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Cultivating the Myth of Human Equality

Ignoring complicity in the contradictions thereby engendered

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Introduction

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Introduction

A brief discussion thread on the theme, initiated by Martin Willett (*The Myth of Human Equality*, YouTube, 25 Nov 2014), starts with the statement: *Everybody knows that we are all equal... right? No. It isn't self evident and the evidence to back it up is scarce indeed. There is no good reason to expect equality.*

As the focus of many studies and commentaries, authoritative and otherwise, the distinctive approach here is rather to highlight the variety of ways in which the manifestations of human inequality are poorly recognized -- and may even be unthinkingly celebrated. Conventionally the tendency is to deplore gross inequality and "gaps" -- poverty, injustice, income disparities -- effectively viewed from a distance calling for little direct engagement. The concern here is with forms of human inequality in which all are complicit in some respect.

At the time of writing the issue is exemplified by the [2016 Olympic Games](#) and its worldwide media coverage. The focus of the games has traditionally been on those who win medals. There is very little concern for those who do not -- effectively framed as losers -- or for those who are variously excluded from participation. As such the games can be considered a remarkable metaphor for the contradictions associated with collective appreciation of human equality. They can be understood as an unthinking celebration of inequality, paradoxically reframed as the honourable quest to be "first among equals" (*primus inter pares*).

The rules governing the organization of the games usefully frame those who are variously excluded -- unmentionably. A striking example is offered in the case of height and weight in that whilst there is provision for various categories of weight in combat sports (such as boxing), there is no provision for various categories of height in ball games (such as basketball). Whilst some consideration may be accorded the younger generation in some sports, typically none is accorded to the older generations. Matters of gender are especially complex, given the distinctions made and the polemics associated with emerging transgender issues.

Even more intriguing are questions of competence, whether framed by inexperience (despite willingness and dedication) -- as with "[Eddie the Eagle](#)" -- or physical handicap (questionably reallocated to the [Paralympic Games](#)). If such is the much acclaimed "spirit of the games", why not have sets of games for those variously challenged otherwise -- for the otherwise unequal?

The question of principle is strikingly defined by the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) that: *all men are born free and equal in rights and dignity*. The International Olympic Committee has consultative status with the UN. It is a curious irony that the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council are especially attentive to their medal rankings at the Olympic Games.

Whilst such rankings are widely publicized, virtually no attention is devoted to the number of "losers" engendered by the Olympic Games -- with the strangely significant exception of reference to "bad losers" ([Rio Olympics 2016: athletes who have failed to accept their losses](#), BBC News, 18 August 2016). More generally this highlights the issue of the "left behind" or effectivly "remaindered", as

discussed separately (*Reintegration of a Remaindered World*, 2011). The United Nations is attentive to these otherwise -- framed through the abstractions of various statistical indicators of human development.

In the quest for extreme inequality and "above average" performance however, the competitive spirit of the games clearly offers further metaphors through the illegality it currently engenders in [systematic doping of competitors](#) in order to avoid losing, and through the protests of those who do not accept their loss. Equivalent pressures are evident in society world wide where the protests may be more "unreasonable" and far more violent.

The concern here is with the "wall" of media [superlatives](#) and [puffery](#) which obscures the existence of the multitude of losers -- whilst intensively celebrating the winners. The process can be understood as a celebration of inequality, widely engendered such as to obscure those considered undeserving of recognition and attention. However as a gap, this calls into question where and how equality is to be effectively celebrated -- rather than inequality.

At the time of writing, the argument can be made otherwise with the popular appeal of the promise of one US presidential nominee to "make America great again". How is the desperate need to "be number one" to be related to whatever is implied by human equality? As one instance of promotional superlatives, together with claims that America is already "the greatest" (superpower), does this exemplify the marketing of every kind of consumer product -- presumably to the exclusion of products made by competitors and in other countries?

Should the myth of human equality be considered a probable candidate for the "Big Lie" of this period of human history, as discussed separately (*Existential Challenge of Detecting Today's Big Lie*, 2016)? Or, as a myth, should it be understood otherwise, as variously implied (Joseph Campbell with Bill Myers, *The Power of Myth*, 1988; Karen Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 2005)?

Such possibilities aside, there is a strange perversity to the sophisticated arguments for human equality in discourse with those experiencing shocking degrees of inequality in their daily lives. This is an exemplification of hypocritical doublespeak (*Enabling Suffering through Doublespeak and Doublethink*, 2013).

Of relevance to this argument, notably as a consequence of the unconstrained flow of refugees into Europe in this period, various initiatives are calling into question the pattern of human rights defined internationally by law (*UK to Scrap Human Rights Act*, Euronews, 28 August 2016; *UK must leave European convention on human rights, says Theresa May*, The Guardian, 26 April 2016; *Turkey suspends European Convention on Human Rights*, The Telegraph, 21 July 2016; *Turkey to 'follow France' and suspend European rights convention*, Euractiv, 21 July 2016; *France to opt out of European human rights convention because of Paris attacks*, RFI, 27 November 2015). Are these to be considered as a direct challenge to the myth of human equality?

Where might understandings of identity of requisite subtlety be found? How might human (in)equality be evaluated in such terms?

Controversial appreciation of the quest for human equality

Any exploration of the matter is usefully framed in terms of the distinctions identified for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by Ferdinand Mount (*Five Types of Inequality*, 2008). Despite this title, and thereby contributing to the myth to some degree, these are framed in terms of:

- political equality, including civic equality and equality before the law. As a core principle of Western civilization, it is held to be true both of its dominant political tradition and of its dominant religious tradition.
- equality of outcome or result, meaning primarily equality of income and wealth. This can be understood as the conflict with liberty and dynamism.
- equality of opportunity, otherwise recognized as the ideal of equality of access or of life chances
- equality of treatment, taken as including (or helping to generate) equality of agency and responsibility
- equality of membership in society.

Recognizing that sociologists study many types of inequality, a useful range of resources and distinctions is offered by Robert Max Jackson (*Causes of Inequality: analytical strategies*, 2014). As discussed below, this notably addresses the issue of the distinction between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" forms of inequality.

Questioning the social reality of human equality: An extensive comment by Varanasi Ramabrahmam (*The Myth of Human Equality!* Boloji, 3 January 2012) is introduced by the assertion that:

We many times make the statement and read at many places that all human beings are equal. But in reality and practice we do exactly the opposite... It is atrocious to say that Einstein and the ordinary physics student are equal... All human beings must be treated equally is entirely different from saying all human beings are equal... Some citizens have to suffer the lack of opportunities in educational or job opportunities just because of their birth. The champions of the cause of human equality are silent on this unfortunate but deliberate reverse discrimination.

The argument is concluded with the following:

All human beings are not equal. We also cannot treat all human beings equally in view of their nature, behavior or our likes or dislikes for them. An ideal is always defeated by reality and realism. We better know that truth and strive in our circle for peace and understanding among us taking into consideration our limitations and merits. Else the statement that all human beings are equal remains a slogan or a mere wish and the reality is much starker and enlightened minds alone can transcend that darkness.

A review by Rebecca Bynum (*The Cult of Non-Judgmentalism*, *New English Review*, November 2007) of a book by [Theodore Dalrymple](#) (*In Praise of Prejudice: the necessity of preconceived ideas*, 2007) praises the focus on an essential defect in modern popular thought that has left us seriously lacking in our ability to deal with reality as it is. Though he doesn't address it directly, the modern myth of human equality lies at the bottom of the attitude he criticizes.

In support of this argument the reviewer uses a quotation from [Richard Weaver](#):

It is possible in some abstract sense that all men are equal. But according to the Bible, Aristotle, and most considerate observers, men are not equal in natural capacity, aptitude for learning, moral education, and so on. If you can get the first belief substituted for the second, on the claim that the second cannot be proved, you have removed a 'prejudice'. And along with it, you have removed such perception as you have of reality. (*Life Without Prejudice*, *Modern Age*, 1957)

Rob Horning notes in a commentary (*Meritocracy and Measurement Myths*, *The New Inquiry*, 19 March 2012) on the early work of [Michael Young](#) (*The Rise of the Meritocracy*, 1959):

The more plausible meritocracy seems, the more self-righteous and intransigent the "meritorious" will become. As Young puts it in his 1994 introduction, *If the rich and powerful were encouraged by the general culture to believe they full deserved all they had, how arrogant they could become, and, if they were convinced it was all for the common good, how ruthless in pursuing their own advantage*. And the corollary of this is that those excluded by meritocracy, if they believe in it, have no excuses for their failure; they simply don't measure up. From the perspective of the meritocratic future, Young notes, with an ambiguous quotient of irony, that *educational injustice enabled people to preserve their illusions, inequality of opportunity fostered the myth of human equality*

Questioning the legal basis for human equality: In a foreword by [John Witte](#) to the study by John E. Coons and Patrick Brennan (*By Nature Equal? The Anatomy of a Western Insight*, 1999) he notes:

We jurists tend to view human equality at once as a mantra and a myth of the law. The American Declaration of Independence proclaimed it a "self-evident... truth" "*that all men are created equal [and] . . . are endowed with certain unalienable rights*". But the reality of revolutionary America in 1776 was that women, blacks, natives, the poor, non-Protestants, and the vast majority of others seemed to enjoy rather little equality and even fewer rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed without pause "*that all men are born free and equal in rights and dignity*". But the reality of the war-torn world of 1948 was that freedom and rights were hard to find anywhere, and that equality and dignity had blatantly betrayed themselves in the gulags, battlefields, and death camps of the previous decades. In part, these disparities simply reflect the inevitable tensions between legal ideals and legal reality, between the law on the books and the law in action. And happily, in our day, these disparities have abated somewhat...

