 7 May 2011).

In contrast to other approaches to eradication, permaculture as an integrated ecosystemic approach to the environment gives specific attention to planning for "a time after weeds" (*Weed Out Your Succession Plan*, *Permaculture Visions*, 1 December 2012). Of particular interest is the attention given to the role of weeds -- a neglected mode of thinking of great interest where the weeds can be considered as metaphors for documents, ideas or people. For example, for Chris Concello (*Practical Permaculture: the art of weeds*, 1 March 2013):

The weeds that are growing in your garden have a story to tell, it's up to us to figure out how to translate what they are saying... Weeds can tell you massive amounts of information relating to the land you are planning on working, you just have to know how to read the data growing in front of you. What you and I consider weeds, play an important role in reclaiming disturbed lands... All weeds have their place. Permaculture isn't really so much about weed eradication, the weeds are going to grow one way or another... Many weeds are perfectly acceptable when left in the ground, and often play a major role in the overall eco-system of your garden.

There is every reason to assume that alternatives to "eradication" may be suggested by metaphors from other cultures as argued by **Susantha Goonatillake** (*Toward a Global Science: mining civilizational knowledge*, 1999), as discussed elsewhere (*Enhancing the Quality of Knowing through Integration of East-West metaphors*, 2000). Consideration could, for example, be given to the **12 Labours of Hercules** as a 12-pronged set of strategic complements responding together to a level of complexity inadequately comprehended through any one of them. This would be consistent with intuitions regarding strategic 12-foldness (*Eliciting a 12-fold Pattern of Generic Operational Insights: recognition of memory constraints on collective strategic comprehension*, 2011). The "labours" might well be explored as complementary patterns in topological terms.

Eradication in the light of radicalization, liminality and termination

Paradoxical processes: There is a curious correspondence between analogous pairs of processes of which eradication is but one example:

- **eradication engenders radicalization:** As frequently remarked, the consequence of subjecting peoples to any form of eradication is to **radicalize** and inspire those who escape the intended consequences. This pattern of action and reaction is a characteristic of **martyrdom**. Curiously relevant to this argument, the sense of "root" is shared by both terms -- implying a process of "going to the root of the matter". Instructive examples include:
 - programmes to eradicate people holding particular beliefs (Jews, Christians, etc)
 - incidence of suicide among returning military personnel -- following efforts to eradicate the Taliban in Afghanistan
 - emergence of resistant variants -- following use of antibiotics to eradicate bacteria
 - emergence of rewilding policies -- following initiatives to eradicate species considered dangerous to man (wolves, etc)

As with bacteria, dissidence mutates. Ironically the victory over the more tangible challenges, to which eradication aspires, may result -- through radicalization -- in the transcendence of the values that the eradication mindset represents. This raises the question as to whether human civilization is primarily dependent on scorched earth eradication to engender higher values -- much as wildfires may be essential to the regeneration of forests in Australia.

As noted above, part of the challenge of the eradication mindset is that it is unable to engender anything with which to fill the vacuum it creates. The question is the nature of that "nothingness" as experienced, especially as it relates to the "nothing" which business-as-usual now has to offer to many -- and which may itself be recognized as engendering violence (*Emerging Significance of Nothing*, 2012; *Configuring the Varieties of Experiential Nothingness*, 2012). There is then a distinction to be explored between forms of radicalization, as discussed with respect to **Cognitive radicalism** in other contexts (*En-joying the World through En-joying Oneself: eliciting the potential of globalization through cognitive radicalization*, 2011; *Engendering Viable Global Futures through Hemispheric Integration: a radical challenge to individual imagination*, 2014).

- **elimination engenders liminality:** Elimination is a common strategic synonym for eradication. As with radicalization, the paired term **liminality** is a subtle cognitive experience contrasting with the more tangible nature of whatever may be eliminated. The

subtlety is indicated by the shared root deriving from the Latin term for threshold -- more widely recognized through use of [subliminal](#). Liminality is now the theme of extensive exploration by the arts

As with the problematic consequences of eradication, elimination can then be understood as potentially engendering an experience beyond the focus of that elimination. People may then be obliged to develop strategies to shift between the elimination mindset and that which is meaningless to it but a reality for many, as separately discussed ([Living as an Imaginal Bridge between Worlds: global implications of "betwixt and between" and liminality](#), 2011).

- **extermination highlights termination:** Extermination is another common strategic synonym for eradication. Curiously, however successful, extermination may then lead to recognition that it is only a phase in a cycle which is terminated ([Liberation of Integration, Universality and Concord: through pattern, oscillation, harmony and embodiment](#), 1980). The seemingly exterminated phase may then be succeeded by another contrasting phase, possibly to terminate in due course, only to be replaced by re-emergence of what was assumed to have been exterminated.

