



laetus in praesens

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International Community as God or Sorcerer's Apprentice?

Strategic chaos in the absence of an interlocking temporal pattern of longer-term cyclic processes

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Introduction

Are there insights to be gained from the current challenges of governance? Most evident are the refugee crisis, financial instability (and rumours of worse to come), climate change, regional conflict, and resource constraints. In this context it is strange to see the progressive marginalization of the United Nations, other than for token purposes and as a device for inhibiting global decision-making. In its place there is the apparent recognition of an intangible entity, namely the so-called [international community](#). This seemingly disembodied entity has no legal existence and seemingly lacks any clear structure or processes consistent with previous understandings of international organization.

Appeals are now frequently made to the international community in declarations publicized by the media. Its failure to act in response to them may well be deplored by those in need, as evident in a key report of Amnesty International ([The Global Refugee Crisis: a conspiracy of neglect](#) (June 2015):

The refugee crisis is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century, but the response of the international community has been a shameful failure. We need a radical overhaul of policy and practice to create a coherent and comprehensive global strategy... The international community has failed to provide [refugees], or the humanitarian agencies supporting refugees with sufficient resources... The current refugee crisis will not be solved unless the international community recognizes that it is a global problem that requires states to significantly step up international cooperation

Reference is thus made to the capacity of the international community to decide, to act and to mobilize resources. More mysterious is the degree to which such appeals, and collective belief in the possibility of action, increasingly resemble that traditionally associated with those to some deity in acknowledgement of its power. Is the international community now being engendered as a form of secular deity -- despite deprecation of religion and the much debated demise of God ([Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion, 2006](#))?

Especially given its increasingly questionable capacity, the intangible nature of the international community invites similar criticism: the *International Community Delusion*? More challenging is the sense in which, as with deity, there is an implication of a higher order of coherence beyond the ken of ordinary citizens. There is a sense in which belief in the international community is conflated with belief in the possibility of universal consensus.

If only in terms of the elusive nature of agreement on a value-imbued response to problems, evidence to date indicates that this too may be a delusion, as separately argued ([The Consensus Delusion: mysterious attractor undermining global civilization as currently imagined, 2011](#)). Ironically it is only by cultivating the illusion of an ultimate threat -- from evil, or terrorism, or ETs, etc -- that a form of consensus can now be cultivated and imposed. This was a theme of [Noam Chomsky](#) and [Edward S. Herman](#) ([Manufacturing Consent: the political economy of the mass media, 1988](#)).

There is therefore a case for exploring "international community" as an intangible entity in the process of being engendered metaphorically as a form of secular deity. This then focuses attention on all the problematic limitations evident in belief in divinity, as so

assiduously cultivated by religion in response to the hopes and desperation of the wider population. Especially sinister is a strange need for human sacrifice to encourage that entity to act -- as most recently evident with the media coverage, and response of world leadership, to the image of a drowned refugee boy (*Shocking images of drowned Syrian boy show tragic plight of refugees*, *The Guardian*, 2 September 2015; *Will the image of a lifeless boy on a beach change the refugee debate?* *The Guardian*, 3 September 2015).

Whether a collective delusion or not, the tragedy of global governance at this time suggests that another metaphor may however offer greater insight, namely that articulated in a poem by [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#): *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (1797). The metaphor has been widely used since then in books and films. In the absence of the wisdom and efficacy of a traditional sorcerer -- whether benign, malign or transcending such distinctions -- is global governance now to be more usefully compared with that sorcerer's apprentice, left to act irresponsibly without adequate guidance or constraint? The most concrete example is offered by the Middle East in which a variety of military initiatives by the "international community" have so evidently produced far greater chaos than they were naively designed to remedy, as now defensively claimed by those responsible.

Whether as a secular substitute for divinity or as a thoughtless incompetent, it can be readily concluded that global governance is indeed giving form to a global strategy -- namely chaos. Is it possible to frame the condition otherwise -- beyond the limitations of short-term irresponsibility and neglect? Is there a new systemic framework to be recognized --- an interlocking temporal pattern of longer-term cyclic processes (*Strategic Embodiment of Time: configuring questions fundamental to change*, 2010)?

Whilst the contrasting metaphors or images are provocative, and perhaps necessarily so, the approach is consistent with that framed by [Gareth Morgan](#) (*Images of Organization*, 1986).

International community as a divine surrogate?

What is the international community? Early insight into the nature of international community was offered by James Brown Scott (*Law, The State, and the International Community*, 1939). However it remains possible for the question to be asked by such as [Martin Jacques](#) (*What the hell is the international community?* *The Guardian*, 24 August 2006):

You have heard it a thousand times. Our prime minister uses it, so do cabinet ministers and opposition spokespersons. It slips off the tongue of BBC correspondents and newsreaders as if it is just good old plain common sense. Newspapers constantly use it. We all know what is meant by the term "international community", don't we?

It's the west, of course, nothing more, nothing less. Using the term "international community" is a way of dignifying the west, of globalising it, of making it sound more respectable, more neutral and high-faluting. "The international society thinks this ... believes that ... is concerned about ..." You know the stuff. But just remember: when you next hear the term, what is being referred to is not the international community at all - understood as all the nation-states that make up the world - but just a small sliver of it, our bit.

As a former prime minister and member of the [Collegium International](#) grouping those of that rank, [Michel Rocard](#), argues that the United Nations "carries the mantle for the international community" -- at least in some situations:

For some an international community does not exist. For others, the term refers, more pragmatically, to all countries when they decide to act together. Still another, more accurate definition encompasses all countries with international influence -- that is any country whose identity and sovereignty is recognized, and that chooses to participate in global discussions and decision-making.

Beyond semantics lies the more consequential, but equally ambiguous, question of the international community's role and responsibility. Just as too broad a definition could undermine a country's sovereignty, too narrow a definition like that which seems to predominate today -- allows violence and instability to proliferate (*What Is the International Community?* *Project Syndicate*, 30 May 2013).

[Noam Chomsky](#) has noted the use of international community as referring to the United States and its client states and allies, most notably in the media of those countries:

The literal sense is reasonably clear; the U.N. General Assembly, or a substantial majority of it, is a fair approximation. But the term is regularly used in a technical sense to describe the United States joined by some allies and clients. (Henceforth, I will use the term "Intcom", in this technical sense.) Accordingly it is a logical impossibility for the United States to defy the international community (*The Crimes of 'Intcom'*, *Foreign Policy*, September, 2002)

The literal sense is evident in the close association of the United Nations with the international community, as in a website it maintains under that name -- identifying *Steps to be taken by the international community and international and regional organizations* with respect to the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). The UN may indeed be identified with the international community in some cases (*International community calls on S. Sudan to put peace deal into action*, *Sudan Tribune*, 11 May 2014). Chomsky's technical sense is perhaps usefully reflected in the commentary by Muhamed Filipovic (*Reflections on the Responsibilities of the International Community for the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *Spirit of Bosnia*, 2008).

