



laetus in praesens

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Inspiration, Conspiracy, Transpiration, Expiration Towards a universal model of conspiracy theories

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Introduction

Reference is widely made to the problematic existence of conspiracy theories, variously understood as deriving from fake news (*Varieties of Fake News and Misrepresentation*, 2019). In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns are raised regarding the epidemic of misinformation (Bill Chappell, *U.N. Chief Targets 'Dangerous Epidemic of Misinformation' on Coronavirus*, NPR, 14 April 2020).

Conspiracy theories are now held to be especially influential with respect to the US 2020 presidential election (Charlotte Alter, *How Conspiracy Theories Are Shaping the 2020 Election -- and shaking the foundation of American democracy*, Time, 10 September 2020; S. Jonathon O'Donnell, *Demons of the Deep State: how evangelicals and conspiracy theories combine in Trump's America*, The Conversation, 14 September 2020; Thomas Milan Konda, *How Did Conspiracy Theories Come to Dominate American Culture?* Literary Hub, 18 April 2019).

The role of such theories is especially evident in relation to the coronavirus as succinctly stated by Gregory Hood (*Coronavirus and the Greatest Conspiracy Theory of All*, American Renaissance, 4 May 2020): *There are two contradictory media messages about the virus: First, we don't know much about it. Second, we cannot let certain people talk about it.* The trend is exemplified by the publicity given to the banning by Facebook of the [QAnon](#) social media movement -- claimed to be a far-right conspiracy theory that alleges that a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles is running a global child sex-trafficking ring and plotting against President Donald Trump, who is battling against the cabal.

In the same period, great emphasis is placed on the quest for inspiration and sources of insight to address the difficulties of the times. However those finding inspiration from one source are readily seen from other perspectives as entangled in a form of conspiracy which their involvement serves actively to cultivate. In this context of multiple sources of inspiration, variously appreciated and deprecated, alternative perspectives may well be labelled in terms of conspiracy theories. One person's inspiration may indeed be another person's conspiracy.

The prevalent phenomenon is the process of blaming those who fail to share an inspiration -- possibly then understood as a failure to "share a dream". For those identified with the dream, however, associating with others who share it in a hostile environment may well be appreciated as a form of conspiracy -- a secret shared appreciatively with the complicit.

Reference is indeed made to the [blame-game](#) and those indulging in it. Emphasis has been given to the tragic erosion of mutual trust, with the suspicions which the absence of confidence engenders. There is a sense in which all are however embroiled in different aspects of this dynamic. Each could be said to feel a sense of despair at the conspiracies which undermine an inspiration regarding a way to move forward -- if only those conspiring to prevent this could be bypassed, or even eradicated. There is a paradoxical unrealistic naivety to the assumption that if only everyone would believe in "my dream" then all would be well.

Part of the difficulty would seem to be the lack of insight into how these phenomena can be more fruitfully understood, to enable a means of dissociating from the influence they exert -- whilst appreciating whatever is held to be an inspiration. Fruitful discourse on such

matters is itself increasingly difficult to sustain (if not impossible), given their divisive effects on viable interaction.

This problematic condition encourages "doom-mongering" and the anticipation of civilizational collapse -- despite the strenuous efforts of those engaged in "hope-mongering". The dramatic depredations of the environment, and the disasters these may enable, only reinforce the uncertainties regarding the dynamic between conspiracy and inspiration as variously experienced.

The argument here explores the perspective offered by the strange association between inspiration and conspiracy -- potentially extended to expiration via transpiration. Curiously these share a common etymological root which may offer clues to a means of transcending the dynamic in which people are embroiled. Why indeed should they share an association with "spire" and "spiral"?

More curious is the extent to which specific reference is made to distinct forms of spiral descriptive of aspects of experience at this time -- "spiral of silence", "spiral of depression", and "death spiral" -- each subject to interpretation in psychological, economic and environmental terms (as discussed [separately](#)). Much less is however said about any "upward spiral" -- a "spiral of hope", a "spiral of inspiration", or a "spiral of creativity" -- with the ironic exception of an "inflationary spiral".