This suggests that efforts at extermination may be essentially acyclic, namely inherently unable to recognize and understand cyclic processes. To the extent that it is the cycle as a whole which it is intended to "exterminate", this relates to the issue of breaking so-called vicious cycles, notably in relation to violence ([Dysfunctional Cycles and Spirals web resources on "breaking the cycle"](#), 2002). The argument extends to engaging with so-called [wicked problems](#) ([Encycling Problematic Wickedness for Potential Humanity](#), 2014). There is also the question of whether the extermination mindset is so narrowly focused as to inhibit recognition of multiple phases, notably in the case of the [adaptive cycle](#) and any possibility of its navigation. The case for recognizing an adaptive cycle has been made by the [Resilience Alliance](#) and by [Thomas Homer-Dixon](#) ([The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilization](#), 2006).

Possibility of simulation: The six interrelated or complementary conditions above suggest the merit of endeavouring to simulate how they function in the light of the variety of examples available. Such an approach suggests that eradication initiatives, however they may be associated with virtual wars, would then lend themselves to forms of simulation from which further insights might be drawn -- including unsuspected ways of engaging with them.

Of particular interest is the conventional focus on the tangible in contrast with emerging recognition of the role of the intangible in the three cases. The tangible focus necessarily invites simpler comprehension -- if not dangerously simplistic. The intangible focus is far more subtle and complex -- and a particular challenge to comprehension. Paradoxically the eradication mindset (or its equivalents) offers only a superficial understanding of the issues -- whereas radicalization implies a more profound understanding, as suggested by the preoccupations of fundamental physics with matters beyond ordinary ken. There is then some irony to the association to "radical fundamentalism" in cognitive terms.

Of further interest is the use of such simulation to explore the emergence of consensus -- as most strikingly evident in efforts (at the time of writing) to engender consensus for eradication of jihadism. As widely noted, this of course recalls the manner in which such consensus-building was a key to the effort to eradicate Saddam Hussein through invasion of Iraq.

More subtle is the considerable shift in popular confidence in government over the past decade, notably in the light of the disclosures regarding invasive surveillance at every level of society. This is curiously accompanied by the process through which western governments have progressively subscribed to practices which they previously abhorred as exemplifying non-democratic values. Within a suitable simulation this could be explored as [enantiodromia](#), as discussed separately ([Psychosocial Energy from Polarization within a Cyclic Pattern of Enantiodromia](#), 2007). This notably discussed the process of [cycling through a "cognitive twist"](#) -- possibly of relevance to the relation between eradication and radicalization, whereby the values of the other become enracinated in the eradicator.

Antifragility? With respect to the emergence of higher and more inclusive values -- as a consequence of narrowly focused application of eradication -- also of interest is the concept of antifragility, as explored in the work of [Nassim Nicholas Taleb](#) ([Antifragile: Things That Gain From Disorder](#), 2012). He described it in the following terms:

Some things benefit from shocks; they thrive and grow when exposed to volatility, randomness, disorder, and stressors and love adventure, risk, and uncertainty. Yet, in spite of the ubiquity of the phenomenon, there is no word for the exact opposite of fragile. Let us call it antifragile. Antifragility is beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the antifragile gets better.

To what extent is what transcends the three cyclic processes above to be understood as exemplifying antifragility -- as indicative of success through failure. It reflects the emergence of a higher form of order as may be otherwise explored in terms of collective creativity ([Imagining Order as Hypercomputing: operating an information engine through meta-analogy](#), 2014). It is in this sense that the call to martyrdom, as honoured in the history of Christianity or in Islamic jihadism, strengthens the worldview in question. Ironically the strategic slogan for the targets of eradication could then be: *Bring it on! The more the better!*

Enracination and deracination: Whereas the strategic focus on *eradication / elimination / extermination* can be variously promoted, it is the neglected aftermath that is of particular interest -- as illustrated by the shambles at this time in Gaza, Iraq and Afghanistan. It is this shambles which is the existential focus of *radicalization / liminality / termination* in relation to which so many are now called upon to live -- thereby offering, somewhat ironically, greater proximity to their comprehension of the integrity of transcendental deity.

Curiously in a further play on eradication / radicalization, the concern with regard to Islamic jihadists is the degree to which they may be "enracinated" in society -- especially when understood as "home grown" in western countries. Rather than eradication, thus suggests use

of "deracination". However this offers its own paradoxes in that the consequence of eradication-inspired campaigns is the extent to which it engenders an unsuspected form of deracination. This is to be seen in the manner in which people are variously uprooted in large numbers and displaced as refugees as a consequence of those campaigns. In 2007 it was [estimated](#) that the number fleeing the war had reached 2 million and that there were some 1.7 million internally displaced persons ([Iraq War 2003-present](#)).