Subsequently Chomsky is quoted as stating:

Where the term (international community) is used in the West, the international community refers to the United States and anyone

who happens to be going along with it. If the world happens to be, most of the world is opposed, they're just not part of the international community (*Israel, US violators of international law*, *The News Tribe*, 14 June 2012).

This view is well reflected with respect to negotiations with Iran (Scott Stearns, *International Community Wants 'Concrete Action' from Iran at Nuclear Talks*, *Voice of America*, 24 February 2013). Appropriate to Chomsky's argument, a briefing document by the Council on Foreign Relations avoids any effort to clarify what is the relation of the international community to the USA (Mark P. Lagon, *Promoting Democracy: the whys and hows for the United States and the International Community*, February 2011). This is also the case in a briefing by the US Department of State (*What Actions Should the International Community Take To Resolve the Situation in Darfur?* *DIPNote*, 13 March 2009).

A different understanding of international community is a feature of the practice of remedial social work and should not be confused with use of the term to describe a nebulous entity as discussed above. This usage is described by Manohar Pawar (*International Community Practice: local-global issues and strategies* pp. 632-653)

To social work, welfare, human services, and development workers, international community practice is essentially community practice carried out in international contexts and/or through the auspices of international social work programs or organizations. International community practice efforts can focus at one or more levels of intervention, ranging from grassroots to global; they may employ one or multiple practice models and a broad range of practice approaches

Similarly a distinction can be made with extensive usage of "global community", although a degree of conflation can be readily assumed to be in the interest of those directly associated with international community in Chomsky's "technical sense". Global community might be more readily understood in terms of a pattern of belief in shared values, rather than in any degree of formal organization -- the *sense of community* offered to those perceiving themselves to be a *global citizen*. Why are so few appeals made to the global community?

Filling the power vacuum of disunited nations? Understanding "international community" can be highlighted by recognition of its contrast. There are many commentaries on "disunited nations", especially in critical deprecation of the United Nations. For *Richard Grenell*, as recently noted:

Anyone witnessing the barrel-bomb attacks in Syria, the Russian-inspired violence in eastern Ukraine or the Islamic attacks in Mali and Nigeria might reasonably wonder why the United Nations hasn't stepped in to stop the bloodshed. After all, what's the point of having a global diplomatic organization like the United Nations ensconced in a gleaming tower at Turtle Bay in Manhattan, if it's unable to act when member nations brazenly flout international law? Sadly, that complaint has echoed down through the decades ever since 1920, when the League of Nations was created at the end of the First World War (*The Dis-United Nations*, 18 August 2015)

Other examples include:

- Gary Rethford: *The Disunited Nations* (*The Trumpet*, December 2003) Why this monumental effort at orchestrating world peace has been such a monumental failure
- Jonathan Steele: *Disunited Nations* (*The Guardian*, 20 May 2003)
- *The Euro Zone Crisis: disunited nations* (*The Economist*, 13 June 2012),
- Albert Russo: *Twisted European Minds: disunited nations* (*The Times of Israel*, 13 August 2015)
- Matthew Connolly: *The Disunited Nations* (*Diplomatic History*, 33, 2009, pp. 367-370)
- Howard Davis: *DisUnited Nations: why can't man's best efforts bring peace?* (*Blow the Trumpet*)
- Sam Vaknin: *The Disunited Nations* (1 April 2003)
- Shirley Jenkins: *Disunited Nations* (*Far Eastern Survey*, 1946. 9)

Most curiously, *Time* magazine even has a commentary to that effect **prior to the creation of the United Nations in 1945:**

In Washington the United Nations lost a campaign. It was not military: news from the battlefronts was still excellent. It had nothing to do with production: that war was being won over & over again. The misfortune was the failure of the U.S. to practice the United Nations principle that it had preached--with the result that a great & good ally was slowly losing faith. (*Disunited Nations*, *Time*, 11 January 1943).

Existence of the international community? Given the importance associated with international law and the attention devoted to the existence of threats in the form of terrorist organizations, the question of the "existence" of any collective entity and how such existence is to be understood is especially intriguing -- and provocative. The so-called "international community" is, increasingly cited as though it existed, and is capable of pressure and initiatives in relation to other collective entities -- even beyond those of the United Nations. As noted by *Wikipedia*, the term is typically used to imply the existence of a common point of view towards strategic issues in a period in which such consensus is increasingly questionable, as separately argued (*The Consensus Delusion*, 2011).

The international community does not however "exist" according to any "conventional" understanding. It has no legal basis, if that is the primary criterion -- whether or not *de facto* existence can be claimed or assumed. There is no "concrete proof" of its existence which could be accepted in a conventional legal process or through application of any conventional scientific method. There is confusion as to who might "legitimately" claim to be its representative. Deploing the failure to act of a "non-existent" entity then merits the most careful consideration.

Whether framed in terms of a [duty to rescue](#), or as a failure to provide assistance to a person in need, the capacity to indict the international community for [crimes against humanity](#) through some sort of [class action suit](#) is clearly extremely limited (Christa Rottensteiner, *The Denial of Humanitarian Assistance as a Crime under International Law*, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 835, September 1999).

Is the curious status of the "international community" then to be recognized as the emerging focus of remedial global governance? Meriting careful consideration are the references explicitly and implicitly made to the failures of the "international community" -- such as in response to the refugee crisis, inequality, overconsumption and climate change (Chiara Giorgetti, *A Principled Approach to State Failure, International Community Actions in Emergency Situations*, 2010; *Inci Otker-Robe, Global Risks and Collective Action Failures: what can the international community do?* International Monetary Fund, 2014). The latter argues that:

... managing global risks requires a cohesive international community that enables its stakeholders to work collectively around common goals by facilitating sharing of knowledge, devoting resources to capacity building, and protecting the vulnerable. When some countries fail to cooperate, the international community can still forge cooperation, including by realigning incentives and demonstrating benefit from incremental steps toward full cooperation.

What really exists? Such thinking thus frames the question of whether and how other collective entities exist, notably the "United Nations" and including the "United States" itself. This continues to be variously explored (*Does America even exist?* 31 December 2011; *Does America Still Exist?*; Richard Rodriguez, *Does America Still Exist?* Fudan University, 2012), most notably by Stephen Clarkson (*Does North America Exist? Governing the Continent after NAFTA and 9/11*, Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008).