Noting the authors very extensive examination of philosophical, theological and other arguments made over centuries, Witte summarizes their thesis as:

Their interest is in the first phrase of Jefferson's "self-evident truth" (that persons are "created equal"), not the second phrase (that they are "endowed with certain unalienable rights"). Their concern is with the ontological nature, not with the jurisprudential nurture, of equality. Their thesis is that human equality is a created condition for the law to confirm, not a constitutional ideal for human rights to pursue.

Questioning the political basis for human equality: [Tom Lindsay](#) asks *Is The Declaration of Independence based on a Lie?* (*Forbes*, 30 June 2016)

As Americans prepare to celebrate another Fourth of July, it is alarming to learn that a Louisiana bill requiring elementary school students to recite a passage from the Declaration of Independence stalled and died last month. The proposed legislation... would have required students... to recite a portion of the Declaration in the first class of each school day. The passage that they would have recited was:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

... According to a leading opponent of the bill... the above passage from the Declaration is false: "One thing I do know is, all men are not created equal. . . When I think back in 1776, July the 4th, African-Americans were slaves, and for you to bring a bill to request that our children will recite the Declaration, I think is a little bit unfair to us to ask those children to recite something that's not the truth."

For Henry Köselitz (*History Isn't Over*, *Radix*, 6 February, 2016)

The epistemological and ethical components of the Enlightenment conflict with one another. Casual observation, the record of

history, and scientific study reveal that human equality is a myth, that man is by nature hierarchical, that man is a social being rather than a solitary one, and that community, and the defining feature of community, identity, are essential parts of what it means to be human. Any ideology which denies these truths is doomed to fail. Thus it is no accident that at the peak of their power Liberal regimes cannot win their wars, pay their debts, secure their borders, or protect their citizens.

He continues with the comment:

The goal of U.S. foreign policy for the last thirteen years has been to attempt to bring about the end of history, to establish a global Liberal order. In service of this goal, America, and other Liberal regimes have attempted to use military force to convert the Muslim world into secular, liberal democracies. Such efforts were doomed to failure from the start because they are dependent on the assumption that the majority of Muslims have same self-conception and desires as a Postmodern European.... The inability of Liberal regimes to fulfill the functions and responsibilities of a state are the direct result of the contradictions within the ideology which were previously suppressed by competition with illiberal powers at the international level, and by piety, nationalism, and racial consciousness domestically.

Questioning the evolutionary basis for human equality: For neuroscientist [David Eagleman](#) (*The Brain on Trial*, *The Atlantic*, July/August 2011):

Variation gives rise to lushly diverse societies -- but it serves as a source of trouble for the legal system, which is largely built on the premise that humans are all equal before the law. This myth of human equality suggests that people are equally capable of controlling impulses, making decisions, and comprehending consequences. While admirable in spirit, the notion of neural equality is simply not true.

The [review](#) by Lael Weinberger (*Journal of Creation*, 24, 2010, 1) of the book by Darek Isaacs (*The Extinction of Evolution*, Watchmen, 33, 2009) notes his proposal of four "sub laws" of Darwinian evolution, of which the first is the "myth of human equality":

The concept of equality, as I will make painfully clear, is not only absent in evolutionary thought, it fundamentally contradicts it (p. 30).

Questioning the delusional assumptions of human equality: For the psychoanalyst [Adam Phillips](#) (*Do we really want equality?* *New Internationalist*, 364, 2004):

The curious thing about equality is that lots of people value it and aspire to it. And yet at an individual level people are really quite phobic of it. There is an anxiety about losing a sense of specialness or uniqueness. One of the origins of this lies in the fact that most people have had some experience of being special to their parents. How that then develops depends on lots of different factors. The problem at an emotional and psychological level is that specialness is associated with being able to be what another person needs.

[Roy Hattersley](#) reviews the issue in terms of *The Equality Delusion* (*The Guardian*, 24 January 2009):

But by promoting the interests of a few, there is the danger of ignoring the needs of the many. Sometimes the neglect is blatant.... Life's race is only fair if there is an equal start as well as an open road. An equal start for everybody is an unattainable ideal.... Of course, a hierarchical society suits some. "When everybody is somebody, nobody is anybody"; and the popularity of "positional goods" - acquired not for their utility but to reflect status - shows how attractive demonstrations of social superiority can be. That is why there is an economic war between the classes. We delude ourselves when we talk as if the remedy to every problem is the "common good" that benefits every part of society.... and it is the duty of a democratic government to "adjudicate" between rival claims. That requires politicians to take sides. By denying the existence of class conflict they usually end up fighting on behalf of the prosperous, the articulate and the self-confident.

Whether as "illusion" or "delusion", the recognition of the myth is usefully highlighted by studies such as the following:

- Kat Banyard: *The Equality Illusion: the truth about women and men today* (2011)
- P. T. Bauer: *Equality, the Third World, and Economic Delusion* (1981)
- Wendy Brown: *Civilizational Delusions: secularism, tolerance, equality* (2012)
- Elizabeth Ruth Carter: *The Illusion of Equality: the failure of the community property reform to achieve management equality* (2015)
- Margaret S. Collins, Irving W. Wainer and Theodore A. Bremner: *Science and the Question of Human Equality* (1981)
- Barbara Ehrenreich: *Bright-sided: how the relentless promotion of positive thinking has undermined America* (2009)
- Martha Albertson Fineman: *The Illusion of Equality: the rhetoric and reality of divorce reform* (1991)
- Charles S. Hyneman. Equality: *Evasive Ideal or Beguiling Delusion?* (*The Modern Age*, 1980)
- Murray Milner, Jr: *The Illusion of Equality: the effects of educational opportunity on inequality and conflict* (1972)
- Lant Pritchett and Martina Viarengo: *The Illusion of Equality: the educational consequences of blinding weak states* (2009)
- Jack Random: *Liberal Illusion of Equality* (*Dissident Voice*, 28 May 2012)

- Jean-Jacques Sarfati: *Equality, Semi-Delusion, and Ethics in the Act of Governing* (*Le Philosophoire*, 2012)
- Jeremy Seabrook: *Independence and Illusion of Equality* (*The Statesman*, 7 July 2002)
- David A. Strauss: *The Illusory Distinction between Equality of Opportunity and Equality of Result* (*William and Mary Law Review*, 1992)
- Osmat Azzam Jefferson: *Workplace Equality in International Organizations: why is it such an illusory concept?* (2010)

Questionable framing of cultural equivalence: As argued by John Lange it is simply very improbable that culture, in any interesting sense, could be equivalent (*An Analysis of the Myth of Cultural Equivalence*, *Academic Questions*, 2010). The further point is made that if all cultures are equivalent, with the implication that it is inappropriate to criticize another culture, then, by parity of reasoning, all cultures being equivalent, it seems that it should also be inappropriate to recommend, approve, praise, or commend another culture.

The author finds the notion of cultural equivalence anthropologically dubious, if not unintelligible. If such a claim is intended to be factual, putting aside the difficulties of characterizing what the entities are that are supposed to be equivalent, namely, cultures, its proponents owe the people a methodology by means of which such an equivalence, or its absence, might be empirically determined, namely, an empirical test, or tests, by means of which their claim, if it is a genuine factual claim, a genuine hypothesis, might be established, or refuted.

Questionable framing of moral equality: Human equality has notably been framed in moral terms giving rise to considerations of [moral equivalence](#). If the morality of humans is held to be not equivalent, this would tend to call into question the assumption of human equality. During the Cold War, the moral equivalence of actions by the US in response to the USSR was argued to be a myth by US Ambassador to the UN, [Jeane Kirkpatrick](#) (*The Myth of Moral Equivalence*, 1986). Later instances merit consideration, notably in relation to Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan (*Mirroring Global Moral Equivalence: US contra Julian Assange versus China contra Liu Xiaobo*, 2010).

Any sense of human equality is naturally called into question in negotiating exchanges of prisoners, where those of one country are recognized in practice to be individually worth far more than those of another -- leading to asymmetric rather than one-for-one exchanges. This is exemplified by [Israeli prisoner exchanges](#) in the Arab-Israeli conflict (*Gilad Shalit: A 1,000-to-one asymmetry*, *BBC News*, 18 October 2011; ; *Israel's asymmetrical prisoner swap*, *Al Jazeera*, 15 October 2011)

The point is made otherwise in the articulation by US Ambassador to the United Nations, [Madeleine Albright](#) when questioned on whether the sanctions against Iraq were appropriate (having killed more children than at Hiroshima). Albright replied: *I think this is a very hard choice, but the price -- we think the price is worth it* (*We Think the Price is Worth It*, *Fair*, 2001).

