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**Guidelines for Critical Dialogue between Worldviews**

*as exemplified by the need for non-antisemitic dialogue with Israelis?*

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**Introduction**

Critical comments on the policies of Israel in its handling of the crisis with Hizbollah (July-August 2006) [more], or more generally with Palestinians, have evoked accusations of "anti-semitism". Both the criticism and the accusations have been characteristic of interaction with Israelis over decades -- and, more generally, over centuries with regard to Jews. Considerable effort has gone into recognizing what constitutes the "anti-semitic" characteristics of such criticism. Although references are occasionally made to "non-anti-semitism", and the need to demonstrate it, it is not clear that any effort has been devoted to clarifying what constitutes "non-anti-semitic" dialogue that is critical of Israel or of positions favoured by Jews in particular.

The situation with respect to Israel may usefully be considered as exemplifying a challenge with respect to the proponents of any worldview, whether those of other religions (especially including Islam and Christianity), schools of thought, academic disciplines, etc. In effect the situation with respect to Israel is considered here as isomorphic with other psychosocial conditions. These have the potential to offer more general learnings, as well as clues to how the challenge can be more elegantly and fruitfully handled.

What follows is an effort to determine whether there are any guidelines for critical dialogue with proponents of a worldview strongly held, possibly so strongly as to be intimately associated with the very identity of the proponents. Preferably the guidelines should be offered by those holding the worldview, rather than by those critical of its consequences -- and seeking an appropriate window of
opportunity through which to dialogue. If there is any implication that one may occasionally be "wrong", at least from some other perspective, it is useful to clarify the conditions under which others may point this out.

This exercise is not concerned with the much-explored question of "tolerance" -- namely tolerating an alternative worldview and its associated practices -- rather it is concerned with the guidelines for engaging critically with such a worldview where it is experienced as problematic. The practice of tolerance is commonly understood to be one which deliberately abstains from critical feedback -- that may in fact be vital to the sustainability of any relationship. Cris Cullinan (Vision, Privilege, and the Limits of Tolerance, 1999) makes the point:

As long as some of us receive automatic presumptions of innocence, worthiness and competence and yet refuse to hear and understand that others do not share these benefits, we can do little to create a respectful and inclusive environment. This is not necessarily because we do not want to help create this kind of environment.

**Challenge of dialogue with an alternative worldview**

What are the guidelines for criticizing those who use particular styles of dialogue to define themselves as beyond criticism -- beyond the bounds of human behaviour considered acceptable from other perspectives? The corollary is that any who engage in such criticism are necessarily to be considered as acting unfairly, unethically, discriminatorily. Such critics may then, by their own choice, be seen to be laying themselves open to counter-measures -- of which those criticized are the sole judge of appropriateness.

It might be expected that those subscribing to such a logical position would offer careful guidelines to others who might wish to offer criticism. This does not appear to be the case. The following is therefore a contribution to the extensive literature on critical thinking.

One focus of this exploration is the particular case of the much debated question as to whether it is possible to be critical of anything with which a Jewish person is associated, notably the State of Israel, without being automatically labelled as anti-semitic. To clarify the boundaries of appropriateness, some comparison is made with many other situations where people have well-established reasons to think of themselves as specially distinct from other human groups.

**Isomorphs of the Israeli case: challenging parallels and distinctions**

It is instructive to explore the following tentatively clustered, well-known cases where one worldview considers itself more developed, informed or appropriate than another -- and, to that extent, "above criticism". They seem to have dimensions with a degree of isomorphism to that of the challenges of critical dialogue with Israel and Israelis. The key questions are then:

- whether and how to draw parallels or distinctions between potential isomorphs?
- what forms of criticism is a coherent worldview not "above" receiving?

The problem in the case of Israel is frequently framed in relation to the challenge of a "chosen people" -- a people specially chosen by God and therefore necessarily "above criticism" (cf The Peace Encyclopedia: Chosenness, The Chosen People, Superiority; Paul Eidelberg, The Chosen People, 1998; Dovid Gottlieb, The Chosen People). There are other peoples who have traditionally considered themselves to be similarly "chosen", including the Chinese and the Japanese -- and, much more recently, the Americans. But the special divine relation, and its associated responsibilities, is also commonly recognized amongst many indigenous peoples.

It is therefore potentially more fruitful to review the challenge, for the "unchosen", of appropriate dialogue with "chosen people" in terms of a much wider spectrum of situations in which variants of this condition obtain.

**Religion:** Those subscribing to a religious belief are typically faced with similar perspectives and must develop a mode of dealing with anti-religious dialogue, notably as characteristic of humanists and atheists. The lack of any faith, irrespective of the faith chosen, may be considered as extremely problematic, notably according to the views of Islam (regarding an infidel, or kafir).

Here the challenge is one of dialogue with unbelievers stigmatized as having an anti-religious attitude. The corresponding challenge is that for the "unbeliever" in dialoguing with a person holding a particular belief. Whilst religions give a great deal of attention to dialogue (on their own terms) with unbelievers, as part of the proselytizing process, none is given to the guidelines for unbelievers in engaging critically, for mutual benefit, with those holding a religious belief.

It is a characteristic of religious belief to consider the truths of the chosen religion to be more fundamental than those of other beliefs, thus making them preferable if not superior -- offering a specially privileged understanding (and associated status). The challenge comes from any consequent constraints on dialogue. Examples include:

- **anti-Christian:**
  - condescending: criticism of the Catholic worldview and its associated practices dates back over centuries -- notably resulting in the often violent relationships with "protestants" Christians stigmatized as "anti-Catholic" (as in Northern Ireland) and with Muslims (as in the period of the Crusades). It is however unclear that participation of Catholics in recent inter-faith dialogue initiatives has established guidelines acceptable to Catholics for critical feedback from those not subscribing to the Catholic worldview (whether other Christians, Jews or Muslims) -- especially when the Pope has so controversially asserted the superiority of Christianity over other faiths and especially Islam. Nevertheless the Pope has stressed that "We are in great need of an authentic dialogue between religions and between cultures" (25 September 2006). The situation is not facilitated by the Pope's typically strong views on the superiority of the Catholic faith above all others.
  - **anti-Protestant:** this situation is typically the reverse of the anti-Catholic situation. It is exacerbated by the fundamentalist beliefs of some Christian denominations, naturally convinced of the primacy of their worldview and their divine mandate --
notably in response to the Muslim worldview. Again there is little evidence of the emergence of any guidelines from such groups on the appropriate form of critical feedback.

- **anti-Semitic**: criticism of the Jewish worldview and its associated practices also dates back over centuries -- with many horrific consequences. Judaism is also characterized by a range of denominations with contrasting worldviews (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Haredi, Hasidic, Modern Orthodoxy, Reconstructionist, Karaite, Rubbincic, and Alternative). Given this variety, the question is what guidelines might be formulated by Jews for fruitful critical feedback that could be usefully distinguished from "anti-semitism".

- **anti-Muslim**: the past decade has seen intensive debate on the Muslim worldview by other worldviews (whether religious or secular) -- of which a major proportion is considered to be "anti-Muslim" by Muslims. The question for all concerned, as with "anti-semitism" in particular, is what guidelines might be offered by Muslims as to fruitful critical feedback -- if any is admissible. The possibility is complicated by the quality of the critical "dialogue" between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims.

- **anti-Buddhist**: although less well-known in the West, Buddhism has been subject to strong anti-Buddhist actions (cf Great Anti-Buddhist Persecution) but also has a proactive approach to critical views (cf Against Buddhism - Anti-Buddhist Arguments; Anti-Buddhist Traditions). Buddhism has engendered one of the oldest attempts to create a framework for mutually incompatible views in the classical text on The All-Embracing Net of Views (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1978) which identifies 62 philosophical views as constituting a complete set of inappropriate or unsustainable views -- together constituting a larger and more appropriate framework. Whilst these may be usefully framed as classical errors of interpretation, it is not clear however that Buddhism has generated guidelines for more spontaneous criticism.

- **anti-Taoist**: criticism of early Taoism is clarified in an annotated commentary by Livia Kohn (Laughing at the Tao: Debates Among Buddhists and Taoists in Medieval China, Journal of Religion, 1997). Of particular interest in the case of Taoism is the special role given to polarities, raising the technical question of the modalities by which a polarizing external critical perspective is integrated (9-fold Higher Order Patterning of Tao Te Ching Insights, 2003; Discovering richer patterns of comprehension to reframe polarization, 1998). It is not clear that Taoism has reflected its understanding of such dynamics in guidelines for its critics.

- **anti-Hindu**: typically Hinduism is naturally accepting of non-Hindu philosophies and practices, although anti-Hindu prejudices within Indian tribal populations and amongst fundamentalists of Muslim and Christian persuasion have notably led to massacres of the Hindu population. As with Taoism, the Hindu concept of Indra's Net points to an encompassing of the total variety of views and counter-views. But again it is not clear that Hinduism has generated guidelines for critical feedback on its worldview. This conclusion would also appear to apply to contemporary spiritual leaders of Hindu inspiration.