The question with respect to the USA is currently of great relevance in the light of the ongoing debate regarding the [right to exist](#) of Palestine -- recognized as it is by the vast majority of countries (John V. Whitbeck, *The State of Palestine Exists*, *The Huffington Post*, 1 September 2013). Given that debate, to what extent can the USA then be held to exist, or to have a right to exist? How could concrete proof be presented in support of that claim -- given such requirements with respect production of nuclear weapons by Iran, as discussed separately (*10 Demands for Concrete Proof by We the Peoples of the World*, 2012)?

There is great irony to the fact that current controversy regarding arguments with respect to the existence of God can be understood to be as questionable as those with respect to the existence of the "United States" or "Israel" -- whether framed in scientific, legal, historical or theological terms. Within each of these frames, the issue is the nature of "concrete proof" and the manner in which its status and credibility is determined, as with [fiat currency](#). Hence the concern regarding adherence to so-called "fiat beliefs". The current massive exercise in "[printing money](#)" is therefore of relevance (*ECB launches 1 trillion euro rescue plan to revive euro economy*, *Reuters*, 22 January 2015).

Insights from the existence of other "international communities": Contrasting domains in which "community" tends to be used therefore merit consideration. These specifically include:

- the financial community, recognized as so central to the economic crisis of the recent past and the manner in which future crises may be engendered or averted
- the corporate community, highlighted in indications of the limited number of corporations effectively controlling the global economy, national economies, and influential in governmental decision-making at every level of society
- the diplomatic community
- the intelligence community, based on formal and informal exchanges of intelligence data, of which the [Five Eyes](#) community is one instance
- the scientific community, and the related medical community
- the legal community
- the development community
- the donor community
- the criminal community, notably recognized in terms of the role of organized crime, whether within or between many countries

The term is less readily applied to other domains about which similar characteristics may well be inferred:

- the military, as configured within overlapping military alliances, most notably that of NATO -- and evident in the worldwide network of military bases primarily controlled by the US. The notorious [Coalition of the Willing](#) which intervened in Iraq offers one example of conflation with "international community". Less clear at this time is the composition and organization of the coalition engaged in action against ISIS. This domain can be understood more generally in terms of security (Hasan Ulusoy, *Revisiting Security Communities after the Cold War: the constructivist perspective*, 2012).
- the military industrial complex, as combining some of the above, notably to engender and sustain the development, manufacture and sale of arms
- "the market", recognized as the determining factor in the viability of economic policies
- the pattern of secret(ive) agreements, most notably those relating to trade. This is currently most evident in the case of the [Trans-Pacific Partnership](#) (TPP) is a proposed regional regulatory and investment treaty and the [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership](#) (TTIP) as discussed separately (*Imposing TTIP-TPP-TISA as the caliphate of normality?* 2015).

Other insights are offered by variously interrelated elite groups and secret societies involving the influential in a range of domains, potentially to be understood together as constituting a community of influence. Examples include the Bilderberg Group, the Club of Rome, Collegium International, Freemasonry, Opus Dei, and the like (at least in their own eyes). Together with the above, their extent and influence is central to the speculations of conspiracy theorists.

More generally, it can be argued that the lack of transparency as to the extent and degree of existence of such arrangements is a characteristic of the "unsaid" in global society, as discussed separately (*Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid"*, 2003; *Varieties of the "unsaid" in sustaining psycho-social community*, 2003). A common problem for many communities, constituted as formal organizations but with drastically declining membership, is the extent to which they indeed "exist".

International community as a construct: It is within this context that the sense of community is fruitfully explored through theories of **constructivism** relevant to international relations (Georg Simmerl, *A Critical Constructivist Perspective on Global Multi-Level Governance: discursive struggles among multiple actors in a globalized political space*, 2011). How any community is appreciated may say as much about the appreciator as about the community. For example, for **Peter M. Haas** (*Social Constructivism and the Evolution of Multilateral Environmental Governance*):

Economic globalization creates transboundary and global environmental externalities. A system of multilateral international environmental governance has evolved over the last 25 years as the international community has attempted to address the ecological externalities of economic globalization... governments are now held accountable to new standards of environmental behavior by carriers of values who had no standing in 1945. Not only has a stable set of expectations about reciprocal state practice been established, its form has evolved over time to become more comprehensive, reflecting growing scientific understanding about the behavior of ecosystems and the sensitivity of human societies to such dynamics. (In: *Epistemic Communities, Constructivism, and International Environmental*, 2015, p. 121).

For those observing the environmental depredation in the Middle East, these arguments would seem to ignore the reality on the ground -- as it has been "de-structured" by the international community, if only through the continuing supply of arms to the combatants (most notably by Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and their allies).

Flocking of the willing? Another option is to explore the existence of community through understandings of the dynamics of the **flocking behaviour** of animals -- beyond those associated with pack animals. As yet unexplained, it is a remarkable wave-like dance, seemingly for its own sake (*The Startling Science of a Starling Murmuration* [video], *Wired*, November 2011; *Videos of Beautiful Murmurations*, *Global Stewards*). The dance is suggestive of new insights into sustainable community (*Flocking behaviour and the dynamics of gated conceptual communities*, 2004).

The dynamics are especially relevant given the increasing focus on **collective intelligence**, so-called "hive mind" and **crowdsourcing**, notably with respect to the operation of social networks enabled by the internet. To what extent does a flock "exist", in contrast with the legal conventions and models of organization? Is any coalition of the willing then to be better compared with such an apparently leaderless flock? Or is the international community better understood as a flock of geese -- in flight formation appropriately led, reminiscent of any bombing mission?