These examples are consistent with a different approach to any framing in terms of morality, namely in terms of moral idiocy -- as one distinctive dimension of human inequality. According to psychology, this is the inability to understand moral principles and values and to act in accordance with them, apparently without impairment of the reasoning and intellectual faculties. As variously described by [Lawrence Davidson](#) (*America and the Plague of 'Moral Idiocy'*, *Consortium News*, 6 September 2015; *Moral Idiocy in the Halls of Power*, *Information Clearing House*, 7 September 2016), he cites as example the case of [Henry Kissinger](#):

The story is told by [Stephen Talbot](#), a journalist and documentary producer, who in the early 2000s interviewed [Robert McNamara](#), who had been U.S. Secretary of Defense for much of the Viet Nam War years and was, by the 1990s, full of remorse and feelings of guilt for his behavior while in office. Then, shortly thereafter, Talbot interviewed Kissinger, who had been Richard Nixon's Secretary of State and National Security Advisor during the Viet Nam War's final years. Here is how Talbot describes what, for us, is the relevant part of his interview with Kissinger: *I told him I had just interviewed Robert McNamara in Washington. That got his attention... and then he did an extraordinary thing. He began to cry. But no, not real tears. Before my eyes, Henry Kissinger was acting. 'Boohoo, boohoo,' Kissinger said, pretending to cry and rub his eyes. 'He's [McNamara] still beating his breast, right? Still feeling guilty'. He spoke in a mocking, singsong voice and patted his heart for emphasis. Kissinger obviously held McNamara and his feelings of guilt in utter disdain. He had actually committed greater crimes than McNamara -- crimes documented in [Christopher Hitchens's](#) 2001 book, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* -- and yet apparently felt no remorse at all.*

Controversy regarding moral equivalence is clearly evident with respect to any correspondence perceived between those severely deprecated as barbaric "terrorists" and those acclaimed as heroic "freedom fighters". The difficulty arises when those previously framed as "terrorists" achieve the independence for which they have fought and are then framed as "freedom fighters" -- possibly then to frame others as "terrorists". Given the pattern by which "terrorists" have been transformed into national icons in many countries -- even in recent decades -- of particular interest in the case of France is how the [Reign of Terror](#) (1793-94) is to be understood. During that period some 15,000 to 30,000 people were guillotined -- as a direct consequence of the [French Revolution](#) (1789-1799) through which the [French Republic](#) emerged. Similar examples are evident in the case of the [American Revolution](#) (1765-1783), or that of [Israel's War of Independence](#) (1947-1949).

The issue can be explored otherwise through comparisons made in the recent period between:

- Number of Iraqis slaughtered in US War and Occupation of Iraq, with estimates up to 1,455,590 (see *Wikipedia* review of variety of evaluations: [Casualties of the Iraq War](#))
- Number of U.S. Military Personnel sacrificed (as officially acknowledged) in America's War on Iraq: 4,883 (see *Wikipedia* [United States military casualties of war](#))

In the light of such indications, any sense of moral equality is challenged otherwise by the recent declaration of the former Secretary General of NATO, [Anders Fogh Rasmussen](#):

The world needs... a policeman if freedom and prosperity are to prevail against the forces of oppression, and the only capable, reliable and desirable candidate for the position is the United States... America alone has the credibility to shape sustainable solutions to these challenges... Just as only America has the material greatness to stop the slide into chaos, only America has the moral greatness to do it -- not for the sake of power, but for the sake of peace. (*The United States Must Be the World's Policeman: only America has the material and moral greatness to stop the slide into chaos and foster peace*, *The World Street Journal*, 20 September 2016)

Questionable framing of human equality by religion: In claiming to be the primary vehicle for articulation and promotion of human values, religions have variously placed themselves in an extremely paradoxical position.

The dominant religions, whether or not they explicitly claim to subscribe to a singular deity, are most notable in their remarkable incapacity to resolve their differences in a meaningful manner consistent with their transcendent principles. Through their severe condemnation of those adhering to alternative beliefs, held to be inferior, they have a long history of engendering human inequality as a consequence of the righteous violence and slaughter thereby enabled. This is a much the case **between** religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, etc) as **within** those religions (Catholicism/ Protestantism, Sunni/Shia, etc).

This pattern is consistent with an extensively cultivated attitude of arrogant exceptionalism -- typically held to be justified by some form of **divine mandate**, enshrined in sacred scripture and therefore inherently unquestionable (Peter Petkoff, *Religious Exceptionalism, Religious Rights, and Public International Law*, 2015). The exceptionalism -- as specially **chosen by God** -- translates into a sense of personal superiority on the part of believers -- a cultivated inequality in relation to those misleadingly believing otherwise. There is a further irony to this through the manner in which humility may well be cultivated as an essential value -- but precluding any humility in relation to the possible insight of others. The pattern has fundamental implications for the governance of countries which consider themselves as primarily upholding the values of any such religion.

There are further implications of the pattern through the fundamental difficulty of many religions to cultivate fruitful relations with those of different gender. Arguably, especially in the case of the Abrahamic religions, this is intimately associated with a much-challenged theological understanding of a singular deity in relation to the sense and symbolism of fatherhood. Consequently women are readily framed as problematically inferior (if not inherently sinful) and calling for carefully regulated framing of that inequality.

Paradoxically, whilst extolling the merits of women on the one hand, in practice this is accompanied by behaviours which righteously reinforce their inequality -- if only in their own eyes. These attitudes extend further into the rights of women, most obviously with respect to sexual intercourse, procreation and ownership of property.

In claiming insight into the mysteries of birth and death, the religions are also remarkable for the manner in which they frame sacrifice as a celebration or heroic defence of their beliefs (martyrs, crusades, etc) -- making an "ultimate sacrifice". This attitude has adapted (partially) from traditions of human and animal sacrifice into framing as appropriate the slaughter of thousands -- whether as crusades against Islam or jihad against Judeo-Christian societies (*Systemic Reliance of World Religions on Human Sacrifice*, 2014).

Arguably so-called **just war theory**, in the elaboration of which religions have been complicit, can be understood as justifying human inequality through the death of others. thereby considered righteously appropriate. The unconstrained procreation policies of many religions -- "just procreation theory" (?) -- can be seen as bringing millions to life to face certain suffering and death in a global society much challenged in the governance of its resources (*Indifference to the Suffering of Others: occupying the moral and ethical high ground through doublespeak*, 2013).

Political correctness as the cultivation of the myth of human equality

The practice and cult of **political correctness** can be variously understood as deliberately obscuring recognition and discussion of human inequality. It describes language, policies, or measures that are intended not to offend or disadvantage any particular group of people in society. Criticism of its cultivation of the myth of human equality may be variously argued:

- Nick Adams: *Retaking America: crushing political correctness* (2016)
- American People: *Merit Based: how the scales of equality have been tipped too far by political correctness and affirmative action* (2015)
- Bruce G. Charlton: *Thought Prison: the fundamental nature of political correctness* (2014)
- Barbara Ehrenreich: *Smile Or Die: how positive thinking fooled America and the world* (2010)
- Geoffrey Hughes: *Political Correctness: a history of semantics and culture* (2009)
- John L. Jackson Jr: *Racial Paranoia: the unintended consequences of political correctness* (2008)
- Howard S Schwartz: *Political Correctness and the Destruction of Social Order: chronicling the rise of the pristine self* (2016)
- David Thibodaux: *Political Correctness* (1992); *Beyond Political Correctness: are there limits to this lunacy?* (1994)
- Michael William: *The Genesis of Political Correctness: the basis of a false morality* (2016)
- William S. Lind: *The Origins of Political Correctness* (2000).
- John Wilson: *The Myth of Political Correctness: the conservative attack on higher education* (1995)
- William Blum: *Political Correctness Demands Diversity In Everything But Thought* (*Information Clearing House*, 13 August 2016)

Cultivation of human inequality through competition

The introduction noted the remarkable metaphors offered by competition in sport, exemplified by the Olympic Games as a process

upheld for the global inequality it engenders and the protests that may be voiced by "bad losers". Such striving for inequality is clearly evident wherever people engage in competitive sport -- as participants, as observers, or as gamblers. Enthusiasm is engendered by the capacity for one side to demonstrate its superiority over another -- in the many domains in which the metaphor is relevant -- possibly to be rewarded by the fruits of gambling and speculation at the expense of losers.

Given the intimate relation between competition and leadership, it is naive to avoid the paradoxical implication with respect to engendering and sustaining inequality. It is difficult to avoid the recognition that the promotion of leaders -- and the calls for "new leadership" -- are effectively calls for new forms and degrees of inequality. Any arguments of new leaders regarding their concern with inequality then merit challenge as cultivating the myth of equality -- to whatever degree.

Much is made by economics of the value of competition in the market place. Government policy may be explicitly organized to encourage competition as being inherently and unquestionably valuable. It is variously understood as increasing productivity through increasing efficiency. A degree of value is attached to dominance in the market place, exclusive ownership and control of resources. However the much-debated slogan "greed is good" necessarily raises the question as to the outcome for those at whose expense this relative inequality is achieved (John Paul Robert, *Greed Is Good: a 300-year history of a dangerous idea*, *The Atlantic*, 7 April 2014)

The strange consequence of such success is the manner in which it must necessarily engender losers -- whether collective initiatives forced into bankruptcy, or employees downsized into a condition of unemployment. As with the illegality potentially engendered by sport, competition in the market place also tends to engender illegality in the effort to achieve business superiority -- namely inequality. This has been remarkably exemplified by the [Volkswagen emissions scandal](#), especially given the long-acclaimed role of Volkswagen in initiatives for [corporate social responsibility](#), notably the [United Nations Global Compact](#).

As noted above, there are curious pressures on some societies and cultures to be "the greatest" or "number one" -- and especially to be universally recognized as such. In the business world the process is further epitomized by increasing disparities between [executive salaries](#) (including perks, [golden handshakes](#), [golden parachutes](#), [stock options](#), etc) at the highest level, compared to those of the labour force at their command. Such disparities are clearly an indication of a form of inequality systematically reframed by questionable arguments.

