



laetus in praesens

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Evil Rules

Guidelines for Engaging in Armageddon Now

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Introduction

There is now extensive reference to evil in the media, in political declarations, in commentary on the web, and even in academic literature. Most of these references are very clear on what is evil or who is evil. Some of the commentary endeavours to raise questions about how evil is framed. This tends to be matched by other references which consider that raising such subtleties is part of the problem and effectively just another manifestation of evil.

In such circumstances it is appropriate to recognize that the prophesied battle of [Armageddon](#) is not some time in the future. That ultimate battle between good and evil is now. This is a time clearly characterized by the Biblical reference: *And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against [their] parents, and cause them to be put to death* ([Matthew 10:21](#)).

The argument here is that Armageddon is better understood as a Battle with Otherness, with which evil is so readily associated. However that "otherness" is even more appropriately understood self-reflexively as a Battle with Ourselves with regard to meaning, identity, credibility and their comprehension. Viable communication of such comprehension requires a language that calls itself into question, challenging premature closure on particular definitions. In this sense the nature of the "battle" is itself better recognized through the subtlest understanding of the "martial arts". It is therefore not surprising that confusion regarding Islamic Jihad has already evoked confusion with regard to a Christian Jihad and a Jewish Jihad. The fundamental struggle is one of comprehension.

Some comment on commentaries about evil offers further insight. Reference is made to that in concluding sections below -- however irrelevant to the dynamics of the battle in which people are required to engage now. More relevant to an understanding of that battle is a sense of the rules governing individual and collective behaviour in the face of evil. Hence the following checklist.

Evil rules

1. My country, my religion, my party, and my people cannot in any way be considered evil, any more than myself.
2. Other countries, religions, parties and people have an evident tendency to be evil, as with people other than myself.
3. Those who disagree with my country, my religion, my people, and myself, may well be unfortunately misguided by the forces of evil, if not specifically evil-intentioned.
4. Any action by my country, my religion, my party, or myself, which specifically enables others to commit evil, cannot in consequence be considered evil, irrespective of the level of suffering engendered

5. It is fundamentally misleading to see any equivalence between evil actions by others today and actions undertaken in the past by my country, my religion, my party, and my people. or by myself. When deliberate, this misinterpretation may well be evil in its own right.
6. In combatting evil, my country, my religion, my people, and myself, may be obliged to use methods which we profoundly regret, but there is no justification whatsoever for considering these to be evil, since they are necessarily used with good intention
7. The leading authorities of my country, my religion, and my people are unquestionably qualified to distinguish the perpetration of evil by others, as am I
8. Those persisting in evil actions, despite warnings in that regard, merit any response by we who oppose them to ensure that such actions cease
9. Those seeking to qualify or excuse the abhorrent actions of others as less than evil are fundamentally misguided, to the point that they may themselves be considered evil, despite any superficial merit claimed for their arguments by the ill-informed
10. Any doubts regarding the fundamental validity of these rules should be considered as inspired by evil and worthy of absolute condemnation

Brother against Brother

The slogan *Brother against Brother* may become the theme of the era, prefigured by its use in histories of the [American Civil War](#) (1861-1865). The slogan describes the predicament faced in families in which loyalties and military service were divided between the [Union](#) and the [Confederacy](#) -- with each of which evil was associated by the other. Curiously this gave birth to the primary defender of the principles of global democracy. Debate continues as to which side engaged in terrorism (Amy Zalman, *Terrorism in America: a guide to terrorism in America*, [about.com](#); Roland S. Martin, *Were Confederate soldiers terrorists?* [CNN](#), 12 April 2010; Daniel E. Sutherland, *American Civil War Guerrillas: changing the rules of warfare*, 2013). Traces of such perceptions of evil are as evident in current political rhetoric between left and right, as between Democrats and Republicans in the USA.

Such a predicament is now widely evident between countries, religions, peoples, and within families. Rather than a simple battle between the forces of Good and Evil under distinctive banners on a well-defined terrain, the traditional "plain" of Armageddon is now characterized by the modern complexities of [guerrilla warfare](#), [network-centric warfare](#) and [asymmetric warfare](#). Rather than conventionally visible it has invisible dimensions, as with [cyberwarfare](#) and "memetic warfare" (Brian J. Hancock, *Memetic Warfare: the future of war*, *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, April-June 2010). Only [negative campaigning](#) and misleading [propaganda](#) are now readily recognizable.

The war heroes-cum-villains are those like Edward Snowden, Julian Assange and Bradley Manning. Rather than evil being a threat "elsewhere", evil is "everywhere" according to much threat-focused current commentary. Every instigator of a purportedly remedial strategy runs the risk of being labelled "evil" -- and may be assassinated as a consequence, whether literally or otherwise. To what extent are subterfuge and dissimulation to be considered evil -- especially if the purpose can be claimed to be for the greater good?

Unquestionable declarations and assertions

In a world inspired by the enlightenment, it might be supposed that evidence-based science would have long enabled valuable insight into the nature of evil that is the subject of declarations by authorities to whom they are beholden and by whom their funding is ensured. Science has nothing to say on the matter, however complicit scientists may be in processes enabling evil -- most notably through the use of arms whose development they so uncritically facilitate. The scientific method is curiously ineffectual in the face of declarations such as the following:

- [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)*
- [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)*.
- [Pope Francis](#): *Satan seduces by disguising evil as good (Catholic New Agency, 29 September 2014)*; *What is Pope Francis on about with all this talk of Satan and evil? (The Conversation, 28 May 2014)*
- [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)*.
- [Kofi Annan](#) (UN Secretary-General): *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*)

- **Tony Abbott** (Prime Minister of Australia): *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)
- **Justin Welby** (Archbishop of Canterbury): Recently declared: *I believe Islamic State is deeply evil -- even to its own supporters* (BBC, 19 April 2015)

Declarations by the highest authority readily recognize terrorism as the primary evidence for evil. This takes the form of unambiguous statements framed to suggest (as implied by some of the rules above) the need for it to be "confronted" (by we-the-necessarily-good):

- Paul B. Woodruff and Harry A. Wilmer (Eds.): *Facing Evil: confronting the dreadful power behind genocide, terrorism, and cruelty* (2001)
- Peter Simpson: *The Evil of Terrorism: The first thing to say about terrorism, and to say with all the firmness that one can command, is that it is an evil, a heinous crime, an attack on civilized life and on peace.* (*The War on Terrorism: its moral justification and limits*)
- Uriel Rosenthal and Erwin R. Muller: *The Evil of Terrorism: diagnosis and countermeasures* (2008)
- Claudia Card: *Confronting Evils: Terrorism, Torture, Genocide* (2010)

It could be asked whether any failure to distinguish evil without ambiguity is increasingly to be considered an indicator of a degree of complicity with evil. The pattern was tragically set in the USA in the **McCarthy Era**. Similar consequences are to be anticipated in relation to "evil". For communism, with which it was preoccupied, was just that -- evil.

However it could also be asked whether the ease with which "evil" is used as a qualifier in an indicator of challenged analytical competence -- or an assumption that any audience is so challenged. Those who disagree with a proposal are necessarily evil? Or those who make disagreeable proposals are necessarily evil?

There is a curious sense in which evil is defined by a form of fiat -- reminiscent of the process of creation of **fiat money** by strategies of **quantitative easing**. This could be explored in relation to a moral analogue (*From Quantitative Easing (QE) to Moral Easing (ME): a stimulus package to avert moral bankruptcy?* 2010).

It is the very unquestionability of assertions regarding evil which is a challenge for many, and especially the young called upon to acceptance the guidance of their elders. Especially difficult is recognition that most of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council are major manufacturers of arms -- if not weapons of mass destruction. The young are required to accept unquestioningly the strange contradiction between the manufacture and supply of arms (upheld as being vital to the domestic economy of a defender of global peace) with the deaths engendered by their use. The weapons are specifically designed for that purpose. It would seem that evil is only associated with use, not with enabling such use, in that it is the user who has the option to engage in killing -- whether interpreted as being for good or for evil.

Curiously the young are confronted with related contradictions in their personal lives when they, or their relatives, are exposed to great suffering from terminal illness. They are then required to accept that suffering as being a necessary good -- rather than an evil -- because authorities declare it to be so. Consideration of collateral damage elsewhere, enabled by authorities, is considered to be unrelated.

Questionable reframing of evil

None of the above-mentioned declarations regarding evil -- effectively *ex cathedra* -- allow for any reservations or qualifications. The declarations are however questioned from a wider perspective in the light of the apparent contradictions implied: .