Appeals to the international community (whether it exists or not)

The titles in the following checklist offer a sense of the manner in which the international community is understood to exist:

- *UN and International Community: will anything shock you into action in Darfur? Stop Genocide Now*, 13 December 2014
- *Appeal of the people of Ukraine's to the international community, Eastern Partnership: Civil Society Forum*
- *An appeal to the international community*, Kurdish Institute of Brussels, 25 March 2015
- *The Ogoni Appeal to the International Community*
- *Assyrians appeal to international community: "Save us from ISIS"*, *Ara News*, 5 March 2015
- *International community lends a hand after rare appeal from Myanmar government*, *Coconuts Yangon*, 6 August 2015
- *Angelina Jolie Appeals For Unity From International Community To End Syrian Refugee Crisis*, *Sky News*, 24 April 2015
- *Liberians Appeal to International Community on Trafficking*, *The New York Times*, 28 April 2015
- *Appeal to the International Community and People of Bethnahrin (Mesopotamia)*, *European Syriac Union*, 2 March 2015
- *PLO appeal to international community to protect Arafat*, *The Irish Times*, 5 October 2003
- *Urgent Appeal from Civil Society: international community must ensure rights of Egyptians are upheld*, *Human Rights Watch*, 1 February 2011
- *Appeal to the International Community for Imprisoned Uyghur Scholar Ilham Tohti*, *World Uyghur Congress*, 14 January 2015
- *Haiyan Typhoon: the international community needs to take action now*, *Action contre la Faim*, 12 November 2013
- *Ukraine asks international community to condemn Russia's 'illegal actions'*, *Reuters*, 22 August 2014
- *Al-Haq Action Alert: International community must take concrete action to end Israel's aggression against Al-Aqsa*, *Al-Haq Human Rights*, 30 October 2014
- *The international community must remain engaged to respond to urgent humanitarian needs and better link humanitarian and development efforts, says Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel*, *ReliefWeb*, 14 August 2015
- Elise Baker, *The International Community Continues to Be Unmoved by Syria*, *Physicians for Human Rights*, 20 August 2015
- PaanLuel Wël, *My Personal Appeal to the International Community: for God sake, do not impose bad peace on South Sudan*, 1 August 2015
- Saeb Erekat, *Mideast Peace Impossible Without International Action*, *Haaretz*, 29 June 2014 -- arguing that: *It is time for the international community to empower those within Israel who want peace rather than colonization.*

Given their own formal role, especially striking are the following examples:

- *Pope appeals to international community over migrant deaths*, *The Guardian*, 18 April 2015
- *Pope appeals to international community as African immigrants flood Italy, perish at sea*, *Catholic World News*, 20 April 2015

- [Pope appeals to international community to aid Syrians](#), *The Times of Israel*, 24 May 2014
- [King of Jordan Urges International Community to Take Decisive Action on Syrian Crisis](#), World Economic Forum, 25 January 2013
- [UNHCR head says international community must share burden of Syrian refugees](#), *UNHCR News*, 30 September 2013
- [WTTC and UNWTO appeal international community to assist Nepal](#), *Travelbiznews*, May 2015

It is also appropriate to note examples of the very limited number of appeals specifically addressed to the "global community", especially when there is less likelihood of a translation error:

- [Ban urges global community to help Syria end 'cataclysmic conflict'](#), *UN News Centre*, 30 June 2015

Especially relevant to this argument are the assumptions regarding how the appeals are communicated, to whom they are specifically addressed, and by whom they are received. Since the manner of communication is through the media, with no specific address, appeals to the international community recall the use of [prayer flags](#) in some religious traditions, or attaching prayers to a [wish tree](#).

International community as an act of deception?

There is a logic to Chomsky's technical sense of international community being primarily associated with the USA. This could be understood as an extension of the [Washington Consensus](#), the primary role of the USA in security and intelligence communities, as well as in [TTIP-TPP-TISA](#). It is of course home to the HQ of the United Nations with which its priorities can be readily conflated.

There are also strange associations to God, dating notably from the doctrine of [Manifest Destiny](#), described in terms of:

- the special virtues of the American people and their institutions;
- America's mission to redeem and remake the west in the image of agrarian America;
- an irresistible destiny to accomplish this essential duty

Framed as "heaven" by many migrants and refugees (notably from Mexico), there is a cultivated sense in which the USA is held to be "closer to God" -- even to the point of being representative of the ultimate values of humanity as articulated in holy scripture. The continuing celebration of the [Founding Fathers](#) offers a sense of this, reminiscent of that associated with the Holy Father in Rome.

The State as God's Will: There is a long tradition associating the state with divinity, notably articulated and promoted as the political and religious doctrine of the [divine right of kings](#). The modern successor to this can be seen in the arguments articulated in more secular terms by [Georg Hegel](#) as the *State as God's Will*, As summarized under that heading by [Murray Rothbard](#) (*An Austrian Perspective on the History of Economic Thought*, 1995):

Armed with such a philosophy and with such a philosopher, the modern state would take its divinely appointed stand at the height of history and civilization, as God on earth. Thus, *The modern State, proving the reality of political community, when comprehended philosophically, could therefore be seen as the highest articulation of Spirit, or God in the contemporary world.* The state, then, is *a supreme manifestation of the activity of God in the world, and, the State stands above all; it is Spirit which knows itself as the universal essence and reality;* and, The State is the reality of the kingdom of heaven. And finally, *The State is God's Will....* According to Hegel, the final development of the man-God, the final breakthrough into totality and infinity, was at hand. The most highly developed state in the history of the world was now in place -- the existing Prussian monarchy under King Friedrich Wilhelm III.

Such views, and their implications with regard to the USA, have since been the subject of [extensive criticism](#), notably by such as [Karl Popper](#) (*The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 1945) who argued that it was a thinly veiled justification for [absolute rule by the state](#). Further, he argued, *there is so much philosophical writing (especially in the Hegelian school) which may justly be criticized as meaningless verbiage (Conjectures and Refutations: the growth of scientific knowledge, 1963, p. 94).*

This said, however, it could then be asked whether the positioning of the USA at the core of the international community, frames both the USA and the international community as an expression of the divine -- at least from the perspective of the many sympathetic to such a worldview. More intriguing, this offers the sense in which the community of states so configured effectively constitutes a new form of pantheon -- if only by implication, or as an "unstated" aspiration, curiously analogous to Islamic aspirations to a caliphate.

This suggests that the ongoing battle with the latter could then be framed anew as an archetypal "Battle of the Gods" as imagined in the [Theomachy](#) of Ancient Greece (and in some modern video games). Echoes of this are to be recognized in current political reference to the ongoing archetypal battle between "Good" and "Evil" -- a view ironically reciprocated by ISIL -- and the anticipation (by some) of a form of final [Armageddon](#), as may be variously explored (*Spontaneous Initiation of Armageddon: a heartfelt response to systemic negligence*, 2004; *Evil Rules: guidelines for engaging in Armageddon now*, 2015). As with any such battle, neither side would of course question the adequacy of their particular comprehension of God's Will in any larger scheme of things.

Acts of God?: It is in this sense that any act of the USA can be speculatively explored as an [Act of God](#), especially given the particular definition of this which is offered by the insurance community -- a "technical sense" of God (exploiting Chomsky's distinction). Clearly for many exposed to the action of drones and other forms of bombardment ("from the heavens"), the arbitrary nature of their experience is fruitfully framed as such an act -- *Insha'Allah* -- as in many religious traditions.