Unquestionable eradication and the eradication of questioning

Eradication unquestioned: As partially implied within the checklist above, **use of eradication with respect to one domain may be borrowed metaphorically to reinforce or justify its use in another** -- rendering eradication in that domain unquestionable to a higher degree. This was evident in the discussion of weeding. More generally it is especially relevant in the manner in which anything framed as pestilential or a disease may be readily applied to the eradication of people or movements. This was evident in the Nazi framing of Jews in their so-called Final Solution. The consequences follow from the above-cited arguments of Donald Schön.

Of interest is **the scarcity of references challenging use of "eradication" -- or of any related metaphorical framework through which strategic frameworks are currently being defined**. With respect to "world problems" and "global strategies", the matter was partially addressed through a [Metaphors Project](#). One indicative exception noted is that of Sara Gorman ([Is Disease Eradication Always the Best Path?](#) PLOS, 20 March 2013). Following selective assassination, further reflection is suggested by the argument of [Marc Sageman](#) (*Leaderless Jihad: terror networks in the Twenty-first Century*, 2011):

The leaderless jihad will probably fade away for... internal reasons. The danger is that too vigorous an eradication campaign might be counterproductive and actually prolong the life of the social movement. The eradication efforts may be seen as unjust and therefore attract new recruits to the movement, just when it was dying out on its own. (p. 146)

This is to be distinguished from the earlier view articulated by [James A. Schear](#) (*Strategic Challenges*, 2008):

By strengthening control over inadequately governed spaces... and seizing the initiative to provide better solutions to tangible grievances than those offered by the jihadists, US strategy can sever the bonds between the terrorists and their mountains -- the very people they seek to mobilize to their cause. When that happens, the eradication of the terrorists that remain will not be long in coming. And if, by that time, US efforts have altered the environment in which jihadism flourishes, choking off the support that keeps it alive and eliminating the conditions that breed future jihadists, they will have ensured that jihadists terror organizations, once eradicated, do not revive,

Ironically this exercise has been triggered in response to the strategic predisposition to "eradication" of jihadism. The irony derives from the interpretation of jihad as the effort to eradicate differences of opinion -- namely dissidence of any form -- as indicated by the following argument by [Maulana Wahiduddin Khan](#) (*The True Jihad: the concept of peace, tolerance and non violence in Islam*, 2000):

In this world, unity is achievable only by learning to unite in spite of differences, rather than insisting on unity without differences. For their total eradication is an impossibility. The secret of attaining peace in life is tolerance of disturbance of the peace. (p. 99)

There would seem to have been little effort to elicit alternative metaphors to eradication through which to engage with what is perceived as terrorism, as tentatively explored separately ([Learning from alternative metaphors framing terrorism?](#) 2005). For the USA, there is a sense in which eradication is America's "best shot" in terms of its current values, as highlighted at the present time (William J. Astore, *The American Cult of Bombing*, *Transcend Media Service*, 25 August 2014 by ([US Just Not Sure Who to Bomb in the Middle East Anymore](#), *Pan-Arabia Enquirer*, 10 August 2014; Binoy Kampmark, *The Law of Futility: air strikes against the Islamic State*, *Global Research*, 6 October 2014). Despite being extremely counterproductive in terms of sustaining those values, eradication appears to be extremely productive in engendering values that transcend them.

The explicit reliance of religions on strategies of "eradication", most notably the Abrahamic religions, suggests that this preference should be called into question -- despite its use in highly valued scriptures and commentaries. It is clearly at the root of the process of engendering bloody conflict -- then seemingly upheld as justifiable by such faiths.

Eradication of questions by the Abrahamic religions: Through the demonstrably primitive nature of their relationships, there is a curious sense in which the religions engendering so much violence exacerbate their inadequacies through what could be considered the eradication of questions. Whether as Abrahamic religions or the [People of the Book](#), all questions are effectively considered to have already been answered through divine revelation -- if only implicitly. Admissible questions are those for which an answer is readily available.

Having all the necessary answers, more radical questions are necessarily anathema. This also applies to science -- to the extent that it is upheld as a belief system substituting for religion -- despite its own inadequacies ([Knowledge Processes Neglected by Science: insights from the crisis of science and belief](#), 2012).

Each would claim to have all the required answers. Each promotes their worldwide acceptance. Any challenge to those answers is considered misguided -- inviting condemnation and appropriate corrective measures. Despite failure to reconcile their differences, with their fatal consequences, there are no new questions -- other than the question of how best to eradicate more effectively any others of alternative persuasion. This contrasts with the challenging use of questions favoured through use of the Zen *koan* -- in order to provoke

the "Great Doubt" -- and exemplified by the classic collection of 48 (*The Gateless Gate*). Jeff Shore provides a translation with commentary of the insights of Zen master Boshan (*Exhortations For Those Unable To Arouse The Great Doubt*).

With respect to current predisposition to eradicate, there is a case for speculating on a koan potentially capable of eliciting fruitful doubt. Perhaps of the style:

In what worldview is eradication rooted and where is one enracinated when it is uprooted?