- **Kofi Annan**: *Naming Evil* (*Lecture at the 35th National Conference of Trinity Institute, New York, 2 May 2004*):

In fact, to be frank with you, I don't even think that the word "evil" is a regular part of my vocabulary. There is something about the word, when we apply it to another human being - and more especially to a group of human beings, that makes me uncomfortable. It is too absolute. It seems to cut off any possibility of redemption, of dialogue, or even coexistence. It is the moral equivalent of declaring war. When we think of other people as evil we are perilously close to depriving them of any rights, and releasing ourselves from any obligations towards them. We are poised at the top of a slippery slope that leads to violence, murder, even genocide.

- Sarfraz Khan and Shuja Ahmad: *Good Versus Evil: argument to begin global war on terrorism.* (*Central Asia Journal* No. 64)

This article argues that Good versus Evil (Us versus Them) has been a commonly forwarded argument, in times of War on Terror. Good versus Evil is a complex argument, involving numerous fallacies: false cause, poisoning the well, appeal to force, appeal to pity, appeal to fear, begging the question, slippery slope, false dilemma, etc. It also argues that Good versus Evil argument has been instrumental in framing the case to begin War on Terror in Afghanistan as well as a Global War on Terror. We also argue that once President Bush set the Good versus Evil frame, committing other fallacies ensued. Many people did accept his subsequent arguments, though fallacious, without adequate evidential support.

- As'ad AbuKhalil: *War against terrorism not an issue of good vs. evil* (*The Progressive*, 16 October 2001):

President Bush insists to the world that there are only two choices: you are either with "us" or with "them." Yet many people from the Middle East and Muslim countries stand opposed to both Osama bin Laden and Bush. Both men speak of the conflict in striking Manichean terms: While Bush invokes the biblical language of "evil doers" versus the goodness that he ostensibly represents, bin Laden draws on the discourse of the 7th century wars between Muslims and pagans, whom he calls "infidels." Many Muslims see both bin Laden and the U.S. government's acts over the years as immoral.

- Wendell Bell: *New Futures and the Eternal Struggle between Good and Evil* (*Journal of Futures Studies*, 2000):

Think of evil as a continuum, ranging from those acts that are horribly grotesque and monstrous in the harm and suffering that they cause to those that are relatively minor. Think of evil, too, as a choice that people make, even though the choice is frequently situated within a context of group pressures and social conventions. This evolution involves the infliction of harm, sometimes intentional, on people. But its causes have been obscured by the myth of pure evil... Rather, evil is often the result of understandable acts of well-meaning, decent people, such as you and me... the production of evil is for the most part the result of the behavior of ordinary people... Millennial views allow plain and decent people to feel justified in carrying out the most hideous crimes against others whom they see as evil, subhuman monsters.... Ordinary people can learn that the idea of pure evil is a myth.

The reviewer of the study by Claudia Card (*Confronting Evils: Terrorism, Torture, Genocide*, 2010) usefully remarks:

In ordinary discourse the idea of "evil" is both powerfully emotive and very unclear. It is emotive because it is connected with wrongs that overstep some bound of normality and because it is connected both with assumed malevolence and with kinds of suffering that are intense or extensive or both. All of those features are manifestly porous in their meaning, which makes the term a dangerously versatile one in the hands of politicians. So it is a good thing that those features should also attract the critical attention of philosophers. But their attention could either illuminate or dissolve the term. Card's account, I believe, tends (unintentionally) in the direction of dissolving it, for she rejects the idea that the agent's malevolence is a necessary condition of an evil act and rejects the view that evil is extraordinary; so, it would seem, her account risks disposing her readers to question the value of having a term that depends not only on both of the elements that she rejects but also on an idea of their essential conjunction.

Of particular interest at this time is the insight offered by the case of the American Psychological Association. Its former president addressed the issue of why the efforts to prevent future terrorist acts must begin with understanding the root causes of the hatred against America (Philip G. Zimbardo, *Opposing terrorism by understanding the human capacity for evil*. *American Psychological Association*, 32, 2001, 10).

Unfortunately for such arguments, extensive media coverage has subsequently been given to complicity in torture by the APA and its members (*American Psychological Association Bolstered CIA Torture Program, Report Says*, *The New York Times*, 30 April 2015; *Psychologists met in secret with Bush officials to help justify torture -- report*, *The Guardian*, 30 April 2015). A degree of coverage had been given previously but was variously covered up or denied (*Psychologists' Involvement in Torture and the APA*, *Psychology Today*, 19 December 2014; *What the APA Knew: the complicity of psychologists in CIA torture*, *CounterPunch*, 11 December 2014). However, in the light of several of the "rules" above, such complicity could obviously not be considered "evil", nor the torture itself.

Unasked Question I: which world leaders have (not) been labelled "evil"?

It is striking to note the extent to which leaders are readily framed as being "evil". Examples include:

- Barack Obama: *Obama Is Good...At Spreading Evil* (Jesse Lee Peterson, *Truth Revolt*, 16 October, 2014); *Obama Is An Anti Semite 100% Pure Evil* (Shoebat Foundation 24 March 2015); *Is Obama Helping To Create An Axis Of Evil Against America?* (Tim Powers, *Western Journalism*, 27 December 2014); *Obama's Inexplicable Love for the Dark Side* (James Lewis, *American Thinker*, 2 August 2014)
- Catholic Popes: *Ultra-Orthodox Jews describe Pope as 'evil one'* (Ramit Plushnick Masti, *The Irish Times*, 1 March 2000); *The 8 Most Evil Popes in History* (Chris Harty, *The Richest*, 19 August, 2014); *The Great Catholic Cover-Up: the pope's entire career has the stench of evil about it* (Christopher Hitchens, *Slate*, 15 March 2010).
- Dick Cheney (US Vice-President): *Why is Dick Cheney considered evil?* (*Quora*, 4 July 2014); *The Evil that is Dick Cheney* (*ThoughtCrimes*, 1 August 2008); *The Evil of Dick Cheney* (Gary Edward Nordell, *Working Minds: Philosophy and Action Essays*, June 2009)

Given the degree of interest in identifying terrorists as offering the most concrete evidence of evil-doing, it is curious that so little effort is made to produce checklists of evil leaders -- or at least of those accused of being evil. An obvious reason, as with terrorists, is the lack of any widely agreed definition of evil. It is also the case that many of those held to be evil are themselves active in labelling others as evil.

Some confirmation of being "evil", enabling such a checklist to be established, might be offered by those convicted by the International Court of Justice. This is problematic in that "evil" is not defined in legislation, whatever may be said during the sentencing summary of

any court case. Being evil is not a crime.

However any such criterion would also be inadequate given the manner in which the USA has explicitly disassociated itself from that process. This would of course follow from the fear of leaders there, if brought to trial. This is especially evident in the case of such as [Henry Kissinger](#), a Nobel Peace Laureate sought by many for crimes against humanity, and thus presumably to be recognized as evil in some measure ([Christopher Hitchens](#), *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, 2001; Scott Horton, *The Case Against Kissinger Deepens*, *Harper's Magazine*, 6 July 2010). Reference to evil is cited as a feature of the initiatives of the Russell [International War Crimes Tribunal](#).

Given the above-noted complicity of the American Psychological Association in the abuse of prisoners, as president of that body Philip Zimbardo effectively became a remarkable metaphor of the issues raised by his professional interests in the psychology of imprisonment (*The Lucifer Effect: understanding how good people turn evil*, 2007). That title derives from the traditional depiction of the metamorphosis of [Lucifer](#) into [Satan](#). The author's main argument for why good people do awful things is based on situational influences and power given from authority -- of which he clearly had personal experience.

Unasked Question II: which countries were (not) engendered by "terrorists"?

It is striking to note the manner in which so many countries appear to have emerged from a period of violence and terrorism -- with the latter attributed to individuals who may well have become leaders of the countries thereafter. In the period of violence, those in power would of course have every reason to label as "terrorists" those seeking to overthrow them by violence. There is extensive literature regarding individual cases (George Washington, Vladimir Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, etc). However there is no worldwide checklist of leaders who have been so labelled -- and were presumably in danger of arrest and execution. This is consistent with the failure (noted above) to elaborate any checklist of leaders who have been labelled "evil". Is there a curious sense in which the countries constituting the permanent membership of the UN Security Council were founded by people who would now be recognized as evil-doers -- at least by some?