Ironically, in a period challenged by climate change, the most obviously familiar clue in this respect is provided by the weather -- with its shifting pattern of [cyclones](#) and [anti-cyclones](#) visualized daily on meteorological broadcasts. These are readily recognized as being of spiral form, variously interacting with one another as they emerge and disappear -- drifting over the globe. They are readily adapted as metaphors to describe social, political and economic phenomena, as discussed separately (*Psychosocial Learnings from the Spiral Form of Hurricanes*, 2017)..

Less familiar to some, but widely presented in dramatic science documentaries, is the [spiral form of many galaxies](#) in the universe -- in one of which, the Milky Way, that of the Earth is embedded (*List of spiral galaxies*, *Wikipedia*). There are of course many somewhat presumptuous references to "universal" as a framework for addressing the challenges of a global civilization (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, *Universal Basic Income*, *Universal Law*). There is therefore a case for exploring whether the "universal" nature of human society calls for recognition of any spiral form in the dynamics of disparate collective initiatives in problematic relation to each other.

On a smaller scale, it is appropriate to recognize the capacity of gliders and many species of bird to use the updraft of spiralling [thermals](#) to enable them to fly long distances. In a period of "heated" discourse, have some individuals and groups acquired an analogous skill in relation to "thermals" potentially experienced (or labelled) as dangerous by others? Can a spiralling source of inspiration and hope -- perhaps experienced by those identifying with it -- enable such facility?

There is some irony to any failure in this respect, given the extent to which the body politic is explicitly recognized as having a "right wing" and a "left wing" -- although use of the metaphor clearly does not extend to much understanding of the ability to "fly", especially as may be required for appropriate global governance.

Varieties of conspiracy theory -- identifying the blameworthy?

As might be expected, a number of efforts have been made to document the variety of conspiracies, or those of a particular type:

- Wikipedia: [List of conspiracy theories](#).
- Conspiracies.net: [Conspiracy Theory Index: list of all conspiracy theories](#) (also offering a checklist of conspiracy websites).
- Truth Control: [Top 100 Conspiracy Theories of All Time](#)

According to *Wikipedia*, There are many unproven conspiracy theories of varying degrees of popularity, frequently related to but not limited to clandestine government plans, elaborate murder plots, suppression of secret technology and knowledge, and other supposed schemes behind certain political, cultural, and historical events. Some are noted as having been proven to be true (Lauren Cahn, *12 Conspiracy Theories That Actually Turned Out to Be True*, *Reader's Digest*, March 2020). Related to such listings are those elaborating what are held to be conspiracies (*The Top 40 Conspiracy Theorists*, *Exmptore*, 3 July 2020).

In identifying conspiracy theories an obvious issue is what to include or exclude for whatever reason, and how they might best be clustered. The following is an adaptation and selective presentation of the clustered list of *Wikipedia*:

- **Aviation:** Black helicopters; Airline disasters; Chemtrails
- **Business and industry:** Price fixing, Bid rigging and Market allocation schemes
- **Science and technology:** Global warming; Weather and earthquake control projects; Flat Earth; Technology suppression; Weaponry; Targeted Individuals; False history
- **Ethnicity, race and religion:** Antisemitism; Anti-Catholicism; Anti-Islamic; Racism
- **Economics and society:** New World Order; Freemasonry
- **Deaths and disappearances**
- **Espionage**
- **Extraterrestrials and UFOs**
- **Space exploration**
- **Sports**
- **Government, politics and conflict:** Illuminati; False flag operations; 9/11; Deep state; Electoral fraud
- **Medicine:** Alternative therapy suppression; Artificial diseases; Fluoridation; Vaccination; COVID-19 pandemic
- **Climate change** Global warming

Recognized and clustered otherwise are:

- Regional conspiracies:
 - [Conspiracy theories in the Arab world](#) (*Wikipedia*)
 - [Conspiracy theories in Asia](#) (*Wikipedia*)
 - [35 of the most popular conspiracy theories in the US](#) (*Insider*, 5 May 2020)
 - [10 Conspiracy Theories About The European Union](#) (*Listverse*, 12 January 2020)
- [List of political conspiracies](#), as presented by *Wikipedia* and defined as referring to a group of people united in the goal of

damaging, usurping, or overthrowing an established political power. Typically, the final goal is to gain power through a revolutionary coup d'état or through assassination. A conspiracy can also be used for infiltration of the governing system.