Christianity has been the most successful in occupying the moral highground by ensuring that "unchristian" is widely held to mean "uncharitable" or "uncompassionate" -- if not "inhumane". Other religions have however successfully elaborated powerful symbolic understandings of "impurity", "uncleanliness" and the like -- which would in each case typically apply to the practices of another worldview, including the Christian (cf Susan Handelman, On the Essence of Ritual Impurity (in Judaism), 1996; Christine Hayes, Gentle Impurities and Jewish Identities, 2002; Ritual Impurity (hadith and najasa in Islam); Guide to Ritual Impurity (asaucham in Hinduism)). Dialogue under such conditions calls for special precautions that need elaboration.

**Academic and other disciplines and skills:** It is a characteristic of those having acquired a discipline, often through long and arduous training, to be constrained in their dialogue with those lacking the understanding (and possibly status) arising from the associated insights. Typically the points made from other perspectives are held to be "unacceptable", "ill-informed", "unfounded" or "naive". This is the case with the "professionals" of many disciplines, whether mountaineers, meditators, masons, or musicians (a breadth of spectrum favoured by Paul Feyerabend (Against Method: outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge, 1975).

Here the challenge is one of dialogue with non-professionals, possibly pejoratively stigmatized as "amateurs" or "undisciplined" or having an anti-professional or anti-disciplinary attitude. The corresponding challenge is that for the "amateur" -- or one without skill -- in dialoguing with a person skilled in a particular discipline. Whilst professionals may give a great deal of attention to dialogue (on their own terms) with those lacking their skills, as part of persuading others to develop that skill, none is given to the guidelines for amateurs, especially the unskilled, in engaging in critical dialogue with skilled practitioners, for mutual benefit.

This cluster is most instructive in the case of science, especially the "pure" or "fundamental" sciences. Practitioners of such disciplines are renowned for the reservations they have in dialoguing with non-practitioners, which may extend behaviourally into forms of self-appreciation and elitism, including an unfortunate degree of intellectual arrogance. Many efforts are made to explain to wider audiences the excitement of the perspectives of these disciplines and the discoveries they make. This may be understood as a form of dialogue with those who are not necessarily persuaded of the fundamental value of science over all other approaches to truth. A striking example, highly critical of religion, has recently been offered by Richard Dawkins (The God Delusion, 2006).

Such explanations are considered vital to ensure that voters and politicians continue to support fundamental research. But curiously those scientists who perform this role are often disparaged by their colleagues as "popularizers" who endanger their academic standing and research careers by doing so. Whilst pure scientists consider any other form of thinking as "unscientific" and subject to condemnation for its logical and methodological inadequacies, little attention is given to the challenge of how the unscientific should engage in dialogue with scientists other than on the terms of the latter.

The challenge applies not only to dialogue with non-scientists but in different ways to dialogue between practitioners of different sciences, whether or not they are "fundamental" or "pure". The problems with such dialogue -- whether or not it extends beyond the natural sciences into the social sciences and other disciplines -- have been explored under the heading of "interdisciplinarity" and "transdisciplinarity". For the practitioners of particular disciplines any such efforts may be seen to be as dangerously suspect as the concerns about syncretism in interfaith discourse.

Of particular interest are the cases where the discipline has preoccupations with the subjective rather than the objective -- as with
Here the challenge is one of unacceptable discriminatory attitude -- even an antipathy to the group critically, for mutual benefit, with possibly stigmatized dangers so. This is exemplified by the adage: whether or not you concern yourself with politics, politics will certainly concern itself with you.

Well-known examples, usefully clustered as complementary pairs, include:

- **capitalism**: capitalists present their case with great fervour and see their approach as fundamental to economic development. The "anti-business" resistance from "anti-capitalists" is seen as exceptionally problematic. For some corporate interests it justifies the use of "dirty tricks", possibly resulting in the death of labour leaders, whistleblowers, or demonstrators. Whilst dialogue by business to make the case for capitalism is conducted with moral fervour enhanced by public relations, there is no guidance from capitalists as how to make a reasoned critical case against the capitalist perspective, notably as formulated in the pro-globalization discourse. Any such critical discourse is viewed as highly suspect if not subversive. Interestingly however, "criticism tolerance" is viewed as a highly important characteristic impacting on interpersonal effectiveness and leadership -- successful startup entrepreneurs seem to have a higher criticism tolerance.

- **communism**: as with capitalists, communists present their case with great fervour. Any "anti-communist" perspective is viewed as highly suspect. But no guidelines are offered by communists on how to engage in appropriate critical dialogue regarding the inadequacies of communism. Unlike capitalism, of particular interest is the emphasis on "critical" discourse within communism of whatever flavour -- even "self-criticism" (eg Soviet, Chinese, Cuban, Albanian). But the degree or scope of criticism is severely circumscribed. It is important to avoid "crossing a line" into inappropriate dialogue.

- **imperialism**: in the past century imperialists made a strong case for the self-evident logic of their actions, subsequently discredited during the period of anti-colonialism and progressive national independence. Such logic was also seen as coherent in earlier centuries -- back to the Roman Empire. Resistance by "anti-imperialists" was considered completely unacceptable and resulted in swift stigmatization of those proposing civil liberties or independence -- associated with many bloody conflicts between righteous imperialists and the local insurgents in their colonies. The imperial logic has returned to fashion with the neoconservative Project for a New American Century and, somewhat differently, through the logic of "globalization". Perhaps not surprisingly this is historically coincidental with pejorative framing of active resisters as "terrorists". No indications are offered by imperialists regarding the modalities of appropriate discourse critical of imperialism.

- **independence**: the fervour of independence from the yoke of imperialism has successfully resulted in the independence of many countries. Pressures however continue to manifest in favour of secession from existing national entities -- resisted with a logic similar to that of imperialism. Again no indications are offered by those opposing such secession regarding the appropriate critical discourse in favour of secession -- possibly vital in the event of such dialogue within the USA.

- **militarism**: the arguments for military preparedness and for military action are presented through a well-known logical framework, supported by appeals to various principles and values: honour, defence of the motherland, noble cause, etc. The discourse in support of conscription is also well-honed -- currently on campuses in relation to military needs of the USA. Any criticism of the military enterprise is quickly framed in terms of disloyalty, cowardice and even treachery. Demonstrations made evoke a violently repressive response. No effort is made by those advocating military action to clarify the guidelines for appropriate dialogue with those presenting critical views of such action.

- **pacifism**: here again, pacifists do not offer guidelines on acceptable modes of discourse critical of their position. Again contrary arguments, and those presenting them, are viewed with the greatest suspicion and stigmatized pejoratively.

- **industrialism**: this well-recognized manifestation of the economic and developmental imperative does not suggest guidelines for appropriate critical dialogue from those highly critical of its assumptions and consequences.

- **environmentalism**: in this case it is environmentalists who present a coherent case -- regarding pollution, climate change, endangered species, etc -- and view contrary arguments with the greatest suspicion. Those offering such arguments are readily labelled with various pejorative descriptors. Environmentalists, despite recognition of the vital function of feedback loops, do not offer guidelines on acceptable critical dialogue against their position.

- **"consumerism"**: this widely promoted approach to the achievement of well-being and happiness through wealth does not offer guidelines for appropriate feedback critical of its consequences.

- **"simplicity"**: advocates of the cultivation of voluntary simplicity, and creative approaches to relative poverty, do not offer guidelines for critical feedback to those pursuing wealth and a consumer lifestyle.

**Nationalism and ethnic culture**: For those especially proud of their country, their culture or their ethnic group, any particular criticism is quickly framed as antipathy to the group as whole. Typically it is described as being "anti-X" and is seen as exemplifying an unacceptable discriminatory attitude -- even an infringement of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Here the challenge is one of dialogue with those unsympathetic to the culture and quickly stigmatized in terms of their antipathetic
attitude. The corresponding challenge is for the latter, given their criticism of attitudes or behaviours of the particular nation or ethnic group. National cultures give a great deal of attention to dialogue (on their own terms) with the cultures of other groups to increase understanding -- as part of the process of cultural exchange that promotes tourism. In this spirit the United Nations proclaimed 2001 to be the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations -- ironically, given the consequences of 9/11. Very little attention is however given to the challenge for those critical of the behaviour of a collectivity to formulate their criticism in appropriate terms as a basis for such dialogue, for mutual benefit.

Classical examples include:

- **America**: the USA is notable for recognizing its special relation to God and a sense of Manifest Destiny. Much has been written about "anti-American" attitudes and the consequent challenge for Americans of "winning hearts and minds" -- winning them over to the American perspective. Americans themselves have engaged in an awkward internal process of penalizing "un-American" initiatives. Little effort has been devoted by Americans to elaborating the guidelines for acceptable dialogue critical of American attitudes and behaviours.

