



# laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

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## Encyclopedia of Evil Claims, Claimants, Counter-claims, and Sigils

### Proposed facility in support of current global strategic priorities

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## Executive summary

Considerable significance is currently attached, at the highest level of authority, to the determining role of evil with respect to ongoing global crises and those recently past. As declared by [Hannah Arendt](#) in 1945: *The problem of evil will be the fundamental question of postwar intellectual life in Europe* (*Essays in Understanding*, 1994, p. 134)

The concern here is to provide a context within which such claims can be more systematically recognized, analyzed and discussed. This follows from the observation that, **despite the frequency of references to evil, claims regarding its manifestation are not well-documented**. Given its assumed importance in justifying strategic initiatives in practice, there is therefore a strong case for exploring ways of holding such claims more creatively and fruitfully. The question here is how to frame the disparate current perceptions of evil.

However, rather than envisaging massive investment in a new documentary initiative, the argument here explores ways of benefitting from advances in information technology. With limited investment, these could enable a specially designed [search interface](#), namely a means of reframing the search results in terms of "evil", as outlined in [Annex 1: Search interface adaptation to profiling evil](#). Such a facility could benefit from an initiative over decades, now taking the form of an online [Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential](#), using its [database on world problems](#) as a primary source.

**This frames the question of the extent to which the "problems" claimed to exist by international constituencies can be reinterpreted as constituting claims for a manifestation of "evil"** -- at least in the eyes of some. That initiative notably features specific articulations claiming the problematic nature of an issue, as well as counter-claims strongly questioning the validity of the arguments made. The search facility could also benefit from results accessible through other [search engines](#) to mine specific references to "evil" in relation to any issue conventionally framed as a "problem". The funding for such a search interface is relatively modest, as discussed in [Annex 2: Funding possibilities for insight into evil](#).

An indication of authoritative claims for the determining role of evil as a challenge to global order is presented in [Annex 3: Existence of evil as authoritatively claimed to be an overriding strategic concern](#). Especially significant at this time is the use of "evil" to render unnecessary, inadequate and irrelevant any more conventional explanatory process. To the extent that the latter may call for comprehension of greater systemic complexity, as cultivated by knowledge elites, use of "evil" offers the simplest of explanations readily comprehensible to the population in general, especially in a democratic society with a populist dimension.

Ironically the controversial real-world problems, especially challenging to conventional methodologies, are now described as [wicked problems](#) by the policy sciences. It is of course the case that religion readily associates "wrong" with "evil".-- especially in the case of dissident belief. This pattern is echoed in political systems in which [dissidence](#) may be as severely condemned. With respect to governance, it is in this sense that **a degree of transition is evident from the neutrality of "problem", as has been conventionally favoured in the management sciences, to "evil"**. The latter offers a succinct clarification of any issue requiring little further

reflection. Evil usefully embodies a value dimension and a simple indication of cause -- both being a challenge in more conventional terms.

It is of course also the case that the attribution of "evil" by one constituency to the initiatives and motivations of another is typically matched by counter-claims -- both denying the merit of that judgement and arguing that the attribution is more significantly appropriate to the constituency making the claim, as indicated in [Annex 4: Framing by others of claimants of evil as evil](#). The situation is therefore highly dynamic and fluid in documentary terms, usefully framed as "slippery", if not "serpentine" -- itself often considered a characteristic of "evil". Rather than being "straightforward", any such exploration is often seen as "bent" and full of "curves", alien to conventional logic.

Clearly claims regarding evil are not a focus of the mainstream disciplines, especially the natural sciences, for which it is necessarily as much a delusion as any preoccupation with the divine, as discussed in [Annex 5: Epistemological and definitional challenges to profiling evil](#). From that perspective, the argument of [Richard Dawkins](#) (*The God Delusion*, 2006) implies a complementary argument regarding *Satanic Delusion* -- currently one primarily explored from a religious perspective. Use of the term "evil" is however not infrequent in the pronouncement of judgement in court proceedings -- irrespective of whether it can be considered as existing or defined in legal terms. Far greater attention is of course given to the determining role of that dimension by theology and in any associated legal system (canon law, sharia, etc). Typically it then features in the condemnation of heretics, unbelievers, blasphemers and apostates.

The closest that knowledge elites -- the sciences -- tend to come to acknowledgement of a quality resembling "evil", is the declaration that some conclusion is "wrong" or "nonsense", but with little capacity to manage information on "wrongness" and the ignorance from which it may arise. Curiously academic debate is typically characterized by constituencies declaring each other to be "wrong" (purveyors of "nonsense" by implication) -- in some cases **not even wrong**. There is an emphasis on marginalizing minority perspectives in favour of a mainstream held to be unquestionably "right".

An extensive preliminary clarification of the proposed methodology can be derived by using as a "template" that of the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, as discussed in [Annex 6: Adapting a proven problem profiling methodology to profiling of evil](#) and [Annex 7: Employing a problem profile as a template for an evil profile](#).

Of particular significance to this approach is the extensive work on detection of "vicious loops" of different lengths by which the world problems are systematically connected, each aggravating the next -- and on the manner in which such loops are themselves interconnected to form larger complexes (*Feedback Loop Analysis in the Encyclopedia Project*, 2000; *Loop Mining in the Encyclopedia of World Problems*, 2015).

As discussed in [Annex 8: Evil loops and sigils as a pattern language](#), such loop interlocking is perhaps appropriately characteristic of the wickedness attributed to so-called wicked problems. From an "evil perspective", these might well be recognized in terms of the [sigils](#) by which patterns of evil were identified in the [grimoires](#) of some traditional approaches to evil -- and in their recent reframings (as in the variants of the *Book of Shadows*).

It is appropriate to note that the absence of a colon following "Evil" in the title of this proposal introduces a degree of ambiguity which may be either misleading or appropriate to the challenge. Indeed "claims", "claimants" or "counter-claims" may themselves be perceived as evil -- as with the sigils.

Responding to the challenge of evil is widely perceived as especially dangerous and inherently problematic. In the light of the proposed facility, and the methodology outlined, possible implications for a more proactive approach are indicated in [Annex 9: Engaging fruitfully with deadly opposition and fear of transformation](#)

## Search interface adaptation to profiling evil (Annex 1)

As noted above, the rapid development of information technology and data mining (through the use of search engines) suggests a relatively low budget means of profiling recognition of evil in its many forms. A search interface could be readily designed and developed to operate on a tablet or smartphone, such is the relative simplicity of the application required.

Possibilities include:

- **Mining the existing database of perceived world problems:** Typically this would involve judicious association of "evil" with the problems named therein. Search results could be presented, such as:
  - corruption as evil
  - prostitution as evil
  - injustice as evil
  - starvation as evil

Interesting challenges are evident with respect to problems perceived with regard to the natural environment. For example:

- tornadoes as evil
- landslides as evil
- deforestation as evil
- overfishing as evil
- rust as evil

Clearly such associations with evil could be challenged by some. The association could be flagged as questionable. Such a flag could be removed if other search engines offered results in which evil was indeed associated with the problem keyword. This would be consistent with the **experience** of a tornado, in contrast with detached **observation and analysis** of such a phenomenon

- **Use of other search engines:** In this mode the search interface would formulate search strings combining an issue keyword with "evil" in order to detect any recognition of references to be presented. As noted above, this could be combined with the previous mode. The search might exploit the merits of search engines aggregating the results of other search engines, as in the case of [Dogpile](#) (which fetches results from [Google](#), [Yahoo!](#) and [Yandex](#), and includes results from several other popular search engines). Consideration could also be given to the approach of the search engine [DuckDuckGo](#). This mode could be used irrespective of availability of the previous mode.

Of some interest is the presentation of zero results as implying that no evil is perceived to be associated with the topic. Related searches might then be suggested. This might constitute a counter-claim (as noted in Annex 6) irrespective of other profiling information.

- **Synonyms of evil:** With respect to both the preceding modes, users might be offered the possibility of extending their search to include (or exclude) synonyms of evil. These might include: : wicked, bad, wrong, immoral, sinful, ignoble, corrupt, nefarious, sinister, vicious, malicious, malevolent, demonic, diabolic, atrocious, heinous, odious, contemptible, horrible. Consideration is required for searches using evil-related keywords in languages other than English
- **Word separation from evil in results:** Search facilities can include specification of the degree of separation of keywords in results, namely whether "evil" (or its synonyms) are present together, within the same sentence, or more widely separated.

The argument here is that a simple facility could be produced for widespread use and as a means of eliciting feedback. More sophisticated modalities could be readily developed subsequently. The facility could also provide interactive visual mappings of vicious feedback loops (as discussed in Annex 8).

With respect to interactivity, there is of course the possibility of associating the facility with user feedback, including additional claims or counter-claims with regard to particular forms of evil.

## Funding possibilities for evil insight (Annex 2)

The considerable advantage of this proposed facility is that it responds directly to recognition by the highest authorities (secular otherwise) of the strategic priorities of the present time -- and the decades to come, as noted in [Annex 3: Existence of evil as authoritatively claimed to be an overriding strategic concern](#).

It is therefore to be expected that, in the absence of comparable facilities, a positive response to funding requests should be readily obtainable from:

- **Leading national governments:** Most notably those associated within the international coalition headed by the USA -- namely the UK, France and Australia (whose leaders have specifically acknowledged the challenge of evil, as noted in Annex 3). Such funding might well be channelled through agencies responsible for security, science, or documentation.
- **International agencies:** Most notably those with:
  - security responsibilities, in response to the war on terror such as the European Defence Agency or NATO (possibly through its [Science for Peace and Security Committee](#), as the successor to the [NATO Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society](#) and the NATO Science Committee)
  - policy responsibilities for governance in a global civilization faced with evil-engendered terror (such as OECD)
  - scientific, cultural, information and interdisciplinary responsibilities, such as UNESCO
- **Religious institutions:** Most notably those with a traditional preoccupation with evil (possibly with a particular concern with terrorism):
  - Christian:
    - Catholic Church
    - Evangelical institutes
  - Islamic institutions
  - Jewish institutions
- **Academic institutes:** Especially in terms of advice and technical support. A notable example is the University of Helsinki, given its research programme ([Law and Evil. Theories and Practices of Evil: a preliminary research plan 2006-2008](#)), following its hosting of an international conference on the problem of evil ([Interrupting Evil](#), 2006), and the resulting studies through the [Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies](#) (Ari Hirvonen and Janne Porttikivi, *Law and Evil: philosophy, politics, psychoanalysis*, 2009). Such institutions also provide avenues for EU research funding.

## Existence of evil as authoritatively claimed to be an overriding strategic concern (Annex 3)

As indicated above, claims regarding evil are now upheld by the highest authority and are increasingly presented as the primary driver of remedial global strategic initiatives -- arguably more fundamental than many others, as previously discussed in that regard ([Unquestionable declarations and assertions](#), 2015). This is most obvious in the Judeo-Christian response to Islamic jihadism, but is equally evident in the response to each other of the opposing Shia and Shiite sects within Islam (following the historical pattern of

sectarian conflict within Christianity). Such usage cannot be dismissed as purely rhetorical and of negligible significance, as is the tendency in many modes of conventional discourse.

With respect to the justification for the long-term global war on terror, for Brad Evans (*Another War, Another Evil: haven't we learned that the devil cannot be slain?* *Truthout*, 26 September 2014):

Any moral concerns here can be easily overcome if the fight is presented in absolute terms. The war is necessary because it is against the forces of evil in the world. David Cameron reaffirmed this position in respect to the horrifying beheading of British Aid worker, David Haines, calling the filmed atrocity a "**pure act of evil**." Such reliance upon this all-too-theological expression has in fact become a hallmark of politics in the post-9/11 period.

Much is indeed currently made of the publicized beheading of individuals by ISIS militants as being an act of "pure evil", as notably argued by the Prime Minister of Australia, [Tony Abbott](#) (*The beheading of American photojournalist James Foley: a despicable act of pure evil*, *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 February 2015; *ISIS beheading 'justifies' Australia's Iraq intervention, says Abbott*, *The Guardian*, 3 September 2014; *This death cult is uniquely evil in that it does not simply do evil, it exults in evil*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 September 2014).

Reference to the abhorrent nature of beheading has been evident in the focus variously placed on evil in formulating a collective response to the [recent attacks in France](#):

- [David Cameron vows to tackle 'evil death cult' of ISIS in show of solidarity with Hollande](#) (*Evening Standard*, 23 November 2015)
- [David Cameron: World uniting to fight 'evil threat' of IS](#) (*BBC News*, 23 November 2015)
- ['Fighting common evil': Putin, Hollande agree to share intelligence on terrorist targets in Syria](#) (*RT*, 26 November 2015)
- [Putin to Hollande: Russia ready to cooperate against 'common evil'](#) (*Times of Israel*, 26 November 2015)
- [A global coalition can beat the evil of Islamic State, states Chris Roycroft-Davis](#) (*Express*, 28 November 2015)
- [Obama on Paris attacks: 'ISIS is the face of evil'](#) (*MSNBC*, 18 November 2015)
- [George W. Bush: Islamic State shows 'evil is real'](#) (*The Washington Times*, 22 February 2015)

The adoption of the emphasis on evil in the discourse of Francois Hollande, in promoting a coalition against ISIS, was originally noted in *Le Figaro* by Jim Jarrassé ([Francois Hollande Adopts 'Bushian' Rhetoric of 'Good vs. Evil'](#), *WorldMeets.US*, 25 August 2015):

Is it the mere fact of being surrounded by American citizens or are we seeing signs of a semantic shift? Upon awarding the Legion of Honor to the three Americans and one Briton who prevented "tragedy" by subduing a terrorist on the train from Amsterdam to Paris on Friday, Francois Hollande showed no hesitation mentioning the battle between "good" and "evil" -- rhetoric popularized by U.S. President George W. Bush.

Authoritative references include:

- [George W. Bush](#): Referring to three countries engaged in terrorism, indicated that: *States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger.* (*2002 State of the Union Address*). He further stated that: *We've come to know truths that we will never question: evil is real, and it must be opposed. and We are a people dedicated to the triumph of freedom and democracy over evil and tyranny* (*Patriot Day*, 2002). George Bush famously declared that he "**wanted to rid the world of evil**,"
- [Barack Obama](#): Presumably with the full support of his science advisors, Barack Obama specifically referred to evil 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).
- [John Kerry](#) (US Secretary of State): Declared in relation to the Boston Marathon bombings: *We've been in direct confrontation with evil* (*BBC News*, 19 April 2013).
- [Justin Welby](#) (Archbishop of Canterbury): Recently declared: *I believe Islamic State is deeply evil -- even to its own supporters* (*BBC*, 19 April 2015)
- [Mahatma Gandhi](#): declared, on the occasion his trial by British authorities in 1922: *In my opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer....The only course open to you, the Judge and the assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourselves from evil, if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil, and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country, and that my activity is, therefore, injurious to the common weal* (*Statement In The Great Trial of 1922, Some Famous Speeches: Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, The Voice of Truth*, Vol. VI, Part-I, p.14-24). [Other references argue that case: [Was the British empire evil?](#) *Quora*, 2017]

As noted by *Wikipedia*, U.S. President [George W. Bush](#) used the term "**axis of evil**" in his [State of the Union Address](#) (28 January 2002), and often repeated it throughout his presidency, to describe governments that he accused of helping terrorism and seeking weapons of mass destruction (despite their possession in great quantity by the permanent members of the UN Security Council, and

notably by the USA). There continue to be many references to that insight.