The point is highlighted by the [400-year delay in acknowledging the errors of the Catholic Church](#) in condemning the exploratory questions of [Galileo Galilei](#), regarding heliocentrism. The eradication of questions is ironically highlighted by the manner in which enhanced interrogation was used by the "Inquisition" "to put to the question" those suspected of heresy -- using methods of [water torture](#) bearing a very strong similarity to current use of [waterboarding](#) by security services in the USA and elsewhere.

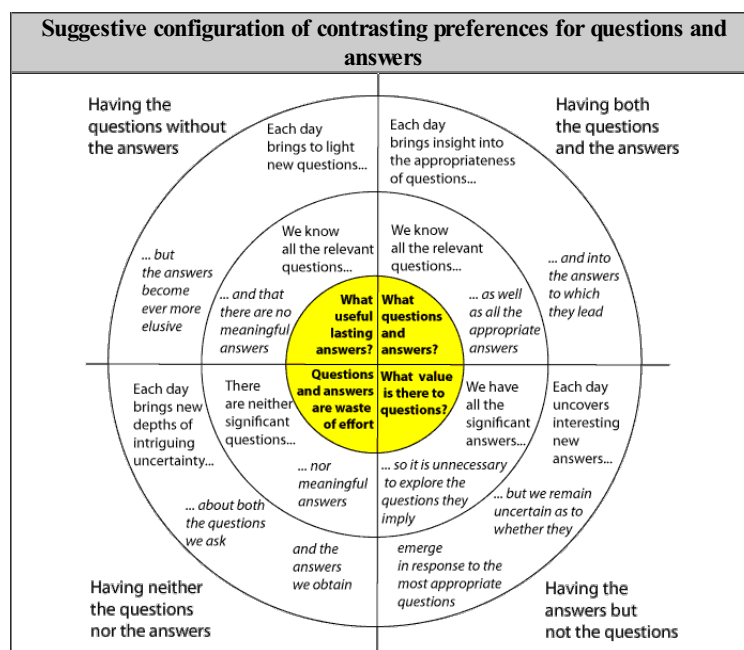
Most advocacy groups "know" the answers to the problems by which they are challenged. As with the Abrahamic religions, they place no value on the insights deriving from any "Great Doubt". Especially intriguing is the failure to ask questions of the track record of failure in the implementation of preferred strategies (*Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action*, 2009).

There is however the question: if it is impossible to understand how eradication is part of the problem, is it possible to understand the nature of the solution required? **Is any worldview then to be fruitfully distinguished by the quantity and quality of its doubts?**

An earlier exercise endeavoured to distinguish contrasting personal preferences for questions and answers (*Sustaining the Quest for Sustainable Answers*, 2003) in terms of quadrants and concentric rings analogous to those of the schematic below:

- Outer ring: the appreciation of questions and answers as encountered in daily life
- Middle ring: the framing of the conclusion regarding the encounter with questions and answers in daily life (in the outer ring)
- Inner ring: the existential understanding of the insights of the outer and middle rings.

This suggests an adaptation to the preferences characteristic of a collective worldview, such as those of religions or of science.



Questions and answers can then be considered as variously essential, threatening, or irrelevant -- to any worldview, and to its appreciation of others. The form of the schematic invites comparison with that prepared by Antonia Blumberg (*American Religious, Political Ideologies Revealed In One Graph*, *The Huffington Post*, 1 September 2014). Far less obvious is the probability that either questions or answers might be understood far more radically by one worldview from the perspective of another. Any analysis of discourse between "fundamentalists" of any faith would make this more evident.

Eradication of critical thinking? In a global condition in which millions face premature death for a variety of reasons, most notably exacerbated by violence engendered by religious differences, there would appear to be a strong case for eliciting more fruitful questions. Somewhat ironically with respect to this exploration of eradication, this would appear to call for new approaches to "going to the root of the matter". This could imply a paradoxical combination of eradication and radicalization -- usefully captured by the Sanskrit adage *Neti Neti* (not this, not that).

Given the predilection for the closure associated with answers and explanations, how is the challenging openness of questioning to be understood? What insights might elicit more fruitful comprehension of the process -- and engagement with it -- as variously explored separately:

- [Conformality of 7 WH-questions to 7 Elementary Catastrophes: an exploration of potential psychosocial implications](#), 2006
- [Strategic Implications of 12 Unasked Questions in Response to Disaster](#), 2013
- [Question Avoidance, Evasion, Aversion and Phobia: why we are unable to escape from traps](#), 2006

- *Engaging with Questions of Higher Order: cognitive vigilance required for higher degrees of twistedness*, 2004
- *Clustering Questions of Existential Significance*, 2010
- *Am I Question or Answer? Problem or (re)solution?* 2006

Eradication of thought: A particular difficulty for the religions is the manner in which the perspectives of others -- notably other faiths -- are readily framed as "evil" and contrary to the divine plan of their particular revelation. It was to evil that Barack Obama specifically referred in the course 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). This is consistent with the current controversies regarding evil, variously considered to be embodied by the US, its critics, and its opponents.