Underlying the competition in sport and in the market place is that implied in the military domain. Whilst this necessarily results in competitive build-up of armaments -- an arms race -- the further implication is the quest for inequality amongst military personnel. A sense of superiority is carefully and deliberately cultivated, with fighting forces and their members upheld as elites capable of defeating any opposition. This capacity is framed through strategic doctrines such as achieving full spectrum dominance --- notably by equipping fighters with technology to enhance their superiority.

The traditional association between the cultivation of inequality in both military and sporting arenas, clearly frames competitive engagement in the market place, most notably through the strategic and tactical metaphors borrowed from those arenas -- targets, missions, bullet points, goals, etc. Such usage can be usefully challenged with respect to strategies purportedly designed to alleviate human inequality (*Enhancing Sustainable Development Strategies through Avoidance of Military Metaphors*, 1998).

Such conceptual borrowing is however matched by the manner in which the perks and privileges of the business and military arenas are considered essential to the higher levels of governance mandated to address issues of human inequality -- as recently exemplified by the case of the European Union (Bruno Waterfield, *European Union officials better paid than David Cameron*, *The Telegraph*, 21 May 2014; Dominic Midgeley, *Brussels' faceless bureaucrats revealed... and here are their endless perks you pay for*, *Express*, 8 June 2016). Such perks take the most create form in the travel distinctions between classes. Those most eloquent and influential with regard to human equality may well travel "first class" -- and with little embarrassment.

Inequality cultivated through marketing and media bias

Beyond information regarding necessities -- however these are to be understood in relation to basic needs -- marketing is remarkable in its efforts to cultivate inequality. This is most evident with respect to products framed as increasing the status of consumers relative to others through their distinctive qualities.

The pattern is evident with respect to foods, beverages, clothing ("fashion"), tourism, consumer technologies, books, music, websites. To an unexplored degree, engendering inequality is closely associated with engendering envy. It is curious to note the extent to which such marketing involves the unconstrained use of superlatives and exaggeration.

Products are readily framed as the "best in the world", or "market leaders", with the implication that their acquisition will endow the consumer with distinctiveness -- presumably difficult to dissociate from inequality. The possibility of any challenge to such claims as "false advertising" or "mis-selling" is curiously constrained by legal provisions for [puffery](#) -- a term explicitly recalling body language in support of personal claims for superiority.

It can of course be argued that various forms of media bias contribute significantly to the cultivation of human inequality (*Vital Collective Learning from Biased Media Coverage: acquiring vigilance to deceptive strategies used in mugging the world*, 2014). Again, this is most notably evident in extolling the merits of some (the "winners") and ignoring or deprecating the others (the "losers"). Clearly the winners are considered newsworthy "somebodies" in contrast to the losers as "nobodies" unworthy of collective attention

Cultivating human inequality in employment

In a period of widespread unemployment, the cultivation of inequality may be explored in terms of the human [right to work](#), or engage in productive employment, and may not be prevented from doing so. The right to work is enshrined in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and recognized in [international human rights law](#) through its inclusion in the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and](#)

Cultural Rights, where the right to work emphasizes economic, social and cultural development. Clearly it can be argued that this right is primarily respected through the manner in which it is breached -- as with many other principles of human rights similarly enshrined.

However, even when people are held to be in gainful employment -- supportive of the myth of human equality -- the cultivation of human inequality is typically evident otherwise in their treatment -- according to the principles enshrined in the *ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (1998). This is highlighted by issues such as:

- bonded labour
- forced labour, notably by prisoners
- child labour
- slavery and its continuing incidence in various forms, including sex slavery
- discriminatory engagement based on gender, appearance, race, age, background
- income disparities between: workers and executives; men and women; racial types; young and old
- unremunerated labour, most notably in subsistence farming, and in the the controversial exclusion of housework from employment statistics and definitions of "work"
- voluntary work in its various forms and most strikingly in community response to emergencies

With respect to human (in)equality, further clarification is required in the contrast between tedious work and that experienced as personally fulfilling. It can also be argued that the processes of qualification and certification associated with work may significantly contribute to the cultivation of inequality.

Contradictions in appreciation of personal qualities

Assessment of others (and by others): Curiously the myth of human equality does not preclude a multitude of assessments of the relative merits of others -- whether in terms of superiority or inferiority.

These may be recognized with respect to a wide variety of **skills**, most obviously the manipulation of any instrument or vehicle. This extends to recognition of ingenuity, creativity and inventiveness. These may be evaluated in terms of IQ or EQ, or other notions of intelligence, including the kinesthetic. Specific significance may be accorded to prodigies, geniuses and the supergifted.

Assessment may be articulated in terms of **comprehension capacity** or especially deprecated in terms of relative ignorance or as inherent stupidity. Inequality may be noted with respect to relative happiness, or vulnerability to depression or other **behavioural disorders** -- even madness. It may be recognized otherwise in terms of moral and ethical norms, ranging from uncouth behaviour, through criminality, to the heroic or the holy. The focus may be on relative physical health (or incapacity), attractiveness, length of life or size (height or weight).

More radically subtle assessments may be based on **kinship**, dynastic relations, "breeding" and "bloodlines" -- as with the aristocracy, or those achieving analogous status. Such assessments are intricately related to highly controversial issues of race, ethnicity and colour -- and the contrasts distinguished -- exemplified by the caste structures of Indian society, or the degrees of "mixed blood" in some societies. Inequality is especially controversial with respect to gender, homosexuality and the confusion of "trans".

Distinctions may be made with approval or deprecation in terms of **lifestyle** and **community**, namely preferences for: space and proximity, decor, noise level, neighbourliness (in contrast with "neighbours from hell"), pace, cleanliness, clothing, cooking styles (odours), and animal proximity.

Inequality may be especially recognized with respect to **family**, notably the contrast between the solitary individual, larger families, and the number of children desired (and engendered). The issue of large families is particularly relevant in the current period of controversy regarding asylum seekers, right of family reunion, and the consequent impact on social security.

Self-assessment of relative inequality: The above dimensions may be applied, more or less critically, in personal assessment and its existential implications for any sense of self-esteem and self-worth, as perceived in relation to that of others -- with pathological forms noted by **R. D. Laing** (*The Divided Self; a study of sanity and madness*, 1960) as separately [summarized](#).

Irrespective of such extremes, the relative attractiveness (sexiness, ugliness, etc) may be a daily preoccupation -- extensively exploited by the marketing of the cosmetic and fashion industries with the implication that those who are unequally endowed could be fruitfully emulated. The concern with such inequality is typically exacerbated by age -- both prior to maturity and thereafter.

Contradictions in appreciation of extremism and otherness

As variously implied above there is a strangely paradoxical ambiguity to the appreciation of **extremism** (military heroism, sporting accomplishments, creativity, and radical inventiveness) and to its deprecation. The latter is exemplified by current preoccupations with the radical initiatives of jihadists.

Although both offer instances of human inequality, there is considerable difficulty in distinguishing between them in a balanced manner -- in preference to assumptions regarding the purportedly desirability forms of normality, as discussed separately (*Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism "rooting for" normalization vs. "rooting out" extremism?* 2005; *Eradication as the Strategic Final Solution of the 21st Century?* 2014).

Radical initiatives, whether appreciated or deprecated, necessarily imply a form of **radical thinking** at variance with norms of human equality (*Radical Innovators Beware -- in the arts, sciences and philosophy: terrifying implications of radical new deradicalisation initiative in France*, 2016). Curiously for a country priding itself (in contrast to others) on its cultivation of both philosophy and high fashion creativity -- and as such indicative of human inequality -- France has chosen to exemplify its interpretation of human equality in

terms of its deprecation of the Islamic burka and the burkini. This righteous official policy compares strangely with the early French promotion of the provocative bikini, as can be variously explored (*Facism as Superficial Intercultural Extremism: burkha, toplessness, sunglasses, beards, and flu masks*, 2009).

How is distinctiveness to be cultivated -- in fashion and lifestyle -- without undermining human equality? Especially intriguing is the evolution in **fashion** over time, given that the veiling and body coverage of European women has varied so dramatically over the past century -- in contrast to the nudity deprecated in indigenous cultures during the colonial period. Could the standard of equality relating to acceptable coverage be determined by one (subjective) definition of the **miniskirt**: long enough to cover the subject; short enough to be interesting? But what of the norms previously associated with the **codpiece**?

The dilemmas of human equality can be explored otherwise through extreme **renown**, as exemplified by:

- **orders of precedence** (and associated **protocol**): most notably in formal settings in which hierarchical relationships are clarified, reinforced and celebrated
- preoccupation with **celebrities**, most notably by the media -- as with the **A-list of movie stars** (see *Wikipedia Lists of Celebrities*)
- preoccupation with **elites**, as any small group of powerful people in political and sociological theory (typically in contrast to celebrities)
- preoccupation with **VIPs** (namely very important persons), possibly variously inclusive of the above

Characterizing human inequality, these are all considered to be "**somebodies**" in contrast to the "**nobodies**" excluded from such preoccupation. Such characterization may well be vital to the sense of identity and self-esteem of those so distinguished. Distinctions of equality may then be explicitly framed in terms of whether someone is "in" or "out".