- **Japan**: continuing concerns are symbolized by the repeated visits of Japanese prime ministers to the Yasukuni shrine where convicted war criminals are honoured together with 2.5 million war dead, calling into questions the validity of the war crimes trials. This pattern has inhibited political summits between China and Japan since 2001. This complex mix of "anti-Japanese" perceptions by foreigners and political pressures on Japanese prime ministers to avoid "un-Japanese" behaviour is further complicated by the particularities of Japanese attitudes to foreigners (gojijn). Again little effort is made by Japan to clarify how others should fruitfully engage cortically with Japan under such circumstances.

- **Germany**: as illustrated by the policies of the Nazi era regarding the Aryan race and the discriminatory and genocidal measures taken against non-Aryans -- now a theme of neo-nazism.

- **Israel**: as reflected in Zionist policies, in support of the State of Israel, in response to anti-semitism and the subsequent confusion of "anti-Zionism" with anti-semitism. Seemingly there is no clarification by Zionists of the appropriate form of dialogue critical of Zionism, if this possibility is even envisaged as beneficial.

- **Other countries**, notably those confronted by immigrants and multiculturalism, continue to express concern with erosion of national identity -- framed pejoratively (in English) as "un-British", "un-Australian", "un-Canadian", "un-Irish", for example. Turkey notably has legislation to curtail criticism of "Turkishness", especially by writers. How should the "un-British" engage critically with the "British"? How should those immigrants stigmatized as "un-European" engage with "Europeans"?

**Aesthetics**: Many of the issues of dialogue are highlighted by the interactions between different schools of aesthetic preferences, notably in the period in which new preferences and styles emerge, challenging dominant preferences. An effort has been made to map these differences by W T Jones (The Romantic Syndrome; toward a new methodology in cultural anthropology and the history of ideas, 1961). Of particular interest are the strong preferences in the case of religious iconography, ranging from prohibition of any form of image of deity in the case of Islam, through the varying preferences of Christianity (from Catholic to Quaker), to the explicit non-Aryans -- now a theme of neo-nazism.

**Physically-characterized social groups**: Those distinguished by certain physical characteristics may have a tendency to frame any critical feedback as inappropriately discriminatory -- possibly to the point of using accusations of "discrimination" as a protective device for what might legitimately be perceived as inappropriate behaviour. This highlights the challenge of determining how to draw parallels or distinctions between issues that are:

- **gender-related**: development of the analyses and empowerment of women has constrained facile criticism of women and successfully stigmatized such criticism as anti-women; the challenge for feminists remains that of providing guidelines for appropriate dialogue critical of women; the corresponding challenge for men might be how to clarify fruitful modes of dialogue with women critical of men

- **age-related**: the considerable empowerment of youth similarly highlights the challenge of the guidelines that might be fruitfully produced by youth to enable adults to engage effectively with them in critical dialogue; a corresponding challenge clearly exists for elders demanding of respect, perhaps inappropriately

- **disability-related**: the modalities of appropriate criticism of a physically-challenged person could fruitfully be elaborated by the disabled

- **colour-related**: whilst considerable attention has been given to colour-based discrimination (of every kind), little attention has been given by those affected to formulate guidelines for any appropriate critical feedback

- **size-related**: again considerable attention has been given to such discrimination (whether in terms of height, girth, or otherwise), little attention has been given to appropriate guidelines for any appropriate critical feedback

**Social status and behavioural skills**: Status and skills are typically used to frame any critical feedback as "out of place" -- possibly to the point of calling for some form of rebuke or retribution. They may well be used as a protective device to camouflage inappropriate behaviour. This raises the question of how any such groups can formulate guidelines for appropriate dialogue critical of their behaviour:

- **social elites**, aristocracies and royalty have long elaborated protocols for dialogue on their own terms, partially embodied in rules of etiquette. Whilst these may extend to the required behaviour of "inferiors", they do not encompass the form of critical feedback from inferiors -- from whom none is expected

- **groups of elites and power-mongers** (such as the Club of Rome, the Bilderberg Group, the Trilateral Commission, World Economic Forum, etc) cultivate an internal dialogue through which they attempt to influence world events. They are exposed to criticism which they condemn as inappropriate, but make no attempt to articulate more fruitful modes of critical feedback.

- **employers** have long established modalities for interacting with their employees. Trade unions have given considerable attention to procedures for dialoguing with employers. But employers have seldom devoted attention to the guidelines for appropriate critical
In addition to the following, the previous section gives a sense of the varieties of "chosenness". Sources of the sense of prohibition of inhumanity formulated as covertly, cluster bombs in Lebanon poses major threat to Afghanistan, Iraq. It is a notable consequence of the unexploded cluster bomblets now endanger civilian regional conflicts. A number of these worldviews combine most unfortunately to sustain a pattern. Other examples of extreme perspectives posing a challenge for dialogue are given elsewhere (opportunity for eliciting (or envisaging) guidelines from the campaigns against these preferences have offered guidelines as to how to protest the behaviour. Unfortunately there are few guidelines from those favouring such behaviour indicating how critics might dialogue appropriately with them.

Alternative and hypothetical: Interesting challenges to dialogue are illustrated by the following where in each case there is an opportunity for eliciting (or envisaging) guidelines from the groups regarding appropriate modes of critical dialogue:

- **intentional communities**: of whatever kind, these are typically trapped into an us/them mode characterized by defensive dialogue with outsiders. What form might guidelines from them take to clarify appropriate critical engagement with them?
- **semi-secret societies**, sects and cults: the Freemasons, Scientologists and Opus Dei, as examples, have all been recently exposed to criticism but have not indicated what form of critical dialogue by others might be appropriate in order to engage effectively with them
- **hypothetical**: what form of guidelines regarding critical dialogue might be expected from extraterrestrials or from the subjects of conspiracy theories?
- **deluded**: whilst many in therapy (and notably in mental institutions) suffer delusions, and there is concern as to how to dialogue with them, it is worth considering how to elicit from them guidelines to appropriate critical dialogue on behaviours resulting from their perspective

Other examples of extreme perspectives posing a challenge for dialogue are given elsewhere (Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism: "rooting for" normalization vs. "rooting out" extremism? 2005)

A number of these worldviews combine most unfortunately to sustain a pattern of denial -- notably associated with the consequences of regional conflicts engendered by them. This is most evident in the widespread use of landmines and cluster bombs. Millions of unexploded cluster bomblets now endanger civilian populations in rural areas long after any cease fire. This is the case in Laos, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq. It is a notable consequence of the military strategy of Israel in southern Lebanon in 2006 (cf Israel's "immoral" use of cluster bombs in Lebanon poses major threat, UN News Center, 30 August 2006). Countries adopting such strategies tend to do so covertly, denying use of inhumane weapons at the time, and offering no guidelines as to how criticism of such policies could be fruitfully formulated as a contribution to policy-making (cf Brian Rappert, Controlling the Weapons of War: politics, persuasion, and the prohibition of inhumanity, 2006).

**Sources of the sense of "chosenness"**

The previous section gives a sense of the varieties of "chosenness". Clearly the source of this sense may derive from any of the following, in isolation or in combination:

- **divinity**: namely where God is understood to have appointed a people or a person as specially "Chosen"; in the case of individuals this may take the form of being "born again"
- **inborn talent**: where it is a matter of skill, this may well be inherited or inborn, notably with the "specially gifted" -- possibly to be understood as the consequence of reincarnation
- **education / training**: qualifications of the highest degree may be acquired through successful pursuit of an educational pathway, which may include physical and mental endurance (notably as in military training)
- **social circumstances**: birth into a well-positioned family (with a large inheritance), or a social group, may nurture a sense of having been chosen for a particular role in life (as with dynastic inheritance such as royalty); being "at the right place, at the right time" may also lead to a sense of having been chosen by circumstances; in certain cultures, birth under auspicious circumstances may be a significant factor, if not the primary one (as with selection of the Dalai Lama)
- **appointment / election**: leaders of every kind may be chosen by those who wish to follow them or by the previous holder of a mantle of authority -- possibly perceived to be in fulfillment of prophecy
- **inner sense**: individuals may be persuaded of their self-worth, or unique destiny, through subjective processes, including dreams and delusions; some occupants of mental asylums consider themselves to be specially chosen
- **creativity**: a creative breakthrough in some area (music, technology, etc) may result in the development of a sense of self-worth
- **promotion**: commercial and political processes may result in the promotion of an individual into celebrity status
- **ritual**: secret societies may offer initiation rituals (including hazing) that progressively enhance the status of the individual through a hierarchical system within an elite
- **invitation**: an individual may be invited into an elite group
- **luck / fate**: especially problematic is where a combination of circumstances selects one or more individuals, notably in unfortunate cases of scapegoating (being chosen for victimhood), criminal framing, mistaken identity, accident and the like; this sense of having been chosen is typically associated with the question "why me"; individuals can be arbitrarily selected in this way "to make an example"
- **commitment**: however triggered, commitment to a cause may be transmuted into a belief in having effectively been "chosen" to complete it (as with, on a larger scale, the myth underlying the faith-based intervention by the Coalition of the Willing)

In addition to the religious sense of being "chosen" through being "born again", other variants of this process may also be considered.
interpreting that authority's perspective. This may include:

consider that only God Blair -- consider examples

A common defensive strategy in response to this form of dialogue, especially under these conditions any questions are only acceptable to the extent that the response can be provided or the question can be proven to be accurate. Criticism and disagreement are essentially superficial or focused on details of interpretation -- whether or not these are framed as a "major debate" between schools of thought of that worldview. The chosen dialogue amongst themselves within a "circle of trust" -- a complicity that is called into question by critical dialogue with "others". In the case of the Jewish diaspora, this might be termed "semitic" dialogue from which "anti-semitic" dimensions are necessarily to be excluded..