Despite the above claims by the leadership of several permanent members of the UN Security Council regarding a major security issue, there appears to have been no credence attached to evil as such by the current UN Secretary-General, President Obama is noted for declaring before a UN General Assembly with regard to ISIS:

There can be no reasoning -- no negotiation -- with this brand of evil. The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force. So the United States of America will work with a broad coalition to dismantle this network of death (*UN General Assembly: Barack Obama calls for destruction of IS; Ban Ki Moon outlines world's mounting woes, ABC News, 25 September 2014*)

On the occasion of a [General Assembly Session Commemorating Liberation of Nazi Death Camps](#), the previous UN Secretary-General [Kofi Annan](#) did however declare that:

Only gradually did the world come to know the full dimensions of the evil that those camps contained. The discovery was fresh in the minds of the delegates at San Francisco, when this Organization was founded. The United Nations must never forget that it was created as a response to the evil of Nazism, or that the horror of the Holocaust helped to shape its mission. That response is enshrined in our Charter, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights....

How could such evil happen in a cultured and highly sophisticated nation-State, in the heart of a Europe whose artists and thinkers had given the world so much? Truly it has been said: "all that is needed for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing"....

Such an evil must never be allowed to happen again. We must be on the watch out for any revival of anti-Semitism, and ready to act against the new forms of it that are happening today. (*UN Press Release, 24 January 2005*)

Prior to that Annan had declared:

- *Who can avoid using the word "evil", when confronted with genocide? Unquestionably, some very evil things happen in the world. And you are right, it has been my fate to come face to face with such things at certain points in my career* (*Naming Evil: Lecture at the 35th National Conference of Trinity Institute, New York, 2 May 2004*)

For the Christian cultures of the world, the declarations of [Pope Francis](#) frame the principal recognition of the existence of evil -- a perception extensively shared by other Christian denominations. Most recently this has taken the following forms:

- The devil is "always lying in wait by our door"... The mystery of evil insinuates itself into our lives and that demands vigilance and care on our part so that it will not prevail. (*Always be vigilant against evil, Pope Francis tells faithful, Catholic Herald, 4 January 2016*)
- Only God's mercy can free humanity from the many forms of evil, at times monstrous evil, which selfishness spawns in our midst (*Pope's Christmas Day homily condemns 'monstrous evil' fuelling refugee crisis. The Guardian, 25 December 2015*)
- These signs of love can't and mustn't be obscured by the tyranny of evil (*Pope's year-end message warns about 'tyranny of evil' Fox News, 31 December 2015*)
- We ought to recognize that we are facing a global phenomenon which exceeds the competence of any one community or country. In order to eliminate it, we need a mobilization comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself. For this reason, I urgently appeal to all men and women of good will, and all those near or far, including the highest levels of civil institutions, who witness the scourge of contemporary slavery, not to become accomplices to this evil, not to turn away from the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, our fellow human beings, who are deprived of their freedom and dignity. (*Don't turn away from evil, National Catholic Reporter, 10 December 2014*)
- *Satan seduces by disguising evil as good* (*Catholic New Agency, 29 September 2014*);

In the case of Pope Francis, the frequency of his references to the devil has itself aroused comment ([Nikky Andres, Why does Pope Francis mention the devil so often? Catholic Online, 22 July 2015](#); [Thomas Rosica, Why is Pope Francis so obsessed with the devil? CNN, 20 July 2015](#); [What is Pope Francis on about with all this talk of Satan and evil? The Conversation, 28 May 2014](#) ).

Currently presented as a primary characteristic of evil, there are however many prescriptions for terrorism in both the *Bible* and in the *Quran*, as noted by [Valerie Tarico \(God as the Original Terrorist: how the Bible condones atrocious acts of terror, AlterNet, 7 January 2016\)](#):

By one count, the Quran has only 532 cruel or violent passages, while the Bible has 1,321. Christians respond that the Bible is longer and so the cruel, violent passages make up a smaller percent of the whole. ISIS terrorists claim that their scripts for jihad, executions, sexual slavery and theocracy come straight from the Quran, and they cite chapter and verse to back up their claim. But Christians who find ISIS horrifying might be even more horrified to learn that similar scripts can be found in their own Good Book, including endorsements of terrorism that rival the most vile atrocities committed in the name of Allah.

There is every reason to assume that similar violent prescriptions exist in the sacred texts of Judaism.

It is vital to recognize that such claims drive the formulation of policy, not rationality in any conventional, secular sense

## Framing by others of claimants of evil as evil (Annex 4)

The references above are offered to emphasize the current importance associated with belief in evil as a dominant factor in global dynamics -- one that renders irrelevant for many any further explanatory insight of any complexity. Those preferring that emphasis may well include the leading politicians and opinion makers. The question is how best to consider the matter further in a knowledge-based society which has indeed invested heavily in exploration of complexity and subtlety through many disciplines -- ignoring evil in the process.

Curiously for a purportedly knowledge-based society, any effort at a systematic approach to evil enabled by search engines is paradoxically complicated by the policy of a major search engine with the (informal) corporate motto "*don't be evil*" -- therefore presumably biasing its coverage of what is claimed by some to be so characterized to whatever degree. That policy assumption is further complicated by new proposals to censor content in ways consistent with that principle (*Google's Eric Schmidt calls for a "spell-check for hate" to battle ISIS*, *Alphr*, 8 December 2015).

The problematic pattern of claims regarding evil is highlighted with respect to the current competitive campaign for presidential nomination between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, as remarked by [Paul Krugman](#) (*Plutocrats and Prejudice*, *The International New York Times*, 29 January 2016):

To oversimplify a bit -- but only, I think, a bit -- the Sanders view is that money is the root of all evil. Or more specifically, the corrupting influence of big money, of the 1 percent and the corporate elite, is the overarching source of the political ugliness we see all around us. The Clinton view, on the other hand, seems to be that money is the root of some evil, maybe a lot of evil, but it isn't the whole story. Instead, racism, sexism and other forms of prejudice are powerful forces in their own right. This may not seem like a very big difference -- both candidates oppose prejudice, both want to reduce economic inequality. But it matters for political strategy. As you might guess, I'm on the many-evils side of this debate.

**Counter-claims?** Whilst authoritative claims (such as those above) are clearly made for the recognition of evil in various forms, fundamental to the challenge of the times is the extent to which each of those quoted is variously claimed (in multiple references) to be essentially evil in their own right. For example:

- Pope Francis: Reference is frequently made to the current Pope as being the [Antichrist](#) (*Why So Many People Think Pope Francis Is the Antichrist*, *CharismaNews*, 29 July 2015). This follows a pattern of associating evil with popes (*Top 10 Most Wicked Popes*, *Listverse*, 17 August 2007). Such a framing is reinforced by recent recognition of possible complicity in cover-up of worldwide sexual abuse by clergy.
- Barack Obama:
  - *Obama Satan* (*The Huffington Post*, 30 January 2014) indicates various comments on the framing
  - *Is Obama misguided and clueless, or is he just plain evil?* (*Debate.org*) offers contrasting views on the matter
  - *Obama: Incompetent or Evil?* (*National Review*, 13 January 2012)
  - Erick Erickson: *Barack Obama is an Enabler of Evil* (*RedState*, 16 November 2015)
  - Brian Tashman: *Trump: 'A Lot Of People Think' Obama Has 'Evil Intentions' With Muslim Refugees* (*Right Wing Watch*, 19 November 2015)
- George W. Bush:
  - Laura Meyers: *College Students Rank George W. Bush More Evil than Stalin and Mao* (*The Libertarian Republic*, 26 May 2015)
  - Matt K. Lewis: *Well-Intentioned or Evil: Revisiting George W. Bush's Iraq Legacy* (*The Daily Caller*, 18 May 2015)
  - Peter Singer: *The President of Good and Evil* (2004)
  - *George W Bush has gone down in history as one of the world's most evil people, just behind Adolf Hitler and Osama bin Laden* (*MailOnline*, 20 May 2015)
- Tony Blair:
  - *Is Tony Blair evil?* (*Digital Spy Forums*, 8 October 2015)
  - Mehdi Hasan: *Tony Blair Bears 'Total Responsibility' For Isis* (*Information Clearing House*, 18 June 2014)

Such claims may be made as readily by those of opposing political views as by those of opposing religious views -- and therefore readily dismissed as naturally biased and lacking authority, however much the claims motivate movements of opinion or represent an articulation of their beliefs.

Clearly claims for the evil nature of Islam, in whatever form, are complemented by claims from that perspective as to the evil (or satanic) nature of Christians, Jews, the USA, or NATO, etc. This point was made by anthropologist [Scott Atran](#) who, in an [address to the UN Security Council](#) about his research on ideologically motivated violence, stated: *Al-Qaida and ISIS argue that the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, without regard to civilian casualties, are evil.*

**Negative campaigning:** Whoever the claimants may be, genuine belief in the claim by the claimants is difficult to distinguish from propaganda typical of those in conflictual relations in desperate quest for descriptors to enhance [negative campaigning](#) in support of a mobilizing dynamic for their particular agenda. Each may well portray the claims of the other as false -- and a natural consequence of their evil nature.

Again evil may readily be claimed as inherent in any "them" who give evidence of disagreement with what is assumed to be inherently good, namely as representative of "us" (*Us and Them: Relating to Challenging Others -- patterns in the shadow dance between "good" and "evil"*, 2009). The difficulties are exacerbated by Christian attempts to claim that "we are all sinners", readily dismissed as a rhetorical device of questionable sincerity and an example of religious [doublespeak](#).

It is however appropriate to raise the question as to whether it is possible to be recognized as a world leader:

- without being described as evil by some opposing group, at least under some circumstances
- without describing any such opposing group as evil, at least under some circumstances

As discussed separately, there is then the "unasked question" as to *which world leaders have (not) been labelled "evil"?* (2015).

The complexity of accusations regarding evil is indicated by the case of UNESCO, readily assumed to be the UN agency with a mandate most appropriate to extend understanding of evil. Its "evil purpose" is however a theme of a number of references -- presumably as a consequence of an orchestrated campaign subsequent to the accession of Palestine to its membership (*UNESCO votes to admit Palestine as full member*, *UN News*, 31 October 2011). For example, one blogger argues *Obama Admin Seeking to Reestablish Funding for Evil UNESCO* (*The Objective Standard*, 18 February 2012).

This could however be considered as but one example of the evil attributed to elitist groups held to be influential in global governance (Bilderberg Group, World Economic Forum, Club of Rome, and the like). Such claims are notably a feature of conspiracy theories with regard to the [Illuminati](#).

**Beheading:** With the focus on beheading as the primary indicator of the evil nature of ISIS, there is a curious failure to address the implication of forms of beheading of cultures accepting this as unworthy of further comment, as separately explored (*Beheading versus Befooting: in quest of the lesser evil for the greater good*, 2014). This is most striking in the case of the response of France to recent terrorist attacks associated with ISIS. *Wikipedia* provides valuable documentation on beheading in a range of countries, many currently expressing concern as to its abhorrent nature (*List of people who were beheaded*).

**Collective cognitive dissonance?** The problematic logic of such dissociation, as indicative of the challenge of addressing collective implication in evil, is partially explored by [André Comte-Sponville](#) (*Faire le mal au nom du bien: logique de la terreur* *Le Monde des Religions*, 23 December 2015).

Such apparent erosion of collective memory is effectively a theme of a study by [Patrice Gueniffey](#) (*La Politique de la Terreur: essai sur la violence révolutionnaire (1789-1794)*, 2000) who argues that little is now written about the Reign of Terror in France ("*on n'écrit plus guère sur la Terreur*", p. 1).

This argument is contested in a critical [review](#) of that study by [Claude Mazauric](#) (*Annales historique de la Revolution francaise*, janvier-mars 2001) -- here (inadequately) translated and edited from the French original:

The fundamental thesis of the essay Gueniffey, one that runs throughout the book, is summed up in a fairly simple proposition: the Terror was not a special and unique moment of the Revolution, it was just the formatting, moreover morphologically changing and institutionally differential, of an organic violence consubstantial with the Revolution itself, as the end of an act of demiurgical nature. This did not mean, as one might believe, that 1789 embodied within it the subsequent terrorist violence as "*the transformation of reality by the action of the will is not in itself necessarily a terrorist phenomenon*" (p. 50), otherwise what would be the status of policy? But *Terror is a plausible outcome, and in some cases fatal, when political action disregards the limits of opposing circumstances, claiming to reach all purposes it is assigned*. The inversion in articulating this unexpected *theory of circumstances* leads to the assertion that the transformative will becomes terrorist when it renders itself *absolute*, renouncing any *compromise* between *well-conceived rationality* and *pesanteurs réelles* [Realpolitik?]: a blandly reformist profession of faith, candidly stated. This could be understood as the common thread of all analysis in the essay -- an essay (I note in passing) that rejects as superstition, any positive reference to *cultural history*, understood as a means of justifying the Terror. Through the attention it invites with regard to exploration of practices, habits and mentalities, it is clear that the work of [Michel Vovelle](#) has been ignored.

Whilst such debate is to be welcomed, it does little to explain in comprehensible terms the dissociation between solemn commemoration of **recent violence by others** and that -- now seemingly forgotten (although quantitatively far more horrific) -- **perpetrated by the French on their own people**. Might such negligence itself be construed as a form of evil -- one solemnly cultivated by the highest authorities? Does the consecration of democratic revolution necessarily require arbitrary sacrifice in regrettable quantity -- at least in the light of the inspiration traditionally offered by the French model?

By comparison, how many has [ISIS/ISIL/Daesh](#) "sacrificed" so far? How does the abhorrent nature of public beheading by guillotine compare with that practiced by ISIS?

The hypocritical abhorrence of beheading, and of other human rights abuses in certain cultures, is reminiscent of that of reformed smokers, as described by Andy Maingam (*Reformed Smokers: a real pain in the butt!* *Ezinearticles*, 16 March 2009):

There's no worse anti smoker than a reformed smoker! They're a bigger pain in the butt with their self righteous attitude than those who have never smoked. They seem to have forgotten the day when they too were addicted to the drug nicotine and also got a twisted pleasure out of their dependency on it.... One might think that those who have 'never smoked' would be the most opposing. In actual fact, they are the most understanding and tolerant. It's these holier than thou reformed smokers that are a smoker's worst enemy.... Reformed smokers seem to think they have a duty to educate the world on the dangers of smoking,

but their approach does little to make folks sit up and listen... Most smokers want to quit, eventually. It all starts with preparing the mind ahead of time.

Curiously rumours have circulated that the guillotine is to be reintroduced in the USA in the state of Georgia, as clarified by Peregrin Wood (*Fact Check: Did Georgia Pass A Law Allowing Guillotines To Be Used For Executions? Irregular Times*, 24 July 2014).

**France as a case study:** For a country that prides itself on its role with respect to philosophy and psychology, it is curious that the association of its revolutionary origins with the etymology of terrorism is not currently a matter of extensive comment. This is especially the case when terror is now unquestionably associated with evil.

The annual [national day of France](#), celebration the [Storming of the Bastille](#) (1789) is not seemingly associated in popular discourse with the **subsequent Reign of Terror** (1793-1794) during which some 10,000-20,000 "enemies of the revolution" were publicly beheaded by [guillotine](#) (typically at the [Place de la Révolution](#), now renamed as Place de la Concorde). Last use of the guillotine in France was in fact only in 1977; the last in public (and secretly filmed) was in 1939. Following proposals for the reformation of capital punishment in 1789, in 1791 the guillotine replaced use of the [Catherine wheel](#) -- a torture device used to that end. As noted by *Wikipedia*, other facilities for [capital punishment in France](#) had been previously used ([hanging](#) for the most common punishments; [decapitation](#) by sword, reserved for nobility; [burning](#) for heretics and arsonists; [death by boiling](#) for counterfeiters; [dismemberment](#) for high treason, parricides, regicides).