More intriguing is the failure to indicate **which member countries of the United Nations countries have been established as a consequence of successful terrorist activity** -- in contrast with those which emerged through other processes. Again the difficulty is one of definition. The comprehensive entry in *Wikipedia* on the [History of terrorism](#) notes that although many definitions of terrorism have been proposed, there is no consensus definition of the term "terrorism". This in part derives from the fact that the term is politically and emotionally charged, "a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents". Countries emerging in this way are ironically reminiscent of the Biblical recognition of humans being shaped in iniquity and conceived in sin ([Psalm 51:5](#)). Further irony is to be found in the possibility of exploring the doctrine of [original sin](#) in relation to such countries.

The lack of definition, as with evil, does not prevent the unqualified use of this term in a wide variety of situations. Loosely understood, it could be argued that many countries, most notably the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, have indeed been founded by terrorists -- subsequently reframed and glorified as "freedom fighters". This does not prevent claims being made by such countries regarding the terrorism perceived to be currently threatening their own security -- readily subject to the additional framing of being inherently "evil".

From an historical perspective, it is appropriate to note how many presidents of countries were originally named as "terrorists". Some have even been subsequently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. These notably include [Nelson Mandela](#) -- a personal hero of Barack Obama -- and [Yasser Arafat](#). Others labelled terrorists include: Jomo Kenyatta and [Robert Mugabe](#). The case of Israel notably offers examples of the rhetoric in this regard (Ted Pike, *Israel: Founded on Terror*, *National Prayer Network*, 25 March 2008; *Israeli Prime Ministers who were Terrorists and War Criminals*). For example, despite having been head of the [Irgun](#), held to have carried out terrorist attacks, [Menachem Begin](#) became prime minister of Israel and was subsequently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Presumably all would be subject to prosecution at this time under national security provisions in member countries of the UN Security Council.

Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize soon after taking office. He is unique in being labelled "terrorist" by some -- subsequent to being so honoured ([Lupe Fiasco calls President Obama a terrorist](#), *Los Angeles Times*, 8 June 2011; [Noam Chomsky: Obama is 'Running Biggest Terrorist Operation that Exists'](#), *Information Clearing House*, 21 June 2013).

As noted above, the loyalists of the Union or Confederacy (in the American Civil War) readily associated the activities of the other with evil -- possibly recognized as taking the form of terrorism. Such commentary is consistent with current controversies regarding evil, variously considered to be embodied by the US, its critics, and its opponents.

Unasked Question III: when did we last do what we abhor now in the actions of others?

Considerable attention is given to abhorrence of the public beheadings by ISIL/ISIS and the provocative manner of their dissemination by the media. These are the focus of declarations -- including some cited above -- as concrete and incontrovertible evidence of evil. The concern expressed is somewhat puzzling in that beheading is a mode of execution in other Islamic countries which fail to attract such a level of condemnation -- especially when there is a need to cultivate commercial relationships with them.

More generally, [capital punishment](#) continues to be practiced in a range of countries, including some Permanent Members of the UN Security Council. The argument can however be developed in the light of the fact that the last beheading by guillotine in France was in 1977 -- of [Hamida Djandoubi](#), who may well have been a Muslim. Beheading has been a common practice in many European countries.

When did a country, now cited as a model, last engage in activities perceived as abhorrent by present standards (to the extent that these are recognized in practice)? How is it that greater attention is not given to such comparison over time?

With respect to UN elaboration of [indicators of social development](#), it would be a relatively easy matter to indicate until when any given

country:

- *favoured or tolerated*: public executions, public lapidation, public flogging, public humiliation (*tarring-and-feathering*, etc), sodomy, slavery, bonded labour, arranged marriage, honour killings, child labour, prostitution, cannibalism, human sacrifice, trial by ordeal, burning at the stake, infanticide, punitive amputation (limbs, castration), domestic violence, hazing, and the like.
- *forcibly condemned*: homophobia, restriction on rights of women (dress code, contraception, abortion, voting, inheritance, ritual suicide of widows), euthanasia, suicide

More interesting is the question why such comparisons over time are not made in a systematic manner -- or requested. Clearly many countries lag with respect to aspects of what might be condemned in the light of universal standards. Such a comparison would offer a subtler understanding of the manifestation and tolerance of what is readily framed as evil. What should be the dialogue with "slow learners"? How should their tardiness be sanctioned? [Transgender issues](#) and [same-sex marriage](#) now constitute a challenge for many countries, as does [assisted suicide](#).

More intriguing is the manner in which the more evident "hands-on" processes (so readily abhorred) are replaced by what could be considered surrogate forms whereby a degree of distance is introduced -- thereby held to render the process more tolerable (and presumably "less evil"). In the case of beheading, use of other modes of execution are then framed as more acceptable. The transition from beheading-by-axe to hanging offers an example. Curiously there have been conditions when death by the sword was considered more honourable than use of techniques ensuring greater detachment for the executioner.

The sense of abhorrence must necessarily be understood otherwise when suffering and death are deliberately effected at even greater distance, as with the use of missiles of whatever form. The matter is entering public debate through use of drones piloted from distant continents. As with weapons of mass destruction, these take notions of collateral damage to new depths -- however evil is to be associated with the unpublicised beheadings, or other trauma, that then results. As yet, such use of drones has been effectively dissociated from evil in public discourse. The manufacturers and distributors of weaponry have long distanced themselves from attempts to label them as evil. They have successfully framed themselves as protectors of democracy and the good (*Arming Civil Society Worldwide: getting democracy to work in the emergent American Empire?* 2003).

The expressed abhorrence is closely associated with the media representation of beheadings. Curiously this extends in a far more negligent manner to the "befootings" resulting daily in many countries from the deliberate dissemination of landmines, as discussed separately (*Beheading versus Befooting: in quest of the lesser evil for the greater good*, 2014). The latter raised the issue of the spectacular as contributing uniquely to the recognition of evil. There are very few representations of the process of befooting, although much is made of the subsequent implications for those affected.

However, if it is the spectacular that frames a sense of evil, giving it a degree of credibility, the challenging question is the extent to which people seek out daily exposure through the media to murder (and other forms of abuse noted above). Not only is evil sought in this way as entertainment, but the capacity to provide it has beneficial commercial implications. This is necessarily a further step in dissociation and surrogacy. It increases the sense in which the processes viewed are dissociated from evil -- although evil may ironically be imputed to them in order to evoke valued experience and emotions.

The question can then be asked as to **when was abhorrent behaviour last viewed with relish (via the media) in countries whose leaders pride themselves on their abhorrence of evil?** Do leaders participate in this process in some way, as was the case in their extensive sponsorship of the fatal games of Imperial Rome -- now to be compared with [snuff movies](#)?

In quest of requisite subtlety?

All religions teach the difference between good and evil. However it could be said that one of the evils of "evil" is that religions have different beliefs about evil and suffering. Why could that be? Of course, many religions consider other religions to be inherently evil.

The current preoccupation with evil is curiously highlighted by distinctions made in the program of religious studies offered by the BBC. This notably asserts the distinction between *two types of evil* (BBC Religious Studies):

- *natural evil*: suffering caused by events that have nothing to do with humans, and which are to do with the way the world is, eg, natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, floods or earthquakes
- *moral (or human) evil*: suffering caused by humans acting in a way that is considered morally wrong eg, bullying, murder, rape, theft or terrorism

These and other distinction are not carefully made in official declarations in which the evil of natural disasters is seemingly equated with that of terrorism, for example. Natural disasters are not a preoccupation of security services. A degree of subtlety is evident in other writings:

- Kenneth Cloke: *Mediating Evil, War, and Terrorism: the politics of conflict* (*Beyond Intractability*, 2005)
- S. D. Reicher, S. A. Haslam and R. Rath: *Making a Virtue of Evil: a five-step social identity model of the development of collective hate* (*Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2008)
- S. A. Haslam and S. D. Reicher: *Beyond the banality of evil: three dynamics of an interactionist social psychology of tyranny* (*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 2007)
- Fardi Abdel-Nour: *An International Ethics of Evil?* *International Relations*, (2004)
- Michael Ingatieff: *The Lesser Evil: political ethics in the Age of Terror* (2004)
- Victor E. Kappeler and Aaron E. Kappeler: *Speaking of Evil and Terrorism: the political and ideological construction of a moral panic* (2004)

Terrorist stereotypes: A very helpful early commentary is that of [Conor Cruise O'Brien](#) (*Thinking About Terrorism, The Atlantic*, June 1986):

Two stereotypes dominate discussions of terrorism. They cloud thought and inhibit effective action. Terrorism is disturbing not just emotionally and morally but intellectually, as well. On terrorism, more than on other subjects, commentary seems liable to be swayed by wishful thinking, to base itself on unwarranted or flawed assumptions, and to draw from these assumptions irrational inferences, muzzily expressed....