Judgment of those within the circle is muted -- in ways that evoke external criticism -- even when some of its values are betrayed. The P2 scandal of freemasonry provides an example.

Critical discourse by "the chosen": Again for comparative purposes, this is the case where a particular worldview is used as the basis for criticizing the inadequacies of another worldview -- without being open to any criticism in return, except to the extent that the arguments of the latter can be refuted from within the worldview of the former.

Preferred non-critical dialogue: As a development of the preceding condition, this is the preferred mode of discourse for exponents of any worldview. Its characteristics include combinations of the following:

- unquestioning deference to a social authority whether a religious leader, the leading professor of a discipline, a political leader, a military leader, a corporate leader, etc
- unquestioning deference to a moral or spiritual authority, notably including a priest, or guru
- unquestioning reference to an authoritative text, whether a sacred scripture, or the work of a world-renowned scholar
- unquestioning application of a methodology

Under these conditions any questions are only acceptable to the extent that the response can be provided or the question can be proven to be inappropriate. The dialogue may be described in terms of:

- "It is my role to talk, your's is to listen"
- "I correct errors in your understanding"
- "There are no errors in the position that I represent"

Typically the process of such dialogue may consist of a number of stages:

- aspects of the preferred worldview are articulated
- comments from those not subscribing to it are accepted
- responses are made to those comments, correcting errors of understanding
- if the degree of protest against those comments is deemed excessive after a "reasonable" attempt at "dialogue", then the "dialogue" is terminated
- the protestor is stigmatized as "unreasonable" or "beyond reasoning" -- or "beyond saving"
- in certain situations, measures may be taken to intimidate, isolate or even "terminate" the protestor -- some modes of discourse can indeed prove fatal (if only to a career position)

A common defensive strategy in response to this form of dialogue, especially in corporate culture, is that of the "yes man". Recent examples of faith-based governance have clarified the extent to which world leaders -- "chosen people" such as George Bush and Tony Blair -- consider themselves as "above criticism" normally characteristic of democratic governance. Ultimately they, and their supporters, consider that only God can appropriately judge them for the deaths they perpetrate in the name of spreading Christian Democracy.

Critical dialogue with "divinity": An especially problematic form of the previous variant occurs when a potentially critical dialogue, with potentially "fatal" consequences, takes place with the "ultimate" authority of the worldview rather than with an intermediary interpreting that authority's perspective. This may include:

- "God": the nature of any "critical" dialogue with God has been highlighted both with respect to key moments in spiritual training ("dark night of the soul", loss of faith, etc) and the experience for many of deep loss of a loved one. It is typically associated with an accusatory question as to "why" the situation arises, a sense of unfairness, and of being betrayed by God (amusingly explored in the movie The Man Who Sued God). Guidelines are not provided by the divine as to how to respond critically. An interesting exception is that of Buddhism where master practitioners have been reputed to destroy sacred texts, and even images of the Buddha, in order to free themselves from attachment to anything. A widely-appreciated quote from a Zen master describes the Buddha as "A dried shit stick" -- a statement which, if made about Mohammed or Jesus, would provoke outrage amongst Muslims or Christians
- "Chief priest": here a person is recognized as the ultimate representative of divinity, typically as a leader of an institutionalized religion of which the clearest example is the Pope as leader of the Catholic Church, notably when speaking ex cathedra.
- "President": this again may be similar to the situation with respect to "God" for many in institutional environments -- and indeed the person in question may be both referred to as "God" and may even perceive themselves as having "divine" attributes. This has notably been the case in monarchies or in those empires where the emperor was held to have divine attributes. Whilst presidents typically surround themselves by "yes men", appreciative tales are told of those few who take specific steps to ensure critical feedback. These have not however been translated into widely available guidelines. An interesting exception is provided by the traditional, and potentially dangerous, role of the court jester.
• "Professor": similar to the situation with respect to "God" is that for a scholar of being confronted with the arbitrariness or betrayal by the ultimate superior in one's school of thought -- often referred to as "God". Professors are seldom reputed for welcoming critical discourse and take steps to avoid it. Guidelines to valuable critical discourse are typically not provided by them.

• "Worldmaker": some highly creative individuals elaborate worldview and "worlds", whether through story (eg Lord of the Rings), movies (eg Star Wars), interactive computer games (eg EverQuest), philosophy, or fundamental physical "Theories of Everything" (cf Nelson Goodman, Ways of Worldmaking, 1978). By their very nature such constructs have no externalities and their creators have no need to build into them "backdoors" through which they are open to critical feedback.

• Elective affinity: to the extent that a loved one is experienced as "divine" -- and in that sense above criticism -- the challenge of engaging in critical dialogue is recognized as problematic. How to communicate to a loved one a problem of inappropriate choice of clothing, halitosis or snoring? (cf Snoring of The Other: a politically relevant psycho-spiritual metaphor?, 2006) What guidelines to offer to ensure valuable critical feedback from those by whom one is above all appreciated?

Radical dialogue and "anathema": Dialogue with a group may, exceptionally, become of such a radical nature that it challenges the fundamental assumptions basic to the identity of the group -- even challenging its very integrity. This may for example occur in theological debate, in scientific debate, or in political debate. The consequence may be a schism in the group, with the more authoritative declaring the other to be the vehicle of heresy. In theological debate, the excluded perspective and the holder of it, may be declared to be anathema -- implying a degree of denunciation and banishment, namely a form of extreme religious sanction

Curiously the original Greek sense of anathema implied a form of suspension, something set apart as sacred -- even offered up to God. This accords with the sense of the perspective being out of a conventional frame -- "out of the box"?

An excellent example has been provided, on the occasion of the Israel-Hizbollah conflict, by the widely publicized commentary of the renowned Norwegian philosopher Jostein Gaarder (God's Chosen People, Aftenposten, 5 August 2006), expressing his outrage against Israel's military operations and foreign policy since 1967. Vehemently contested by many (cf Shimon Samuels, Open Letter to Norway from the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, 8 August 2006), his text, has been perceived by some as attacking not only Israel and Israeli policy, but also Jews and Judaism in general, and as such is considered an extreme example of anti-semitism [more]. Gaarder himself repeatedly dismissed such interpretations. Critics considered that he had "crossed a line", whether or not he realized it. Supporters, including the former prime minister of Norway, Kåre Willoch, criticized the attacks on Gaarder, stating that "whenever Israel's politics are criticized, there are attempts to divert the attention from what this is really about." [more]

Another example, arousing worldwide protest, is the Pope's quotation, without qualification, of the views of a predecessor claiming that Muhammad's innovations were "evil and inhuman" (12 September 2006). As noted by Jonathan Freedland (The Pope should know better than to endorse the idea of a war of faiths, The Guardian, 20 September 2006):

The Pope seems unaware that, for hundreds of millions of people, religious affiliation is not a matter of intellectual adherence to a set of abstract principles, but a question of identity. Many Muslims, like many Jews or Hindus, may not fully subscribe to the religious doctrine concerned, and yet their Muslimness, or Jewishness or Hinduess, is a central part of their make-up. Theology plays a lesser part than history, culture, folklore, tradition and kinship. In this respect, religious groups begin to look more like ethnic ones. Which means that a slur on a religion is experienced much like a racist insult.

Anything that is "anti-" that which has been "chosen" must necessarily be the epitome of "evil" (for religion), "ignorance" (for science), "incompetence" (for competitive business), "anarchy" (for politics and governance), "ugliness" (for aesthetics), "unknown" (national/ethnic culture), etc

Unacceptable denial of formative existential experience: Of major significance in any dialogue situation of the kind described above is any implied challenge, by the critic, to a fundamental formative experience sustaining the worldview that is questioned. Examples of such experiences from the above include:

• religion: For Christians this is the founding myth and mystery associated with the crucifixion of Jesus, and the many Christian martyrs thereafter. Miracles are also important to Islam [more]. Most religions, especially Judaism, attach great significance to the persecution of their adherents down the centuries. In terms of personal identity, individuals subscribing to the worldview may attach fundamental, if not overriding, significance to conversion and "rebirth" experiences -- often following intense personal struggle to overcome dysfunctional patterns of behaviour.