The extent to which the military initiatives of different faiths are formally blessed by military chaplains as doing the work of God, is exemplified by the case now widely reported with respect to Hiroshima and Nagasaki ([George Zabelka](#), *Blessing the Bombs*, *Plough*, 4 August 2015; *The Reluctant Prophet*; Charles C. McCarthy, *I Was Told It Was Necessary*, *Sojourners*, August 1980; *Chaplain To*

Hiroshima and Nagasaki Bombing Crews Repents, *Los Angeles Catholic Worker*, 8 August 2015). Such benediction is of course also the case with respect to the suicide bombers by jihadists. Who might be expected to repent, decades hence, for current initiatives they were told were "necessary" by the international community? The situation of military chaplains is especially problematic where they have a formal responsibility to personnel charged with torture -- and presumably to their victims [the mind boggles !].

Given the arguments of [just war theory](#), in legal terms any action by the international community might then be considered comparable with an Act of God, or consistent with its criteria. The quandries for the individual affected recall the insightful exploration (through comedy) of the possibility of a legal class action suit against his religious representatives (*The Man Who Sued God*, 2001). Any such degree of association of the international community with deity, articulated through religion, must necessarily also recall the phrase: *religion as the opium of the people*. Should "international community" be explored as such an opiate cultivated by the media -- as would be consistent with early arguments of Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (*Manufacturing Consent: the political economy of the mass media*, 1988).

Strategic deception: If the actions of the international community are misleadingly framed as Acts of God, can the deception be further explored through the famous tale of [Hans Christian Andersen](#) (*The Emperor's New Clothes*, 1837)? With the USA increasingly framed in imperial terms, and the international community to be understood as a form of mantle (as noted above), how effectively is the Emperor "enrobed" by clients and allies coagulating around it. This could be explored from the perspective of that tale on clothing design and perception -- as commented separately (*Appreciating the Emperor's new clothes -- as designed by NSA*, 2013).

In a period explicitly framed from a US perspective as a [global war on terror](#), just war theory may naturally be used to justify any form of deception as a major strategic option, including [false flag](#) operations. The systematic pattern of deception revealed by the various electronic surveillance scandals, exemplified by the [release of diplomatic cables by Wikileaks](#), frames the possibility that the existence of the international community, and its very nature, may itself be some form of deception.

This possibility is consistent with conspiracy theories to the effect that Al-Qaeda -- as the early focus for the war on terror -- may itself be a construct for strategic purposes (Pierre-Henri Bunel, *Al Qaeda: The Database*, *Global Research*, 4 September 2015), consistent with arguments regarding 9/11 (Adnan Zuberi and Lars Schall, *9/11 Truth and the Sound of Silence in Academia: "Critical Perspectives on 9/11 are Systematically Excluded from Universities."* *Global Research*, 4 September 2015). Its very existence has been called into question (Brendan O'Neill, *Does al-Qaeda exist? Not in the way that we think, say some terrorism experts*, 28 November 2003; Adam Dolnik and Kimberly A McCloud, *Debunk the myth of al-Qaeda*, *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 May 2002).

Existence by fiat: In a period of quantitative easing, when the ultimate symbol of confidence is created as [fiat money](#), there is great irony to the sense that both God and the international community may well be created by fiat -- as with the "values" to which reference is so assiduously made (in the notable absence of any "concrete proof").

The irony for those countries upheld as members of the international community -- in its technical sense -- is the response to revelations regarding the bugging of the phones of the leaders of allies of the US (*NSA monitored calls of 35 world leaders after US official handed over contacts*, *The Guardian*, 30 June 2013; *New NSA leaks show how US is bugging its European allies*, *The Guardian*, 30 June 2013).

Such deception is the new norm -- even acclaimed as acceptable amongst allies (*Surveillance, Friends and Allies*, *Council for European Studies*, 25 March 2015). Should the existence of the international community be considered otherwise, especially given the lack of transparency as to its composition and organization? Given the increasing dependence on quantitative easing, there is clearly a complementary tendency to "qualitative easing" (*From Quantitative Easing (QE) to Moral Easing (ME): a stimulus package to avert moral bankruptcy?* 2010). Should any greater sense of responsibility be expected of a Sorcerer's Apprentice caught red-handed? (*Responsibility for Global Governance*, 2008).

Nostalgic emulation of patterns and processes of religion by international organization?

Importance is widely attached to religion in many contexts of governance, as with the [Address of the Pope to the European Parliament](#) (*The Guardian view on the pope's speech to the European parliament: rediscover your core values*, *The Guardian*, 27 November 2014). It would be naive to disassociate the role of religion from understandings of the international community and the process of appealing to it. These recall only too clearly the appeals to deity in many contexts over the centuries.

Whether a delusion or an opiate, it is appropriate to explore the extent to which the patterns of religion are to be traced in the processes of international organizations. For a cultural anthropologist (especially one with a "galactic perspective"), are these more similar to those of religion, rather than different from them (as might be otherwise claimed from a "terrestrial perspective")? There is a sense in which, if God does not exist, such a transcendent entity would need to be engendered within human cultures. The emergence of the international community can be considered in that light.

How functionally distinctive are the patterns of international organizations with respect to the following:

- architectural features of secretariats -- in resembling those of classical temples of the European past
- plenary assembly processes -- reminiscent of celebration in religious worship
- role of keynote speakers at a podium -- reminiscent of those of preachers and officiants at an altar, notably in their citations of sacrosanct texts (beyond any reasonable question)
- articulation of fundamental values, and exhortations to adhere to them and promote them more widely
- fragmentation of the one true "religion" into denominations by schism -- even to be framed as heresy and apostasy, with a radical distinction between "us" and "them" (as unbelievers)
- emergence of what are readily identified as priesthoods (with leaders possibly privately caricatured as "God")

- implication that insights of the highest value are only comprehensible to the initiated -- in an inner sanctum
- participating in voting as reminiscent of participation in celebration of the Christian Eucharist
- terminology, given that many terms conventionally used originated from within the context of religious orders (commission, mission, resolution, office, etc)

To the extent that, as in the present time of crisis, it is intriguing to note how international gatherings increasingly resemble [prayer meetings](#) -- especially in the deliberate avoidance of consensus, or the inability to achieve it (other than to schedule a future gathering). The failure to document systematically meetings of the highest long-term importance (Earth Summits, etc), and to learn from them, is to be contrasted with occasional adoption of the [minutes](#). There is however little appreciation of the engagement with time implied by the [canonical cycle of hours](#) or the [liturgical year](#) -- echoed only to a degree by an [Annual General Assembly](#). Adapting an adage, could meetings now be caricatured as the opium of decision-makers and politicians -- even of academics?