There appears to be no comprehensive statistics of the number beheaded in France over the period of use of the guillotine..

Solemn commemorative events of the recent terrorist attacks in France have indeed included the Bastille location as a vital national symbol. However it is unclear why such commemoration, and discourse condemning the evil practices of ISIS, should include no consideration whatsoever of the need to commemorate the thousands beheaded **after** the creation of the French Republic (1789). Has that "evil" become a "detail of history", comparable to that frequently deprecated in reference to the Holocaust gas chambers (*Jean-Marie Le-Pen's Notorious 'Detail' Remark About World War II, The Journal of Historical Review*, March-April 2002)? Have the deaths of those so arbitrarily executed ever been commemorated?

Notable exceptions include:

- [Thamy Ayouch](#) (*De la terreur au terrorisme: les aventures d'une philosophie de l'histoire chez Merleau-Ponty? Topique*, 81, 2002/4) who introduces her argument regarding the dialectic crisis as follows (translated from the French):

The terrorism most often mentioned is currently done by individuals or organizations, which sometimes forget the State origin of the term "terrorism". Terror refers to exceptional measures taken by the revolutionary government since the fall of the Girondins (in June 1793) to that of Robespierre (July 27, 1794). Terror and terrorism should however not be confused. In exploring the semantic difference between the two we will reach a first specification of state terrorism. Terror, first a passion of the seventeenth century, acquires only in the eighteenth century a collective sense that links it to an end in the double dimension of its recipient and purpose. It strikes someone, person or group, to obtain something. The term "terrorism" experienced a reverse semantic drift: the state collective to the individual.

- Gérard-Michel Thermeau (*Quand le terrorisme était une valeur républicaine, Contrepoints*, 15 January 2015) who argues (as translated from the French):

If terrorism is really ancient, the French word is a legacy of the French Revolution. The First Republic was born in and by the Terror. Following the overthrow of the monarchy, a first revolutionary Terror ensured a massacre in September 1792, in the prisons of Paris, of over 1000 inmates considered "internal enemies" ready to kill "patriots". Most of the victims were ordinary common criminals. The radical elements continued to put pressure on the official bodies and forced then to adopt a policy to scare the enemies of the Revolution, the conspirators, the traitors, those foreign powers who want, in the minds of revolutionaries to "terrorize" the partisans of the Revolution. The actual Terror responds to a fantasized counter-revolutionary terrorist threat.

In the war situation in which revolutionary France is at war with allied Europe, all opposition is translated as a "betrayal". The second Terror, legal this time then takes place. As Danton said: "*let us be terrible to avoid the need of the people to be*" ... In fact as early as summer 1793, the Terror plays a vital role in government activity, entrusted to two committees, the Committee of Public Health and the Committee of General Security. The Act of 17 September gives to suspect a vaguer definition: *those who by their behavior, their relationships, their words or their writings have shown themselves partisans of tyranny, federalism and enemies of liberty; those who are unable to justify their livelihoods and the manner of acquisition of their civic obligations; those who are unable to obtain citizenship certificate; the former nobles who have not consistently demonstrated their commitment to the Revolution, emigrants, even though returned, those accused of crimes, even though acquitted*. In short, anyone can end up "suspect"....

Between March 1793 and the end of July 1794, half a million people had been arrested. At the time of 9 Thermidor, many "suspects" languished in jail without trial. **More than 16,000 people were executed after being sentenced to death but it must be added that some 30,000 were executed without trial....** estimates are very different according to the authors anxious to minimize or exaggerate the extent of the killings. Terror, far from saving the Revolution, mostly contributed to discredit the idea of republic for decades. *[emphasis added]*

- [Michel Wievorka](#) argues that: *La comparaison historique entre Daech et la France de Robespierre choquera peut-être. Elle n'en*

*est pas moins instructive... Daech n'a rien inventé (Daech, la Terreur et la diplomatie, Ouest-France, 20 juin 2015).*

A typical response to such rare comparisons with ISIS and Daech is provided in a critical review by [Florence Gauthier](#) (*La « Terreur », de Robespierre à Daech, en passant par Podemos, Revolution-francaise*, 29 juin 2015): *Comparer le vandalisme de la période révolutionnaire aux actes commis par Daech est non seulement erroné, mais ridicule...* Another shocked response is provided by [Jean Glavany](#) (*Non, Daech n'est pas révolutionnaire, Comité Laïcité République*, 22 octobre 2015).

Part of the confusion would seem to be associated with the degree of legitimacy of the French revolutionary tribunals in contrast with repudiation of any legitimacy of ISIL as being essentially a non-state actor, despite its claims to the contrary. This is part of a pattern played out with respect to "non-governmental organizations" (NGOs), whose legitimacy, as with multinational corporations, has long been debated and a focus of protest, notably within the UN (*Conceptual Distortions from Negative Descriptors: the possibility that "non-governmental" may be comprehended as "anti-governmental" in some languages*, 1974). The argument is awkward given the legitimacy which Nazi Germany could claim.

Far more problematic are the repeated recent arguments by the French Prime Minister, [Manuel Valls](#), that any attempt to explain jihadism is already a step towards justifying it. Clearly a "bad career move" for any researcher dependent on government funding. He goes further in calling into question any cultural or sociological commentary with regard to the attacks in France. This attempt to equate understanding with excuse has subsequently been criticized (Sonya Faure, Cécile Dumas et Anastasia Vécrin, *"Culture de l'excuse": les sociologues répondent à Valls, Libération*, 12 janvier 2016). This notes that: *Cette dynamique est une régression intellectuelle qui va de pair avec une politique basée sur la construction d'ennemis.*

The exchanges and the language recall those of the ongoing [history wars](#) regarding the massacres of the indigenous populations of Australia. The government argument is reminiscent of that made with respect to any question of [moral equivalence](#) between the behaviours of the USA and the USSR in the midst of the Cold War -- as articulated by a US Ambassador to the UN, [Jeane Kirkpatrick](#) (*The Myth of Moral Equivalence, Imprimis*, 15, January 1986). Technically it could be asked how many thousands of executions by the righteous -- if not millions -- render that action morally equivalent to the actions by those deemed unrighteous. This is clearly a consideration in [just war theory](#). and any adaptation to a "just torture theory".

Rather than intellectual bankruptcy, it would seem that intellectuals in France have been obliged to stay silent or response. In response to evil, it would appear that France is acquiring the attributes of an intellectual dictatorship in which all are expected to [sing from the same hymnsheet](#). Honourable echoes of the policies of Robespierre and Danton?

## Epistemological and definitional challenges to profiling evil (Annex 5)

**Questionable assertions?** In a separate discussion (*Evil Rules: Guidelines for Engaging in Armageddon Now*, 2015), it was stressed that none of the effectively *ex cathedra* declarations (in Annex 3) regarding evil allow for any reservations or qualifications. As noted there, with respect to [Questionable reframing of evil](#), the declarations are however questioned from a wider perspective in the light of the apparent contradictions implied, notably by:

- [Kofi Annan](#): *Naming Evil* (Lecture at the 35th National Conference of Trinity Institute, New York, 2 May 2004)
- Sarfraz Khan and Shuja Ahmad: *Good Versus Evil: argument to begin global war on terrorism*. (*Central Asia Journal* No. 64)
- As'ad AbuKhalil: *War against terrorism not an issue of good vs. evil* (*The Progressive*, 16 October 2001)
- [Wendell Bell](#): *New Futures and the Eternal Struggle between Good and Evil* (*Journal of Futures Studies*, 2000)

As presented by Jerald D. Gort, et al (*Probing the Depths of Evil and Good: multireligious views and case studies*, 2007):

In the few years since the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, evil has become a central theme in the media and human consciousness: the evil of terrorism, the evil of secular culture, concern for poverty, and climate change... Yet different cultures and religious traditions have different ideas of what evil is and what its root causes are. Although there is no massive clash of cultures, many disagreements and also conflicts in the world arise from the deep differences in views of evil. This volume explores religious views of evil. Scholars from different religions and from various parts of the world describe how people probe the depths of evil--and by necessity that of good--from their own background in various worldviews. In their explorations, almost all address the need to go beyond morality, and beyond legalistic definitions of evil and of good. They point to the radical depths of evil in the world and in human society and reinforce our intuition that there is no easy solution. But if we can gain a better understanding of what people from other worldview traditions and cultures consider evil, we are that much closer to a more peaceful world.

This presumably builds on the earlier collection of Sandra Ann Wawrytko (*The Problem of Evil: an intercultural exploration*, 2000)

**Evil neglect -- of evil?** The references above raise the question as to why -- given the alleged importance of "evil" -- there is seeming so little effort to understand it more fruitfully, at least by documenting claims for its existence. Why is the reference to evil limited to unquestionable allegations of its ultimate importance -- despite its obscurity from the perspective of many disciplines? Such obscurity is already called into question with respect to the divine. Arguably such declarations could even be seen as a surreptitious back-door affirmation of divinity in societies honouring gsecular worldviews.

The point is usefully made by Ari Hirvonen (*The Problem of Evil Revisited. NoFo*, 4, October 2007):

One may wonder whether the problem of evil really is the fundamental question of contemporary intellectual life. If anything, it seems that the concept of evil has faded out and has been withdrawn and watered down. Hence, the problem of evil has been,

and continues to be, more or less absent not merely from natural, bio- and techno- sciences, which is self-evident, but also from philosophy, ethics, social science and law. [Andrew Delbano](#) argues that a gulf has opened up between the visibility of evil and the intellectual resources available for coping with it: 'never have our responses been so weak' [*The Death of Satan: how Americans have lost the sense of Evil*, 1995]

A publication such as the 3-volume *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict* (2008) can be understood as responding to such a gulf to a degree, but only by implication. It also raises the question as to the nature of evil not encompassed by that framing. It does however include an extensive entry by [David Loye](#) (*The Concept of Evil*) distinguishing evil in terms of scientific, religious and philosophical perspectives. The theme is also explored by [Todd Calder](#) (*The Concept of Evil*, 2015) in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. In introducing the scientific perspective, Loye points out that:

Other than in religious contexts, people seldom use the word evil any more. Yet the realities that originally gave rise to the concept of evil are still with us. Indeed in specifics such as our species' new found potential via the ultimate violence of nuclear or environmental devastation to make the earth uninhabitable, what used to be called evil presses upon us even more than ever before.

As with the terrorism it is held to inform, evil invites a wide range of questionable definitions in the conventional sense. It may well be asked whether it is the conventional approach to definition which is itself incompatible with the elusive nature of evil. Some forms of evil -- or its fundamental nature -- may elude meaningful definition. Definitions may well constitute misrepresentation.

**Conferences on evil:** A fundamental contrast is evident between the personal experience of evil and the manner in which it can be explored in "comfortable" academic and similar contexts -- however valuable these may prove to be in offering greater insight. Clearly of relevance are the themes evoked at the periodic, and seemingly variously named, International Conference on Evil and Wickedness and in its published proceedings.

Perhaps not surprisingly, a focus is given to new understanding of evil through the [Perspectives on Evil](#) project of the [Evil Hub](#) of Inter-Disciplinary.Net, described as follows:

The Evil Hub explores the possibility of making sense of the 'darker' aspects of human existence. Almost on a daily basis we encounter spiteful and malicious acts done on an individual or communal basis, witness unbearable moments of tragedy and go through all sorts of experiences of pain, suffering and loss. In struggling to make sense of the things we do, the things which happen to us, and the things we see around us, we develop all sorts of concepts, ideas and language, create all kinds of images and visual representations, perform wide varieties of rituals and practices, as we continually strive to understand what, if anything, we can say and do about these things.

The Evil Hub is also associated with the organization of a periodic *Global Conference: Perspectives on Evil and Human Wickedness* (13th, Prague, 2012; 14th, Lisbon, 2013; 15th, Prague, 2014; 16th, Lisbon, 2015). The themes of conferences are indicative of the extent and nature of preoccupation with the matter. The conference series is seemingly unrelated to other recent events (*Graduate Conference in International Political Theory: Political Evil*, St Andrews, 2014; *The St Mary's Conference on Evil*, 2014, London; *Evil: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, Oxford, 2014). Similarly the Case Western Reserve University has organized a conference on *Evil Incarnate: manifestations of villains and villainy* (Cleveland, 2014).

**Theology:** Clearly evil has long been a preoccupation of religions. Each religion typically has its own understanding of evil and provides a well articulated indication of action deemed evil. Given the importance attached by different religions to evil, it could be considered curious that **no effort has been made by them to produce any collective compilation clarifying understanding of evil.**

The failure to do so strangely mirrors their **failure to reach any consensus on their understanding of the insights opposing evil** -- possibly associated with a deity they diffidently claim to share. The failure also exemplifies their framing of each other as fundamentally misguided, if not essentially evil -- even when they share a common inspiration, as with the [Abrahamic religions](#) -- the [People of the Book](#).

As a source of insight, collections of declarations regarding specific forms of evil (through [encyclicals](#), [fatwas](#), and the like) would clearly constitute a valuable source for any encyclopedic enterprise.

The extensive entry on [sin](#) in *Wikipedia* offers links to the many understandings of sin by different religions, but with no reference to any interreligious compilation. It is to be expected that the focus on evil would be provided through the collection of profiles of sins. Some exploitation of this possibility is itself interesting, if misleading (Chen Xiwo, *The Book of Sins*, 2014). Especially noteworthy is the current work of [Richard Newhauser](#) on a [Medieval Sin 'Encyclopedia'](#) in the light of the *Summa on the Vices* (*Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*, c. 1236) of [William Perardus](#) (William Perault).

It is interesting to note that there is an Islamic site [Fatwa-Online](#) which provides access to the numerous [fatwas](#) (and the related clarification of [haram](#)), effectively to warn the faithful against evil. [Papal Encyclicals Online](#) could also be understood as offering a degree of insight into forms of evil. Although there appears to be no comparable online tool for sin, of particular value is the [review of understandings of sin](#) by *Bible Study Tools*, introduced as follows:

Sin is a riddle, a mystery, a reality that eludes definition and comprehension. Perhaps we most often think of sin as wrongdoing or transgression of God's law. Sin includes a failure to do what is right. But sin also offends people; it is violence and

lovelessness toward other people, and ultimately, rebellion against God. Further, the Bible teaches that sin involves a condition in which the heart is corrupted and inclined toward evil. The concept of sin is complex, and the terminology large and varied so that it may be best to look at the reality of sin in the *Pentateuch* first, then reflect theologically.