• science: The founding myths of science are associated with the struggles of those discovering, formulating and promulgating new theories against the resistance of the dominant worldview of the time. In terms of personal identity, individuals may attach great significance to their long educational struggle (and their associated penury as a student) to acquire the insights they now profess.

• ethnic identity: The most horrific types of formative experience are those associated with genocidal massacre, forced resettlement, deliberate starvation and the withholding of assistance. The denial or demeaning of such experience is especially problematic. The case of the Holocaust is particularly significant as a central act of European civilization perpetrated by Europeans on Europeans with the complicity of Europeans. The efforts made by the Jewish people to ensure that it is not forgotten are therefore understandable in relation to the promise that Israel represents -- hence the challenge represented by the highly controversial study by Roger Garaudy (The Founding Myths of Modern Israel, 2000; The Theological Myth) [more more]. Although the validity of comparisons is questionable, other such acts may be as formative for the identity of the people concerned (eg the Armenian massacre, Hiroshima/Nagasaki, the Rwandan massacre, the Cambodian massacre, and many others -- some, such as Dafur, currently underway).

• labour: The struggle of workers to achieve rights from government and employers, now enshrined as principles in the international labour conventions, has often involved violently repressive measures justified by national institutions. These have constituted formative experiences for those in the trade unions movement -- notably exemplified by the Solidarity movement in
In a dialogue situation great weight is naturally attached to such formative experiences. This may be articulated in the form of statements indicating that the there is absolutely no way in which the critic can understand how such considerations completely outweigh the validity of any criticism. Those of a younger generation are typically exposed to such argument from their elders, especially their parents, who attach a high degree of significance to the challenging conditions from which they have developed, from which the young now benefit. Typically the young attach relatively little weight to such arguments and view them with suspicion, whatever their respect for their parents.

**Transformation of human rights into a defensive shield against feedback:** The general approach to the above challenges has been articulated in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Unfortunately this document limits itself to promoting a high degree of tolerance and says almost nothing about the real-world situation of when, and how, to provide feedback to those who may be considered by others to be acting inappropriately -- in terms of those very same principles. As in the religious case of the 10 Commandments about what (not) to do, there are potentially 10 Missing Commandments about what to do in the event of failure to respect them -- beyond provision for "an eye for an eye" and a presumptuous anticipation of God's retributive justice.

*Article 30* might be interpreted as pointing in a necessary direction, but only in a negative sense. It reads:

> Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Some efforts have been made by some groups to formulate corresponding declarations of human responsibilities (*Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*, InterAction Council, 1997-8; *Citizens' Public Trust Treaty: a treaty of ethics, equity and ecology*, 1997-8; Oscar Aries, *Some Contributions to a Universal Declaration of Human Obligations*, 1997). Such initiatives have been contested as ill-founded (*Revised Research paper on the Draft Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*, Southern Cross Bioethics Institute, 2006; Sandra Mims Rowe, *American Society of Newspaper Editors*, 1997; *Charter of Responsibilities Bill 2004*, Canberra Parliament). Responses to such initiatives have been well summarized by Ben Saul (*In the Shadow of Human Rights: Human Duties, Obligations and Responsibilities*, 2001) -- with the conclusion that no further action is expected by the United Nations. But again such initiatives themselves fail to indicate when and how to provide feedback in appropriate form.

Such concerns regarding critical feedback may be implicit in proposals of the Hamelink Declaration (also termed the *Draft Declaration on the Right to Communicate*, 2002 or the *People's Communication Charter*) but objections to it by the group *Article 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression* (*Note on the draft Declaration on the Right To Communicate prepared by C. Hamelink, 2003*) raise issues of whether:

- it would provide a broad licence to governments to repress critical or oppositional viewpoints.
- it means, for example, that no one is allowed to criticize other people's ideas
- the proposed right to freedom of religion could be seen as prohibiting individuals from criticizing religions, a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of expression.
- to repress criticism of a controversial government policy on the basis that this is likely to encourage 'illegal' demonstrations against it, breaching the peace.
- open public debate depends on criticism of other people's ideas and creative work, even unreasonable or excessively harsh criticism. They become totally unacceptable when cast, as in the *Hamelink Declaration*, as obligations, which implies a legal requirement

The weakness of any such legal focus on isolated "rights" or "responsibilities" it that it fails to acknowledge the dynamics of the systemic communication processes through which feedback is provided to ensure a sustainable, self-correcting balance between freedoms and obligations. Critical feedback is a vital feature of this self-correcting dynamic.

It is within the context of the *Universal Declaration*, and various supporting treaties, that the question of how -- given the principle of free speech -- actions considered inappropriate may be criticized, in particular (as an example) when the person undertaking or promoting those actions is Jewish. In the case of charges of "anti-semitism", as condemned by the *Universal Declaration*, the challenge for all is to clarify when the charge is appropriately made. If the charge is extended as a protective device for any action undertaken by a Jewish person, its weight and value is progressively diminished. The consequence is illustrated by the well-known tale of the little boy who cried "wolf". In a dialogue situation it would be most useful to benefit from the insights of those sensitive to the charge to clarify what is "anti-semitic" and what is not -- and the grey areas to which all should be sensitive

The difficulty from a systemic perspective is that the charge of "anti-semitism" is used by some on occasion to block critical feedback, possibly dynamically. Michael Neumann (*What is Antisemitism?* June 2002) defines this dynamic as an identity shell-game:

> "Antisemitism", properly and narrowly speaking, doesn't mean hatred of semites; that is to confuse etymology with definition. It means hatred of Jews. But here, immediately, we come up against the venerable shell-game of Jewish identity: "Look! We're a religion! No! a race! No! a cultural entity! Sorry--a religion!" When we tire of this game, we get sucked into another; "anti-Zionism is antisemitism! " quickly alternates with: "Don't confuse Zionism with Judaism! How dare you, you antisemite!"

The question in such a dynamic context is then how to formulate critical feedback -- or is it the case that none is ever acceptable in the case of "the chosen" (of any variety)? Clarification of the scope for dialogue is especially problematic when the charge is coupled with
Consequences of "inappropriate" dialogue

understanding of "inappropriateness" or some form of "impurity". Typically any dialogue across constructed slum dwellings and buildings may then be understood as effectively mapping specialized dialogue settings, as mundanities to be transcended. Dynamic "gating" may also be understood in terms of communication specialization of operational responsibility in an emergent self-organizing system requiring conservation of variety.

Two distinct dialogue situations then exist:

- where the boundary is primarily created and sustained by the walled community, as in most of the situations above defined by "the chosen". However, it also includes:
  - many national boundaries
  - fortified boundary walls as with: the Great Wall of China, Hadrian's Wall, the Iron Curtain, the Berlin Wall, the USA-Mexico border fence, or that separating North and South Korea
  - fortresses, closed monasteries (including Mount Athos), secure establishments (research laboratories, intelligence facilities, think tanks, etc)
  - compounds as with "diplomatic ghettos", the Green Zone, and those for expats in Arab countries
- where the boundary is primarily created and sustained by the surrounding environment, as with reservations, ghettos and certain institutions (penitentiaries, asylums, quarantine zones, etc), or the Israeli West Bank Barrier (to contain Palestinians)

More generally there is a case for seeing any form of constructed shelter as a container for relatively exclusive dialogue. The sets of such dialogues might then be seen as visibly replicating the pattern of such constructs -- from the castles and fortified chateaux of past elites to the ambitious corporate skyscrapers of their modern counterparts, including the range of institutional architecture. Urban street layouts and buildings may then be understood as effectively mapping specialized dialogue settings, the relationships between them, and the challenge of "access" to "ring-fenced" environments. They can be understood as a kind of "dialogue architecture" embodied in concrete. This framework of course raises interesting questions about suburban monotony and the quality of dialogue contained and enabled by slum dwellings and favelas. This architectural metaphor gives focus to the universality of disputes between neighbours as an exemplification of the encounter between contrasting worldviews.

Any dialogue across constructed boundaries is severely conditioned by the coherence of the language on either side and the force with which it seeks to penetrate the barrier -- or oppose such penetration -- with or without the consent of the other. Those on one side may adopt a highly defensive attitude. Much may be dependent on the image that those on either side cultivate of the other -- or project onto the other. Typically any such "wall" is an edifice of binary logic -- separating an understanding of "appropriateness" from an understanding of "inappropriateness" or some form of "impurity".

**Consequences of "inappropriate" dialogue**
**Justification for extremist action:** With respect to any of the forms of “chosenness”, it is instructive to note the controversial comment of Roger Garaudy who has argued that:

The idea of a chosen people is politically criminal, for it has always sanctified aggression, expansion and domination. The idea of a chosen people is theologically intolerable, for if some are ‘chosen’ that means that others are ‘rejected’.