There is great irony to the current situation in which Islamic jihadists are now framed as the embodiment of the evil which Obama chose to recognize -- an evil which he is now called upon to eradicate. The expectation of success merits consideration in the light of the millennia of effort by the Abrahamic faiths to do just that.

With respect to evil, the work of [Hannah Arendt](#) has given rise to the nature and conditions of the eradication of thought itself. As noted by Colline Covington (*Hannah Arendt, evil and the eradication of thought*, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 93, 2012, 5, pp. 1215-1236).

Evil deeds may be committed intentionally or out of madness, but it is those who follow orders that present us with the most complex moral, philosophical and psychological questions. In writing about the banality of evil, Hannah Arendt argues that "in granting pardon, it is the person and not the crime that is forgiven; in rootless evil there is no person left whom one could ever forgive." Arendt postulates that "being a person" necessarily entails the acts of memory and thought. This paper explores Arendt's ideas on memory and thought and how these processes can become subverted in the service of a higher order... This shift in theoretical perspective sheds new light on our understanding of the totalitarian state of mind, i.e. of the mind of a "nobody", and the conditions within which evil is committed

The theme is also discussed by Sharon R. Green (*Hannah Arendt, evil and the eradication of thought*, *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 58, 2013, pp. 563-566). Is it fruitful to consider the eradication mindset in relation to thoughtlessness?

Toward comprehending the paradoxical eradication dilemma of the Abrahamic religions

Unfinished business between Abrahamic religions: As the engendering focus of so many bloody conflicts down the centuries, it is clear that there is much "unfinished business" between the Abrahamic religions and their factions. Further "genocidal" conflict is seemingly about to be righteously perpetrated in their name. Characteristic of the process is the manner in which the perpetrators of such violence claim vigorously to be upholding the values of Christianity, Islam or Judaism -- although this may be denied as misguided by others of similar faith.

Relevant to the above argument is the manner in which genocidal violence is presented as a front for the subtlest of existential relationships with a transcendent deity -- as the embodiment of the highest values. Each of the three religions claims a primary, and unique, relationship to that transcendent, superordinate focus -- and sees itself as acting righteously to promote the dominion of that deity over all humankind, irrespective of any regrettable collateral damage in the process.

It is of course the case that those inspired to implement the mandate of any one religion necessarily frame the others as problematically resistant to that endeavour -- hence the divinely-sanctioned absolute need for their eradication (should they fail to convert). Especially intriguing is the manner in which understanding of dominion over others is conflated with understanding of the subtlest and most complex sense of unity. And yet, remarkably, there is so little effort to reconcile those understandings of unity.

Curiously, with advances in fundamental physics and cosmology, the challenge is mirrored more fruitfully amongst the various schools of thought in quest for an archetypal [Theory of Everything](#) -- through the complexities of models involving many dimensions beyond ordinary human ken. Although the associated principles are extensively deployed for ever more advanced systems of mass destruction, little effort is made to consider their relevance to reconciling the divisive understandings of unity which engender the conflicts between the Abrahamic religions (or those of other persuasions).

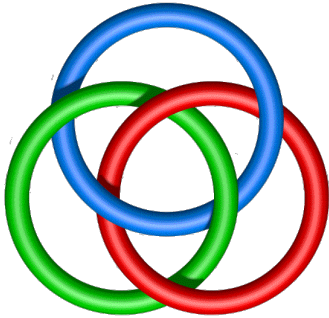
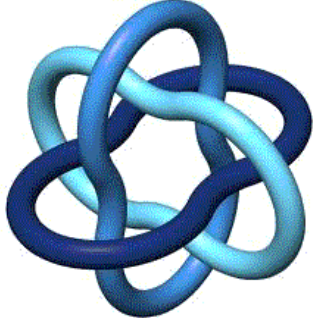
It can be readily argued that religions thrive on their indulgence in silly conflicts between each other -- irrespective of the collateral damage and their vigorous claims to the contrary (*Systemic Reliance of World Religions on Human Sacrifice: covert use of fatal conflict to ensure vital resource management*, 2014).

Rather than each religion accepting the engendered shambles in the name of its deity -- and anticipating an [Armageddon](#) through which appropriate reconciliation of opposing views will be achieved -- is there a case for investing some resources otherwise? This is suggested by the potential of the remarkable relationship between mathematics and theology, as may be variously discussed (*And When the Bombing Stops? Territorial conflict as a challenge to mathematicians*, 2000; *Mathematical Theology: Future Science of Confidence in Belief Self-reflexive Global Reframing to Enable Faith-based Governance*, 2011). The case has been otherwise explored from a cognitive psychological perspective by [George Lakoff](#) and [Rafael Nuñez](#) (*Where Mathematics Comes From: how the embodied mind brings mathematics into being*, 2001).