As noted with respect to the medals awarded for sporting endeavour, human inequality is also distinguished by **systems of awards** (see *Wikipedia List of prizes, medals and awards*). These notably feature:

- **medals**, most notably for military valour
- awards, notably for individual distinction in business, entertainment, artistic endeavour, music (as with the **Person of the Year**)
- prizes for academic achievement (Nobel Prizes, **Fields Medal**, etc)
- awards for humanitarianism, international relations, and service (**Charlemagne Prize**, **Florence Nightingale Medal**, **Gandhi Peace Prize**, **Nobel Peace Prize**, **Right Livelihood Award**, **Sakharov Prize**, etc)
- **ennoblement** and honours, most notably as practiced problematically in the UK (Andrew Grice, *David Cameron Honours list would 'embarrass a medieval court'*, *The Independent*, 4 August 2016)
- honorific titles (Miss Universe, and national equivalents)
- formal recognition of **holiness** by religions, most notably through the process of **beatification** by the Roman Catholic Church

Whilst the above are the readily acceptable manifestation of human inequality, there is a curiously problematic counterpart to those so distinguished, namely those especially recognized for their **criminal activity**, corruption, crimes against humanity, or as constituting a danger to public safety. In featuring on other lists (**most wanted lists**, Interpol, terrorism, sexual offenders, debtors, etc), they exemplify another form of human inequality.

The nature of this counterpart is further highlighted by **demonization** -- a widespread process for the affirmation of human inequality (notably through "**excommunication**" and "**shunning**"). The pattern of the notorious **witch-hunts** of the Catholic Inquisition continues to echoed in the framing of political opponents as "evil" and "demonic", even within the presidential campaigns of the world's superpower (*Trump Sticks to Claim That Hillary Is 'Evil'*, *Fox News Insider*, 20 February 2016; John Halle and Noam Chomsky, *An Eight Point Brief for LEV (Lesser Evil Voting)*, 15 June 2016; *Existence of evil as authoritatively claimed to be an overriding strategic concern*, 2016).

Far more controversial are the dynamics associated with inequality recognized in terms of **otherness as unhuman or nonhuman**. This is evident with respect to:

- humans framed as nonhuman or **subhuman**, typically those associated with behaviours framed as abnormal, bestial or "evil" -- as with some forms of criminality and terrorism. This distinction is readily extended to opponents, notably those of different race, culture, or ideology. Historically it has notably given rise to **nonpersons**, **second-class citizens**, an underclass and, even more controversially, to **eugenics**
- **animals** with which humans may have a very special bond, as with **companion animals** treated with a degree of equality otherwise reserved for humans, as discussed separately (*Marrying an Other whatever the Form: reframing and extending the understanding of marriage*, 2013). The Justice Network argues:

The equality of animals and humans is immortalized in the biblical story of Noah and the Flood. Noah was commanded to save every species of animal on Earth; in contrast only a relatively few human beings were saved from the flood. This story is presented here not as a historical fact or religious believe, but as an ancient myth showing the animal/human bond and the indispensable relationship of animals and humans. (...*Animal-Human Equality - Noah and the Flood...*)

Any assumption regarding the inherent inequality of animals merits further consideration in the light of the metaphorical comparison of humans commonly made with many animals: bull, tiger, ape, snake, wolf, dog, pig, cow, worm, etc -- whether as deprecation or appreciation. Also of relevance is recognition of the degree of genetic equivalence between humans and animals, to the point that many animals are most valued for their use in **animal testing** because of their capacity to emulate the response of humans to drugs and surgical procedures (organ replacement, etc). Worldwide it is estimated that the number of vertebrate

animals used annually for that purpose -- from zebrafish to non-human primates -- ranges from the tens of millions to more than 100 million.

- the emerging issue of human relations with **robots** (notably those endowed with a high order of intelligence) has been extensively explored in science fiction and tentatively from a legal perspective (*Robots could demand legal rights*, *BBC News*, 21 December 2006; Phil McNally and Sohail Inayatullah, *The Rights of Robots: technology, culture and law in the 21st century*, *Futures*, 1988; Robert A. Freitas Jr., *The Legal Rights of Robots*, 1985).
- a predicted degree of convergence between humans with robotic characteristics and robots as conventionally understood (Sharon Gaudin, *Hail Cyborgs ! The line between humans and robots is blurring*, *Computerworld*, 6 June 2014; Catholijn M. Jonker and Annemiek Nelis, *Human, Robots and Robotic Humans*, 2007). The latter argues that humans and machines are, at present, viewed as two distinct categories differentiated by their unique biological or artificial configuration and capabilities. It can be anticipated that the two will, in the near future, increasingly partake of the nature of the other as a result of technological enhancement. Modern technology thus has the potential to aid and even modify the human organism by artificial means. The construction of such advanced forms of humanoid machines, or "**androids**", requires a reconceptualisation of what makes humans characteristically human, as well as requiring us to pay attention to the potential consequences of constructing such humanlike machines.
- irrespective of the focus on robots, the increasing extent of **behavioural programming** (resulting in what may be indistinguishable from robotic behaviour) has been variously framed by **George Orwell** (*Nineteen Eighty Four*, 1944) and **Aldous Huxley** (*Brave New World*, 1932) as reviewed by **Richard K. Moore** (*Mind Control: Orwell, Huxley, and Today's Reality*, *Information Clearing House*, 8 September 2014).
- attention is required to the degree to which familiar technology (most notably vehicles) may be anthropomorphised by the user, to the point of being named and given special care -- even a focus of conversation. Whilst this may be deprecated or considered ridiculous to others, it is a feature of human reality which will be reinforced by the emergence of intelligent robots (*Forthcoming Major Revolution in Global Dialogue*, 2013).
- the potential relation to **extraterrestrials** (for which human science so desperately quests), as discussed separately (*Communicating with Aliens: the psychological dimension of dialogue*, 2000). This is characterized by a certain degree of irony given the challenge for normal humans to communicate with other human readily framed as "alien". There is also a degree of presumption implied by the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, and the common expectation that aliens will share human values, as noted by **Finn Brunton** (*Petit guide de conversation avec les extraterrestres*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Aout 2016) -- or even be recognizable as such (Dyani Sabin, *NASA Says We Won't Recognize Alien Life When We Find it*, *Inverse*, 25 August 2016; Robby Berman, *E.T. Could Already Be Among Us and We Wouldn't Know*, *Says NASA*, *BigThink*, 29 August 2016).

These instances are a reminder that consideration of human inequality merits a broader framework to encompass perspectives of **traditional cultures and knowledge systems** and their particular relation to their environments, as extensively documented for the United Nations Environmental Programme by **Darrell Posey** (*Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, 1999). These may well call into question a degree of arrogant exceptionalism associated with the preoccupation of humanity with human equality. The values implied in the appreciation of humanity may well be attributed more generally to other features of the environment -- with a conventionally unrecognized degree of respect and humility.

The issues extend to the unconventional engagement with animals (notably **totem** animals), plants (especially trees), rock forms and rivers. Traces of these issues are to be found in unusual legal proceedings in countries such as Iceland and Ireland, in which a degree of (traditional) legal personality is accorded to animals, trees, and rocks (Justin Erik Halldór Smith, *The Moral Status of Rocks*, 21 May 2013; Jeremy Harte, *Do Elves have Rights? At the Edge*, 10, 1998; David Favre, *Living Property: a new status for animals within the legal system*, *Marquette Law Review*, 2010). Aspects of these issues are notably evident with respect to the many **sacred mountains** and **sacred rivers** to which a form of personality may be attributed.

Complicity in institutionalization of human inequality

The nature of human inequality can be usefully explored through the institutional processes and vested interests which cultivate the myth of human equality -- in some respects as vital to their own survival (however vigorously this may be denied). This of course continues to be the theme of a multitude of controversial studies and debates, most notably designed as a contribution to the blame-game whereby others are necessarily at fault (*Blame game: it's them not us !* 2015).

Systemic engendering of human inequality: The many arguments so framed, from different ideological perspectives, call into question the very nature of the social system and the manner of its governance.

It remains curious how -- whatever the system advocated -- it is difficult to distinguish its operation from that of a **Ponzi scheme**, understood in more global terms (*Conceptual Traps and Ponzi schemes*, 2001). Whether the emphasis is on financial or other rewards (possibly including the spiritual), it is typically the few who benefit at the expense of those less competent in manipulating the system to their own ends -- whatever the rationalization.

The many (and their multiplication) are however seen as vital to enable the few to thrive. The subtle complexity of a Ponzi scheme exemplifies the manner in which human inequality can be systemically engendered. The difficulty of detecting its operation, and the reluctance to do so, has been remarkably illustrated by the **Madoff investment scandal**.

Cultivation of human inequality through business development and growth: It is curious to note the extent to which human equality is challenged by most forms of growth and development -- and their dependence on ensuring a degree of inequality to render the process sustainable.

In economic theory this dependence is framed by understanding of labour and the considerable advantages of access to "cheap labour". More problematic are the consequent implications for the vested institutional dependence on population growth at all costs. This is framed as providing an unconstrained source of labour necessary to ensure forms of growth -- necessarily framed as being unquestionably healthy, despite any evidence to the contrary.

It is curious to note the role over decades of intergovernmental institutions such as the United Nations Development Programme. Given their authoritative role in framing and justifying growth, it is difficult to determine whether their operations are primarily of benefit to "developers" rather than to "developees". If "development" is indeed to be unquestionably appreciated, it is curious that the incidence of human inequality continues to remain high, with many "gaps" continuing to increase.