Let us look at the stereotypes:

- Sentimental stereotype. According to this stereotype, the terrorist is a misguided idealist, an unsublimated social reformer. He has been driven to violence by political or social injustice or both. What is needed is to identify the measures of reform that will cause him to desist. Once these can be identified and undertaken, the terrorist, having ceased to be driven, stops.
- Hysterical stereotype. Less stable than the sentimental variety, this can be divided into subvarieties:
 - a. The terrorist is some kind of a nut -- a "disgruntled abnormal" given to "mindless violence."...
 - b. The terrorist is nothing more than a thug, a goon, a gangster. His "political" demands are simply a cover for criminal activity.
 - c. The terrorist is an agent, or dupe, or cat's-paw of the other superpower....

These stereotypes serve mainly to confuse debate on the subject. There is no point in arbitrarily attributing motives, nice or nasty, to the terrorist. It might be more useful to look at the situations in which terrorists find themselves and at how they act, and may be expected to act, given their situations.

Terrorism and evil framed by metaphor: The most fruitful recent summary of the dilemmas appears to be that of [Alexander Spencer](#) (*The Social Construction of Terrorism: media, metaphors and policy implications, Journal of International Relations and Development*, 2012). This uses a constructivist methodology to study terrorism and counter-terrorism by applying metaphor analysis to media discourse in a tabloid between 2001 and 2005. It identifies four conceptual metaphors constituting terrorism as a war, a crime, uncivilised evil and as a disease and illustrates how these understandings make certain counter-terrorism policies such as a military response, judicial measures or immigration policies acceptable while at the same time excluding other options such as negotiations from being considered.

Spencer concluded that metaphors do not 'cause' policy in a positivist kind of way. But metaphors do play a vital role in the discursive construction of terrorism and thereby contribute to our understanding of how to react to such a phenomena. Our reaction to terrorism depends strongly on how we perceive 'the terrorist' to be. By considering terrorism as a social construction and reflecting on the idea that there are no externally existing facts about 'terrorism' one can start questioning the established absurdity of 'unthinkable' policies. It would therefore be highly interesting to investigate further the policy options which have fallen outside of the measures considered appropriate against terrorism. Such research would not only further elaborate a constructivist understanding of terrorism research but indicate that not only 'terrorism' but also 'counter - terrorism' is what one makes of it.

Spencer's commentary with respect to terrorism as uncivilised evil is especially valuable. The media source variously framed terrorists as *possessed, vile, evil, hydras* who perform *monstrous* and *barbaric* acts. Terrorism is considered to be *savage* and *barbarism*, and the terrorist is described as *inhuman, monster*, from a *swamp*, with *tentacles*, spread around the globe. These *subhuman, evil beasts, without a soul* are said to have spun a *web of evil* and have left behind *trails of slime*. They are unrivalled in *wickedness* and their *doomsday attacks* created an *inferno* and *hell* on earth likened to *Armageddon* or the *Apocalypse*.

In consequence, according to Spencer:

Both the *evil* and the *uncivilised* part of the conceptual metaphor do a number of things and predicate terrorism in a number of ways. Most importantly both metaphors signal a deep political difference. Predicating the terrorists as *evil* leads to a concrete and clear polarisation as it outcasts the actor and his/her actions and dichotomises and antagonises them (the out-group) and us (the in-group) (Lazar and Lazar, 2004). As there are only two sides to the conflict, good and evil, the construction of the *evil* other automatically constitutes the self as the binary opposite *good* (Ivie, 2004: 80). *Here the dichotomy between the in and the out - group is a religious and spiritual one, the "good" outcasting the "evil" from the moral order that is instituted by the good itself* (Bhatia, 2009: 282). Furthermore, one should note that the predication of terrorists as *evil* automatically also makes those who assist terrorists *evil*, as we tend to consider those who help evil also to be evil. This indiscriminate guilt by association is not the case with the metaphors such as *soldier, beast* or *barbarian*: those who help barbarians are not automatically also barbarians. So the construction of terrorism as *evil* creates only two camps and leads to the situation where *people and countries must choose which side they are on* (Rediehs, 2002: 71)

....The dichotomy of good versus evil leaves no space for anything in-between. The process of *othering* and the deep political difference is also clearly visible in the metaphors which predicate terrorism as something uncivilised as the polarisation imminent in the dichotomous relationship of *good* and *evil* can also be found the binary structure of *civilised* and *barbaric*.... As Robert Ivie points out *[s]avagery is a multidimensional image of the enemy that contrast s the civilized victim's rationality, morality, and peaceful purposes with the irrational and immoral behaviour of the uncivilized aggressor* (Ivie 2004: 78). So while *barbarians* are not *inhuman monsters*, they are still judged as *inferior*...; they are considered a *lower standard of human being* (Kappeler and Kappeler, 2004: 182)

In addition, the metaphor of the *evil* or *barbarian* terrorist automatically excludes the question of why these actors perpetrate these acts of terrorism as the answer is inherent in their evilness. Why did 9/11 happen? Why do terrorists do this? The answer

becomes simple: because they are *evil barbarian*. In other words, the predication of terrorism as *evil* and *barbarian* marginalised the grievances and political goals of these groups and the reasons for the violence are avoided as *evil barbarian* terrorists kill for the sake of killing rather than for some concrete motive. Evilness becomes the ultimate justification for their act and at the same time provides a justification for extreme counter-measures. The predication of evilness through metaphors such as *monster* leads to a direct and clear dehumanisation and demoralisation and therefore *every form of terror attributed to them becomes not only permissible but defined as noble when we do it to them* (Sluka, 2009: 145).

The elimination of *evil* and the infliction of extreme counter-measures such as military violence, detention without trial and torture becomes less shocking and begins to appear appropriate (Ivie, 2004: 80). After all killing monsters is something noble and heroic. When terrorism ceases to be *only* a crime and becomes a sin the elimination of this evil through *counter terrorism* becomes, in a bizarre sense, a religiously sanctioned duty (Leach, 1977: 36). This sacralisation is directly visible in the religious metaphorical expression such as *devil*, *diabolical* or *apocalyptic*... But also in the much criticised metaphor of a *crusade* against terrorism declared by President George Bush which constructs the conflict as a type of "*holy war*" between the forces of "*Good*" and "*Evil*" (Sluka, 2009: 145).

Evil conferences: 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. Perhaps not surprisingly, a focus is given to new understanding of evil by 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 16th event was introduced as follows:

Does evil exist? Should 'evil' exist in the 21st Century? The newspapers use it when talking about children who have been abused or parents who murder their babies. Political language splits into tensions of good versus evil, the forces of light versus the forces of dark, particularly in relation to situations of war or terrorism. Films attract huge audiences at the cinema who are looking to be frightened or scared by supernatural demons, possessions, witches and the malignant power of evil and evil beings. And when confronted by people and events which we cannot fathom or understand, all of us seem to revert to the language of evil to point to 'something more' than it being just 'wrong' or 'bad'. But what is this 'something more'? Is it real? Just an illusion? A convenience? A cop out? Or does evil still have a role to play today?

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). The latter was organized by the The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), and introduced by the following:

Evil is a recurrent theme across diverse accounts of human experience. But despite its ubiquity -- and, in fact, sometimes precisely because of its ubiquity -- human beings perpetually struggle to come to terms with it, whether individually or collectively. In academia, the idea of evil has provoked widespread reflection in the humanities and beyond. Whether the medium is philosophical treatise, theological doctrine, historical analysis, literary expression or something else besides, examining the theme of evil is a necessary aspect of exploring representations of humanity.

Similarly the Case Western Reserve University has organized a conference on *Evil Incarnate: manifestations of villains and villainy* (Cleveland, 2014). This was introduced as follows:

The concept of villainy is a universal: the dichotomy of good versus evil has been a central conflict underlying ideologies and praxis across cultures and time. What is a hero, after all, without the villain as a foil? *Evil Incarnate: Manifestations of Villains and Villainy* asks: What defines villainy? Is it moral? Cultural? Inherent or the product of circumstance? How are villains represented textually, culturally, and politically? What does the presence of the villain do to the issues in which they are embedded? How would the issues change in their absence? By exploring the concept of villainy as it manifests itself, we want to explore the various permutations of villainy and their consequences. Ultimately, we seek definition for villains in an attempt to overturn the characterizing of this pursuit as "[T]he motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity," because, unfortunately, the designation of evil incarnate is also that of villainy beyond understanding (S.T. Coleridge). Instead, this conference asks whether W.H. Auden provided a more accurate depiction in his assertion that "*evil is unspectacular and always human*." We hope that by coming to terms with villains and villainy, we can better understand the meaning of a hero's victory.