**Systems of law:** In a society subject to the rule of law, of particular relevance (as noted above), is the manner in which evil is handled within any legal system. As fruitfully clarified by Ari Hirvonen (2007):

Law -- juridical or positive law and moral law -- one could presume, deals with evil. Now, one could think that what is beyond law or against its imperatives is related to evil: evil deeds and evil motivations. Law should therefore be sensitive to the problem of evil, especially so in the case of criminal law. Isn't the subject matter of criminal law the problem of evil... However, if one flips through criminal laws or criminal law textbooks, one will find no mention of evil. Instead, the main issue is what kind of behaviour causes harm or the risk of harm, and how criminal law can be functionalized for the purpose of minimizing risks and maximizing public security.... it seems that, not merely the concept of evil, but also the whole idea of evil seems to be absent from criminal law. Instead of evil persons, one confronts wrongdoers, illegal risk takers, deviants, socio- and psychopaths, the socially deprived, the economically marginalised and potential lawbreakers, who should be identified already before any act. Even if the criminal sciences still recognize moral wrongness, evil itself is a concept and idea that these sciences avoid, almost as if it would infect them with something... evil. But then again, neither does contemporary moral philosophy feel very comfortable with the problem of evil. (*The Problem of Evil Revisted*, 2007)

Hirvonen then notes the dangers of recognition of evil by criminal law:

Introducing evil into criminal law, would, perhaps, mean a return to absolute moral values and the categorical justification of criminal law, which would then justify inhuman punishment. Trial by the media already shows the risks of this. The modern secularized criminal law could also open its doors at the same time to religious values and principles

He also recognizes that:

Banishing evil from juridical and theoretical discourse does not mean that evil would as a matter of course disappear either from the world or from the different discourses which endeavour to make sense of the world and evil in this world. Human beings who share the world with others have to face and deal with different kinds of evils: physical evil (pain and suffering, agony and trauma, various diseases, privations, degeneration, aging and natural processes), natural evil (natural phenomena such as floods, earthquakes, global warming etc., which cause pain and suffering) and human evil (violence, war, genocide, terrorism, crimes, oppression, poverty etc., i.e., suffering caused by human being because of some 'Good' - nation, ideologue, religion - pain caused by moral evil and also evil acts done just for the sake of evil)

A valuable articulation of necessary future research from this perspective has been provided by a proposal via the University of Helsinki (*Law and Evil. Theories and Practices of Evil: a preliminary research plan 2006-2008*) with which Ari Hirvonen is himself associated. That university appears to provide an unusual context for the disciplined exploration of evil. Reference is notably made to Klaus Lüderssen (*Enlightened Criminal Policy or the Struggle Against Evil. Buffalo Criminal Law Review*, 2000) and to J. Feinberg (*Evil: In: Problems at the Roots of Law*, Oxford University Press, 2003).

Of some relevance is a tentative early proposal for an *Encyclopedia of Transnational Criminal Organization* in association with the Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (American University, Washington DC), and the existing *Encyclopedia of Crime* (2006), the *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment* (2002), and the *Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice* (2002). Of particular relevance is the *Organized Crime Encyclopedia Wiki*

Despite Hirvonen's conclusion, during sentencing a judge may well categorize the criminal behaviour as evil, as may the prosecution in pleading the case before a jury.

In the original compilation of "world problems", any "sins" indicated by religions were reframed as "problems", as with problematic issues identified by Papal encyclicals. It is to be expected that the relation to evil is even more clearly enunciated within the framework of *religious law*, notably *Christian canon law*, *Islamic sharia*, *Jewish halakha*, and *Hindu law*. However, as might be expected each might well frame the other as dubiously associated with evil.

**Taboos:** Whether defined by other traditions, or by religions, taboos and their infringement clearly offer another form of recognition. Is a *WikiTaboo* imaginable? If not, why not? The assiduous cross-cultural compilation by Lynn Rosemary Holden (*Encyclopedia of Taboos*, 2000; freely downloadable) could be understood as a step towards recognition of the forms of evil implied. Many of the taboos are designed to ward off evil spirits or purify the person tainted by evil. The threat of the so-called *Evil Eye* is a concern in many cultures.

\*\*\* (*Law and Order vs. Lore and Orders? Imagining otherwise the forceful engagement of singularity with plurality*, 2013)

**Political science:** Ari Hirvonen (2007) adds to his comment above with respect to the neglect of evil by law:

There are, I admit without hesitation, good reasons for this turn away from evil. According to *Ottfried Höffe*, evil appears to many as a metaphysical or theological concept. It is the '*malum metaphysicum* or sum total of the world's imperfections'. It is also a subject of philosophy of religion, something that is characteristic especially of monotheistic religions. Thus, it is a concept

that cannot easily be accommodated by a secular ethics, Höffe concludes.... Hence, as [Richard J. Bernstein](#) argues, philosophers and political theorists are reluctant to speak about evil. They are more comfortable speaking about the violation of human rights, injustice, immorality and unethicalness.

**Natural sciences:** Just as science has difficulties in defining the nature of "problems", whether as a feature of any discipline or with respect to the external world, so it could be said to be essentially and especially constrained with respect to evil -- despite its recognition by authorities controlling vital research funding for the advancement of knowledge. Some clarification is however evident in the case of wicked problems -- even if use of "wicked" is not intended as implying any acknowledgement of evil (as discussed in Annex 9).

A remarkable exception follows from recognition in 1996 that evil had not been explored from a biological perspective. This resulted in the argument of neurosurgeon [Itzhak Fried](#) that the transformation of non-violent individuals into repetitive killers is characterized by a set of symptoms that suggests a common condition (*Syndrome E*, *The Lancet*, 350, December 1997, pp. 1845-1847). There he suggested that this is the result of "cognitive fracture", which occurs when a higher brain region, the prefrontal cortex (PFC) -- involved in rational thought and decision-making -- stops paying attention to signals from more primitive brain regions and goes into overdrive.

The symptoms of evil as a disease are then predicated on the observation that mass killers share some common traits. Further research on this controversial question has been recently reviewed by [Laura Spinney](#) (*Is evil a disease? ISIS and the neuroscience of brutality*, *New Scientist*, 11 November 2015):

In a world where ideological killings are rife, new insights into this problem are sorely needed. But reframing evil as a disease is controversial. Some believe it could provide justification for heinous acts or hand extreme organisations a recipe for radicalising more young people. Others argue that it denies the reality that we all have the potential for evil within us. Proponents, however, say that if evil really is a pathology, then society ought to try to diagnose susceptible individuals and reduce contagion. And if we can do that, perhaps we can put radicalisation into reverse, too.

Given the diffidence of science in relation to belief systems, there is every reason to suspect that preoccupation with evil might take disguised form, namely exploited primarily through its manifestations, leaving others to claim any relation to evil. Any interpretation of these as evil would then be of little relevance to the research itself. Typically, as for mainstream science, this might well be so narrowly defined that the subtle contextual complexity of evil would be totally beyond the focus of that research.

There is considerable irony to the extent to which evil is said to be manifest in the irresponsibility of science, as documented by [Naomi Oreskes](#) and [Erik M. Conway](#) (*Merchants of Doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*, 2010).

**Psychosocial sciences:** Given the framing above as a "pathology" or "disease", does this suggest that evil could be usefully explored in documentary terms in the manner of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), published by the [American Psychiatric Association](#) (APA), or following that of the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD), produced by the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO)?

Why not? If "evil" is to be recognized as a disease, as noted above, should Syndrome-E be included in DSM?

From any such perspective, there is a sense in which pain is readily perceived, and felt to be, a manifestation of evil. This highlights the relevance of the *Encyclopedia of Pain* (2013), edited by G.F. Gebhart and Robert F. Schmidt, with its 3,000 entries. This is usefully complemented by *Concise Encyclopedia of Pain Psychology* (2005) of Roger Fillingim. This focus has been given particular emphasis by [R G H Siu](#) through *panetics*, and by [Robert Daoust](#) through the *Algosphere Alliance for the Alleviation of Suffering*, as argued in *The Study and Management of Pain Require a New Discipline about Suffering*.

The association of pain with evil is especially strong in that the same word is used for both in some languages. In French, for example, *mal* is featured in a special issue of *Le Monde des Religions* (*Le Mal au Nom de Dieu: les religions sont elles violentes?*, janvier-fevrier 2016, pp. 24-55).

**Military and security services:** As a consequence of the recognition of evil by the highest authorities, their framing of a war against terror, and belief in an archetypal war between good and evil, the military necessarily have a vital role to play -- as with associated security and intelligence services. Essentially, as with the massive funding of science for defence research, the military is increasingly obliged to be especially sensitive to the source of those funds and the rationale for their allocation.

The question is then how evil is framed by the military sciences and how its various forms are to be recognized and categorized in terms of threat levels -- especially given the preoccupation of those disciplines with identification of enemy combatants, through profiling, and the like (Sarah Burris, *What's Your Threat Score?* *AlterNet*, 14 January 2016). The security and intelligence services could be expected to be developing a sophisticated methodology for the detection of evil, consistent with the sophistication deployed with regard to terrorist suspects and "people of interest" (H. Steiner, *Calibrating Evil*, *The Monist*, 2002).

As with science however, the military would clearly tend to frame its preoccupation with the threat associated with manifestations of evil, rather than with evil itself, leaving its paymasters to interpret that preoccupation as a feature of the war between good and evil.

Especially intriguing with respect to military authorities (as with those of science) is the detection of "nonsense" and the undeclared associations to that perception. This has recently become topical in the military response to a Special Report for Reuters (Charles Levinson and David Rohde (*Pentagon thwarts Obama's effort to close Guantanamo*, 29 December 2015; *"Groundbreaking" Exposé Shows Pentagon Thwarting Obama's Bid to Transfer Guantánamo Prisoners*, *Democracy Now*, 30 December 2015). In a subsequent interview, the top U.S. general overseeing the Guantanamo Bay detention center alleged that claims that the Pentagon had delayed the

release of detainees was "nonsense" (*Top US general refutes claims that the Pentagon delayed the release of Guantanamo detainees*, *USNews*, 8 January 2016).

This response is reminiscent of the reaction to the [Senate Intelligence Committee report on CIA torture](#) by the person directly involved in the establishment of the Guantanamo and other interrogation facilities, namely [Dick Cheney](#) (*CIA torture: Former Vice President Dick Cheney says report is 'full of crap'*, *The Independent*, 11 December 2014; *Dick Cheney Says Report Faulting CIA Interrogation Is 'Full of Crap'*, *NBC News*, 11 December 2014). In making the statement he however admitted not having read the full report.

As might be expected one of the two psychologists who devised the CIA's harsh Bush-era interrogation methods indicated that the scathing U.S. Senate report on the torture of foreign terrorism suspects "took things out of context" and made false accusations.

"It's a bunch of hooley," James Mitchell told Reuters... when asked for his response to the Senate Intelligence Committee's findings... "Some of the things are just plain not true". (Matt Spetalnick and Bill Trott, *Psychologist says U.S. Senate's CIA report makes false charges*, *Reuters*, 11 December 2014)

These responses ("nonsense", "crap" and "hooley") suggest the possibility of a relevant case study, given that there is no lack of references associating Guantanamo Bay and the torture policy with evil -- to the point of necessitating a revision of the ethics code of the American Psychological Association. What does this then imply with regard to the reactions to these assessments and those that make them? As with Bush and Obama, there are numerous references to Cheney as evil (*Why is Dick Cheney considered evil?* *Quora*)

Is evil to be recognized in the manner in which the CIA Torture Report has been effectively buried (*U.S. Inaction Following CIA Torture Report is De Facto Amnesty for Perpetrators*, *Amnesty International USA*, 21 April 2015; Murtaza Hussain, *One Year After the Senate Torture Report, No One's Read It and It Might Be Destroyed*, *The Intercept*, 9 December 2015)? As noted by the latter:

Despite the passage of 12 months, the actual report, comprising 6,700 pages, still has not been made publicly available. In fact, reading it appears to be prohibited among officials in the executive branch. Nearly a month and a half after the report's initial release, it had [not even been taken out of the package](#) in which it was delivered to the Department of Justice and Department of State, [according to government lawyers](#). Even the organization that was the subject of the report, the CIA, tightly controlled internal access and made "very limited use" of it, as had the Department of Defense, the lawyers said in a court filing.

**Infotainment:** As implied above, despite belief in its fundamental significance, there is no "Wikipedia of evil" -- a *WikiEvil* -- to aid comprehension of claims in that regard. Ironically, however, there is indeed an *Evil Wiki* focusing solely on evil in fiction. Evil does indeed feature widely in fiction, fantasy and online gaming, as currently explored with enthusiasm worldwide.

Of particular relevance to this argument is the extent to which such media familiarize the wider population with characteristics and depictions of evil and the attitude appropriate to elimination of its manifestations. Despite deprecation by religions as constituting celebration of the satanic, such games can be readily understood as facilitating attitude training relevant to military agendas in response to whatever is framed as evil.

**Historical sciences:** It might be expected that a historical approach to evil provides a necessary form of conceptual distance and detachment through which evil can be systematically recognized -- both elsewhere and long after the disappearance of those involved, in order to avoid any embarrassment (as with processing of archival material).

One such approach is the *The Great Big Book of Horrible Things: the definitive chronicle of history's 100 worst atrocities* (2011), compiled by [Matthew White](#). This has been described in encyclopedic terms by Randy Dotinga (*Encyclopedia of Evil: a catalog of history's 100 worst atrocities*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 February 2012).

Its focus on the past highlights the need for a means of documenting the evil perceived today, especially if it is claimed authoritatively to be so omnipresent and all-powerful. Wikipedia is assiduous in providing checklists and profiles of atrocities, both past and recent (*List of events named massacres*)

**Policy sciences:** As variously formulated, although intentionally unrelated to evil, the above-mentioned recognition of [wicked problems](#) by the policy sciences merits attention in this context (Horst W. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, *Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*. *Policy Sciences* 4, 1973, pp. 155-169; Tom Ritchey 2007, *Wicked Problems: modelling social messes with morphological analysis*, *Acta Morphologica Generalis*, 2, 2013, 1). As stated by the latter (with a rhetorical allusion to beheading, appropriate to this argument):

At first glance, it is not self-evident what is actually meant by this term. Both the words "wicked" and "problem" need to be qualified: Problems are "wicked" not in the sense of being "evil", but in that they are seriously devious and can have (nasty) unintended consequences for the planners who try to do something about them. Furthermore, as a decision maker, whatever decision you make, a good portion of the stakeholders involved (often a majority of them!) are going to want your head on a block!

The following are recognized by those authors as characteristic of such problems

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
2. Wicked problems have no [stopping rule](#).
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not [true-or-false](#), but good or bad.
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.

5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation"; because there is no opportunity to learn by [trial and error](#), every attempt counts significantly.
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution.
10. The social planner has no right to be wrong (i.e., planners are liable for the consequences of the actions they generate).

The concept of problem wickedness has since been generalized to areas other than planning and policy. Although deliberately dissociated from "evil", any such articulation invites investigation into the possibility of "[reverse engineering](#)" it to enable it to encompass evil, especially if a wicked policy problem (more narrowly defined) can be understood as an instance of evil (more broadly defined).

**Evasive subtlety of evil:** As cited above, the Pope refers specifically to the "mysterious" nature of evil. Ari Hirvonen (2007) concludes:

Moreover, Kant argues that 'man is evil by nature', that is, evil can be predicated of man as a species. Through experience one cannot judge him otherwise. Evil is subjectively necessary to every human being, even to the best. Since human beings have a propensity to reverse the incentives, or a propensity to accept non-moral motives into their maxims, they have a propensity to evil. This propensity to evil must be considered as morally evil... the locus of evil is not our sensuous nature or reason but our free choice (*Willkür*). Therefore, human beings must be held responsible for it, even if it is deeply rooted in our being since it is ultimately self-caused. This evil Kant calls 'a radical evil' (*radicales Böse*)... It is important to keep in mind that radical evil does not mean for Kant any kind of extreme evil... Hence, one must search for the possibility of evil from the possibility of free choice from the *Willkür*. The propensity to evil is an act, a choice, but it is not a temporal event; instead it is related to us as citizens of the nation of freedom.

Given the conceptual revolutions of fundamental physics (relativity theories, quantum mechanics), it is appropriate to challenge "definition" as conventionally understood, especially in relation to a phenomenon believed to be as fundamental as evil.