The paradox lends itself to speculative exploration (*Veloping: the Art of Sustaining Significance*, 1997). Is it possible that the sustainable process for ensuring human equality could be better captured by "veloping" rather than "developing"? Veloping would then be the art of recognizing and sustaining the significance of what we already have. "Developing", in contrast, is then to be recognized as the process whereby some people claim that things would be better if everybody subscribed to a particular strategy which is guaranteed to take them to better places -- recognizing that it is those who make such claims who do best out of the process.

Clearly the whole process of acquisition and possession of property -- the most common feature of development -- engenders a worldwide pattern of inequality in relation to those unable to achieve the equivalent. This is potentially most perverse in the case of cultural and intellectual property to which access is systematically constrained -- most notably with respect to the "incarceration" of knowledge by systems of copyright, and the associated imposition of "visiting rights".

Contradictions in political representation and governance: Again this is a focus of continuing debate and protest through the manner in which a pattern of human inequality is sustained.

The pattern is especially evident in the challenges to electoral processes through gerrymandering, electoral rigging, and **voter restrictions** (Andrew Gumbel, *Are We Witnessing the Death of Representative Democracy?* *AlterNet*, 29 July 2016; Patrick J. Buchanan, *Yes, the System Is Rigged*, *Information Clearing House*, 13 August 2016; Barrett Holmes Pitner, *Yes, Donald Trump. The electoral system is 'rigged' -- against black Americans*, *The Guardian*, 3 August 2016).

Other issues are evident with respect to sovereignty, the size of countries and the manner in which their peoples are represented or acquire special privileges, as with **microstates** and **sovereign city states**, such as: Vatican, Monaco, San Marino, Liechtenstein (see also *Wikipedia: List of micronations, List of states with limited recognition, List of dependent territories, List of territorial disputes*).

Cultivating human inequality in risk assessment: Clearly the operations of a number of institutions and services are designed to distinguish degrees of human inequality. These include:

- banking and financial services, with their necessary focus on discriminatory definitions of human creditworthiness
- insurance, with the focus on discriminatory distinctions of the risks posed by the condition, situation, or behaviour of an individual
- medicine, notably under emergency conditions when inequality is necessarily recognized through the discriminatory priorities of **triage**
- religion, especially through the distinctions it makes between believers and unbelievers, and the end which is held to await them
- security, most notably highlighted by current controversies regarding discriminatory **profiling** of suspected offenders

Cultivation of inequality through engendering illegality and criminality: As noted above, perceived inequality and injustice is a direct incentive to criminality.

More controversially, perceived injustice is increasingly recognized as engendering violent protest and terrorism -- however this may come to be justified by history (and any future articulation of "just protest theory").

Misleading framing of inequality through comparative global studies: The human condition is variously presented in regional and global statistical reports by international agencies with mandates claiming to be supportive of human equality. These reports necessarily provide frameworks within which degrees of inequality become evident (see *Wikipedia List of countries by wealth inequality, List of countries by income inequality*).

Curiously such reports then exemplify the distinction between the myth of human equality, cultivated by such institutions as an ideal, and the reality of human inequality to which so many are exposed.

However it is also of interest to recognize that, as the product of political decision-making, the reports reveal (through their omissions) those aspects of human inequality which are too embarrassing to be noted by such institutions. These typically include varieties of corruption, tax evasion and trafficking in which their decision-makers may well be directly complicit. This has been exemplified by the **Eurostat scandal** (*Action on Eurostat Corruption*, *New Europe*, 13 July 2003). What data was massaged in the interests of whom?

Questionable notions of human equality

Inadequate debate: It is embarrassing at this late stage of global civilization that insights regarding human (in)equality remain so confused and open to every form of exploitation. Missing, as with other controversial issues, is a more appropriately subtle means of ordering the debate -- potentially exemplified by recognition of the axes of bias brought to any such discussion, as distinguished by

various authors (*Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases*, 1993). The contribution of fuzzy logic is as yet to bear fruit, potentially to be superseded by the psychosocial implications of the thinking underlying quantum mechanics, as noted below.

In practice appropriate consideration of human equality (framed in terms of rights) is further undermined by dissociation of the matter from any sense of equality of **human responsibility**, as can be variously discussed (*Universal Declaration of Responsibilities of Human Intercourse: a draft proposal*, 2007; Geoffrey Vickers, *Equality of Responsibility: cultural conditions for Western survival*, *Futures*, 11, 1979, 1, pp. 16-31).

The inadequacy of debate is strikingly evident with respect to issues associated with unconstrained reproduction in a resource-challenged context -- even in the most problematic environments (urban bombardment and refugees camps). There is currently no means of debating the possible balance between family size, human rights, human responsibilities, asylum seekers, entitlement, sub-replacement fertility, competitive **natality**, and the unconstrained production of children. The myth of equality serves to reinforce the implicit slogan: as many as you want, not as many as you can feed. The sense in which inequality is systematically engendered by irresponsibility is skillfully avoided (*Institutionalized Shunning of Overpopulation Challenge incommunicability of fundamentally inconvenient truth*, 2008; *Resource Insights from Plus or Minus 12 People on a Liferaft Thought experiment to highlight global dilemmas in a comprehensible context*, 2014).

As a consequence of cultivating the myth of human equality, most notably by religions, the hidden assumption in engendering ever more children in resource-challenged contexts is that people elsewhere will attach equal value to the new lives whatever the numbers. Excessive familiarity with images of those suffering is however more than likely to engender ever increasing indifference as a consequence of **psychic numbing**.

Human lives are not then valued equally -- especially when it is obvious from the images purveyed that the family sizes of those in need are totally imprudent in the absence of food -- even by the standards of developed countries. Engendering children irresponsibly, with the encouragement of religions and in the absence of resources (or unwillingness to provide them), ensures that such lives are valued less. This is a perversely ironic reflection of the economic laws of supply and demand. Cultivating the myth is then clearly counterproductive. When will the indifference to any such suffering become complete -- and for whom?

Inequality in mathematics and logic: In mathematics, an **inequality** is a relation that holds between two values when they are different. In contrast to strict inequalities, there are two types of inequality relations that are not strict: A less than or equal to B; A is greater than or equal to B. A looser distinction is made in engineering when the difference may be greater: A is much less than B; A is much greater than B.

Fundamental to such distinctions is the understanding of **logical equality** and **logical equivalence** -- two statements being equivalent if they have the truth value. In **mathematical logic** these considerations are developed further in **propositional calculus** through the study of propositions (whether they are true or false) formed by other propositions with the use of **logical connectives**. The insights are taken even further in **metalogue** and **metamathematics**.

Curiously such capacity to explore abstract distinctions cannot be said to have as yet been of much assistance in clarifying the issues of human (in)equality. There would however appear to be many fruitful implications, as have been widely discussed with respect to the insights of **George Spencer-Brown** (*Laws of Form*, 1969/1994) and the implication of the observer in the process of making distinctions and establishing boundaries (*Description, indication, depiction and form*, 2008). Of relevance to detection of human (in)equality, for Spencer-Brown:

Any indication implies duality, we cannot produce a thing without coproducing what it is not, and every duality implies triplicity: what the thing is, what it isn't, and the boundary between them. Thus you cannot indicate anything without defining two states, and you cannot define two states without creating three elements. None of these exists in reality, or separately from the others.

Unfortunately the challenge in the discussion of human (in)equality ranges between the simplest of binary extremes. It is curious that equality is an essentially quantitative term, seemingly borrowed for qualitative purposes. Disciplines tend to attach unequal weight to the categories distinguished in this regard. More problematic is whether equality and inequality are appropriately distinguished rather than entangled in ways yet to be "re-cognized".

Legitimate equality? The question of what distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate forms of inequality is addressed by Robert Max Jackson (*Causes of Inequality: analytical strategies*, 2014):

We often use the term *inequality* to refer only to forms of inequality we consider unjust or otherwise undesirable. Yet, much inequality is commonly accepted as appropriate, fair, or desirable in societies. The amount of legitimacy attributed to a form of inequality can be anywhere between extremely high (e.g. the authority of parents over infants) to extremely low (e.g., slavery in a modern society with well-developed civil rights). The assessment of legitimacy should always consider potential differences among differentially situated groups (e.g., those enjoying advantages in a system of inequality, those disadvantaged, and those relatively unaffected), and the degree of agreement or disagreement about legitimacy assessments. Analytically, we want to ask what processes or conditions cause a form of inequality to be considered more or less legitimate. When does the legitimacy status of inequality change or become contested?

"Reality" of inequality? This was noted above in the light of the distinctions made by Ferdinand Mount (*Five Types of Inequality*, 2008) between: political equality and equality before the law; equality of outcome or result; equality of opportunity; equality of treatment (including equality of agency and responsibility); and equality of membership in society.

An insightful framework for an extensive commentary is provided by [Mortimer J. Adler](#) (*The Dimensions of Equality*, 1999) arguing that what differs as one distinguishes different dimensions is:

1. the character of the subjects of which equality and inequality are predicated. The subjects being compared and regarded as equal or unequal fall into two main categories: human beings (human or personal equality and inequality) and everything else (circumstantial equality and inequality), namely -- all the external circumstances under which human beings live and act and whatever factors impinge upon their conduct and their welfare.
2. the mode of the predication, which may be either declarative or prescriptive. To say that two individuals *are* or *are not* equal in a certain respect is declarative. To say that they *should* or *ought to* be equal or unequal in a certain respect is prescriptive.
3. the qualifications attached to the predication, being the most difficult and at the same time the most important qualification or distinction to be considered in statements about equality, whether declarative or prescriptive. This is the distinction between (a) an equality of conditions that exists or ought to exist without any attendant difference in degree and (b) an equality of conditions that exists or ought to exist but which is accompanied by differences in degree and so by inequalities among those who are equal in a given respect.