Symbolic puzzle? Interfaith initiatives have seemingly done little to reframe the bloody relationships between the Abrahamic religions and their adherents -- a pattern now set for repetition. Curiously the deadly interlocking amongst those faiths has not elicited fruitful visualization of a complexity which honours the degree of their entanglement -- as it might be reframed with inspiration from the physics

of [quantum entanglement](#). Given the argument for exploring this relationship through mathematical theology, there is a case for offering the following topological depiction to frame an archetypal challenge of mythical proportions.

The [Borromean rings/knots](#) are a focus of the psychoanalytic approach of [Jacques Lacan](#) and figure in early depictions of the Christian Trinity. Given the degree to which the topological complexity can be readily comprehended, the question is whether the set of rings offers a fruitful pattern through which to explore the mutual entanglement of the three Abrahamic religions.

Borromean rings (notable for their topological implications; the 3D variant has been adopted as logo of International Mathematical Union)	
Typical 2D representation of interlocking circles	3D representation (see Wolfram Mathematica animation)
	

Mutually assured destruction? The above images suggest a way of comprehending the unity with which each Abrahamic religion is associated -- according to its own understanding and tradition. Depicted in each case as a circle, symbolic of the integrity of that insight, the dominance of each is challenged by the manner in which it is "invaded", "cut" and "usurped" by the two others. The integrity of the answer of each is violated by the questions of the two others -- presuming to challenge that comprehension. Each effectively undermine and annihilates the wholeness central to the faith of the others. The challenge may be understood as constituting a "deadly question" as discussed separately ([World Futures Conference as Catastrophic Question: from performance to morphogenesis and transformation](#), 2013). This perceived violation understandably offers a legitimization of any violence it elicits in reaction.

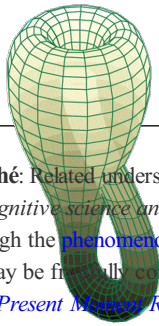
The challenge is how to comprehend a situation in which each subsumes and precludes any alternative understanding -- perhaps to be understood through any of the following lenses:

- each held by the others to be necessarily incomplete and misguided -- with each encompassing, enclosing and superceding the other. This recalls the fundamental challenges raised by the [incompleteness theorems](#) formulated by [Kurt Gödel](#), especially the insight that any comprehensive system of explanation cannot demonstrate its own consistency.
- a condition in which the same [intellectual property](#) is claimed by three parties. Understood as "spiritual property" (rather than [cultural property](#)), each effectively claims dominion over it by divine right.
- as a form of the classical [three-body problem](#), notably as now interpreted through the insights of quantum mechanics regarding the movement of fundamental particles.

Topology then offers a language through which to describe and explore such interlocking. The images above clarify to some degree the strange symbolic puzzle with which the three faiths are confronted (in theological terms) in comprehending the dilemmas of their relationship to one another. Topology might then enable more fruitful configurations and relationship to be explored. Clearly the argument can be extended to include other belief systems with analogous claims, most notably science.

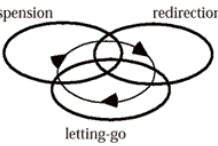

Entangled in this way, it could be said that the configuration as a whole is reminiscent of the Cold War strategic standoff of [Mutually Assured Destruction](#) (MAD). This is a doctrine of military strategy and national security policy in which a full-scale use of weapons of mass destruction by two or more opposing sides would cause the complete annihilation of both the attacker and the defender. It is based on the theory of deterrence whereby the threat of using strong weapons against the enemy prevents the enemy's use of those same weapons. In the case of the Abrahamic religions, this might be better framed as **Mutually Assured Eradication**.

Klein bottle and self-enracination? (image reproduced from Wikipedia)	
	<p>Especially intriguing, in terms of any focus on eradication, is the extent to which each of the co-existent belief systems is deeply rooted in the other in unsuspected ways. This calls for the kind of paradoxical insights associated with the higher dimensionality of the wormholes of cosmology and with the Klein bottle, notably as argued by Steven Rosen (<i>Topologies of the Flesh</i>, 2006). Suggestive illustrations are provided by Carlo H. Séquin (<i>From Möbius Bands to Klein-Knottles</i>, 2012)</p> <p>The form of the Klein bottle offers a sense of "self-enracination" -- clearly posing a cognitive challenge to any "self-eradication" mindset, including that of suicide bombing. As might be readily associated with any worldview, it has no boundary. Inside and outside are not topologically distinguishable -- in contrasts with more conventional symbols of unity.</p>



More intriguing is the degree to which seemingly incommensurable worldviews are usefully to be explored as in some way "rooted" in each other at a "radically" fundamental level -- as might require the insights of higher dimensionality.