Especially intriguing is the use in both contexts of "spirit" and its association with values transcending mundane preoccupations (Richard Attias, *The Olympics and the Spirit of Sport*, *The Huffington Post*, 27 July 2012; Maynard M. Metcalf, *The Scientific Spirit*, *Science*, 49 June 1919; Joseph Grosso, *Scientific Spirit*, *The Humanist*, 27 February 2011; *The Military Spirit*, *The Spectator*, 26 October 1833). Does this constitute a form of nostalgia for a religious framework, however carefully distinguished from secular preoccupations -- and however the latter may be crowned and blessed by any such transcendent reference?

Are the processes of international organization to be explored as surrogates for religion -- celebration of "divinity by proxy" -- of which the international community is the most recent incarnation? Can the Specialized Agencies of the UN be meaningfully explored in terms of the Greek Dodekathion -- especially given their extraordinary tendency to appropriate the symbolism and nomenclature of relevant Greek deities?

International community as Sorcerer's Apprentice?

Metaphor of current relevance: In addition to its more recent treatments in film, significant use is made of Goethe's tale in sociopolitical commentary (*Goethe's "The Sorcerer's Apprentice": metaphor for modern business and politics*, *Wet Tub*, 31 May 2009; *The Sorcerer's Apprentice - a metaphor for capitalism*, *Roadlesstraveller*, 20 August 2012). Fred Charles Iklé uses the metaphor to frame his concern for the fate of modern nations (*Annihilation from Within: the ultimate threat to nations*, 2006). He prefaces his argument with a quote by Goethe: *Two souls alas, dwell in my breast, the one strives to forsake the other*. Should the international community be recognized in such terms?

For Klaus P. Fischer (*America in White, Black, and Gray: a history of the stormy 1960s*, 2007):

Paradoxically, the business system constantly plunges the country into uncharted regions because it has no essential moral and political direction. As it does so, it creates havoc on the political and cultural domain and then stymies both of them from resolving social problems....These changes, however, are never planned, directed, or controlled because the political system has been deliberately weakened and gridlocked. It is as though the sorcerer's apprentice, unable to control the technology in the absence of his master, has gone amok, while the rest of us are standing hopelessly by and allowing our lives to be controlled by the sorcerer's technology. This Faustian metaphor suggests that since the postwar years, if not before, **all of us are being controlled by an amoral corporate machine that none of us, individually, nationally, or globally, is able to control**. It may be that all of us are on a high-speeding, out-of-control train to the unknown, unable to get off. (p. 34) *[emphasis added]*

For Fred Block (*Reframing the Political Battle: market fundamentalism vs. moral economy*, Longview Institute):

The Sorcerer represents the accumulated wisdom of society that has found ways to make dangerous things like fire and markets work for the common good. But the Apprentice's search for a short cut turns the wizard's benign magic into a dangerous and destructive force. The lazy and disobedient Apprentice, in short, is a metaphor for the havoc created by uncontrolled markets and the tyranny of market values. The results include corporate scandals, a deterioration in personal morality, and a coarsening of the culture exemplified by the excesses of "reality" shows in which people are encouraged to betray others for money.

Exemplification by the international community: The international community can be considered an extension of this modality. Despite their framing as "humanitarian", the recent military interventions of the international community in different countries of the Middle East through its coalitions have resulted in disastrous destruction in those countries and a vast movement of refugees into Europe. This suggests further exploration of that community as Sorcerer's Apprentice.

The international community has demonstrated great competence in destabilizing and destroying viable societies -- however problematic their values and practices from a western perspective. The international community has however demonstrated the highest possible order of incompetence in reconstructing those societies in its own image -- as was seemingly a partially hidden agenda. Having broken those societies beyond recognition, the adage which comes to mind is: *If it ain't broke, don't fix it* -- especially if so doing engenders other humanitarian problems, as with the refugee crisis.

With respect to the proposed framing metaphor, who is to be considered the Sorcerer and who the Apprentice? Is the US the sorcerer, with the variously willing client states as apprentice? Is the international community (as a whole) the apprentice, in the significant absence of the benign wisdom represented by the Founding Fathers of the US? Where indeed is the guiding wisdom of the international community -- notably given the subsequent declarations with regard to intervention in Iraq of George Bush and Tony Blair, and the particular association of the latter with the Pope?

Evocation of evil (by fiat?): Acclaimed as men of faith, Bush and Blair were able to frame their intervention as an action against evil -- irrespective of the evil which others subsequently claimed that they enabled thereby. It is strange that in an increasingly secular world, explicit reference to evil should be so specifically made without further clarification -- and reciprocated by those so framed:

- **George W. Bush:** Referring to three countries engaged in terrorism, indicated that: *States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. (2002 State of the Union Address).* He further stated that: *We've come to know truths that we will never question: evil is real, and it must be opposed. and We are a people dedicated to the triumph of freedom and democracy over evil and tyranny (Patriot Day, 2002)*
- **Barack Obama:** Presumably with the full support of his science advisors, Barack Obama specifically referred to evil in the course of his acceptance of the Nobel Peace prize: *For make no mistake: evil does exist in the world. (Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, 10 December 2009).*
- **Pope Francis:** *Satan seduces by disguising evil as good (Catholic New Agency, 29 September 2014); What is Pope Francis on about with all this talk of Satan and evil? (The Conversation, 28 May 2014)*

Given the remarks above (and irrespective of whether and how it "exists"), to what extent is evil itself a construct evoked for strategic purposes -- in a process characteristic of the traditional sorcerer?

With respect to this argument, there is further irony to the renowned use of the metaphor by John Galbraith (*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Texas Observer, 1998, 9 October).

Misleadership: In its apprentice modality, clearly the international community offers valuable evidence of misleadership, as may be variously explored (*Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council: misleading as vital to governance of the future?* 2007). In its systemic neglect, as might be expected of an apprentice sorcerer, there is a fundamental lack of experience of consequences of inappropriate action, explored as surprises by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (*The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*, 2007). There is a sense well described by Karen A. Cerulo (*Never Saw It Coming: cultural challenges to envisioning the worst*, 2006).

There is of course a mischievous tendency in the immaturity of any apprentice, perhaps to be explored in the light of a subsequent study by Taleb (*Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder*, 2012). Is the chaos and suffering engendered by the international community then to be considered inadvertent or cynically deliberate?