Succinctly stated, for example, is evil a noun, a verb or an adjective -- or perhaps better a waveform? (*Freedom, Democracy, Justice: Isolated Nouns or Interwoven Verbs? Illusory quest for qualities and principles dynamically disguised*, 2011).

Is definitional closure to be avoided -- whether premature or otherwise? Given the rapidity with which so many past atrocities are forgotten by all but the few, is there a case for recognizing that some forms of evil may be characterized by a [half-life](#)? Is the half-life of evil consistent with the manner in which past evil loses its significance to become a "detail of history", as with the beheadings by French revolutionary tribunals and the gladiatorial contests emblematic of the Roman Empire?

## Adapting a proven problem profiling methodology to profiling of evil (Annex 6)

As noted above, the perceived problems systematically included in the online *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* imply that "world problems" in general could be recognized as instances of evil, suggesting the need for a particular form of update, as separately discussed (*Encycling Problematic Wickedness for Potential Humanity: imagining a future Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, 2014).

Far more controversially, **using that methodology, how should a *WikiEvil* hold instances claimed to be "evil" by some but denied as such by others, or readily forgotten as a "detail of history"?**

The merit of that methodology is that it effectively registers claims to problematic status without in any way evaluating those claims or taking a position on their relative importance. Some such hygienic "arms length" approach is even more necessary in processing claims with regard to evil -- readily recognized as dangerously "psychoactive", as otherwise explored (*Overpopulation Debate as a Psychosocial Hazard: development of safety guidelines from handling other hazardous materials*, 2009). As envisaged with respect to problems, there is the further possibility of encouraging new claims and counter-claims rather than treating any compilation as static.

The approach can be clarified by the juxtaposition of the commentaries on the existing profiles of world problems with those of the proposed profiling of evil. A "cut-and-paste" replacement of "problem" by "evil" would provide a basis for discussion and clarification. Some indication can be provided making the substitution whilst reading the commentaries referenced on the left below as a methodological "template"

Potential correspondence between structures of commentaries?	
On world problems project	On evil profiling project?
<b>0. Overview / Summary</b>	<b>0. Overview / Summary</b>
<b>1. Significance of World Problems Project</b>	<b>1. Significance of Evil Profiling Project</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Acknowledgement of the universe of problems</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Constraints on a problem-focused approach</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Framework for interrelating incompatible perspectives</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Unique features</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Precedents and parallels</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Precedents in history and tradition</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement of the universe of evil</li> <li>• Constraints on a evil-focused approach</li> <li>• Framework for interrelating incompatible perspectives</li> <li>• Unique features</li> <li>• Precedents and parallels</li> <li>• Precedents in history and tradition</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumptions</li> <li>• Problem disguises and problem evasion</li> <li>• Definitions</li> <li>• Problem inclusion</li> <li>• Problem exclusion</li> <li>• Problem importance</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumptions</li> <li>• Evil disguises and evil evasion</li> <li>• Definitions</li> <li>• Evil inclusion</li> <li>• Evil exclusion</li> <li>• Evil importance</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Method</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification procedure</li> <li>• Problem naming</li> <li>• Document control and problem description</li> <li>• Inter-problem relationships</li> <li>• Conceptual processes summarized</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Method</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification procedure</li> <li>• Naming of forms of evil</li> <li>• Document control and evil description</li> <li>• Inter-evil relationships</li> <li>• Conceptual processes summarized</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Patterning problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept refinement process</li> <li>• Classification and section attribution</li> <li>• Language games</li> <li>• Patterning the problematique</li> <li>• Computer representation of problem networks</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Patterning evil</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept refinement process</li> <li>• Classification and section attribution</li> <li>• Language games</li> <li>• Patterning the evil problematique</li> <li>• Computer representation of evil networks</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General</li> <li>• Approaches to problems</li> <li>• Beyond the problem-lobby mindset</li> <li>• Problem metaphors</li> <li>• Future possibilities</li> <li>• Problem perception and levels of awareness</li> <li>• Integration of perceived problems</li> <li>• Phases of human development through challenging problems</li> <li>• Future possibilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General</li> <li>• Approaches to evil</li> <li>• Beyond the evil-lobby mindset</li> <li>• Metaphors of evil</li> <li>• Future possibilities</li> <li>• Perception of evil and levels of awareness</li> <li>• Integration of perceived evil</li> <li>• Phases of human development through challenging evil</li> <li>• Future possibilities</li> </ul>

## Employing a problem profile as a template for an evil profile (Annex 7)

Adapting the above-mentioned [description of a problem profile](#) (Annex 6), understood here as a preliminary template for profiling evil, this would suggest the following:

- **Nature:** The editorial intent is not to provide a final "definition" of the evil perceived, but to indicate its "nature" and to clarify the preoccupations of the constituency concerned by that evil. The process resembles the procedures of a prosecutor preparing a brief to present the defendants' case in the manner most likely to ensure prosecution. The actual text may therefore be either very precise, amounting to a definition, or very loose, depending on the kind of evil and the information available. The text may be revised on a number of occasions, possibly as a result of being sent to an appropriate authority in proof form for comment. Paragraphs may be moved into the description from profiles of other forms of evil as a result of the processes described above.
- Other possible headings under which descriptive information might be provided include:
  - **Background**, used when some historical or technical context is required for an understanding of that evil
  - **Incidence**, used if there is some statistical, geographical or other information indicative of the extent of that evil
  - **Claim**, used to present examples of strong statements from bodies advocating priority attention to that evil, especially when the statements succinctly dramatize the overriding importance of that evil.
  - **Counter-claim**, used for examples of statements from bodies who consider that evil to be non-existent, totally misrepresented, or who deny its importance as a form of evil and may even consider that "evil" to be a solution.

Note that both "Claim" and "Counter-claim" differ from the other paragraphs in that they are judgemental and opinionated, rather than purporting to be factual. It is important to stress that the compilers are not attempting to present "the objective truth" by making editorial judgements on what is factual and what is not. The editors endeavour to present perceptions of evil as they are each perceived from the framework within which each is experienced as significant, using whatever "facts" are considered appropriate by bodies working within that framework. This is especially the case with the "Claim" and "Counter-claim" paragraphs. When such information is available, these paragraphs provide a means of reflecting more explicitly the dynamics between advocates and detractors of particular conceptions of evil. The existence of such dynamics is of course implicit in the juxtaposition of forms of evil which may be readily seen to be mutually exclusive.

"Claimants" in the case of the World Problems Project were understood to be international constituencies, typically international organizations of any persuasion, however they defined their own legitimacy. With respect to evil, the first concern is to benefit from claimants articulating their perception on the web.

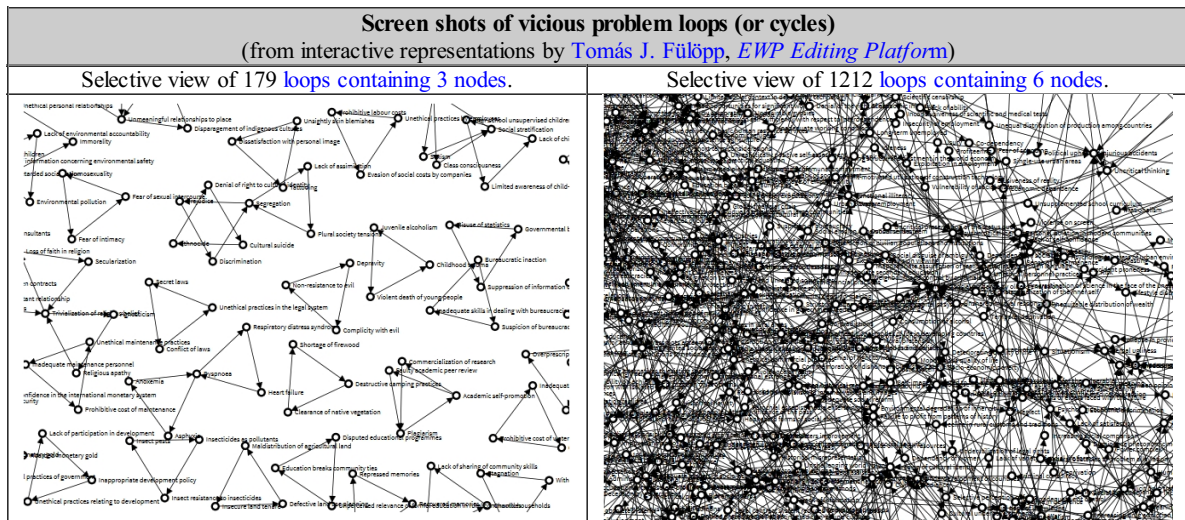
Of particular interest is the manner in which perceptions of evil can be understood as interrelated. Possibilities are indicated by using the approach indicated with respect to [inter-problem relationships](#) (Annex 6). This distinguished patterns of relationship which serve as a template for relationships between forms of evil:

- hierarchical relationships, namely by providing links to "broader" forms of evil, to "narrower" forms of evil, and to "related" forms of evil
- functional relations: namely when the profiled evil
  - aggravates a cited evil profiled separately
  - is aggravated by a cited evil profiled separately
  - alleviates a cited evil profiled separately,
  - is alleviated by cited evil profiled separately

## Evil loops and sigils as a pattern language (Annex 8)

**Loops:** As indicated above, extensive work has been done on analyzing and visualizing networks of problems and the "vicious loops" (of various lengths) they form in systemic terms (*Examples of vicious problem cycles and loops; Dysfunctional Cycles and Spirals: web resources on "breaking the cycle"*). This could well be adapted to the interrelationship between perceptions of evil -- and the higher orders of evil thereby evident. The networks might then offer a higher order of insight into wicked problems and any evil they may be held to embody.

Most obviously, recent developments in this analysis take the form of online mini-maps of the problems in which a particular problems is embedded, as described by [Tomás J. Fülöpp](#) (*Loop Mining in the Encyclopedia of World Problems*, 2015).








Shifting from the neutrality of "problems" to the psychoactive engagement with "evil" implies that such presentations offer depictions of evil as can be rendered with current information technology. Basically **such images, as vicious cycles, imply "looking at evil" in systemic terms**. It is however appropriate to note that systemic representations and network maps typically depict links linearly in contrast to what is implied by positive and negative **feedback loops** and cycles.

With respect to evil, this recalls the framing of "straight" in contrast to "bent" -- with such twisting presumably implying a degree of association of evil with "non-linear" and "curved". This helps to explain the ready association of whirlpools and tornados with evil (Flavius Saxo, *On Tornados, and the Problem of Evil, Turtles All the Way Down*, 2 June 2013; Yamin Zakaria, *Tornados, Hurricanes, Tsunamis and Earthquakes: why God permits evil, Radical Views*, 22 May 2013; Robert Jeffress, *Why does God allow tornados, tragedy and suffering? Fox News*, 26 May 2013).

**Psychoactive danger:** It is the psychoactive dimension of such representations which is to be recognized as posing a danger and requiring prudence. Comparisons can be usefully made with handling firearms, poisonous biochemical substances, and radioactivity. Special procedures have been developed to this end, with warning signs as to their necessity. These offer insights into possible procedures for handling what is perceived as evil, as discussed separately (*Overpopulation Debate as a Psychosocial Hazard: development of safety guidelines from handling other hazardous materials*, 2009; *Psychoactive Text Warning: enneagram of precautionary attitudes*, 2007; *Psychoactive hazards in recognizing and engaging with risk*, 2011).

Those explorations gave rise to proposals for a set of *Psychoactive hazard warnings: symbols relevant to overpopulation debate* (2009) of which the following are examples.

Exploration of psychosocial analogues to conventional hazard warnings in response to evil		
Hazard warning symbols	Conventional name	Possible psychosocial hazard in relation to evil topics
	Radiation sign	Indication of a source of potentially dangerous memes -- of "memetic radiation"
	Ionizing radiation sign	Indication of dangerously polarized debate
	Biohazard sign	Indication of debate with psychoactively hazardous implications for life and livelihood

	High voltage sign	High energy debate potentially dangerous to the unskilled or the unprotected
	Chemical weapon symbol	Psychoactive processes transformatively disruptive of the chemistry of dialogue and its conventional psychosocial processes

Relevant consideration of exposure to evil is evident with respect to harmful films and banned books (*List of books banned by governments; Ten Most Harmful Books of the 19th and 20th Centuries, Human Events*, 31 May 2005; *Banned, burned, or simply life changing: what are the best dangerous books? The Guardian*, 28 August 2015). As psychoactive hazards, libraries may only hold such books in special limited-access sections. Some libraries may indeed refuse to hold them. The theme is currently of relevance given controversy over the republication of *Mein Kampf* (Adam Gopnik, *Does "Mein Kampf" Remain a Dangerous Book? The New Yorker*, 12 January 2016).

**Sigils and logos:** As an integrative image, any focus on evil in this light recalls the considerable importance traditionally attached to **sigils** (Simon Jester, *Understanding and Creating Sigils*). As described by *Wikipedia*, these are symbols used in magic, usually referring to a type of pictorial signature of a demon or other entity. In modern usage, especially in the context of postmodern **chaos magic**, it refers to a symbolic representation of the desired outcome of the "magician".





Expressed otherwise, the latter may be understood in conventional terms as a "**change agent**". In aspiring to engage effectively with evil, it is therefore appropriate to glean insights from those who have done so in the past.

Curiously it could be argued that as a form of seal, there is considerable investment by national and international bodies in formulating and protecting a logo held to symbolize their preoccupations (*World Guide to Logotypes, Emblems and Trademarks of International Organizations*, 1997). A distinction needs to be made between a decorative logo -- whatever its symbolic (or heraldic) connotations -- and a thumbnail map articulated to frame cognitively the systemic focus of an activity.

Clearly there is little effort by international bodies, claiming responsibility for transformative global change, to reconcile the decorative, the symbolic, and intellectual property role of logos as an indication of the nature of their systemic comprehension. An exception in this respect is the **International Mathematical Union** with its careful choice of **Borromean rings**, as illustrated below



As with sigils, logos tend also to be closely associated with a string of letters -- typically the initials of the body in question. Again, however, **in the case of the logo, the set of such initials seldom reflects the systemic preoccupations required to engage effectively with change**. More curiously however, the superposition of the initials of a body approximates visually to a greater degree to the strange form of magical sigils -- but without embodying any systemic or cognitive significance as **concept maps** (Joseph D. Novak and Alberto J. Cañas, *The Theory Underlying Concept Maps and How to Construct and Use Them*, 2006)

"Sigils" of selected intergovernmental agencies? (unrelated to their systemic mandates)			
			
UNESCO	FAO	WHO	UNHCR

**Pattern language: "problems" as "demons":** The traditional pattern language of sigils can be understood otherwise in terms of **semantic maps** or **systems diagrams**, with whose dynamics wicked problems may be associated. Google provides many links to such diagrams and to sigils.

That traditional language, and its current exploration by **Wicca** and others, is of course readily deprecated from a conventional perspective -- but with little insight into any comparable equivalent, as might be appropriate to the engagement with evil. Evil is of course a very particular focus of the occult -- raising the question of how any *Encyclopedia of Evil* might be associated, or dissociated from that worldview, widely held to be problematic and evil in its own right. This is a reminder that a strong and continuing interest in evil is to be found in contexts with a particular understanding of magic, as in the description of **Sigils and Seals** by the Neuromagick Institute. An **extensive list** of examples is provided by the Sigil Workshop.