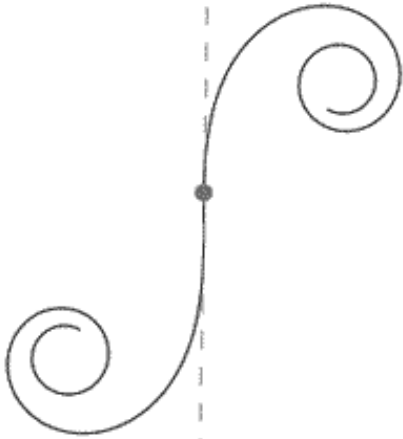
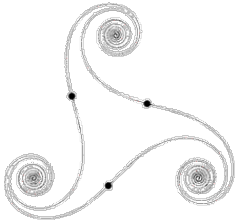
Phenomenological epoché: Related understanding was promoted as **enaction** by **Francisco Varela**, **Evan Thompson**, and **Eleanor Rosch** (*The Embodied Mind: cognitive science and human experience*, 1992). Varela offered one image to illustrate the cognitive cycles calling for interrelationship through the **phenomenological epoché** (*The Gesture of Awareness*, 1999). With respect to the argument above, Varela's representation may be fruitfully compared to both that of the Borromean rings and to a traditional Celtic knot pattern, as previously discussed (*Present Moment Research: exploration of nowness*, 2001). Associating these depictions is consistent with the argument for associating mathematical and experiential complexity.

Phenomenological epoché (explored by Francisco Varela)	Traditional Celtic knot pattern (and its associations to the mythopoetic of the megalithic period)
 <p>suspension redirection</p> <p>letting-go</p>	

Enaction has been understood to "emphasize the growing conviction that cognition is not the representation of a pre-given world by a pre-given mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs". A chapter in that work by Francisco Varela was entitled with the Buddhist metaphor of "laying down a path through walking" (pp. 237-254). It was subtitled "science and experience in circulation".

Varela sees the phenomenological *epoché* as "the ensemble of these three organically linked phases", for the simple reason that the second and third are always reactivated by, and reactivate, the first. He provides a valuable discussion of the three interlinked cycles and the obstacles traditionally recognized to some of their processes. The images above also figure in separate discussions of some relevance to this argument (*Engaging with Globality through Dynamic Complexity*, 2009; *Cognitive Cycles Vital to Sustainable Self-Governance*, 2009; *Interestingness, suggestiveness, memorability and presentation*, 2014).

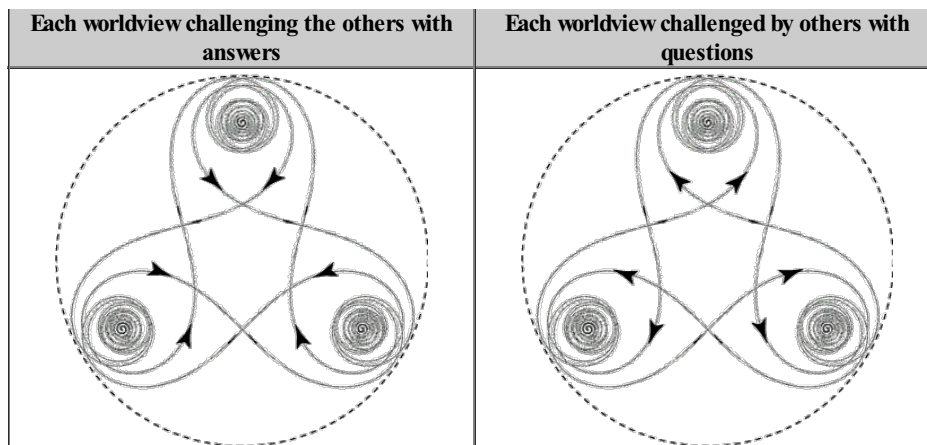
Transitioning between worldviews: Possibilities for comprehension between the Abrahamic religions can be taken further through use of the **Euler spiral** (spiro, clothoid or Cornu spiral). Such spirals are widely used as transition curves in railroad/highway engineering for connecting and transiting the geometry between a tangent and a circular curve. This suggests a degree of potential relevance to the challenge of smooth transition from one worldview to another.

Euler's spiral or Clothoid Screen shots from an interactive representation	Hypercycle ? <i>Principia Cybernetica</i>
	