- References to alternative ideologies and modes of action as constituting a conspiracy:

- Political ideologies
 - Communist conspiracy
 - Fascist conspiracy
 - Right-wing conspiracy
 - Left-wing conspiracy
 - Socialist conspiracy
 - Anarchist conspiracy
 - Pacifist conspiracy
 - Radical conspiracy
 - Terrorist conspiracy
- Economic / Technocratic
 - Capitalist conspiracy
 - Technocratic conspiracy
 - Military-industrial conspiracy
 - (Neo)-Luddite conspiracy
- Ethnic, gender and race-related
 - White-supremacist conspiracy
 - Black power conspiracy
 - Male conspiracy
 - Feminist conspiracy
 - Homosexual conspiracy
- Religious
 - Catholic conspiracy;
 - Fundamentalist conspiracy
 - Islamic conspiracy
 - Animist conspiracy
 - Zionist conspiracy
 - [Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory](#)
 - Satanic conspiracy
 - Pagan conspiracy

- Especially framed as "real", are the conspiracies in the articulation by Jeremy Lent (*The Five Real Conspiracies You Need to Know About*, *Patterns of Meaning*, 1 October 2020):

- Conspiracy to turn the world into a giant marketplace for the benefit of the wealthy elite
- Conspiracy by transnational corporations to turn billions of people into addicts
- Conspiracy to plunder the Global South for the benefit of the Global North
- Conspiracy to hide the effects of climate breakdown for corporate profit
- Conspiracy to grow the global economy indefinitely, while killing most of life on Earth and risking the collapse of civilization.

Missing is a general framework in which the "ecosystem" of conspiracies can be appropriately acknowledged -- potentially because any attempt to do so could even be recognized as instigated by a conspiracy. The question can be addressed otherwise in terms of "otherness" or "alterity" and the suspicions it naturally arouses as a potential threat. Alleviating conspiracies could then be framed in terms of "anti-otherness", as discussed separately (*Elaborating a Declaration on Combating Anti-otherness -- including anti-science, anti-spiritual, anti-women, anti-gay, anti-socialism, anti-animal, and anti-negativity*, 2018).

Other possibilities include recognition of the variety of phenomena which constitute:

- [cognitive biases](#) -- recognizing that one person's bias may well be another person's preference (*Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases*, 1993)
- [fake news](#) -- offering the challenge that a piece of fake news may be an inspiration to some, whilst framed as engendering conspiracy by another, as separately explored (*Varieties of Fake News and Misrepresentation: when are deception, pretence and cover-up acceptable?* 2019). Much advertising, with its reliance on puffery, exemplifies the problem.
- [logical fallacies](#) -- recognizing that these (together with spurious arguments and claims) may feature as common currency in political discourse, nourishing perceptions of conspiracy
- [cover-ups](#) -- typically recognized as characteristic of conspiracy

Recognition of prospiracy or inspiracy theory

As implied above, there is an obvious tendency to frame the opponents of any strategy as motivated and driven by a "hidden agenda", readily labelled as a conspiracy. Reference to "conspiracy" necessarily implies a secret or undeclared agenda, potentially only known to a few -- readily interpreted as inspired by false belief, even one to be recognized as fundamentally "evil" (whatever that is held to mean).

Potentially more intriguing is any understanding of a hidden intent which is held to be beneficial. This may indeed be termed, perhaps misleadingly as a "conspiracy", as with the articulation of [Marilyn Ferguson](#) (*The Aquarian Conspiracy: personal and social transformation in our time*, 1980), or that promoted by Amnesty International (*A Conspiracy of Hope*, 1986).