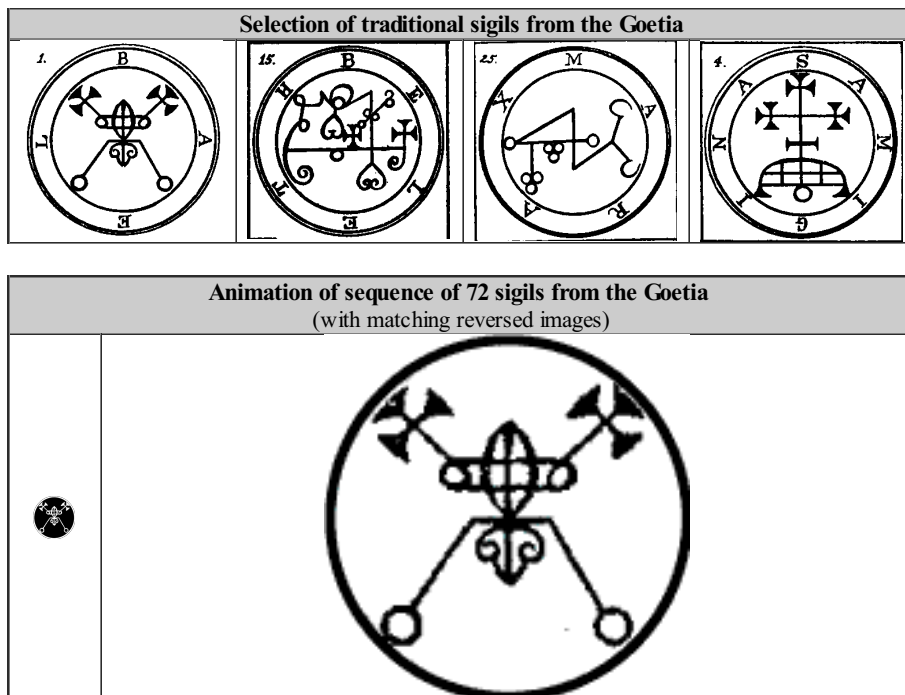
With the current shift of the most comprehensive framing by global governance from the **problematique** (as originally articulated by the Club of Rome) to the demonic (the "demonique"?), **there is a case for recognizing the implication that "problems" are now effectively to be understood as "demons"** -- as in the world views of the past.

However the processes of whole system design and mapping also imply the possibility of negligence through lack of attention to modes

of system failure, as variously discussed (Jake Chapman, *System Failure: why governments must learn to think differently*, Demos, 2004; Zahid H. Qureshi, *A Review of Accident Modelling Approaches for Complex Critical Sociotechnical Systems*, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, 2008; Burag Cetinkaya, *Modeling Failure Scenarios in Systems*, *InfoQ*, 23 April 2012; Brian Randell and Maciej Koutny, *Failures: their definition, modelling and analysis*, *Theoretical Aspects of Computing*, 4711, 2007, pp 260-274; John Gall, *Systemantics: how systems work and especially how they fail*, 1978). This understanding can also be explored through [viable system modelling](#) and through the [viable systems approach](#).

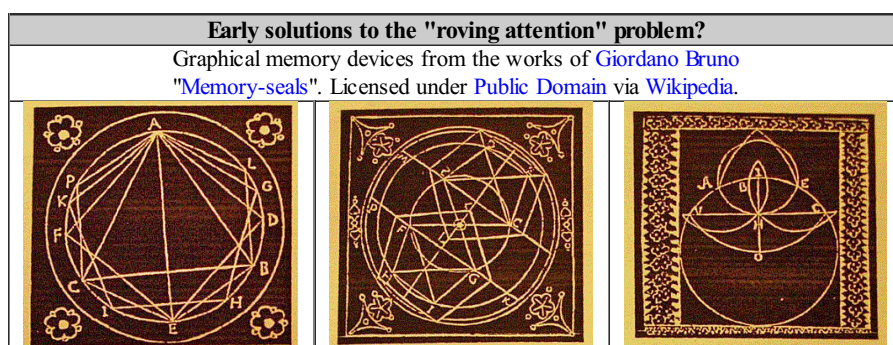
The set of **modes of systemic negligence could well be recognized as "demons"** for which vigilance is required in the governance of any system. Any understanding of the relationship between sigil and demon therefore merits careful attention, whatever mapping device is used. Demons then offer an imaginative means of distinguishing patterns of nonviability in systemic terms -- effectively of "unwholiness" or "unholiness". In geopolitical terms, an [unholy alliance](#) refers to an alliance perceived as unnatural, unusual, or simply undesirable, sometimes between seemingly antagonistic parties.

A much-cited traditional list of sigils is in *The Lesser Key of Solomon*. This presents the sigils of the 72 "princes of the hierarchy of hell" to be employed with the skills and understanding of traditional magic of the *Ars Goetia*. Within that worldview, such sigils have been considered to be the equivalent of the "true name of a spirit" and thus granted the magician a measure of control over them. Examples of such sigils include the following. *Wikipedia* offers a detailed [List of demons in the Ars Goetia](#) and a summary list of [Goetic demons in popular culture](#) (notably in role-playing games). The essence of a wicked problem, as a challenge to governance, could indeed be described metaphorically by such terms.



Whether reminiscent of wiring diagrams or concept maps, the sigils necessarily have a mnemonic function highlighting the need for such in engaging with global complexity, as separately discussed (*In Quest of Mnemonic Catalysts for Comprehension of Complex Psychosocial Dynamics*, 2007). The imaginative engagement of popular culture through gaming is a reminder of the vital function of imagination cultivated in magic, and potentially of significance for credible new approaches to global governance (*Imagining the Real Challenge and Realizing the Imaginal Pathway of Sustainable Transformation*, 2007; *Engendering 2052 through Re-imagining the Present*, 2012). The framing is significant in the light of the appreciation accorded by the *New Scientist* to the study by Olle Häggström (*Here Be Dragons: science, technology and the future of humanity*, 2015).

This issue touches upon the science of [mnemonics](#), as notably reviewed by [Francis Yates](#) (*The Art of Memory*, 1966) with respect to the [method of loci](#) -- appropriately understood in terms of "sites". The method, known in classical Greece and Rome, is a general designation for mnemonic techniques that rely upon memorized spatial relationships to establish, order and recollect memorial content. The term is currently most often found in specialized works on psychology, neurobiology and memory.



In this sense, can sigils be understood as corresponding to the individual patterns of a [pattern language](#) -- through which the multiple faces of evil manifestation are to be recognized? The pattern language can be considered as corresponding to any proposed pattern with respect to (wicked) problems featuring within the global problematique, as indicated above with respect to [Patterning the problematique](#).

Is a correspondence to be recognized between the associated magic "spells" and the "strategies" formulated for change in a global context -- where it might be said that powerful "magic" has long been desperately required, if only for public relations purposes?

It is profoundly ironic that it is the young, deeply addicted to role-playing games and the like, who are imaginatively cultivating insights into an extensive range of demonic imagery -- typically strongly deprecated by their elders. Is it remotely possible that as a cultural innovation this familiarization elicits a way of thinking about dynamic wicked problems with which their elders have proven to be significantly incompetent? **Are the young being enabled to engage with evil in a more appropriate manner?**

**Sigils for governance?** As a basis for reflection, sigils of a kind could be constructed by superposition of the letters in the initials of the name of a key intergovernmental agencies -- distinct from their logos. Tentatively translating the "sigil language", it might be asked **where are the 72 systemic maps framing the key global problems vital to global governance and social transformation?**

No such detailed mapping exercise is performed -- even with respect to the set of wicked problems or "social messes", although possibilities are envisaged ([Robert E. Horn. Knowledge Mapping for Complex Social Messes](#), 2001). It is of course the case that there are checklists of logos implying such a coordinated systemic preoccupation, at least potentially ([Top 10 United Nations Logos](#)).

There is however **no mapping of international agencies in systemic terms capable of matching the system of wicked problems** -- and negligible effort to produce one. It might be concluded that the so-called [international community](#) navigates the strategic challenges of the globe without any map -- despite concerns in that regard ([International Community as God or Sorcerer's Apprentice? Strategic chaos in the absence of an interlocking temporal pattern of longer-term cyclic processes](#), 2015). As secular deities (despite appropriations from Greek and Roman deities), presumably their logos could then be indicative of "serendipitous loops" representative of their remedial strategies. 3D variants ([Brief Survey of the Gods and Temples of the Omusien Pantheon](#), 1985),

Ironically a burgeoning interest in sigils is notably cultivated in some online gaming contexts. Sigils are, for example, central to the [The Talos Principle](#) video game, featuring a philosophical storyline. Also intriguing is use of [sigil in a computer programming context](#).

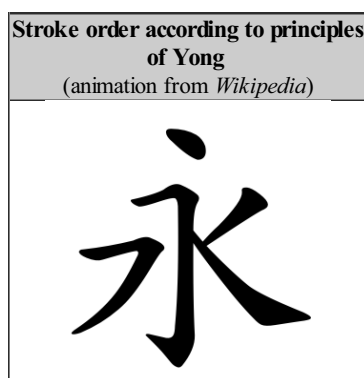
**Polyhedral configurations of sigils?** The strange cognitive appeal of sigils as a pattern language lends itself to further exploration in terms of symmetric configuration of concepts in polygons, polyhedra, and higher order polytopes. ([Eliciting Memorable Spheres and Polyhedra from Hyperspace: Integrative connectivity of problems, strategies, themes, groups or people](#), 2015). Whilst any reference to [pentacle](#) is conventionally deprecated as intimately related to evil, it is curious that the current international coalition against evil has been mobilized by the "[pentagon](#)" with support of the "[hexagon](#)" (Nathaniel B. Smith, [The Idea of the French Hexagon](#), *French Historical Studies*, 1969; Kristin Hohenadel, [France's New Defense Building, Inspired by the Pentagon, Is...a Hexagon](#), *Slate*, 13 November 2015).

It is of course the case that other symbolic features of the Middle East conflict are the [Islamic 5-pointed star](#) and the [6-pointed Star of David](#). As a means of containing evil behind a "seal", these elements of the crisis suggest a higher order reconciliation meriting exploration ([Middle East Peace Potential through Dynamics in Spherical Geometry: engendering connectivity from incommensurable 5-fold and 6-fold conceptual frameworks](#), 2012). The associated navigational implications of the so-called [pentagramma mirificum](#) also merit consideration ([Global Psychosocial Implication in the Pentagramma Mirificum: clues from spherical geometry to "getting around" and circumnavigating imaginatively](#), 2015).

Of related interest to any pattern language of relevance to evil -- given the association of viruses with the evil nature of disease -- is the current interest in icosahedral viruses. The protein shell of a virus is termed a [capsid](#). These are broadly classified according to their structure. The majority of viruses have capsids with either helical or icosahedra structure.

**Cognitive implications of sigil construction:** Given a degree of emphasis on the process of constructing sigils, also of potential relevance are insights from [Chinese calligraphy](#) in the light of the [8 Principles of Yong](#), as discussed separately ([Thirteen ways of apprehending blackbird song](#), 2014). The thinking with regard to the elaboration of the most aesthetic form of a Chinese character (as widely practiced) uses eight common [strokes](#) in [regular script](#).

This is illustrated with the character *yong*, signifying "forever" or "permanence". In Japan the principles (and the associated 72 types of "brush energy") were the focus of the Daishi school of calligraphy associated with [Kukai](#). **There is clearly a strong case for exploring what is understood by *yong* in relationship to "sustainability", as this is now so widely used with respect to strategic issues of governance -- in contrast with evil, potentially to be understood as its contrary.** Of particular relevance with respect to calligraphy are the cognitive and philosophical associations in the process of elaborating a character, as cultivated within the Zen tradition.



**Chirality and magic squares:** Of further relevance to the traditional symbolic representation of evil is the distinction arising from the **chirality** of sigils -- as most widely cited in relation to the left-handed or right-handed form of the swastika (*Swastika as Dynamic Pattern Underlying Psychosocial Power Processes: implicate order of Knight's move game-playing sustaining creativity, exploitation and impunity*, 2012). The animated sequences of sigils above are a reminder that "wicked problems" may call for complementary "enlightened strategies" and that "vicious loops" may need to be matched by "serendipitous loops".

Sigils are also traditionally related to **magic squares** or kameas, now notably made available as a computer app (**Kamea Sigils**). Such chirality can be explored in relation to the innovations of **Benjamin Franklin** with respect to magic squares -- as a Founding Father of the USA, elaborator of its Constitution and a freemason (*Metaphorical frame offered by insight from an 8x8 magic square*, 2015). Given the implication of freemasonry in governance, their appreciation of magic squares as a focal symbol merits attention.

## Engaging fruitfully with deadly opposition and fear of transformation (Annex 9)

**End times narrative:** The current **global war on terrorism** has been framed by world leaders whose countries notably include permanent members of the UN Security Council. Understood as a war unlikely to end in the immediate future, underlying their discourse is a degree of belief in a **final battle between the forces of good and evil**. This reflects prophecies of the Abrahamic religions with respect to **end times scenarios**, **Apocalypse** and **Armageddon**. The credibility of the imagery is evident from the title of the study by Len Scott (*Planning Armageddon: Britain, the United States and the Command of Western Nuclear Forces, 1945-1964*, Routledge, 2013)

These events are however understood in psychosocial and spiritual terms, whether or not accompanied by natural disasters (John Brandon, *It's the End of the World: 8 Potential Armageddons*, *Fox News Technology*, 29 September 2010). Characteristic of that battle is the assumption on each side that the other is representative of the forces of evil -- itself framed by a biblical phrase (*End Times Brother Against Brother*, *Open Bible*), adopted as a slogan in the American civil war (*Brother against Brother*), as well as featuring in video games, as separately discussed (*Brother against Brother*, 2015).

It could be said that, **at the highest level, recourse to the best of conventional rationality has been abandoned** -- except insofar as it enables the marshalling and delivering of destructive power. The framing of the ongoing confrontation, and the mobilizing of unquestioning consensus in that regard, can be usefully understood as extending into forms of memetic warfare, of which **information warfare** and **cyberwarfare** are but obvious manifestations (Brian J. Hancock, *Memetic Warfare: the future of war*, *Military Intelligence*, 36, 2010, 2, pp. 41-46; *Conceptual defence systems and memetic warfare*, 2001; *Selected Articles: "Steering The Masses Towards Total War"*, *Global Research*, 18 November 2015).

**Death ground:** Curiously, in military terms, the US-led international community has placed itself at considerable disadvantage in its confrontation with ISIS and Islamic jihadism, framed as emblematic of evil. This is despite a decade-long conflict and desperate use of an unprecedented number of bombs. As a basic principle of military strategy, **disadvantage is ensured when the opposition continues to be able to choose and define the ground for ongoing conflict** -- whether in the Middle East or through the levels of threat engendered elsewhere. **The international community has been obliged to adopt a potentially obsolete, reactive mindset in framing its relation to deadly opposition.**

Reinforced by a **Manichaeon** worldview, only too habitual to Judeo-Christianity, no other strategic modality is envisaged or open to exploration. Of value to this recognition is the use of "field" and "territory" in relation to the challenge of otherness. As used, the metaphor is directly related to the topography and geometry of the physical ground. It recalls and sustains the dynamics of the sports fields over which engagement with an opposing team so typically takes place -- with all the habitual responses thereby instilled and sustained. In terms of strategic thinking, this association is reinforced by the recently recognized process of paid patriotism (Burgess Everett, *Report: Pentagon spent millions on 'paid patriotism' with pro sports leagues*, *Politico*, 4 November 2015).