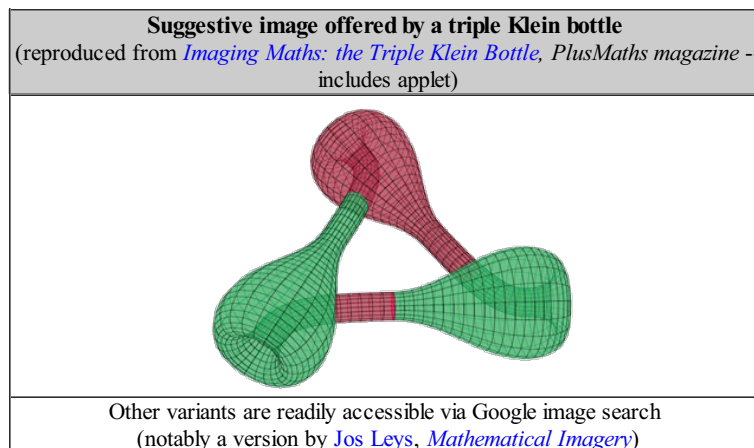
Such spirals also have applications to diffraction computations in optics -- suggesting a degree of potential relevance to the widespread use of "vision" metaphors in policy-making. The relevance to issues of governance is discussed separately as offering a means of engaging with a silent "underworld" about which little is said (*Designing Global Self-governance for the Future: patterns of dynamic integration of the netherworld*, 2010; *Mapping the Global Underground*, 2010). Related uses of such spirals have been explored separately with respect to *Silence / Ignorance / Uncertainty as fundamentally interwoven?* in a context of consideration of *Civilization as a Global Configuration of Silences: recognizing silence of a higher order* (2013).

With respect to a three-fold pattern of mutually exclusive worldviews (as depicted in the earlier images above), the following contrasting patterns are suggestive. Each worldview can claim and assert dominion over the other two through the quality of its answers. However each can in turn be radically challenged by the quality of the questions formulated to it by the others.





Whether through the effort to achieve dominance by answers or by questions, the challenging dynamics are readily perceived as threatening -- even potentially fatal. But to what? A reaction is to be expected in the absence of a larger perspective. The need to eradicate the other is then rendered evident.



Given the creativity deployed in the mathematical and artistic exploration of forms such as that above, it is unfortunate that so little effort is made to elicit their potential significance for interrelating seemingly incompatible belief systems and worldviews. In a period when a degree of complexity is considered necessary to the construction of vehicles of transportation and communication, it is too readily assumed that relationships between belief systems require only the simplest insights -- as exemplified by the process of eradication. Examples of current investigations of potential relevance include Carl-Fredrik Westin, et al, (*Visualization and Processing of Tensors and Higher Order Descriptors for Multi-valued Data*, 2014). Especially intriguing are the insights which might be drawn from exploration of [Kleinian groups](#) of higher dimensions (Michael Kapovich, *Kleinian Groups in Higher Dimensions*, *Progress in Mathematics*, 2007).

An imaginative reframing of bloody conflict between worldviews calls for investigation of the best that mathematics has to offer. There is of course the delightfully irony that mathematics has a vast literature on root extraction, in both simpler and generic terms (see *Wikipedia* discussion of [nth root](#)). The [root of unity](#) is a complex number which is an n th root of one.

Othercide and the eradication of dissidence: [Daniel R. Brunstetter](#) (*Tensions of Modernity: Las Casas and His Legacy in the French Enlightenment*, 2012):

Insight into the logic behind excluding the Other can be garnered by reading the birth and spread of modernity through the lens of *othercide*. "*Othercide*" is a term I have coined which literally means "the killing of the Other". Historically, the fortuitous encounter between the Old World and the New World was a *physical othercide*.... *Cultural othercide* emphasizes the elimination of the social, political, religious, and/or moral differences of the Other judged to be nefarious and incompatible with the dominant European constellation of values. The suffix *cide* denotes the targeted eradication of such radical differences by the civilized. The Other is the opposite of the civilized because of its radical difference, but can become the same as the civilized because it shares the same core of rationality. The Other is thus equal, at least potentially, but this equality has historically been linked to assimilation. While all humans are equal, the Other is in the wrong and intoltable, and therefore must be changed. The Other is thus not simply left alone, but is the target of political projects aimed at effacing radical differences. (pp. 5-6).

There are numerous references to dissent and its suppression, and to the eradication of dissidence, especially within dictatorships. Particular concern is now expressed with regard to the disruptive expression of dissent via social networks and other facilities (see *The Crisis Papers: political opinion and commentary for the progressive internet*). The possibility of [shutting down the internet](#) to limit dissent has been widely debated, and implemented to a degree by some countries through censorship.

Imagining the possibility of "inter-other" communication: A separate discussion explored possibilities of navigating around the "cognitive ground zero" implied by the recourse to othercide by worldviews such as the Abrahamic religions (*Way Round Cognitive*

Ground Zero and Pointlessness? Embodying the Geometry of Fundamental Cognitive Dynamics, 2012). The suggestion was that the form of the Euler spiral offered insights of relevance to the need to reframe conventional assumptions regarding the linearity of relationships and links in communication in order to ensure their viability for appropriate transfer of meaning between contrasting worldviews. In the light of insights from orbital mechanics, this was seen as a way of enabling an "Inter-Other Transition Network" by analogy to the currently researched *Interplanetary Transport Network (Orbiting Round Nothingness across Communication Space: possibility of an "Inter-other Transition Network"*, 2012).

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