In contrast with the conspiracies held to be associated with doom-mongering, these could be seen as complemented by those associated with "hope-mongering" -- potentially exemplified by the recent exhortation of a report to the Club of Rome (Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker and Anders Wijkman, *Come On!: Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet*, Springer; 2018) or other optimistic presentations by such as Thomas Homer-Dixon (*Commanding Hope: the power we have to renew a world in peril*, 2020).

Less evident is when and how an inspiration for the few may indeed be held to be a conspiracy by the many, as with the early Christians (in the Roman Empire), or freedom-fighters faced with a dominant regime (as variously evident in the history of colonialism).

Curiously the missing complementary terms currently only take the form of little-known neologisms, as with current proposals and usage for:

- **prospiracy**: Namely the opposite of a conspiracy -- as it is [regularly reconed to be](#) in quest of an antonym. Originally proposed to indicate a secret plan by a group of people to do something good for another person or group of people (Stuart Hansman, *Guilty Parties*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 March 1989). It has been proposed as the name for massive multiplayer online game. Used experimentally in an exploration of debunking conspiracy theories and true beliefs (Scott Alexander, *Prospiracy Theories*, *Slate Star Codex*, 4 March 2019). For some Christians the term is readily associated with [prosperity theology](#).

- **inspiracy**: Currently used for a "[festival of imagination and hope](#)", and adopted by a proprietary game design group. Defined in urban jargon as the publication of a potential controversy by a lover in order to inspire their other half into action.

The distinction between prospiracy and conspiracy has been insightfully explored in one blog (Eric S. Raymond, [Conspiracy and Prospiracy](#), *Armed and Dangerous*, 14 November 2002):

What distinguishes prospiracies from conspiracies is that the members don't necessarily know they are members, nor are they fully conscious of what binds them together. Prospiracies are not created through oaths sworn by guttering torchlight, but by shared ideology or institutional culture. In many cases, members accept the prospiracy's goals and values without thinking through their consequences as fully as they might if the process of joining were formal and initiatory.

What makes a prospiracy like a conspiracy and distinguishes it from a mere subcultural group? The presence of a "secret doctrine" or shared goals which its core members admit among themselves but not to perceived outsiders; commonly, a goal which is stronger than the publicly declared purpose of the group, or irrelevant to that declared purpose but associated with it in some contingent (usually historical) way.

On the other hand, a prospiracy is *unlike* a conspiracy in that it lacks well-defined lines of authority. Its leaders wield influence over the other members, but seldom actual power. It also lacks a clear-cut distinction between "ins" and "outs".

A later reflection explores a somewhat different angle ([Prospiracy Theory](#), *Skip's Testiong Range*, 21 February, 2015):

Another thing about conspiracies: we always seem to assume that they're nefarious, up to no good, plotting to control or torment or exploit, and probably quite a few of them are. But couldn't there also be benevolent conspiracies? I don't mean groups that justify terrible means by lofty ends, like promoting the advancement of humanity by culling the population, or enforcing some ideal system of utopian governance that only they understand. No, I'm thinking shadowy groups of crafty and clever individuals who lurk around, unnoticed, finding opportunities to secretly do nice stuff for other people.

Let's not even call such a thing a conspiracy. Let's call it a *prospiracy*. And let's call the participants *delightists* – the opposite of terrorists. These would be folks who, in Anne Herbert's marvelous phrase, go around practicing "random kindness and acts of senseless beauty." Such folks might also, unlike their conspiratorial counterparts, eschew any ambition for trying to control or orchestrate events, but instead would recognize the utterly illusory nature of such attempts, and become experts at body-surfing the waves of change.

Further clarification is offered in another blog ([Prospiracy](#), *Enriching the English Dictionary*, 8 August 2013):

A public plan or agreement that often excludes one or more individuals. Some people think of a hypothetical scenario where everyone in the world is a part of a conspiracy to trick them somehow. This thought is incorrect as the majority of the population that interact with the person is a part of the "conspiracy" it would technically be a prospiracy. The belief in said scenario would make someone a prospiracy theorist.