Given the manner in which religions have especially associated women with sinfulness and evil, of further relevance is the *Global Conference: Evil, Women and the Feminine* (5th, Prague, 2013; 6th, Lisbon, 2014; 7th, Dubrovnik, 2015). Of some significance is the association of "evil" with complex policy challenges in the form of so-called "wicked problems" -- the theme of the *World Conference of Futures Research* (Turku, 2015). Curiously this may be one of the few ways in which science can claim to engage with evil.

Self-reflexivity: Armageddon as the ultimate Battle with Otherness

The suggestion was made above that the simplicity of Armageddon, as traditionally envisaged, needs to be understood otherwise in terms of the sophistication of modern warfare -- and potentially in terms of its subtle psychological dimensions. This is consistent with the subtle complexities of comprehension of "good" and "evil" -- at least in the eyes of some. The slogan of "Brother against Brother" is indicative in this respect. The dangerous imminence of Armageddon in such simple terms has been usefully articulated by Bob Harris (*Sleepwalking Toward Armageddon*, 10 September 2014). Understood as a potential surprise, it can be explored otherwise (*Spontaneous Initiation of Armageddon: a heartfelt response to systemic negligence*, 2004).

Otherness: One approach to the nature of Armageddon is as a **Battle with Otherness**. So framed it is those who are "normal" who are to be recognized as the "good". Then it is clear that it is "others" who are unambiguously associated with abnormality and evil -- if only potentially so. The battle is then about how to reform others -- making them over into our image. Clearly weapons of every kind may be used to achieve this -- as a conventional approach to reformation (extensively demonstrated in Iraq and Afghanistan).

The challenge of otherness and alterity continues to be the theme of various conferences, notably the annual *International Conference on Engaging the Other*. For example the *Psychology and the Other Conference* (Harvard, 2015) endeavours to enrich conversations at the intersections of philosophy, psychology, and theological/religious studies. As noted by Marie Meudec (*Challenging the concept of Otherness*, 2014), the notion of otherness is at the heart of the anthropological discipline:

However, this concept is essentialist, and so, makes invisible the dynamic nature of its production and its renewal. This can be seen by taking into account othering process(es), designed as logics of social and moral differentiation and socio-historical and political distancing. Understanding the production of the Other dynamically invites also to address the "active" receipt of Othering and the participation of individuals in the creation of new social and moral relations.

Mirroring: The question of "otherness" is strikingly reframed through a reflecting mirror and related metaphors. How does use of a mirror challenge conventional understanding of otherness? Clues include:

- *perception in a distorting mirror* (as at a fair ground): Does this suggest that any "other" may be a distorted perception of oneself -- with the effect being "in the eyes of the beholder"
- *self-recognition in a mirror* (as in the [mirror test](#) of self-awareness): In engaging with an "other", to what extent is one engaging with oneself -- or aware of any implication in that regard?

Paul Demiéville (*The Mirror of the Mind*, 1947) reviewed the range of ways the mirror metaphor is used in Chinese, Indian and Christian thinking across the centuries. He concluded:

To some, reflections in a mirror serve to illustrate the unreality of the phenomenal world. to others, on the contrary, the clear mirror is like the absolute, reflecting back to man his ideal image. Or again, the mirror's property of faithfully reflecting objects without being touched by them is compared to the detachment of the sage, who apprehends reality in an impersonal immediate manner. These are in short the two aspects of a mirror, the one active, the other passive.

Of interest is whether those attributing evil to others ever see themselves in a mirror -- or consider that they may ever have made a mistake. More challenging is the possibility that huamn it may be subject to a form of mirror test in the event of any encounter with extraterrestrials (*Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criterion of species maturity?* 2008).

Our selves: Armageddon can be explored otherwise as a **Battle with Ourselves** in the light of the sense of the otherness of oneself. This reflects the self-estrangement and self-alienation which many may experience, namely of having a variety of "selves" through which to engage with the world and with others -- in the absence of any comprehensible form of transcendent integrity. This would be consistent with recognition that one may engage in activities which one regrets and with which one does not wish to be associated.

Arguments framed by the Jungian [shadow](#) are relevant in this respect. It is also consistent with the observation of [Arnold Toynbee](#): *Civilizations die from suicide, not by murder*. recently explored by [S. Fred Singer](#) (*A Suicidal Collapse of Western Civilization?* *AmericanThinker*, 16 November 2014).

Language and self-reflexivity: As noted above, "otherness" is even more appropriately understood self-reflexively as a struggle with regard to meaning, identity, credibility and their comprehension. **Viable communication of such comprehension requires a language that calls itself into question, challenging premature closure on particular definitions.** It is the particularity of definitions, and assumptions regarding their definitive nature, that engenders disagreement. This then frames the other as an unbeliever in the truth of an experience transcending any such definition. Beyond any battle of words and their interpretation, the "battle" can then be recognized as a mysterious form of memetic warfare especially appropriate to forms of cognitive entrapment in the current era (Richard Falk, *The Semantics of Struggle*, *Transcend Media Service*, 11 May 2015. As indicated by [Geoffrey Vickers](#): *a trap is a function of the nature of the trapped* (*Freedom in a Rocking Boat: changing values in an unstable society*, 1972)

When use of language is itself challenged, there is a case for eliciting insight from a variety of devices and disciplines -- prudently

avoiding dependence on any of them. These might include:

- **general semantics**, as originated by **Alfred Korzybski** (*Science and Sanity: an introduction to non-Aristotelian systems and general semantics*, 1933) and developed by Harry L. Weinberg (*Levels of Knowing and Existence: studies in general semantics*, 1959)
- closure explored as:
 - **philosophy of cognitive closure**, namely the hypothesis that human minds are constitutionally incapable of solving certain perennial philosophical problems. The work of **Hilary Lawson** (*Closure: a story of everything*, 2002) endeavours to provide an account that overcomes the problems of self-reference inherent in other philosophical systems. The **theory of closure** provides a new vocabulary with which to do this without need for a recourse to truth.
 - **psychological closure**, namely the desire for a firm answer to a question and an aversion toward ambiguity
- distinctions and boundedness: These are notably the preoccupations of: **Francisco J. Varela** (*The Extended Calculus of Indications -- interpreted as a three-valued logic*, *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, 1979), **Louis H. Kauffman** (*Virtual Logic: the calculus of indication, Cybernetics and Human Knowing: a journal of second order cybernetics and cyber-semiotics*, 5, 1998, 1) and **George Spencer-Brown** (*Laws of Form*, 1969)
- reflexivity: as explored by **Douglas Hofstadter** (*Gödel, Escher, Bach: an eternal Golden Braid: a metaphorical fugue on minds and machines in the spirit of Lewis Carroll*, 1979; *I Am a Strange Loop*, 2007) and **Hilary Lawson** (*Reflexivity: the post-modern predicament*, 1986)

Cybernetics and self-reflexivity: Of particular relevance is the sense in which the primary discourse regarding evil and terrorism is in terms of reactive cybernetics, namely of the first order. There are fundamental challenges to the comprehension of cybernetics of higher order, despite the focus on the second order by the above-mentioned journal on *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*. Hence the relevance of cybernetics of higher order, as explored by **Maurice Yolles** and **Gerhard Fink** (*A General Theory of Generic Modelling and Paradigm Shifts: cybernetic orders*. *Kybernetes*, 2015).

As suggested above with respect to the emerging significance of cyberwarfare in cyberspace, higher orders of cybernetics are likely to have implications for forms of memetic warfare which may characterize *jihad* -- in future, if not now.