Whilst most worldviews do not provide any guidelines for acceptable criticism of their perspective, a number provide rationalizations or guidelines for responses to critical discourse deemed inappropriate -- notably when this is framed to include forms of **apostasy**, namely the renunciation of a worldview as the result of revolt or defection. Of particular importance is the religious and moral justification for war -- known as just war. Other examples from the monotheistic “religions of the book” (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) have included:

- **Islam**: a well-defined legal pronouncement in Islam, provides for the issuance of a **fatwa** on a specialized issue as in the case of:
  - Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989, pronouncing a death sentence on Salman Rushdie (Satanic Verses)
  - Osama bin Laden in 1998, declaring war on the USA.


- **Judaism**: widespread response to critics such as Jostein Gaarder (see above) is based on scriptural provisions; These may be interpreted as justifications for death threats. Judaism provides for a death penalty in the case of apostasy (**Deuteronomy** 13:6-10)

- **Christianity**: some denominations may provide for shunning or excommunication in the case of heresy or apostasy [more].

Military action, sanctioned by the Pope, has long been a characteristic of these beliefs. Military action, sanctioned by the Pope, has long been a characteristic of these beliefs. A militaristic tradition persists:

- millions of children have been exposed to hymns joyously employing military metaphors [more] | more | more | more |
  - such as: "Onward Christian soldiers, Marching as to War / With the Cross of Jesus, Going on Before".
- Reverend Pat Robertson (a former US Presidential Candidate) speaking to 7 million viewers of the evangelical **Christian Broadcasting Network** on 23 August 2005 [more] called for the assassination of the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez:
  "We have the ability to take him out, and I think the time has come to exercise that ability... It's a whole lot easier to have some of the covert operatives do the job and then get it over with."
  [more more more]


Although other examples of the above are widely available (on the web), even quoting the scriptural basis for such justifications from sacred texts tends to be interpreted as a justification for retribution. As “religions of the book” it might be said that these religions are deserving of the rationalizations they have developed for their perspective, perhaps even in the name of a common deity.

Other variants are notably associated with semi-secret societies and sects, of which well-known examples include:

- **Freemasonry**: breach of the binding oaths of a freemason provides for "no less penalty than that of having my body severed in two, my bowels taken from thence and burned to ashes" or "to have my body opened perpendicularly and to be exposed for eight hours in the open air, so that the venomous flies may eat my entrails, my head to be cut off and put on the highest pinnacle of the world, and I will always be ready to inflict the same punishment on those who shall disclose this degree and break this obligation" [more].

- **Mafia**: inductees, governed by the code of **omerta**, commit to obedience, including murder, in defence of their society and for the advancement of its interests [more]

In the world of politics, business and the military, the priorities of the operating logic provide rationalizations for the undermining of those with opposing worldviews where other modes of dialogue prove inadequate. Legislative measures may be developed to facilitate a form of "dialogue" with detainees suspected of terrorism, for example [more | more].

It will be interesting to observe whether subsequent web versions of this article -- possibly including this sentence -- have been subject to prudent editing in response to pressures appropriately denied

**Intimidation**: With the aid of such rationalizations a range of techniques -- including various forms of harassment, threats and bullying -- may be deployed against those who have evidenced various forms of inappropriate dialogue:

Another range of variants is associated with politics, business and the security services:

- "**dirty tricks**": In politics and business, these refer to unethical, duplicitous, slanderous or illegal tactics employed to destroy or diminish the effectiveness of those with an opposing worldview [more].

- **security services**: When it is in their interests, secret services are alleged to provide "friendly warnings" to those whose activities they wish to constrain, perhaps extended into various forms of legal harassment. "Covert operations" (black ops) are not only clandestine (undertaken in a manner that disguises the identity of the perpetrators) but also covert, i.e. denied by the governments that undertake them. [more]

- **science**: Typically intimidation from superiors in a discipline takes the form of (implicit) threats to block publishing opportunities, conference participation, research funding or career advancement.

Invaders of a particular religious persuasion have typically intimidated populations to convert. Christians and Muslims down the centuries...
have accused each other of religious conversion under intimidation -- "by the sword". Considerable protest was engendered by the Pope through quoting a predecessor's view that Muhammed had commanded his followers "to spread by the sword the faith he preached" (12 September 2006).

It is now unfortunately impossible for the adherents of any powerful worldview to prove with any credibility that those questioning that perspective are not subject to constraining intimidation and harassment, whether deliberately or inadvertently.

**Retraction and apology:** Typically highly publicized critical statements evoke protests, and requests for retraction and apology. In the USA, for example, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has a policy of requesting retractions from those who have made anti-Jewish statements [more] [more]. The Jewish Defense League (JDL) is allegedly more militant in this respect.

Under conditions of accusation, denial and counter-accusation, it is difficult to determine the extent to which retractions and apologies are made in response to intimidation. Three days after publishing his criticism, Jostein Gaarder announced his intention to "withdraw from the debate." [more] An earlier highly publicized retraction and apology was that of Mel Gibson [more].

Again, it is now unfortunately impossible for the adherents of any powerful worldview to prove with any credibility that those questioning that perspective are not subject to intimidation and harassment to ensure the retraction of any publicized statement and the dissemination of an associated apology.

Perhaps the most delayed apology of historical significance was that of Pope John Paul II in 1992 to Galileo Galilei condemned in 1633 and forced to abjure -- for teaching that the Earth revolved around the Sun. It is claimed that the apology implied that Galileo did not suffer from the church as such, but from "churchmen and church bodies." [more] Galileo has long constituted an exemplar of the conflict of authority and freedom of thought, particularly with science, in Western society.

**Complicity with extremist action:** Given the dominant psychosocial, political or economic role of the worldview subject to criticism, and given the rationale for extremist action, there is a widespread tendency towards tolerance of any action against a critic, even complicity in that action. This might be understood as a perversion of "tolerance". Examples include:

- **religion:** there is little tendency within a dominant religion to protest the actions of extremists against those stigmatized as critical of the fundamental beliefs of the religion. "Christians" are extremely circumspect in their protest against the actions of Christian fundamentalists. Muslims are equally circumspect in their protest against the actions of Muslim fundamentalists. The same situation applies with respect to Jewish fundamentalists.

- **science:** there is little tendency within a scientific discipline to protest the discriminatory measures taken against those who challenge dominant theories. Scientists have proven to be extremely tolerant of the use of medical research on humans in institutionalized settings (whether in concentration camps, prisons, or the military). There is little protest against the development of inhumane weapons, or against marine biologists repeatedly involved in "scientific whaling".

- **politics:** there is little tendency amongst politicians to protest against unethical campaign fund raising or "dirty tricks" applied against opposing parties

- **business:** the business community is extremely circumspect in its criticism of corporations discovered to have been using "dirty tricks" of the most unethical and reprehensible kind. An extreme example is the case of corporations trading with the enemy in wartime or who largely derived their wealth from such activity.

Yet again, it is now unfortunately impossible for the adherents of any powerful worldview -- by which the the rules of dialogue are defined -- to prove with any credibility that those rules are not systematically abused, whether deliberately or inadvertently. Again, it is possible, but unwise, to name groups whom it is widely acknowledged engage actively in intimidation -- even "termination with prejudice" -- and with whom many are knowingly or inadvertently complicit.

Adherents of a dominant worldview are unable to demonstrate credibly their noncomplicity in extremist actions in their name. It is unfortunate that any approach to more radical forms of dialogue is inhibited by extremists from whom the honorable are both unable, and unwilling, to distinguish themselves.

**Degrees of isomorphism, equivalence or analogy**

The many examples given above have been presented to highlight similarities between seemingly quite disparate domains and behaviours. The argument here is that in terms of dialogue there are instructive parallels between them. The question is how to determine the degree of similarity.

One mode of argument has it that unless there is exact equivalence then any comparison is inappropriate. This might be called the "binary" approach. The challenge to the relevance of this approach might be illustrated by:

- **male-female:** clearly there is very extensive resemblance and, in physical terms, whether a person is male or female is normally unquestionable (if only for legal and administrative purposes). This argument is however problematic in the case of the many physical complexities of *transsexuality* where the degrees of maleness or femaleness are an important issue. It is problematic genetically in that there is a high degree of similarity (especially in comparison with other species). More importantly, irrespective of physical arguments, behaviourally and psychologically a person may be better described as having significant proportion of the opposite characteristics to those of any physical gender. The proportion is known to shift over the life cycle.