Understood as the war to end all wars, the current global engagement is defined as "being at war". So framed, with whatever inspiration is derived from the classic of **Sun Tzu** (*The Art of War*), little attention is however accorded the psychosocial significance of death ground, identified there as fundamental. Jihadists engage existentially with that nexus, as described by Brent Parrish (*On Death Ground*, *The Right Planet*, 7 August 2012). As widely noted, this engagement differs fundamentally from the unpreparedness for death of those who face them -- individually or collectively. This is despite appropriation of that same term (Daniel P. Bolger, *Death Ground: today's American infantry in battle*, 2003; David Weber and Steve White, *In Death Ground*, 1997; Ty Cunningham, *On Death Ground: the way of strategy forged by nature*, 2015).

According to John Carroll (*Retreating From 'The Death Ground'*, *Boston Globe*, 22 May 2001):

Military theorists define the point of no return in war as the "Death Ground," the place from which the only way out is to kill. After soldiers experience that, the ruthlessness of combat moves to a new level, and fighting to the death becomes natural. The Death Ground is the most fearsome place in the world, yet, of course, it is not a place at all, but a state of mind. Where a military initiative may have first been organized to assure the well-being of one's group, on the Death Ground the very meaning of such well-being shifts, and now even survival can seem a lesser value. Honor or revenge or the feeling of mastery over one's destiny can matter more than life.

The challenge framed by the jihadist implication is whether it is now a case of retreating from the death ground or rather one of understanding its nature otherwise -- collectively rather than individually alone.

Rather than a field, evoking the pattern dynamics of a football field and its goal posts, is the space in which the engagement takes place far more complex in topological terms -- as might at least be indicated by that of aerial combat, but perhaps of more dimensions (as envisaged by some science fiction with respect to "hyperspace")? Rather than the linearity of football trajectories, might it be primarily

characterized by "curveballs" -- lending themselves far too readily to simplistic framing as "cunning" and "evil"?

Given the focus on the prophesied final battle between good and evil on the field(s) of Armageddon, attention is appropriate to commentary on the original meaning of that term in Hebrew, such as that of John Ramsden (*Armageddon: where and when will it happen?* *Bible Magazine*). As "fields", Armageddon may be more fruitfully explored in the light of their configuration in spacetime, as in polyhedra or 4-polytopes, or as in some cognitive analogue to an [electromagnetic field](#) -- calling for a confrontation between waveforms (*Encountering Otherness as a Waveform: in the light of a wave theory of being*, 2013; *Reimagining Tesla's Creativity through Technomimicry*, 2014).

Such thinking contrasts with the focus on nation "states" and their implied stasis -- together with that of "state of the world" reporting -- as separately argued (*Dynamic Transformation of Static Reporting of Global Processes: suggestions for process-oriented titles of global issue reports*, 2013). Engaging with the Islamic State might benefit from another mode of thinking, in contrast with that implied by Jacques Neriah (*Explaining the Islamic State Phenomenon*, *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, 20 January 2016):

The Islamic State is a terrorist state with almost all governing elements. Over the last four years, it has developed from an extremist fringe and marginal faction to become the strongest, most ferocious, best funded and armed militia in the religious and ethnic war that is waged today in Syria and Iraq.

**Knowledge of the enemy?** Curiously, given the fundamental nature of the deadly challenge by which the conflict with jihadism is framed, **little attention is paid to particular advice of Sun Tzu regarding knowledge of the enemy**. There is seemingly little desire or need to explore what drives a dangerous opponent. Although the theme is evoked by Barbara Elias (*Know Thine Enemy: why the Taliban cannot be flipped*, *Foreign Affairs*, 2 November 2009), the insights offered there are in conventional western terms unrelated to the mysterious existential drivers of a nature enabling suicide -- however these may be construed as the essence of evil.

One approach to such understanding has been made by Jon Basil Utley (*Sun Tzu and America's Way of War*, *AntiWar.com*, 4 February 2010). He comments on Sun Tzu's main maxims of war as follows (note, however, that there are alternative translations):

- The best victory is to win without actually fighting. Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.
- Know thyself and know thy enemy. If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle. (Alternative: The best victory is when the opponent surrenders of its own accord before there are any actual hostilities... It is best to win without fighting.)
- There is no instance of a country having benefited from a long war.
- Try to break up your enemy's alliances.
- The best thing is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good.
- Empires are lost when inadequate men become leaders and wage war for base reasons or for no reason at all.
- Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend; go swiftly to place where you are not expected.
- That general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.
- If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant.
- Fight not unless the position is critical. The good general is full of caution. This is the way to keep a country at peace and an army intact.

Whilst valuable in framing further discussion, Utley reviews the strategies of the USA in conventional terms rather than looking for insights within the complex cognitive space in which jihadists may be assumed to *live and move and have their being* (*Colossians 1:17*, *Bible Hub*) -- presumably matching that to which that Christian citation refers and driving Christian righteousness in opposing it as evidence of evil.

## Insights from engaging with the wild (Annex 10)

**Insights from the terrors of the wild:** The relevance of the questions can be simply explored in the engagement with a dangerous wild animal, typically evocative of fear ([agrizoophobia](#)) -- even terror -- as with a raging tiger, a crocodile, a snake, or a bear. Curiously however there are people with well-honed skills and experience in that process ([horsewhisperers](#), and the like). They see no need to react to such exposure by eliminating the animal, capturing it, caging it, or taming it (otherwise framed as "breaking its spirit"). However the nature of their skills is less than evident to most -- who prefer to respond reactively, as with the eradication of any perceived threat to lives or livelihood (possibly through framing as pests). The unusual insights and innovations of [Temple Grandin](#) come to mind in engaging with livestock.

Is the western-led response to the evil of ISIS comparable to efforts to eradicate wolves from rural areas, notably given exploitation of that metaphor (Andrew L. Peek, *The Roots of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, *Foreign Affairs*, 12 January 2016)? This is despite controversial issues raised by the recently recognized role of "dangerous" wildlife in ecosystems -- in relation to efforts to reintroduce them (named [rewilding](#)). The eradication metaphor itself has controversial implications, as separately argued (*Eradication as the Strategic Final Solution of the 21st Century?*, 2014).

Is the quality of such thinking to be compared to any French initiative to dispatch its aircraft carrier to the Pacific in order to smash [El Niño](#) as being an immediate threat and source of terror in those regions -- perhaps inspired by the logic of weather modification for strategic purposes? As with El Niño, fundamental beliefs may not be as responsive to bombs as is assumed. Expressed otherwise, ideas

cannot be bombed.

**Insights from fear of conversion:** There is an extensive literature on fear of conversion between religions, notably in the light of the proselytizing zeal of competing religions:

- J. N. Bremmer, et al (Eds.): *Cultures of Conversions* (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change, 2006).
- Esther Dwarswaard: *Proselytism and Conversion zeal* (Knowledge Centre for Religion and Development, 2010)
- *Debating Conversion in Different Historical Contexts* (Center for the Study of Conversion, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2014)
- Lewis R. Rambo: *Understanding Religious Conversion* (Yale University Press, 1995)
- Lewis R. Rambo, et al (Eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion* (Oxford University Press, 2014)
- H. Gooren: *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation: tracing patterns of change in faith practices* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
- Ines W. Jindra: *New Model of Religious Conversion: beyond network theory and social constructivism* (Brill Academic, 2014)

The fear is evident with respect to suspicions regarding the hidden agendas of interreligious dialogue, as well as the threat of [syncretism](#), heresy, blasphemy and [apostasy](#), usefully documented by Anton Karl Kozlovic (*Seven Logical Consequences of Interreligious Dialoguing: A Taxonomy of Praxis Possibilities*, *Marburg Journal of Religion*: 8, 2003). Especially noteworthy is the ghreat engendered by the zeal of new religions, sects and cults, readily understood to be misguided, if not inherently evil. The insights are valued in the light of concerns regarding fundamentalism, especially Islamic jihadism.

**Questionable opportunities?** Still to be explored in relation to the strange archetypal battle between good and evil are issues usefully framed by the classic set of WH-questions:

- **Where** is the opposition coming "from" -- as might be explored in cognitive, philosophical, and existential terms sustained by belief (in relation to locus in a global context)?
- **Why** is it experienced as deadly -- in its effects on those framing themselves as the epitome of good?
- **What** is there to fear -- perhaps understood in terms of the transformation it may entail in valued habitual processes, and therefore held to be absolutely non-negotiable?
- **When** is it deadly -- especially if it is mistakenly assumed to be continually threatening, rather than only occasionally, if unpredictably, or especially triggered?
- **Who** embodies the danger -- especially if there is a tendency to over-generalization, stereotyping and stigmatism (and failure to address the mysteries of identity. multiple identities, etc)?
- **Which** manifestations are dangerous -- especially if profiling is unspecific and ill-informed (requiring distinctive responses)?
- **How** best to respond -- given that conventional responses may be more than inappropriate?

Such questions may themselves be related to the complexity of cognitive and existential catastrophe, as separately discussed (*Conformality of 7 WH-questions to 7 Elementary Catastrophes: an exploration of potential psychosocial implication*, 2008). This may be associated with the exploration of [catastrophe theory](#) and semiophysics of (René Thom, *Semio Physics: A Sketch*, 1990; Peeter Mürsepp, *Semiophysics as a Theoretical Basis for Scientific Creativity*; F.T. Arecchi, *Complexity and Emergence of Meaning: toward a semiophysics*, 2001; Franson D. Manjali, *Catastrophe Theoretic Semantics: towards a physics of meaning*, *Semiotics Institute Online*, 1997). The encounter with deadly opposition -- framed as evil -- is then to be understood as a threatening cognitive catastrophe.

The argument here concerns the nature of a question, prefiguring as a form of "cognitive catastrophe", through which an existing pattern of understanding is transformed to enable a new pattern to emerge. It might be said that there is a distinct "feel" to each such form of question (*Cognitive Feel for Cognitive Catastrophes: Question Conformality*, 2006). It could prove to be related to creative insight or revelation.

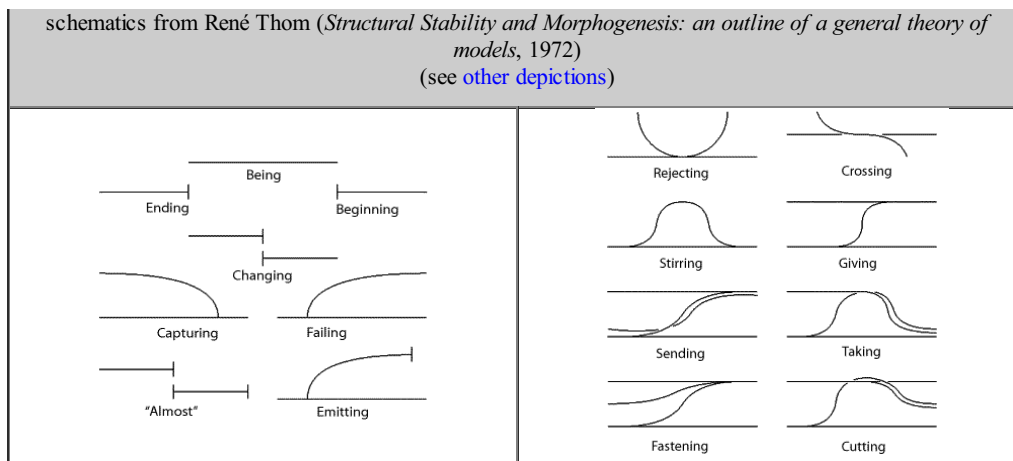
This approach can be used to explore the nature of the question most "deadly" to any non-negotiable commitment to the status quo, as separately discussed (*World Futures Conference as Catastrophic Question: from performance to morphogenesis and transformation*, 2013). That exploration was notably framed in terms of the following themes:

- [Questioning as cognitive portal to the future](#)
- [In quest of the most deadly question](#)
- [Enabling morphogenesis and transformation through catastrophic questioning](#)
- [Markings: ¿ Question 8 Answer ?!](#)
- [Conferencing as putting identity to the question](#)

**Modes of experiencing otherness as potentially deadly:** In the light of the visual renderings of the different forms of catastrophe, their topology suggests exploration in terms of particular [phobias](#) such as: [fear of falling](#), [fear of heights](#) (acrophobia), [fear of gravitational pull](#) (barophobia), [fear of disorientation](#) (vertigo), [fear of open places](#) (agoraphobia), [fear of enclosure](#) (claustrophobia), [fear of freedom](#) (eleutherophobia), [fear of movement](#) (kinesophobia). Of interest, with respect to the fear of falling, is the use of the metaphor in spiritual terms (*The Fall of Man* in Abrahamic theology) and in reference to [backsliding](#).

It is appropriate to note the potential relevance of the pattern of 16 fundamental "archetypal morphologies" in the figure below, as identified by topologist René Thom. Of specific relevance are the "metaphorical" terms, by which he briefly describes the nature of each (see also [Wolfgang Wildgen](#), *Catastrophe Theoretical Semantics: an elaboration and application of René Thom's theory*, 1982). The question is how these might be indicative of engagement with otherness experienced as potentially deadly through the transformative change implied.

**Archetypal morphologies of Thom -- potentially indicative of distinctive forms of fear of otherness?**



With respect to the sense and nature of "opposition", further credibility of an approach of this nature is offered by the work of Hector Sabelli and Gerald H. Thomas (*The Future Quantum Computer: Biotic Complexity*, 2008) who argue:

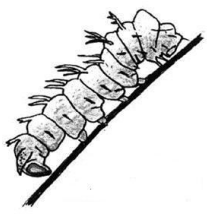


Some forms of opposition, including negation, may be modeled by catastrophes. Thom's catastrophes provide a good starting point to go beyond the standard "and" and "or" gates. First, according to Thom's theorem, we need to consider only a few control forms. The limited number of archetypal morphologies that Thom identified is assumed to be universal. Certainly forms are created and constrained by physical factors that also extend across the chemical, biological, social, and psychological domains. We may apply this concept to logical statements. Second, it is good starting point because catastrophe forms appear in the study of choice... Third, Thom... and others have already explored how catastrophes can be used to model active verbs representing actions, as contrasted to Boolean logic that only models the non-active copula "to be." Thom give a constructive and a destructive interpretation to each catastrophe. For instance, the fold represents to begin and to end; the cusp represents to engender or unite and to capture and to break; the butterfly represents to give and to receive, as well as to exfoliate.

It is appropriate to note the (necessarily) controversial appreciation of Thom's methodology (David Aubin, *Forms of Explanations in the Catastrophe Theory of Rene Thom: Topology, Morphogenesis, and Structuralism*, 2004). However it is remarkable to note a fruitful interpretation of Thom's basic thesis (*Structural Stability and Morphogenesis: an outline of a general theory of models*, 1972):

- structural stability can be understood as the normal order of global societal engaged in business-as-usual and committed to the status quo, currently understood as threatened by deadly opposition in the form of terrorism -- held to be imbued with evil
- morphogenesis can be understood as the process of transformation to any new pattern of order, necessarily a terrifying prospect for many, if not most

Thom's initial preoccupation was with the transformation of biological forms during their life cycle. This necessarily makes no reference to the experience of that form exposed to the necessity of change.

**Fear of change framed by morphogenesis of a butterfly?** A remarkable illustration of transformative change is provided by that undergone in the well-recognized lifecycle of the butterfly -- from caterpillar, via pupa, to imago. The widespread calls for "change", and the sensed need for it, could be explored metaphorically in terms of the pressures and tensions, felt within the butterfly, that elicit the necessary "rewiring" of its instinctual behavioural patterns and metabolic processes. from the insect chrysalis -- the stage in the life cycle of lepidopterons when, within a self-spun cocoon, rapacious (and somewhat ugly) caterpillars undergo a sensational re-configuration of both form and function, to emerge as delicate (and often beautiful) butterflies (or moths if their particular genes so dictate).