Asystemic thinking: The apprentice sorcerer is best characterized by asystemic thinking, perhaps best understood as "subunderstanding" (Magoroh Maruyama, *Polyocular Vision or Subunderstanding*, *Organization Studies*, 24, 2004). This dimension was evident in the US Senate assessment of the failure of the intelligence community to anticipate 9/11. This was phrased explicitly as a **failure of imagination** (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States: Executive Summary*, 27 January 2004; *Failure of 'imagination' led to 9/11*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 23 July 2004).

This is consistent with arguments for **critical thinking** which highlight issues of blinkered vision, *information silos* and **logical fallacies** -- a failure to "connect the dots" appropriately, namely a failure of "joined-up thinking" (*Groupthink: the Search for Archaeoraptor as a Metaphoric Tale*, 2002). Essentially the apprentice is governed by frameworks, models and methods which are ill-thought through, if not to be caricatured as thoughtless.

Towards a big tent: recognizing responsible time horizons in cyclic terms?

Short-termism: Framed as the sorcerer's apprentice, the international community's approach can be explored in terms of derivative thinking (*Vigorous Application of Derivative Thinking to Derivative Problems*, 2013). The latter discussed the challenge of transcending the bemoaning, hand-wringing and emotional blackmail typical of the response to the short-term consequences of the asystemic thoughtlessness of the apprentice. This could be better framed in terms of blinkered short-term thoughtfulness in a context of long-term thoughtlessness characterized by blame-gaming (*Collective Mea Culpa? You Must be Joking ! Them is to blame, Not us !* 2015).

Reference to short-termism is consistent with the widely recognized failure to consider the long-term consequences of a multiplicity of resource-related issues (Adi Ignatius, *Who Can Really Take on Short-Termism?* *Harvard Business Review*, January-February 2014; *Short-termism in business: causes, mechanisms and consequences*, Ernst and Young; Henry M. Paulson Jr., *Short-termism and the threat from climate change*, McKinsey, April 2015; *Short-Termism in Financial Markets*, UN Global Compact; Steve Denning, *Why Can't We End Short-Termism?* *Forbes*, 22 July 2014). In the corporate world this is deprecated as "fire-fighting". The mindset set is evident in the response of governance to flooding (*Disastrous Floods as Indicators of Systemic Risk Neglect: implications for authoritative response to future surprises*, 2011).

Climate change offers another topical example -- currently given focus by the range of climate-related disasters. Assiduously avoided is any sense of the impact of the increasing global population under conditions of global governance challenged on every front.

Especially evident in collection of indicators of future development is the avoidance of any attention whatsoever to remedial capacity, irrespective of the level of crisis (*Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action: constraints on ensuring a safe operating space for humanity*, 2009). The current crisis of European governance in response to the current influx of refugees is an early indicator of the unmanageability of other crises as population pressures increase (*Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy? Towards engaging appropriately with time*, 2011).

This short-term focus can be explored as the pathology of "temporal delinking" -- a "missing link" in strategic evaluation and media

coverage. It can be seen as assiduous cultivation of blindspots -- effectively dancing around them (*Lipoproblems: Developing a Strategy Omitting a Key Problem: the systemic challenge of climate change and resource issues*, 2009).

Short-termism in response to the refugee influx: The limited discussion of the extent to which the refugee crisis has been engendered by thoughtless military intervention, and irresponsible destabilization, merits consideration in its own right -- especially given the manner in which various members of the international community responsible continue to benefit considerably from the sale of arms to the affected regions whose conflicts they claim to deplore.

The response to the refugee influx into Europe at this time is notable for its failure to consider the probable influx next year and in decades to come. There is virtually no media discussion of implications beyond the immediate crisis. Strategic thinking is focused on the issue in the weeks to come.

Given that the Syrian conflict has been going on for four years, was there no capacity to predict the refugee crisis? If there is some recognition **now** that military intervention in Libya **then** engendered the instability that has given rise **now** to the refugee influx, **what else is being neglected now**-- given the mindset which neglected the consequences of that initial intervention?

Spatial strategic preoccupation: It is curious the degree to which global strategic governance is locked primarily into a spatial framework -- in a period in which physics assumes spacetime to be a given. As separately argued, the focus of governance is on what amounts to "spaceship design", with only the most limited consideration of the implications of "timeship design", despite the need to navigate a variety of time cycles (*From space-ship design to time-ship embodiment as a requisite metaphor of governance*, 2015).

As with imperial hegemonies of the past, the international community would seem to associate sustainability with timelessness. By contrast, globality necessarily has a temporal dimension vital to anticipation of potential crises.

The original study by the Club of Rome offered multiple images of increasing resource constraints in *The Limits to Growth* (1972). The limited response over time has been usefully reviewed by Graham Turner (*A Comparison of "The Limits to Growth" with Thirty Years of Reality*, 2008; *Is Global Collapse Imminent? An Updated Comparison of The Limits to Growth with Historical Data*, 2014).

Another articulation on **planetary boundaries** was presented to the Club of Rome by **Johan Rockström** (*Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity*, 2009) and subsequently reframed in an Oxfam report, as discussed separately (*Exploring the Hidden Mysteries of Oxfam's Doughnut: recognizing the systemic negligence of an Earth Summit*, 2012). The case was remade in a report to the Club of Rome by **Jorgen Randers** (*2052: A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years*, 2012). A recent articulation with multiple graphs deriving from a computer model is offered by the Energy and Resources Institute (Mihir Mathur and Swati Agarwal, *Sustainability Dynamics of Resource Use and Economic Growth: a discussion on sustaining the dynamic linkages between renewable natural resources and the economic system*, 2015).

The question to be asked is whether **can graph-based presentations offer the means through which systemic linkages relating to remedial capacity over time can be rendered comprehensible?** The issue is evident in the case of the many graphs produced in support of climate change. Arguably it is only the images of flooding and storm damage, as disseminated by the media, that have constituted comprehensible "concrete proof" on which decisions are based.

Timeblindness and the need for a bigger "tent": Despite the period of time in which the issues have been highlighted (in vain), it is appropriate to note that -- with the focus on "planetary boundaries" -- the emphasis clearly relies on a spatial metaphor. Arguably even the models produced, as appropriately framing the issues, lack any self-reflexive sense of their own life cycle. Missing is a sense of the "temporal boundaries" constraining comprehension in a learning society -- however these might be better understood. .

It is appropriate to note the metaphor employed to encompass a larger range of perspectives in interfaith discourse, namely that of a "big tent". Arguably any such tent should incorporate a temporal dimension in its design, as separately argued (*Global Brane Comprehension Enabling a Higher Dimensional Big Tent?* 2011).