- **species:** genetically it is now usefully recognized to what extent humans share important proportions of DNA with primates and with many other species

- **profiling:** security services consider it meaningful to use profiling techniques to isolate those suspected of criminal and terrorist activity, however much the same traits may be shared by others without those tendencies
In terms of its formative effects on those who survive, there is a case for comparing more readily comprehensible forms of abuse with those whose horror remains a major challenge to comprehension. Examples include:

- the psycho-physical impact of rape on an individual women in comparison with the psycho-physical impact of massacre on a people
- the total destruction of villages (as in Lebanon) with the total destruction of cities (by fire-bombing)

A more fruitful approach is therefore to move beyond the binary approach and to recognize statistical degrees of equivalence or isomorphism -- pattern fitting. The issue is the percentage similarity in the cases identified above and at what point the degree of similarity is fruitful rather than misleading.

Equipped with such a framework it then becomes possible to explore the degree of validity (or lack thereof) to the highly controversial and emotive comparisons increasingly made between:

- the use of torture by the Catholic Inquisition in order to save souls and that advocated by George Bush to save Christian democratic values
- the behaviour of American neocons and that of the Nazi leadership, especially in the light of calls for Nuremberg style war crime trials and efforts by George Bush to introduce retroactive legislation to grant his regime immunity from indictment under the war crimes act
- South African apartheid and "reservations" for indigenous populations in some western countries -- or the treatment of Palestinians in the Middle East
- the isolation of minority groups in many countries, notably in the Middle East, into what resemble ghettos

It is more instructive to recognize the degree of similarity between a preferred pattern of behaviour and one considered reprehensible, rather than to dismiss such comparison because the statistical fit is not 100%.

Exemplary test cases: symbols vs trivia?

Who: As valuable test cases, the challenge for the following is to provide insight into the nature of the critical discourse in which they are prepared to engage without feeling it necessary to describe themselves as "above criticism":

- an individual (who happens to be Jewish, but may even be a criminal)
- a rabbi (of whom Meir Kahane was an extreme example)
- a group (primarily Jewish)
- a group promoting Judaism
- a group promoting Zionism (of which an extreme example was the Irgun Tsvai Leumi)
- Israeli citizens
- State of Israel (notably in its policies towards Palestinians and in its engagement against the Hezbollah)
- Jewish diaspora

The challenge for others is the degree to which they subscribe to blanket arguments of "anti-semitism" made on the occasion of critical dialogue.

What: Possible foci of criticism:

- symbols: especially sensitive for any culture, such as that of the Jews, is the criticism of behaviours and artefacts that are of fundamental symbolic significance to the identity of that culture. As an example, the Muslim response to the cartoon depiction of Mohammed aroused worldwide protest -- perceived by many to be quite unreasonable. To what extent can a culture prescribe the limits of unwanted criticism, if others choose to make it? At the simplest level, this is analogous to the well-known challenge of bullying and teasing in institutional environments -- to which little effective response is made, even when it gives rise to suicide
- aesthetics: the designs favoured by a culture, perhaps embodying features important to their culture, may be subject to criticism by comparison with those favoured by other cultures. To what degree is aesthetic criticism of Jewish artefacts to be construed as anti-semitic?
- criminal behaviour: this issue has been much debated with regard to black criminality (in the USA) and maghreb criminality (in Europe). Typically identifiable ethnic communities engage in an unfortunate process of reframing criminality into a defensive community issue without elaborating a focused mode of dialogue about the behaviour. This exacerbates problems of complicity and of inappropriate stigmatization of the community.
- socio-political issues: this focus is well-highlighted by criticism of the government of Ehud Olmert subsequent to the attack on Hezbollah in 2006. There has been extensive criticism by Israelis after the failure of the attack, presumably not to be defined as "anti-semitic". However most of the criticism by outsiders during the attack was labelled "anti-semitic".

Self-hating vs Self-loving Jews: The epithet "self-hating Jew" is applied, notably by Jews, against those that are in any way critical of Judaism and by extension, Israel and Zionism. One website (Self-Hating and/or Israel-Threatening List) claims to list 7000+ such Jews. One such is for example Rabbi Michael Lerner (Israel's Jewish Critics Aren't 'Self-Hating'), Los Angeles Times, 28 April, 2002.

The dimensions of dialogue in this area are a veritable minefield which merits sophisticated use of mapping techniques to clarify the modalities characteristic of each area. The argument from above is however that it would be fruitful for those subscribing to extremes stereotypes to clarify the guidelines for critical dialogue -- if only that no critical dialogue is admissible.

How should Jews make points against government Israeli policy without being stigmatized as self-hating Jews or being cowed into silence and complicity?
Mapping the terrain of hypersensitive dialogue

In a world acknowledged to be complex, it is to be regretted that so little effort is made to map out the nature of the terrain over which dialogue touching on sensitive issues takes place:

- What are the different kinds of terrain?
- How do they relate to each other?
- How can one move from one to the other, especially if some parts are separated by untraversable abysses?
- Are some more skilled in traversing certain kinds of terrain than others?

Complexity of dialogue terrain: It would be convenient if such terrain were to be understood as reasonably "flat". It is probable that it is more convoluted than most geographical terrain. And it is even more probable that its complexity can only hoped to be mapped multidimensionally -- in a form at best (if not only) comprehensible through interactive multi-media devices.

Provocatively it might be argued that the psycho-social dynamics to which humans have not found a sustainable solution -- as with the Middle East situation -- are likely to be more complex than problems to which solutions have been found. This is consistent with Ross Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety. It is therefore a useful provocation to note the description of one such complex solution and to recognize the dimensionality and language that may well be needed for resolution of the Middle East situation:

For L.G. Aldrovandi and F.A. Schaposnik (Quantum Mechanics in Non(Anti)Commutative Superspace, High Energy Physics - Theory, 4, 2006): We consider non(anti)commutative (NAC) deformations of d=1 N=2 superspace. We find that, in the chiral base, the deformation preserves only a half of the original supercharge algebra, as it usually happens in NAC field theories. We obtain in terms of a real supermultiplet a closed expression for a deformed Quantum Mechanics Lagrangian in which the original superpotential is smeared, similarly to what happens for the two dimensional deformed sigma model. Quite unexpectedly, we find that a second conserved charge satisfying the supersymmetry algebra can be constructed, so that finally the deformed theory has as many conserved supercharges as the undeformed one. The quantum behavior of these supercharges is analyzed.

Given the amount of "defence research" effort devoted by mathematicians to the precision-guided weaponry of destructive "dialogue", it is surprising that more effort is not allocated to identifying the viable pathways between different areas of a complex sustainable dialogue through which community can be built (And When the Bombing Stops? Territorial conflict as a challenge to mathematicians, 2000). The research skills are readily available (cf Dragan Milovanovic, Postmodern Criminology: mapping the terrain, Justice Quarterly, 1996). There is a case, for example, for recognizing how the relationships between some of the unacceptably disastrous areas of "dialogue" are well-mapped by the various "catastrophes" of catastrophe theory (cf Cognitive Feel for Cognitive Catastrophes: question conformity, 2006).

Insights from "anti-feminism": Given the more widespread familiarity with discourse concerning abuse in the form of sexual harassment and rape, the map of this terrain could offer methodological pointers to experiences associated with "anti-semitism" (including "non-anti-semitism" and "anti-anti-semitism"). The relationship has notably been explored by Eishiro Ito (Anti-Semitism/Anti-feminism in Giacomo Joyce, Journal of Policy Studies, 2006). But, as noted by Peter Zohrab (Sex, Lies and Feminism, 2002):

A central problem within feminist discourse has been our inability to either arrive at a consensus of opinion about what feminism is or accept definition(s) that could serve as points of unification. Without agreed upon definition(s), we lack a sound foundation on which to construct theory or engage in overall meaningful praxis

This raises the possibility that "anti-feminism", like "anti-semitism" may not be a single definable concept but rather a dynamic of concepts whose coherence may be multi-dimensional -- rather than as might be expected in any theory tending to focus on possibilities of simplistic remedial "road maps" over conventional terrain. Tools such as concept mapping may be fruitfully employed (cf Rebecca Campbell and Deborah A. Salem, Concept mapping as a feminist research method: examining the community response to rape. In: Ellen B. Kimmel and Mary Crawford, Innovations in Feminist Psychological Research, 2000; Marie-Nathalie Beaudoin Agency and Choice in the Face of Trauma: a narrative therapy map Journal of Systemic Therapies, 2005; Cheryl Tatano Beck Pentadic Cartography: Mapping Birth Trauma Narratives Qualitative Health Research, 2006)

Distinct from approaches such as that of Inger Skjeldsbaek (Sexual Violence and War: mapping out a complex relationship. European Journal of International Relations, 7, 2001), there is the possibility that the so-called "vicious cycles of violence", whether physical or structural, might be mappable onto complex mathematical objects. These could offer more integrative approaches to sustainable relationships between seemingly opposed positions -- rather than depending (yet again) on negotiating techniques of Getting to Yes (1981) or Getting Past No (1993) in the hope of simplistic "win-win" reconciliation. Such a dynamic context could offer more legitimacy to the various understandings of "anti-semitism" ("anti-feminism", etc) and the various critical perspectives on it that now sustain a complex dysfunctional system.