Indicative metaphors: Other "devices" can be used to clarify such distinctions:

- **dan ranking in the Eastern "arts"**: The *dan* ranking system is used by many Japanese organizations to indicate the level of expertise within a certain domain. Originally used with respect to the **game of go** (see **go rankings**), it is now also used in modern fine arts and, of greatest relevance here, to the **martial arts**. Of particular significance is recognition of distinctions in levels of strategic comprehension and the progressive implication of attitudinal and philosophical dimensions into the engagement with any other, most notably in *aikido*. The other is of course most comprehensibly defined as an enemy in the conventional logic of combat. With respect to the "battle" of Armageddon, however, the question is how the nature of the relationship to the other might be comprehended at the higher *dan* rankings -- especially beyond those of the lower *kyu* grades. As with football and other games, like chess, how is comprehension of a higher order to be recognized and understood, as separately explored (*Engaging with Insight of a Higher Order*, 2014). How is it that so many grades are considered appropriate -- at least in the martial arts *dan* rankings? With respect to football and other games, the martial arts and the fine arts, what cognitively distinctive skills can be recognized? Why are such rankings valued with respect to **Six Sigma** expertise (*Learn Six Sigma Black Belt*)? Potentially intriguing is the importance acquired by "empty hands" skills in response to more conventional strategic weapons. Does this suggest the possibility of distinctions between levels of expertise in *jihad*?
- **Ten Ox-Herding pictures of Zen**: A valuable metaphor from Zen is expressed in a set of images relating to **10 stages of herding oxen** -- also known as the 10 bulls (D. T. Suzuki / Kubota Ji'un, *Ten Ox-herding Pictures with the Verses Composed by Kakuan Zenji*, 1996). In contrast to mechanical metaphors, the traditional interpretation of this pattern is intended to hold increasing degrees of self-reflexivity. This can be related to stages of engagement with the global problematique (*Progressive integration of the shadow of non-self-reflexivity*, 2007). Understood as "bulls", this pattern invites a provocative (Western) interpretation with respect to the struggle with "bull" in conventional discourse (*Viable Global Governance through Bullfighting: challenge of transcendence*, 2009).
- **Initiations into secret knowledge**: Although readily associated with rites of indigenous peoples, initiation is widely practiced by secret societies, most notably in the case of freemasonry. Many degrees may be upheld as corresponding to distinct levels of insight. Such transitions may be understood as a form of cognitive rebirth, as discussed separately (*Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being "born again"*, 2004). Can insight into levels of engagement with an other, as in *jihad*, be understood in terms of a succession of such transitions?
- **Higher dimensionality indicated by geometry, topology and symmetry**: Many efforts are made to clarify the distinction between conventional understanding of three-dimensionality and that relating to greater numbers of dimensions of which the most immediately challenging is four. Cosmological theories consider the possibility of **many extra dimensions**. For example, for a consistent quantum theory (noted below), **string theory** requires 26 spacetime dimensions for the **bosonic string** and 10 for the **superstring**. Another example is **M-theory**, which requires spacetime to have eleven dimensions. The implications for psychosocial comprehension can be variously considered (*Global Brane Comprehension Enabling a Higher Dimensional Big Tent?* 2011; *Dynamics of Symmetry Group Theorizing: comprehension of psycho-social implication*, 2008; *Potential Psychosocial Significance of Monstrous Moonshine: an exceptional form of symmetry as a Rosetta stone for cognitive frameworks*, 2007; *Hyperspace Clues to the Psychology of the Pattern that Connects*, 2003).

Struggle for comprehension as jihad: The argument can be usefully developed by the suggestion that the challenge of *jihad* is one of

acquiring a degree of comprehension of the extremely elusive, paradoxical and counter-intuitive. The challenge of the times can then be most fruitfully compared to that of comprehending what is acknowledged as being fundamental to understanding the nature of matter (with which all are supposedly familiar), as illustrated by classical [quotes regarding quantum mechanics](#). Why is it so readily assumed that *jihad* poses no similar challenge to its comprehension, as can be highlighted by the following comparison. Should the challenge not be recognized as being necessarily commensurate -- rather than more obvious and easy? Is failure to do so effectively an insult to the nature of *jihad*?

Fundamental comprehension?	
Fundamental comprehension of matter	Fundamental comprehension of ?
I think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics (Richard Feynman)	I think I can safely say that nobody understands <i>jihad</i> (?)
... those who are not shocked when they first come across quantum theory cannot possibly have understood it. (Niels Bohr)	... those who are not shocked when they first come across <i>jihad</i> cannot possibly have understood it (?)
We have always had a great deal of difficulty understanding the world view that quantum mechanics represents... I cannot define the real problem, therefore I suspect there's no real problem, but I'm not sure there's no real problem. (Richard Feynman)	We have always had a great deal of difficulty understanding the world view that <i>jihad</i> represents... I cannot define the real problem, therefore I suspect there's no real problem, but I'm not sure there's no real problem. (?)
It is often stated that of all the theories proposed in this century, the silliest is quantum theory. In fact, some say that the only thing that quantum theory has going for it is that it is unquestionably correct. (Michio Kaku)	It is often stated that of all the theories proposed in this century, the silliest is <i>jihad</i> . In fact, some say that the only thing that <i>jihad</i> has going for it is that it is unquestionably correct. (?)
...the "paradox" is only a conflict between reality and your feeling of what reality "ought to be." (Richard Feynman)	... the "paradox" is only a conflict between reality and your feeling of what reality "ought to be." (?)
Theology, philosophy, metaphysics, and quantum physics are merely ways for God to have his smart people believe in him (Jeremy Aldana)	Theology, philosophy, metaphysics, and <i>jihad</i> are merely ways for God to have his smart people believe in him (?)
If quantum mechanics hasn't profoundly shocked you, you haven't understood it yet. (Niels Bohr)	If <i>jihad</i> hasn't profoundly shocked you, you haven't understood it yet. (?)
Nothing can create something all the time due to the laws of quantum mechanics, and it's -- it's fascinatingly interesting. (Lawrence M. Krauss)	Nothing can create something all the time due to the laws of <i>jihad</i> , and it's -- it's fascinatingly interesting (?)
In the future, maybe quantum mechanics will teach us something equally chilling about exactly how we exist from moment to moment of what we like to think of as time. (Richard K. Morgan)	In the future, maybe <i>jihad</i> will teach us something equally chilling about exactly how we exist from moment to moment of what we like to think of as time. (?)
Quantum theory was split up into dialects. Different people describe the same experiences in remarkably different languages. This is confusing even to physicists. (David Finkelstein)	<i>Jihad</i> theology was split up into dialects. Different people describe the same experiences in remarkably different languages. This is confusing even to theologians (?)

The question has been asked: *Will we ever... understand quantum theory?* (Philip Ball, *BBC*, 25 January 2013). Of relevance is a recent survey of quantum physicists which established that they did not share a consensus on the nature of quantum electrodynamics and were perplexed by the meaning framed by the models they variously preferred ([Sean Carroll, *The Most Embarrassing Graph in Modern Physics*](#), 17 January 2013). Would this necessarily also be the case with respect to *jihad* or any Christian equivalent (*Is the World View of a Holy Father Necessarily Full of Holes? Mysterious theological black holes engendering global crises*, 2014)?

As a struggle for comprehension, *jihad* can be compared with the early conflicts within Christianity regarding the nature of the [Trinity](#), and especially that between Eastern and Western churches regarding [Filioque](#) (with its fundamental implications for comprehension of the Trinity). *Wikipedia* notes:

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity... defines God as three consubstantial persons, expressions, or hypostases: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit; "one God in three persons". The three persons are distinct, yet are one "substance, essence or nature"... According to this central mystery of most Christian faiths, there is only one God in three persons: while distinct from one another in their relations of origin... and in their relations with one another, they are stated to be one in all else, co-equal, co-eternal and consubstantial, and "each is God, whole and entire". Accordingly, the whole work of creation and grace is seen as a single operation common to all three divine persons, in which each shows forth what is proper to him in the Trinity, so that all things are "from the Father", "through the Son" and "in the Holy Spirit".

As separately stated in *Wikipedia* with respect to the [Trinitarianism in the Church Fathers](#):

Some Trinitarians state that the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed in New Testament times; others, that it was revealed in the Patristic period. Nontrinitarians, on the other hand, will generally state that the traditional doctrine of the Trinity did not exist until centuries after the end of the New Testament period. Some Trinitarians agree with this, seeing a development over time towards a true understanding of the Trinity. Trinitarians sometimes refer to Christian belief about God before the traditional statements on the Trinity as unsophisticated, 'naive', or 'incipient Trinitarianism', and that early Christians were 'proto-Trinitarian, partially Trinitarian', etc. Unitarians would state that this means those early Christians were not actually Trinitarians.

Should such disagreement be compared with that currently so evident between Sunni and Shiite?

Greater jihad: As carefully noted in the *Wikipedia* entry on *jihad*, there are many strongly held interpretations regarding its nature and significance. Many naturally focus on the justification for the use of force to persuade others to convert to a particular interpretation. Relatively few seem to attach deeper spiritual significance to an "inner" or "greater jihad" (Taylor McNeil, *The Greater Jihad*, *Tufts Journal*, March 2008; Reza Shah-Kazemi, *From the Spirituality of Jihad to the Ideology of Jihadism*, *Journal of Zaytuna*, 2005; Imam Khomeini, *Jihad al-Akbar: The Greatest Jihad: Combat with the Self*).