Curiously, however, as essentially academic abstractions, these are insensitive to the experiential reality of those recognizing inequality -- typically expressed in other terms. The plethora of commentary with respect to human equality can be succinctly deprecated in terms of the famous statement by [Jack Nicholson](#):

Look, you, I'm very intelligent. If you're gonna give me hope, you gotta do better than you're doing. I mean, if you can't be at least mildly interesting, then shut the hell up. I mean, **I'm drowning here, and you're describing the water!** (*As Good As It Gets*, 1997).

Development of personal inequality? Arguments above have focused on the manner in which inequality is variously cultivated, typically to the disadvantage of those with respect to whom advantage and privilege is acquired. The issue becomes more complex when humans seek to develop themselves in some way -- in contrast with others (less motivated in that respect). Physical fitness offers one example. Advancement along a career path offers another -- suitably acknowledged by distinctive corporate and military titles or by academic degrees.

More challenging is the question of the inequality engendered by education or through psychological and/or spiritual development -- or life experience. Within some religious frameworks this may be understood as the acquisition of merit (necessarily relative to others). Understood otherwise it may take the form of the quest for spiritual insight -- to be born again -- enshrined in some mystical traditions by a succession of initiations (*Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being "born again"*, 2004). For example, whilst entry into Freemasonry may be recognized as a "third birth", some forms of Freemasonry recognize up to 33 "degrees" -- each presumably associated with a new level of insight, readily recognized as exemplifying ever higher degrees of inequality.

Beyond simplistic understandings of equality: Clearly there are forms of paradox, ambiguity and contradiction associated with human equality -- notably characteristic of any mythical understanding. There are much valued degrees of qualitative subtlety which are readily and unfortunately obscured.

How is the deprecation of inequality to be related to the appreciation of distinctive beauty, charisma, wisdom, courage and any form of holiness? It is curious that religion, in acclaiming itself to be the primary articulator of human values, has proven to be inadequate to the challenge of reconciling such subtly complex dimensions -- other than by reinforcing the sense of inequality through the singular recognition accorded to those upheld as most exemplifying it (priests, saints, the "born again").

Despite the intimate relation of religion to mathematics, very little effort has been made to enhance theology in the light of recent insights into complexity by mathematics, as separately discussed (*Mathematical Theology: Future Science of Confidence in Belief*, 2011).

Rather than a binary contrast between human equality and human inequality, an alternative approach is offered by advances in [fuzzy logic](#), for example, as notably articulated by [Sarah Voss](#) (*Fuzzy Logic in Health Care Settings: moral math for value-laden choices*, *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*, 6, 2016).

Beyond the challenge of (in)equality between those of superficially similar nature is that between those of distinctive skills and competence. A one-size-fits-all assumption of norms by which equality is defined avoids the new thinking called for at this time. This inadequacy is strangely echoed by the much-challenged ability to accord meaningful significance to the range of non-human species in the environment -- on which human life may be highly dependent.

The issue can be framed more radically through the "re-cognition" of equality in the case of incommensurables. The point is often made that a dog would find a human to be remarkably ignorant with respect to the distinction of odours. Amongst humans a similar point is made with respect to the [multiplicity of intelligences](#). As argued by [Howard Gardner](#), those distinguished include: musical-rhythmic and harmonic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential. The point can be highlighted by human inequality with regard to [emotional intelligence](#).

Instead of assuming commensurability, there is then a case for addressing the challenge of relative incommensurability in the face of significant difference -- rather than deliberately misrepresenting the nature and degree of such differences to the advantage of one or other. This has been variously addressed to an inadequate degree in the archetypal relations between young and old, cowardly and courageous, or between male and female ([John Gray](#), *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, 1992).

A curious possibility -- following recognition of a genetic-memetic continuum?

It is all too readily assumed that human beings are defined by their genetic code -- nuanced by continuing debate

about epigenetics and environmental effects. Missing from such discussion is the human embodiment of memetic information which the future may frame in terms of a memetic code. There would then be the possibility that individuals would be distinguished not only to a minimal degree by genetic differences -- insufficient to characterize them as distinct species according to current thinking. Individuals with distinctive DNA can still have fruitful intercourse in genetic terms.

If a genetic-memetic continuum came to be recognized this would however clarify -- controversially -- why some with similar genetic codes cannot have fruitful intercourse with others in memetic terms, if their memetic makeups were especially distinctive. Humanity would then need to be recognized as speciating rapidly memetically -- embodying distinctive memetic coding. Specialization by discipline and skill offers a possible indication of this form of inequality. Perhaps appropriately, consideration of aspects of the genetic-memetic continuum is discussed with respect to distinctive musical preferences (Steven B. Jan, *The Memetics of Music: a Neo-Darwinian view of musical structure and culture*, 2007). Differentiation of musical preferences significantly determines fruitful intercourse -- a question of "vibration" in information terms.

Beyond oversimplistic framing of "human identity": Preoccupations with security in many forms (physical, financial, confidentiality, etc) have increased the need to frame human identity unambiguously. This has reduced the focus to measurable details. As noted by Viviana Bernath: *In the last twenty years the term DNA has become synonymous with identity* (*Social Identity and Biological Identity*, 2015).

A contrast can be drawn with the experience of so-called **bipolar disorder** -- alternating between periods of depression and periods of elevated mood. Whether for the person in question, or for those encountering that person, it is appropriate to ask how identity is then to be defined. Recourse to biological or other administrative details is an oversimplification divorced from the dynamics of experiential reality. A similar point could be made with respect to a range of behaviours, most obviously as a consequence of use of narcotic substances.

The sense of identity may of course vary with age and physical condition. As long recognized by the social sciences, **identity** can be radically challenged by the contrast between individualistic and collective cultures. The latter engender extreme pressures for extensive family reunion -- a current challenge to countries responding to asylum seekers..

Society is clearly faced with a confrontation between those understandings of identity defined by measurable details (and profiling) in contrast with understandings informed by the sense of the identity with which a human may personally "identify" -- whatever that may be understood to mean. Of relevance to this argument is the fact that it may be primarily in terms of the latter that any sense of human (in)equality emerges.

It is therefore surprising that a civilization, recognizing itself to be information-based, accords so little attention to rapid evolution of understanding regarding information and its implications. This is all the more surprising in that human identity is variously defined and experienced through information and the media -- most notably the social media. Framing identity in terms of conventional categories is increasingly obsolete. This suggests that richer insights into a richer sense of identity could be fruitfully derived from thinking developed in relation to information technologies -- especially including the music through the experience of which many people frame their identity.

Rather than seeking to define human (in)equality in terms of conventional box-like categories characteristic of statistical reports, is human identity better to be understood through **thinking outside the box**? Could a comparison then be critically made between shipping containers and the manner in which human identity is conventionally and inappropriately defined in an increasingly globalized society?

This could follow from the argument with respect to shipping containers as the primary symbol of globalization and a container world (*Alexander Klose, The Container Principle: how a box changes the way we think*, 2009). In a critical comment Klose notes:

Containers represent the impressive dynamics of modern capitalism and its fundamental optimism in the face of every crisis. At the same time, they represent the fears and objections to these dynamics when logistic are organized purely for optimization, forcibly converging and aligning formerly remote parts of the world through an exponential increase in transport and communications processes. The basic materiality of containers, the fact that they can be emptied just as easily as they can be filled, also seems to reveal an effect on the semantic level of stories and images. (p. ix)

Are box-like categories a feature of inappropriate globalization of identity -- as might follow from the argument of Luc De Brabandere and Alan Iny (*Thinking in New Boxes: a new paradigm for business creativity*, 2013)?

Does this metaphor suggest the extent to which human identity is variously "boxed in", with evaluation of human (in)equality increasingly comparable to that distinguishing containers and their contents? Does security in a globalized society require that identity be contained in this way?

Human (in)equality in terms of wave theory? Rather than understanding human identity in primarily static terms, there is then be a case for an essentially dynamic conception -- identity framed and contained dynamically. This would be consistent with the arguments of Daniel Dervin (*Creativity and Culture: a psychoanalytic study of the creative process in the arts, sciences, and culture*, 1990) with respect to the emergence of *Homo undulans*, as discussed separately with respect to *Homo conjugens* (*Emergence of Homo undulans -- through a "grokking" dynamic?* 2013).

The wave metaphor is widely used and appreciated -- from sports stadia, to surfing, to web navigation, to appreciation of "vibes", to fashion and design, and through music. Information itself is analysed and disseminated via waves. New insights in this respect are proposed by physicists Sara Imari Walker and Paul C.W. Davies (*The "Hard Problem" of Life*, June 2016). The authors, both from the Beyond Center for Fundamental Concepts in Science (Arizona State University), suggest that fleshiness and double-helices might be

things confined only to life on Earth. Life in the rest of the universe, they venture, could be based on something much more unlikely: information.

If "information" can indeed be recognized as the fundamental building block of life, the discovery will be a scientific revolution as game-changing as those of classical physics and quantum mechanics (as highlighted in a [commentary](#) on their proposal). It has multiple implications for consciousness, the capacities of which are called into question in relation to the recognition of order by the cognitive studies of [George Lakoff](#) and [Rafael Núñez](#) (*Where Mathematics Comes From: how the embodied mind brings mathematics into being*, 2000). These developed from earlier work, notably on the metaphorical significance of the container and the conduit ([George Lakoff](#) and [Mark Johnson](#), *Metaphors We Live By*, 1980).