Conclusion

Challenge of language: The widespread debate on "anti-semitism" tends to obscure what amounts to semantic monopolisation of the descriptor "semitic" -- in terms of its geographic, demogaphic, ethnological, religious and ethnic significance, inclusive of the Arab world.

A complicating factor with challenging prefixes such as "anti-", "non-" and "un-" is that it is too readily assumed that they are unambiguously translated into other languages and that the distinctions between their connotations is preserved. This is not the case as
Dialogue about the implications of criticism, reflected in preoccupation with "anti-semitism", typically fails to introduce the cultural and connotative implications characteristic of differences between languages. What may be termed "anti-semitism" in one language may have far more -- or far less -- pejorative connotations in another language or culture. As noted above, the prefix may not be unambiguously translatable and may carry quite different meanings. An interesting example is the distinctive use of terms in Australian English -- like "bastard" -- that could possibly be considered to be offensive in an inoffensive or even affectionate way [more]. Such a term could be a mortal insult in other cultures. 

**Conflation:** In clarifying more fruitful approaches to dialogue, it is appropriate to recognize that many of the seemingly isolated issues noted above tend to be conflated in ways that contribute to confusion. In such a context, the challenge for all is to ensure that a label such as "anti-semitism" is not used as a conceptual shield to block out any critical feedback whatsoever -- possibly as a means by some to avoid dealing appropriately with issues of concern (such as the use of cluster bombs in southern Lebanon, for example). The concern with groups who define themselves as "chosen" is to ensure that they do not arbitrarily set the rules that preclude critical dialogue. They can however usefully contribute to the articulation of the guidelines for such feedback to avoid it being labelled unfruitfully as "anti-

The conflation arises in part because the isomorphic relation between forms of chosenness is complicated by an experiential dimension -- perhaps best described by Kathleen Forsythe (Isophor: poiesis of experience, 1987) with the term isophor -- isomorphisms experienced in the use of language. Isophors are distinct from metaphors in that they are experienced directly. With the isophor there is no separation between thought and action, between feeling and experience. The experience itself is evoked through the relation. She suggests that the "experience" of one thing in terms of another, the isophor, is the means by which one domain is mapped onto another and that consciousness of this meta-action, when we observed, lies at the heart of cognition. Without such consciousness, issues of identity and discrimination are confused.

With respect to conflation in relation to group identity, as argued by Kimberlé Crenshaw Williams (Mapping the Margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color, 1994):

> The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite -- that it frequently conflates or ignores intra group differences. In the context of violence against women, this elision of difference is problematic, fundamentally because the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class. Moreover, ignoring differences within groups frequently contributes to tension among groups, another problem of identity politics that frustrates efforts to politicize violence against women.

In terms of critical dialogue, should lengthy papal denial of the Earth's movement around the Sun be compared with current denial of the Holocaust and of the Armenian massacre -- since all have been the subject of legal proceedings? What then of false accusations or denials regarding weapons of mass destruction, treatment of detainees or climate change -- which have not yet been the subject of such proceedings?

**Recognizing more complex patterns:** Every group of "chosen" people engenders its "Palestinians" and "Hizbollah" constrained in consequence to disruptive protest by unconventional and unexpected means -- necessarily to be framed as unreasonable and unacceptable. The case of the Israelis, and by extension the Jews, is therefore not unique. The dysfunctional pattern is widespread and will continue to undermine the emergence of more fruitful patterns -- until reframed by richer modes of understanding (cf Spontaneous Initiation of Armageddon -- a heartfelt response to systemic negligence, 2004).

Rather than consider the critical dialogue between worldview as a simple binary interaction in which one party should necessarily "win", there is a case for exploring more complex patterns of interaction -- even beyond "win-win" expectations. Whether or not this is realistic in practice, it could be considered more instructive than the use of cluster bombs and rockets by supposedly intelligent people. It could be hypothesized that the pattern of interaction is at least one degree more complex than the participants are as yet capable of naming and communicating -- other than in terms of "cycles of violence". It may indeed be mappable as a complex mathematical object incorporating temporal dimensions, distinctive perspectives, different capacities in response to complexity, different sensitivities, and different agendas.

**Embodying the challenge of chosenness:** The approach taken above highlights the extent to which Israel effectively embodies the challenges engendered by the patterns of all forms of "chosenness" -- of which the particular conditions associated with the continuing focus on "anti-semitism" are but a single case. In this sense Israel is effectively a "scapegoat" for collective human failure to acknowledge the generic dysfunctionality associated with chosenness.

It might even be said that the founding myths of Israel are in many ways analogous to those of any other sense of chosenness, whether religious, academic, political or otherwise. Each such group has its "promised land" and aspires to build its new "Jerusalem" -- as in the case of the aspiration of physicists with respect to a "Theory of Everything".

**Transformation of discriminatory argument:** In this light, the controversial literature associated with Holocaust denial, notably that disseminated by the revisionist Institute for Historical Review, can be fruitfully explored in terms of its generic implications for any particular worldview -- including that of "historical revisionism" itself. As an example, the well-argued but controversial study of Paul Grubach (A Critique of the Charge of Anti-Semitism: the moral and political legitimacy of criticizing Jewry. The Journal for Historical Review, 1988) is explicitly addressed only to those who (mistakenly) harbour the following beliefs:

- Criticism of the Jewish people, Jewish culture and behavior, etc., is synonymous with immoral racism;
- At best this criticism is only to be tolerated due to [US] First Amendment protection of free speech, or, at worst, to be censored and censored.
Although not his intention at all, Grubach's study can far more fruitfully be read as addressed (more generally) to any who consider criticism of their own preferred worldview as inappropriate ("evil", "unreasonable", etc), in ways explored above. The same may be said of his conclusions, given here with appropriate substitutions to ensure that the wording is relevant to any preferred worldview:

1. X is an established social and political power in the [world]. In concurrence with the democratic principles of our society, it is morally and politically correct to offer criticism of X and its politico-cultural power.
2. The potency of the charge of anti-X -- its ability to silence critics of X -- derives not from the force of reason, but rather, from the force of an irrational, deeply ingrained, cultural convention specifically, the unthinking association of a sense of [evil] with criticism of the X.
3. The charge of anti-X is a... sword and shield of X: [As a sword] it is an ad hominem attack on any critic of X. By focusing on the critic's character, it induces people to reject his assertions on X behavior out of hand, without fair examination... [As a shield] the charge serves as a psychological defense mechanism whereby X people can insulate themselves from criticism which is too painful to confront consciously. In a political and sociological sense, the charge of anti-X is a powerful weapon of the X cultural and political establishment, used in an undemocratic manner to silence its opponents and to enable that establishment to operate with impunity. Thus, the accusation of anti-X is an essential tool of X power and influence.
4. In our society almost every form of social and political power has its share of critics... If all forms of social and political influence have their tolerated, even respected critics, then let the critic of X influence speak openly. By the canons of our free society, even X should ultimately benefit from an open discussion of the power of X in politics, economics, and culture in [the world]

**Dysfunctionality of singular worldviews**: This reframing of "anti-X" may be usefully taken further through use of the argument of Rabbi Joseph Telushkin (Jewish Literacy: the most important things to know about the Jewish religion, its people, and its history, 1991) with respect to whether Judaism does in fact believe that chosenness endows Jews with special rights in the way racist ideologies endow those born into the "right race"? He cites the key verse in the Bible on the subject of chosenness as indicative of the precise opposite: "You alone have I singled out of all the families of the earth. That is why I call you to account for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2) [more].

In the light of the arguments above, regarding the dysfunctionality common to worldviews that see their perspective as uniquely "singled out" and reserved for the chosen, there is a case for recognizing the "iniquities" consequent upon adopting such a mindset -- as evident in the perpetuation of "cycles of violence".

**Possibilities**: Other approaches to comprehending critical dialogue between worldviews could be usefully inspired, in response to other preferences, by:

- games that simulate such exchanges, sensitivities and misunderstandings in order to offer a sense of the "space" in which the "cycles of violence" emerge
- use of virtual personalities (based on artificial intelligence) to experiment with the dimensions of critical dialogue
- use of sets of fables from different cultures to provide a sense of the different patterns and conditions of critical and asymmetric dialogue (cf Proportionate Response in the Eye of the Beholder Educational fables for faith-based global governance, 2006)

Such techniques may help to reframe critical dialogue so that more can be expressed through indirectness and context rather than in binary confrontational modes and their sustaining mindsets (cf Samuel P Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, 1993) -- an archetypal Ragnarök, or Götterdämmerung, calling to be transcended.

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It is difficult to be sat on all day, every day, by some other creature, without forming an opinion about them. On the other hand, it is perfectly possible to sit all day, every day, on top of another creature and not have the slightest thought about them whatsoever. (Douglas Adams, 1987)

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