As a characteristic of the ongoing dynamic, the notion of a greater *jihad* is even asserted to be unorthodox and heretical to the majority of the world's Muslims, as argued by Hugh Fitzgerald (*Greater Jihad and Lesser Jihad*, *Jihad Watch*, 28 August 2008). Similarly, as noted with respect to *Lesser vs Greater Jihad* in *WikiIslam* -- which specifically offers a critique of Islam -- that entry concludes with the following citation:

In reading Muslim literature -- both contemporary and classical -- one can see that the evidence for the primacy of spiritual *jihad* is negligible. Today it is certain that no Muslim, writing in a non-Western language... would ever make claims that *jihad* is primarily nonviolent or has been superseded by the spiritual *jihad*. Such claims are made solely by Western scholars, primarily those who study Sufism and/or work in interfaith dialogue, and by Muslim apologists who are trying to present Islam in the most innocuous manner possible (David Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, 2005, pp.165-6)

Critical views of "greater jihad" are to be contrasted with those which endeavour to render it comprehensible, as that of John Heit (*What is Jihad?* Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, 2005):

According to one tradition of the *hadith* (the sayings and life of the Prophet Muhammad), *Muhammad tells his followers returning from battle that they have now returned from the 'lesser jihad' (battle) and must turn to the 'greater jihad' (inner struggle for true submission to God)* (Johnson, p. 35; Feldman, p. 232). This is the first differentiation of the "lesser *jihad*", the physical holy war, and the "greater *jihad*", the inner struggle to submit to God. The *greater jihad* is further divided into three types of struggle: 1) Jihad of the Heart (the struggle for moral reformation and faith); 2) Jihad of the Tongue (the struggle to proclaim God's word abroad; right speech); 3) Jihad of the Hand (doing good works in accord with the will of God).

Jihad and its derivatives meaning struggle in the path of God appear 36 times in the Qur'an. Each of those 36 times, *jihad* is used in the context of struggling to submit to God (the *greater jihad*) (Johnson, p. 61). There is another word that appears in the Qur'an when reference is made to physical confrontation or fighting. This term, *qital*, more directly means "fighting" or "killing".

It could be said, **as with quantum mechanics, that anything that can be said regarding appropriate comprehension of the Trinity or of jihad has significant probability of alienating those who think otherwise** -- and might even be forcibly challenged for that reason. To this it might be added the suspicion that what is not understood by any one is projected negatively onto others framing matters otherwise.

The challenge of comprehension is well framed by the opening lines of the *Tao Te Ching*:

The Way that can be told of is not an unvarying way;
The names that can be named are not unvarying names.
It was from the Nameless that Heaven and Earth sprang;
The named is but the mother that rears the ten thousand creatures, each after its kind.

Within this framework there is a case for suggesting that unquestionable declarations regarding the nature of evil correspond to what might be understood as the lowest *dan* rankings with respect to combatting otherness -- possibly even to the lower *kyu* rankings. The progressive subtlety which is evident in efforts to nuance such understanding, through an increasing degree of self-reflexivity, corresponds to higher *dan* rankings -- or more insightful approaches to "ox-herding" in Zen terms. The comparison might be extended to playing chess or *go* with the most devious opponent -- who may finally be recognized as oneself.

Whereas Christianity has indulged in conflicts associated with different comprehension of the Trinity, it is only too evident that Islam is now engaged in similar conflicts with respect to the nature of *jihad* and the enemy with whom struggle is necessary.

Christian Jihad and Jewish Jihad: It is extremely ironic that the prominence given to Islamic Jihad should have now evoked diverse framings of Christian Jihad and Jewish Jihad -- the former being readily compared with both the *crusades* and striving (*Is there a jihad in Christianity?* *Arabic Noor*, Ben-Dror Yemini, *Jewish Jihad developing within us*, *Israel Opinion*, 7 April 2014). It is therefore not surprising that confusion regarding Islamic Jihad has already evoked confusion with regard to a Christian Jihad and a Jewish Jihad.

The point to be made however is the tendency for these to be framed at the least subtle strategic level -- at the lowest *dan* ranking. They are typically reactive -- effectively corresponding to the patterns of first order cybernetics. The point is illustrated by Colonel V. Doner (*Christian Jihad: neo-fundamentalists and the polarization of America*, 2012), by Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner (*Christian Jihad: two former Muslims look at the Crusades and killing in the name of Christ*), and by Patrick Allitt (*Christian Jihad*, *American Conservative*, 31 January 2012), in his review of Philip Jenkins (*Laying Down the Sword: why we can't ignore the Bible's violent verses*, 2012).

More subtle insights emerge from the argument of Craig Considine (*A New Perspective of 'Jihad' in Christianity and Islam*. *The Huffington Post*, 8 May 2013), concluding that: *In essence, Christians and Muslims share a similar "jihad". This "jihad" is one of non-*

violence, the love of humanity, the perfection of the soul, and the search for knowledge. Putting familiar words to spiritual experience in this way could however be construed as fundamentally misleading -- thereby recalling the arguments for [apophysis](#) (Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 1994). To what extent is any essential incommunicability a matter of [Ludwig Wittgenstein's](#) concluding phrase: *Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent* (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1921)?

Circling the elusive? The argument has associated what might be termed definitional overconfidence and overreach with premature closure (typically by fiat) in contrast with the fluidity characteristic of divergent interpretations. It is therefore appropriate to ask whether another "device" to enable comprehension would involve some form of [semantic map](#), or [concept map](#), whereby alternative understandings could be configured "around" that to which reference cannot be effectively made. Such a representation might incorporate the features of an [argument map](#) to hold the patterns of agreement and disagreement, especially where the latter have a tendency to engender conflict. It might take forms characteristic of empty-centered mandalas, or configurations of polygons or polyhedra, as explored separately (*Embodying Global Hegemony through a Sustaining Pattern of Discourse*, 2015; *Memetic Analogue to the 20 Amino Acids as vital to Psychosocial Life?* 2015).

More intriguing is the sense in which any such **static** map would also be inadequate to the challenges of definition, language and comprehension. Insights as to further possibilities could be derived from the counter-intuitive challenges of the design of a container for plasma in the [ITER nuclear fusion reactor](#). The principal requirement is that the plasma **not** come in any contact with the walls of the enclosing container -- since any such contact would destroy the container (explosively) and render inoperable the fusion process. This offers a powerful and well-articulated metaphor for the manner whereby understanding of the fundamental struggle for comprehension may need to be contained by definition -- but dissociated from any such definition in an unconventional way in order for meaning to be sustained.

Currently under construction, the unusual design to enable the fusion process requires a toroidal form within which the plasma circulates, namely the container only works through ensuring a cyclic **dynamic** of the plasma. The viability of this unconventional design as a source of future energy raises the question as to whether a cognitive analogue is required to endeavour to "contain without containing" what is implied by the struggle for comprehension. The metaphor is explored separately (*Enactivating a Cognitive Fusion Reactor: Imaginal Transformation of Energy Resourcing (ITER-8)*, 2006).

Potentially even more intriguing is the sense in which, as a metaphor, the solar system suggests another way of comprehending the necessary dynamic of detachment. Each planet can be understood as a particular definition in concrete conventional terms, each separated from the other but having a dynamic circling relationship to a distant central sun of quite different nature -- both sustaining life and with the potential to dissolve each of them. This image recalls *The Pivot* of [Chuang Tzu](#).

The issue of the comprehension of subtle complexity therefore seems to require unconventional approaches that constrain the tendency to define and label. The solar system metaphor is indicative in that respect. Equally valuable is the comprehension of an atom with its circulating electrons, except that their distinctiveness has been called into question by comprehension of [atomic orbitals](#) in the light of quantum mechanics. This frames the question of whether there are subtleties of psychosocial "definition" that merit similar consideration, whether on the micro or the macro scale. Rather than a set of circulating definitions (or "models") around an undefinable core, further considerations apply as suggested by current understanding of orbitals.