If "category boxes" are to be considered obsolete containers of identity, the nature of the future containers (or vehicles) of identity calls for imaginative reflection -- consistent with quantum mechanics and whatever may succeed it. From this perspective a case is made separately for a wave theory of being:

- *Encountering Otherness as a Waveform: in the light of a wave theory of being* (2013)
- *Being a Waveform of Potential as an Experiential Choice: emergent dynamic qualities of identity and integrity* (2013)
- *Being Neither a-Waving Nor a-Parting: cognitive implications of wave-particle duality in the light of science and spirituality* (2013)

If life in general merits understanding in terms of information, clearly this argument applies equally to humans and to the possibility of new ways of thinking about human (in)equality -- perhaps to be provocatively termed "e-quality". If "life" elsewhere in the universe is to be imagined as potentially otherwise, rather than contained by the conventional categories currently favoured by humans, the challenge of communication with extraterrestrials also merits consideration otherwise, as separately argued (*Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criterion of species maturity?* 2008; *Sensing Epiterrestrial Intelligence (SETI): embedding of "extraterrestrials" in episystemic dynamics?* 2013).

With self-consciousness currently framed in terms of the [mirror-test](#), these argue that a more complex variant may prove appropriate, consistent with higher orders of cybernetics. Extraterrestrials may well frame current human understanding of (in)equality as quite "unfit for purpose".

Myth? Through its subtle implications, the myth of human equality may well be more significant and fruitful than simplistic assumptions regarding the experiential reality of inequality. The myth merits imaginative refinement on its own terms however. What it is that is unambiguously "equal" between humans, living entities, or otherwise, may remain a mystery for the future -- currently beyond our ken, other than as variously intuited. The mystery necessarily encompasses the quest for distinctiveness, as a paradoxical form of inequality which calls into question the fundamental meaning of equality.

One interesting clue is offered by the early insight of environmental designer [Christopher Alexander](#), framing his later development of a [pattern language](#) as a cognitive pointer to the core attractor of a "place to be". He has stressed the need for recognition of a "quality without a name":

There is a central quality which is the root criterion of life and spirit in a man, a town, a building, or a wilderness. This quality is objective and precise, but it cannot be named. The search, which we make for this quality, in our own lives, is the central search of any person, and the crux of any individual person's story. It is the search for those moments and situations when we are most alive (*The Timeless Way of Building*, 1979)

Any sense of human identity could be explored in such terms as a means of framing the "quality without name" through which humans might indeed be understood as "equal" -- perhaps a quality shared with a life as might be more widely understood.

Regulating the manifestations of inequality could then be fruitfully challenged as the palliative tinkering of "derivative" thinking (*Vigorous Application of Derivative Thinking to Derivative Problems: transcending bewailing, hand-wringing and emotional blackmail*, 2013). A strangely relevant comparison is to be made with the shift from value based on the [gold standard](#) to that readily determined by [fiat](#). With the variously diminishing value of human life (noted above as a consequence of unconstrained population growth), notions of human equality are increasingly determined by the perversities of a market and the value arbitrary attributed to life under different circumstances.

Much to be regretted is the degree to which oversimplistic understandings of (in)equality are effectively used as "humanitarian shields" in support of simplistic, knee-jerk decision-making (*Starvation Imagery as Humanitarian Trump Card? Counterproductive emotional blackmail engendering worldwide indifference*, 2016). This is perhaps to be recognized as a form of "cognitive camouflage", reminiscent of the pretence of the archetypal [fig-leaf](#) or of the [Potemkin village](#) (*Globalization within a Global Potemkin Society: a strategic challenge to proactive participation in society*, 2000).

Controversially, but potentially fruitfully, it could be asked whether the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* has effectively been crafted such as to frame entities which are "non-human", thereby justifying engagement with them in a manner which cannot be effectively challenged as "inhumane". Given the propensity to demonise enemies as inherently "sub-human" in some way, they can then be treated like animals or other life forms. The legal subtleties deployed to enable [torture](#) by humans against humans offer valuable insights into a process in which many are complicit in less controversial instances -- despite the provisions of the *UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*. Sophisticated arguments of interests are those of the Catholic Inquisition and more recently the case for euphemistically-termed *enhanced interrogation techniques* -- both implying a case for "just torture theory".

Where might understandings of identity of requisite subtlety be found? How might human (in)equality be evaluated in such terms?

Essential inequality: normal vs. abnormal / unliked vs. liked / outsider vs. insider

The following table may offer a useful summary of the argument through the extreme conditions it contrasts from a variety of perspectives -- most usefully introduced by reference to "alien". The question is then the manner in which human (in)equality is to be recognized. In being inherently equal in a particular sense, how are the "liked", the "insiders" and the "normal" to be considered as equal to those framed as the "disliked", the "outsiders" and the "abnormal" -- whether or not the latter include the "extremists" and the "radicals"?

In a global information society, are the hyperconnected "more than equal" (in a sense which merits recognition) in contrast with the relatively isolated and unconnected? Are there a variety of modes of "connectivity" -- of which some may be essentially dysfunctional? Should connectivity be explored in a dynamic sense, whether in terms of rate of connectivity or some analogue to bandwidth? Does understanding of both **connections** and **contacts** merit challenge in the light of arguments presented separately (*Considerable Conglomeration of "Cons" of Global Concern*, 2012)?

Variety of modes of "connectivity"		
Alien (unlinked)	<p>Whether as a foreigner or from outer space, an alien is characterized by not having recognizable links to the community. The term can be usefully contrasted with lien, namely any sort of charge or encumbrance against an item of property that secures the payment of a debt. This can be understood in terms of dependency recognized by law whereby the individual is in some respects indebted to the community, or the community to the individual. In its derivation from French, <i>lien</i> notably refers to any web (hyper)link in cyberspace. Aliens may thus be recognized as the "unlinked" in terms of electronic communications.</p> <p>Understood in terms of linkage, any multiplicity of links defines community and being part of it. A relevant question is then at what point the nature of those objective links (and identification with them) erodes subjective links, thereby disassociating a human from a sense of personal identity. The person then effectively becomes an "alien", in the sense of being alienated from whatever their interiority might be taken to mean (as notably the focus of the International Society for Psychology as the Discipline of Interiority). This is in preference to identification with what might be understood as the hive mind, or described as some form of inner emptiness or soullessness.</p>	Lien (linked)
Extraterrestrial (ungrounded)	<p>As with "alien", this can be understood as an off-planet, extraterrestrial. Metaphorically this can also be understood as a form of ungroundedness, possibly to be considered a problematic characteristic of global citizenship, continuous travel, and lack of particular association to any one place. In the parlance of drama, an "extra" refers to a performer who appears in a nonspeaking, nonsinging or nondancing capacity, usually in the background. In this sense, global civilization is characterized by a vast number of "terrestrial extras" -- a perception with which many refugees from their homeland could readily identify.</p> <p>Terrestrial, by contrast, can be associated metaphorically with the sense of being "down to earth" or grounded, namely having a good understanding of what is really important in life. (<i>Get Grounded, Psychology Today</i>, 2009; <i>The Importance of Being Grounded</i>, 2010). However, being grounded, may also refer to some form of restrictive constraint. A related understanding is the use of ground or earth to refer to the point in an electrical circuit from which voltages are measured. Some cultures attach particular importance to the place from which a person originates -- deprecating the condition of those who can claim no such point of reference or homeland.</p>	Terrestrial (grounded)
Unbonded (unliked)	<p>In relationship terms, the absence of any human bonds or attachments -- most notably those of friendship, marriage and kinship -- is frequently a cause for regret (whether by the individual, or as perceived by others).</p> <p>Having a particular bond -- an elected affinity -- may well be framed as a preferred condition. This has been extended through social media to the widespread preoccupation with expression and accumulation of "likes", understood as "followers" -- which may in some conditions be acquired in bulk as a means of being promoted as a star figure in that environment (in contrast with those who are relatively "unliked", or explicitly "disliked" on social media)</p>	Bonded (liked)
Outsider	<p>The descriptions by various authors of the archetypal outsider have been summarized by Colin Wilson (<i>The Outsider</i>, 1956) exploring the effect on the psyche of that condition, the effect of the outsider on society, and the effect of society on the person in that condition.</p> <p>By contrast, references are widely made appreciatively (or in deprecation) to the role of the insider, namely a member of any group of people of limited number and generally restricted access. An insider is readily understood as having firsthand, material knowledge, in contrast to that of an outsider. Reference may be similarly made to being "in" (rather than "out") and to being "in the loop". This is associated with in-group favouritism (in contrast to out-group derogation). Privileged access to information regarding financial affairs enables problematic insider trading (which may be illegal).</p>	Insider
Abnormality (extremism, radicalism)	<p>Abnormality (or dysfunctional behaviour), namely deviating from the normal or differing from the typical (such as an aberration), is a subjectively defined behavioral characteristic, assigned to those with rare or dysfunctional conditions. Especially from a psychosocial and ideological perspective, this can be extended to include extremism and radicalism of various kinds. Both extremism and radicalism may however be celebrated rather than deprecated.</p> <p>Behavioural normality, is the state of being "normal" -- naming conforming to social norms -- as opposed to being deviant, eccentric or unusual. A return to normalcy has featured as a political programme following social disruption.</p>	Normality

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