Temporal vortices: There is therefore a case for speculating on the design of an image which could embody time in a new and more convincing manner. Faced with the cognitive tendency to delink systemic cycles, the need is to embody time horizons into a global design which embodies time with space in an integrative manner.

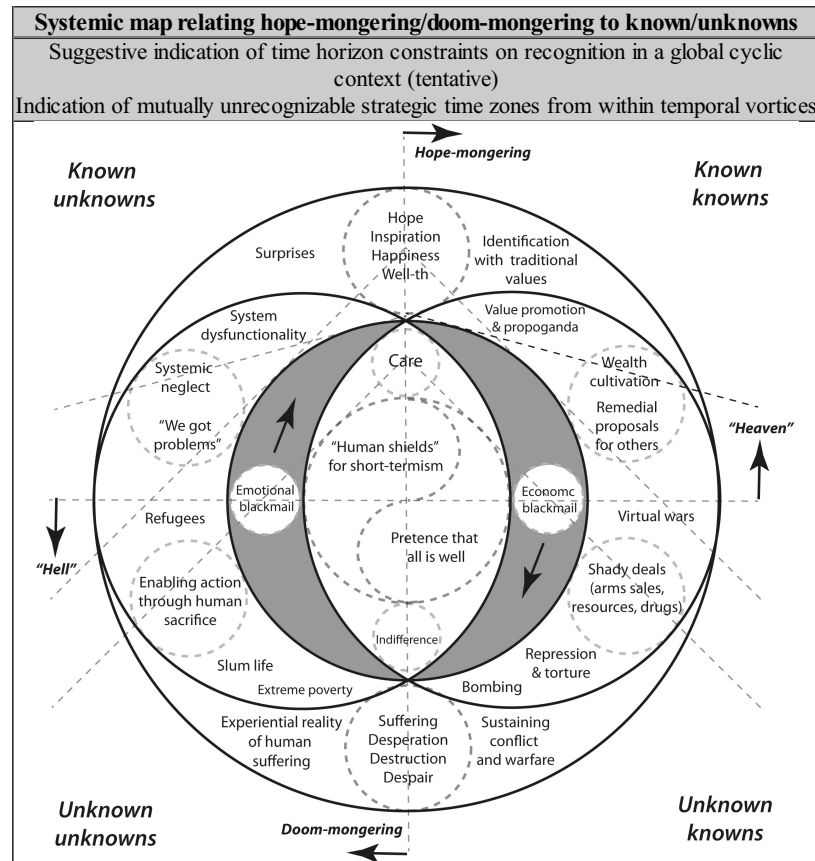
Systems necessarily have both temporal and cognitive implications, especially for elected decision-makers -- whose commitment is primarily to survive their limited temporal mandate successfully. Silo thinking merits reframing in temporal terms. It is extremely ironic that notions of "temporal vortices" figure primarily in speculative science fiction and gaming. The phenomenon has however been addressed in terms of "attention vortices" by Richard C. Feiock and John T. Scholz (*Self-Organizing Federalism: collaborative mechanisms to mitigate institutional collective action dilemmas*, 2010).

In the case of climate change, much has been made of the argument in the recent papal encyclical of the need to get to the "roots" of the challenge. As discussed separately (*Systemic inadequacies of the Environment Encyclical*, 2012), missing from that appreciation are the temporal and causal links associated with the long-standing promotion of unrestricted population growth consequent on a particular interpretation of Abrahamic religious doctrine (*Genesis 1:28*).

Mnemonic catalysts? There is therefore a case for exploring an image based on a simple symbol widely valued. That below is based on the **vesica piscis**, or the almond-shaped **mandorla** (see notably *Vesica Piscis: The Tale of a Fish*, *Hawkwood*, 2013), notably appreciated by Christianity (but also by Freemasonry). This is traditionally used to frame the spiritually significant, through an empty frame as a placeholder, as in the Islamic tradition in decoration of Arabic manuscripts. In Judaism it symbolizes the kernel of immortality. It has the merit of being fundamentally cyclic in design -- with all that may evoke in terms of systems and environmental cycles, notably in the light of understanding of **circles of causality** and causal loop diagrams (with the further implications of recycling). As noted by **Anita Strezova** (*Hesychasm and Art*, 2014):

As a cosmogram, the mandorla represents the world reduced to an essential pattern; it was a sign of the whole universe in its essential plan, in its process of emanation and reabsorption. The octagonal mandorla was also a psych-cosmogram, presenting in a symbolic fashion not only the "disintegration of one to many, but also the reintegration from the many to the one." (p. 100)

As a speculative exploration of cycles, with their temporal implication, the image can be variously augmented with other cycles. These raise the question as to what cycles are valuable to global comprehension of relevance to governance. Especially intriguing is the sense in which a cycle is effectively a temporal vortex -- constraining recognition of phenomena beyond its "catchment area" as with the cyclones depicted daily on global weather maps and the understanding of black holes by astrophysics.



Whilst notions of a temporal vortex can indeed be dismissed as a feature of speculative fiction for the younger generation, it is appropriate to note the preoccupation of NASA regarding its [Gravity Probe B](#) spacecraft gathering data required by physicists to check a bizarre prediction of Einstein's relativity (*Space-time Vortex: Is Earth in a vortex of space-time?* *NASA Science News*, 16 November 2005). Given the obscurity of the concern, it might be asked whether an equally bizarre question could be fruitfully asked regarding the existence of some form space-time vortex in which global civilization is embedded in psychosocial terms -- even one deriving from unexplored implications of Einstein's theory, namely from the influence of patenting procedures on his thinking (*Einstein's Implicit Theory of Relativity -- of Cognitive Property?* 2007).

Could the "cyclones" tentatively indicated in the above image be understood as some form of [time warp](#), a notion variously explored by both the sciences and the arts? Could they be consistent with the insights into constraints on comprehension offered by [spiral dynamics](#), as explored within the [integral theory](#) articulated by [Ken Wilber](#) ([Don Beck](#) and [Christopher Cowan](#), *Spiral Dynamics, mastering values, leadership, and change*, 1996). The concern is how a macrohistorical perspective can be meaningfully comprehended when constrained by multiple [time horizons](#), with characteristics potentially reminiscent of the event horizons of astrophysics (*Engaging Macrohistory through the Present Moment*, 2004). The preoccupation with now, as provocatively suggested by the central imagery of the above schematic, is indicative of the dilemma of how attention is invested within a global civilization (*Investing Attention Essential to Viable Growth: radical self-reflexive reappropriation of financial skills and insights*, 2014).

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