Thus the orbiting electrons around a nucleus could not be fully described as particles (as might be conventionally defined), but needed to be explained by the [wave-particle duality](#). In this sense, the electrons have the following properties -- with implications for subtler understanding of the relationship between "models" or "world views". As described by Wikipedia:

- Wave-like properties:
 1. The electrons do not orbit the nucleus in the sense of a planet orbiting the sun, but instead exist as [standing waves](#). The lowest possible energy an electron can take is therefore analogous to the fundamental frequency of a wave on a string. Higher energy states are then similar to [harmonics](#) of the [fundamental frequency](#).
 2. The electrons are never in a single point location, although the probability of interacting with the electron at a single point can be found from the wave function of the electron.
- Particle-like properties:
 1. There is always an integer number of electrons orbiting the nucleus.
 2. Electrons jump between orbitals in a particle-like fashion. For example, if a single [photon](#) strikes the electrons, only a single electron changes states in response to the photon.
 3. The electrons retain particle like-properties such as: each wave state has the same electrical charge as the electron particle. Each wave state has a single discrete spin (spin up or spin down).

Thus, despite the obvious analogy to planets revolving around the Sun, electrons cannot be described simply as solid particles. In addition, atomic orbitals do not closely resemble a planet's elliptical path in ordinary atoms. A more accurate analogy might be that of a large and often oddly shaped "atmosphere" (the electron), distributed around a relatively tiny Sun (the atomic nucleus).

Given the continuing conflict arising world-wide from conventional definitions, and the certainty that they are unquestionable, such indications offer a language which reframes the definitional process in ways which honour the subtlety implied by the beliefs they evoke. It is then useful to ask what can be understood as circulating (according to the fusion reactor metaphor) and how are more profound senses of meaning and identity to be related to a wave-particle duality (*Circulation of the Light: essential metaphor of global sustainability?* 2010; *Being Neither a-Waving Nor a-Parting: cognitive implications of wave-particle duality in the light of science and spirituality*, 2013; *Being a Waveform of Potential as an Experiential Choice: emergent dynamic qualities of identity and integrity*, 2013; *Encountering Otherness as a Waveform -- in the light of a wave theory of being*, 2013)

It is somewhat ironic to note that the capacity to enable exploration of a system of multiple "overly-definitive" models (as suggested

above) has recently been considerably enhanced via the web using [orbital layout animations](#) with [d3.js](#), most notably through the freely accessible experiments of [Elijah Meeks](#) (*D3.js in Action*, Manning Publications, 2015). The work is based on the Digital Humanities initiative at Stanford University. The freely adaptable experiments are indicated [here](#) [[hierarchical data as orbits](#); using [flare.json](#); [solar system](#)]. The irony lies in the fact that representation capacity (and its pace of development) now far exceeds consideration of the semantic implications of world views and models in orbits around more elusive understanding -- typically so controversially assumed to be unquestionably defined by those world views. At best it might be said, with respect to world views, that the transition has yet to be achieved from analogues to the [epicycles](#) of the [Ptolemaic system](#) of astronomy to current heliocentric understanding.

Imposing TTIP-TPP-TISA as the caliphate of normality?

Considerable concern has been voiced via the media regarding the establishment of a [Caliphate](#), notably as a consequence of the [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant](#) declaring itself to be so in 2014 (Yasmine Hafiz, *What Is A Caliphate? ISIS Declaration Raises Questions*, *The Huffington Post*, 30 June 2014). As yet its authority remains unrecognized by any country. It has been framed as the embodiment of evil (Matthew Clark, *ISIS, the Caliphate, is Evil Incarnate*, *Red State*, 8 August 2014).

Although ISIL is readily described as extremist, such a declaration can be compared with other initiatives, notably by [Muammar Gaddafi](#), claiming the establishment of regimes otherwise held to be unconventional. These included the [Arab Islamic Republic](#) and the [Federation of Arab Republics](#). Curiously the creation of the Caliphate has aroused the suspicions of conspiracy theorists (Richard Skaff, *The Illusory Islamic State: Washington's Caliphate Project "Made in America"*, *Global Research*, 16 August 2014).

It is appropriate to consider the comparison of Islamic initiatives of this kind with potential Christian equivalents. One example is the [Great Commission](#) to take the gospel to every person throughout the world and to make disciples in all nations. It is considered by Christian evangelists to be one of the most significant directives in the Bible (*Matthew 28:16-20*). Such notions are consistent with Biblical injunctions regarding achievement of forms of dominion over the peoples of the world. This is notably articulated through [dominion theology](#), or dominionism, namely that Christians should work toward either a nation governed by Christians or one governed by a conservative [Christian understanding of biblical law](#). This is reminiscent of the Islamic preoccupation with *sharia* -- as characteristic of the Caliphate. Another example is provided by Christian theology with respect to understanding of the [Christian Church](#), or Church Universal. Part of this is recognized as the Church Militant (*Ecclesia Militans*), a Christian militia struggling against sin, the devil and *..the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places* (*Ephesians 6:12*).

If a caliphate is an exercise in Islamic extremism, much to be deprecated, it is useful to explore how a Christian-inspired "caliphate of normality" might be recognized and come to be accepted (Paul Carline, *TPP, TTIP, CETA, TISA: acronyms of empire*, *Gaither Stewart*, 10 May 2015). It is in this respect that two initiatives are worthy of careful observation at this time:

- [Trans-Pacific Partnership](#) (TPP) is a proposed regional regulatory and investment treaty. As of 2014, twelve countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region have participated in negotiations on the TPP
- [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership](#) (TTIP) is a proposed free trade agreement between the European Union and the United States.

As noted by Nobel Laureate [Joseph E. Stiglitz](#) (*The Secret Corporate Takeover*, *Project Syndicate*, 13 May 2015):

These agreements go well beyond trade, governing investment and intellectual property as well, imposing fundamental changes to countries' legal, judicial, and regulatory frameworks, without input or accountability through democratic institutions. Perhaps the most invidious - and most dishonest - part of such agreements concerns investor protection... The real intent of these provisions is to impede health, environmental, safety, and, yes, even financial regulations meant to protect America's own economy and citizens.

For US Senator [Elizabeth Warren](#) (*Broken Promises: decades of failure to enforce labor standards in Free Trade Agreements*, 18 May 2015):

Supporters of past trade agreements have said again and again that these deals would include strong protections for workers, but assurances without strong enforcement are just empty promises... The facts show that, despite all the promises, these trade deals were just another tool to tilt the playing field in further of multinational corporations and against working families.

Both initiatives have evoked considerable controversy because of the surreptitious manner in which negotiations are taking place (Heidi Hautala, *Lack of transparency in TTIP: a case for the ECJ? TTIP: beware what lies beneath*, 10 July 2014; John Hilary, *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: a charter for deregulation, an attack on jobs, and an end to democracy*, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 23 April 2015; Mike Dolan, *TPP and TTIP: Partners in Crime: fighting the corporate "trade" agenda in the United States*, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 23 April 2015; Manuel Perez Rocha, Karen Hansen and Roland Kulke, *TTIP: Why The Rest of the World should beware*, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 1 April 2015).

With respect to the argument above, both initiatives have been framed as "evil" (*The Twin Evil of the TPP and TTIP Crimes against Humanity! One Just World*; William K. Black, *Obama and TPP: Every One That Doeth Evil Hateth the Light*, *New Economic Perspectives*, 25 April 2015; *Evil: "Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)"*).

Potentially more controversial is what might emerge from a comparison between an Islamic-inspired caliphate and a Christian-inspired "international community" -- of which TPP-TTIP would be but an aspect. With the increasingly nuanced understanding of the "international community", despite appeals to it and pressures seemingly exerted by it, the question is whether and how it "exists" in a

sense which would distinguish it significantly from the existence of a "caliphate". The lack of transparency with regard to the international community and its accountability reflects the pattern considered questionable in the case of TPP-TTIP and the belief required in its necessity. In what sense is it distinct from a caliphate declared to exist by fiat? Could it be argued that the ill-defined "international community" is itself a late-born creation of the [Project for the New American Century](#) (PNAC), in the light of the summary by Bette Stockbauer (*"Rebuilding America's Defenses" PNAC: a Summary*, *Antiwar.com*, 2003)?

Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA)

TISA is the larger component of the strategic TPP-TISA-TTIP "T-treaty trinity".

All parts of the trinity notably exclude the 'BRICS' countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Wikileaks has revealed secret documents that expose the construction of a set of norms and rules designed to evade state regulations on the global market. These clandestine negotiations among some 50 governments aim to establish a neo-liberal planetary alliance, the [Trade in Services Agreement](#) (TiSA).

The agreement on the interchange of services is not only being negotiated in the most absolute secrecy, but also intends to maintain its secrecy during the first five years of its operation. The level of concealment of the TiSA (covering telecommunications, electronic commerce and financial services, as well as insurance and transportation) is superior to that of the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement between Washington and their Asian associates. (Excerpted from Marco A. Gandásegui, *Wikileaks throws light on an ultra-secret treaty*, *ALAI*, 22 June 2015)

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