Caterpillar-to-Butterfly Transformation -- a Renaissance				
Caterpillar		Pupa/Chrysalis		Butterfly
	?		?	
Business-as-usual consumption society committed to the status quo	<b>Existential terror</b>	Unexplored transition	<b>Existential terror</b>	Flight-enabled global civilization (as variously imagined)

There is naturally no reference to the terror experienced by a caterpillar faced with the process of transformation into a butterfly. As noted below, this example features as a metaphor in some commentaries on social transformation. This frames global civilization as:

- currently to be compared to a **caterpillar**, focused primarily on consumption, accumulation, and voluminous growth -- with no implication of transformative growth of any other kind, however necessary this might be for the future evolution of humanity

- confronted by the imminent future prospect of becoming a **butterfly**, with all the agonising reorganization that this may imply -- naturally to be experienced as terrifying

Such transformation provides a perspective on the widely discussed theme of fear of change (*Fear of Change*, *The Huffington Post*; Mark Connelly, *Fear Of Change Is A Top Reason For Resistance To Change*, *Change Management*; Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War: with fear of change*, 2011). This may be framed as terror of change, notably for the individual (Lawrence Tirnauer, *Power and Terror of Change*, *The Psychotherapy Patient*, 1985).

For any institution or society, what indeed is the "deadly question" to enable the transition from "caterpillar" to "pupa", and from "pupa" to "imago" -- through the "death" of the preceding modality?

Much of the terror may be associated with what is necessarily unknown, possibly calling for a new mode of thought (*Inexplicable unknowns: the challenge of "the dark"?* 2010; *Epistemological Panic in the face of Nonduality Does nothing matter?* 2010). That which is not understood is readily reframed as inherently evil.

As discussed separately (*Animating the Representation of Europe*, 2004), the necessary institutional metamorphosis for the 21st century has been explored by John Elkington (*The Chrysalis Economy*, 2001) through this caterpillar-to-butterfly metaphor. For Elkington, the transformation is not achieved without radical shifts in the nature of the animal that involves "self-digestion" before metamorphosis is possible. He uses insights from this metaphor to illuminate many aspects of corporate transformation.

Using the same metaphor, Edgar Morin (*Vers l'abime*, *Le Monde*, 1er janvier 2003) argues:

La métamorphose de la chenille en papillon nous offre une métaphore intéressante: quand la chenille est entrée dans le cocon, elle opère l'autodestruction de son organisme de chenille, et ce processus est en même temps celui de formation de l'organisme de papillon, lequel sera à la fois le même et autre que la chenille. Cela est la métamorphose. La métamorphose du papillon est préorganisée. La métamorphose des sociétés humaines en une société monde est aléatoire, incertaine, et elle est soumise aux dangers mortels qui lui sont pourtant nécessaires. Aussi l'humanité risque-t-elle de chavirer au moment d'accoucher de son avenir.

Its seemingly terrifying nature, especially when inappropriately managed, is usefully distinguished from the following semblances of change by Susan Richards (*Taming the Change Management Monster*, 20 October 2015):

- *Knee-jerk Change* -- based on hasty decisions made without due diligence or sufficient input from affected parties
- *Cinderella Change* -- expecting to succeed without seeking out and addressing the reasons for the failure of previous initiatives; requires a Fairy Godmother
- *Do As I Say Change* -- when leadership teams speak the right words but do not demonstrate their commitment through actions
- *Yo-Yo Change* -- unpredictable, exemplified by ever-changing priorities, plans, and promises
- *Tightrope Change* -- when employees are asked to "work without a net" of education and training to perform their altered jobs
- *Dishonest Change* -- featuring communication that is unclear or glosses over expected negatives like possible job loss

Curiously there is some intuitive, metaphorical recognition of a requisite degree of transformation to enable an organization or project to "fly". With respect to organizational transformation, there are many related jokes concerning earth-bound "turkeys" in contrast with "eagles" able to fly. The notion of radical wings is also of relevance (*Counteracting Extremes Enabling Normal Flying: insights for global governance from birds on the wing and the dodo*, 2015).

Comparison with a caterpillar, clutching desperately as its source of nourishment with **prolegs**, suggests that global civilization is unconsciously anticipating a **pupal transitional phase** through the focus on "spinning" narratives and the **cocooning** trend. In this respect, the cognitive implications of an "encyclopedia" are more fruitfully explored through "encycling", as separately discussed (*Encycling rather than Encyclopaedia: dynamic versus static?* 2014). Given the inspiration currently offered by biomimicry, this suggests the merit of exploring the extensively studied processes of **biological metamorphosis** as indicative of psychosocial analogues. To the extent that those implied by the emergence of the butterfly are recognized and prefigured through intuition and imagination, the extensive commentary evoked by the butterfly dream of **Chuang Tzu** merits attention (C. W. Chan, *The Butterfly Dream*, *The Philosopher*, 83, 2; Kuang-ming Wu, *The Butterfly as Companion*, 1990).

**Identification with threatening otherness through mirroring:** Given the fear of an enemy, ultimately as the embodiment of evil and source of terror, missing from any references to "know thine enemy" is the insight in the remarkable well-known reference in the *Pogo strip* cartoon by **Walt Kelly**: *We have met the enemy and he is us*. This is upheld as framing the foibles of mankind and the nature of the human condition.

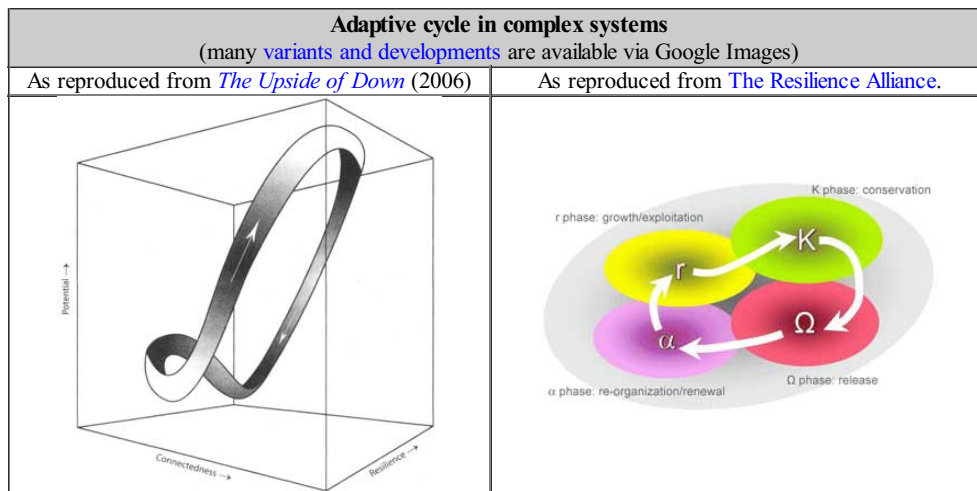
The quote speaks to the recognition, articulated otherwise, of the manner in which a feared enemy mirrors one's own condition in some subtle manner. This notably features in the extensive psychological literature on the **shadow**, understood as indicative of a part of the unconscious mind consisting of repressed weaknesses (Stephen A. Diamond, *Essential Secrets of Psychotherapy: what is the "Shadow"?* *Psychology Today*, 20 April 2012; Jeremiah Abrams and Connie Zweig, *Meeting the Shadow: the hidden power of the dark side of human nature*, 1991; Robert A. Johnson, *Owning Your Own Shadow: understanding the dark side of the psyche*, 1993; Christopher Perry, *The Shadow*, *The Society of Analytical Psychology*). As noted by Perry with respect to the shadow and evil:

That leads us to the deepest areas of the shadow, where we find manifestations of evil as a dynamic in the world to which we need to relate with collective guilt, responsibility and reparation: privatised water, the arms trade, famine, torture, Guantanamo Bay etc; each of us will have such a list. The problem of evil is one that Jung explored through his correspondence with the

Dominican, [Fr Victor White](#), and through his writings, particularly [Answer to Job](#).

Aside from extension of the shadow metaphor to the collective unconscious, the sense of threat is also evident in its use with respect to the [shadow economy](#) (namely the black market), [shadow government](#), and the [dark web](#).

**Resilience of an adaptive cycle:** Of some relevance to any such understanding is the theory of [hypercyclic morphogenesis](#), namely the emergence of a higher order of self-reproducing structure, organization, or hierarchy within a system. This might well be associated with increasing understanding of an adaptive cycle appropriate to resilience. As implied by the caterpillar-to-butterfly metaphor, rather than constituting unidirectional transformations, these are phases in a cycle of renewal. The butterfly engenders new caterpillars calling for comprehension in cognitive terms. This challenge is intimately related to that of the need to navigate the adaptive cycle with which they are associated. 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). (*Adaptive Hypercycle of Sustainable Psychosocial Self-organization*, 2010)



A particular difficulty with the term "adaptation" was originally clarified in a report to the Club of Rome. Understood as "maintenance learning", this was usefully distinguished from "shock learning". As discussed in a critique of that report (*Societal Learning and the Erosion of Collective Memory*, 1980):

Maintenance learning is the acquisition of fixed outlooks, methods, and rules for dealing with known recurring situations. It enhances our problem-solving ability for problems that are given. It is the type of learning designed to maintain an existing system or an established way of life. Maintenance learning is, and will continue to be, indispensable to the functioning and stability of every society. (p.10)

Maintenance learning reinforces existing categories and paradigms, the disciplines to which they give rise, and the professional and institutional division of labour of which they are the basis. Funding for the associated information systems is governed by maintenance priorities.

But, as the Club of Rome report points out:

Traditionally societies and individuals have adopted a pattern of continuous maintenance learning interrupted by short periods of innovation stimulated largely by the shock of external events... Even up to the present moment, humanity continues to wait for events and crises that would catalyze or impose this primitive learning by shock. But the global problematique introduces at least one new risk -- that the shock could be fatal. This possibility, however remote, reveals most clearly the crisis of conventional learning: primary reliance on maintenance learning not only is blocking the emergence of innovative learning, but it renders humanity increasingly vulnerable to shock; and under conditions of global uncertainty, learning by shock is a formula for disaster. (p. 10)

Reframed in terms of the adaptive cycle, there is a case for recognizing a shocking intermediary phase through which the caterpillar-to-butterfly transition is rendered cyclic. Considered as a fourth phase this merits exploration in terms of Jung's (necessarily?) controversial understanding of evil in his *Answer to Job* (1952) -- as a missing fourth element calling for fourfold insight.

**Engaging with terror of transformation through embodiment:** From such perspectives, the challenge is how to reframe the "ground" on which -- or within which -- engagement with terrifying opposition is encountered. This requires exploration of **how to shift beyond the preoccupation with possession of "field" and "terrain" as (intellectual) property**. The issue might be on how to transform the field (in topological terms) and to "shift the goal posts" and whatever they are held to signify. It could be understood as the quest for "uncommon" ground (*911+ Questions in Seeking UnCommon Ground and protecting the Middle Way from Binary Thinking*, 2001).

This seemingly requires a process analogous to that in which the caterpillar engages at the cellular and organ level -- which might well be understood as "radicalising". This can then be seen a prelude to embodiment otherwise an embodiment of the other as terrifyingly mirrored and imagined (*Embodiment of Change: Comprehension, Traction and Impact? Discovering enabling questions for the future*, 2011). Understood as the mirroring of a collective shadow, how best to engage with the terror engendered by looking in a mirror --

perhaps as exemplified for Oscar Wilde (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1890)? Cognitively the terror might be compared with that associated with fear of conversion.

Rather than the "after" in the case made by Richard Kearney (*Thinking after Terror: an interreligious challenge*. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Crossroads*, 2005), it could be better explored in terms of "in", as in a commentary on his argument (*Thinking in Terror: refocusing the interreligious challenge from "Thinking after Terror"*, 2005). There it was argued that

This comment has been entitled "Thinking in Terror" to suggest that there may be an abomination more terrifying than the terrors of the Holocaust and 9/11. How might this feature in the "great mystery"? There is the possibility that the terror is unconsciously recognized as so great that thinking about it is set behind the most rigid forms of denial -- petrifying those that consider its implications (as suggested by the *Gorgon Medusa* and other myths) [more]. This may effectively give rise to a "terror of thinking". What might cause such terror?

This was clarified in the following terms:

There is a challenge offered by terrorism from a spiritual perspective -- and by the scientific innovations offering ever more horrific means of causing terror. The challenge lies in whether the theoretical advances in the fundamental sciences regarding the nature of reality offer cognitive guidelines and templates through which dialogue can transcend the dualism separating religions. Pointers are, for example, offered by physicist David Bohm (*Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980) and his subsequent deep involvement in dialogue processes [more], or by mathematician Ron Atkin (*Multidimensional Man; can man live in 3-dimensional space?*, 1981) [more]. People might thereby be carried into the "fabric of reality" -- into "the stones" -- through a process that may hold a key to the "invisible" character of the ubiquitous "unspeakable, inexplicable, unlocateable terror" to which Kearney refers.

This is consistent with other recommendations variously associated with Sun Tzu:

- To know your enemy, you must become your enemy.
- Be extremely subtle, even to the point of formlessness. Be extremely mysterious, even to the point of soundlessness. Thereby you can be the director of the opponent's fate.

This insight may be explored further in the light of the process of *enantiodromia* whereby the overriding emphasis on one framework or set of values eventually engenders its opposite. This is a process only too evident in the adoption by those abhorring certain modalities who seem eventually to take on those modalities to some degree -- as with terrorism -- and despite denials of moral equivalence.

The process could be explored in the light of the insights of fundamental physics regarding the requisite design of the CERN *Large Hadron Collider* or the nuclear fusion reactor (ITER). These offer framings which can be speculatively explored, as separately discussed (*Dynamic Interrelationship of Symbols of Coherent Experiential Representation of Nonduality (DISCERN)*, 2008; *Enactivating a Cognitive Fusion Reactor: Imaginal Transformation of Energy Resourcing (ITER-8)*, 2006).

With their dependence on mathematics of the greatest sophistication, it might be asked whether handling evil appropriately calls for more extensive exploration of mathematical theology, as separately discussed (*Mathematical Theology: Future Science of Confidence in Belief -- Self-reflexive Global Reframing to Enable Faith-based Governance*, 2011; *Towards a Logico-mathematical Formalization of "Sin": fundamental memetic organization of faith-based governance strategies*, 2004).

With respect to CERN, that initiative could be seen as a splendid metaphor of the degree of extreme denial characteristic of conventional scientific thinking at its best? To what extent is the degree of focus on the most fundamental secrets of the known universe and its origins to be seen as comparable to the much-cited tale of the person searching at night under a lamplight for lost keys, because it was "easier" to search there although the person knows the keys to have been lost beyond the lighted area where the search was more difficult?

With respect to ITER, this would seem to offer insights into fruitful new ways of handling deadliness (in that case radioactivity) -- skillfully avoiding inappropriate closure -- such as to derive vital energy for global civilization. Is this how perception of evil should be channelled? Both CERN and ITER suggest **new ways of reconfiguring the "ground" on which engagement with deadly opposition can be fruitfully explored -- to the benefit of both opponents. Should the engagement then continue to be framed as "fighting", with a view to "defeat", as is the only strategic option currently envisaged** (*Enhancing Sustainable Development Strategies through Avoidance of Military Metaphors*, 1998)? Poetry could help to render other insights comprehensible (*Ensuring Strategic Resilience through Haiku Patterns: reframing the scope of the "martial arts" in response to strategic threats*, 2006).

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