For Daniel Pinchbeck ([Conspiranoia versus Prospiracy](#), *Exposing the Truth*, 16 July 2013::

Where conspiracies are secret and nefarious, prospiracies are transparent and open. They are efforts to transform society in a direction that serves the greater good. According to this narrative, we are part of a vast ancient prospiracy to awaken humanity to its spiritual greatness and create a movement of solidarity that brings about a next age of conscious evolution. When we study the potentially ravaging effects of accelerating climate change and peak oil, what we need to do now is get creative by developing new social, political, and economic arrangements that can take over as the empire of control continues its slow-motion breakdown and collapse.

Varieties of inspiracy theory – identifying the praiseworthy?

For the purpose of this argument preference is given to "inspiracy" over "prospiracy", despite the relatively limited ranges of reference to it. It has the advantage of being more meaningfully related to "inspiration" in contrast to "prospiration" (with its questionable relation to prosperity theology). Inspiracy theory would then be indicative of those seeking "behind the scenes" in some manner to transform society in a direction that serves the greater good -- irrespective of whether their understanding is appreciated by others.

Obvious examples, variously providing a source of inspiration to some, might then include:

- Beliefs and practices associated with various cultures and traditions held to evoke or engender beneficial results. These may be readily scorned and deprecated by sceptics as mere superstition, or as based on pseudo-sciences -- irrespective of the inspiration they offer.
- Frameworks offered by those upheld as especially insightful and charismatic (whether recognized as "gurus" in the traditional sense, or treated as such), possibly engendering "disciples" and communities -- readily labelled by outsider as cults. This obviously extends to those esteemed most insightful in any discipline. Unfortunately few such sources of inspiration are renowned for their capacity to cultivate and sustain fruitful relationships with their peers of other disciplines
- Secretive elites who, whatever their acclaimed aims and achievements, are readily framed as conspiracies, as with Freemasonry,

the Rosicrucians, the Club of Rome, the [Club of Madrid](#), and the [Bohemian Club](#)

- [Masters of the Ancient Wisdom](#) and the [White Brotherhood](#), whose existence is variously inferred. These have most notably been the early preoccupation of theosophy and associated movements with [initiates of the highest order](#) ([John G. Bennett, *The Masters of Wisdom*](#), Turnstone, 1977). Their existence is acknowledged in various forms in different spiritual traditions. A major difficulty at this time is their questionable conflation with the [Illuminati](#) who feature so prominently in some conspiracy theories, although the relation may be framed in terms of an archetypal battle behind the scenes
- [Extraterrestrials](#) variously believed to be "guiding humanity". Again the possibility that any such ETs may be less than benign has featured extensively in science fiction.
- Supernatural entities, typically framed as [angels](#), according to the different traditions of angelology -- and including belief in "[spirit guides](#)". Unfortunately, these too are held to have their demonic counterparts.

Associated with the inspiration which may be offered by such secretive entities is the somewhat less controversial belief in forms of self-improvement leading to a sense of rebirth of various kinds, most notably as a feature of religious conversion and associated beliefs (*Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being "born again"*, 2004). The beliefs and practices of each may however be framed as highly dangerous and misleading by others. Even less controversial, inspired by the birth metaphor, are the frequently articulated references to an anticipated Renaissance of civilization (David Lorimer, *Towards a New Renaissance, The World Community for Christian Meditation*, 7 July 2020)

Inspiration may be offered by recognition of the emergence of a creative minority, understood as active in renewing human society in each of its cycles. One form has been recognized in terms of "[cultural creatives](#)" (Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson, *The Cultural Creatives: how 50 million people are changing the world*, 2000). This understanding may be reframed to include innovation as specifically promoted in technological development -- epitomised by the inspiration offered by the exploration of outer space.

Curiously the term "angel" has been borrowed as indicative of "[angel investors](#)" providing financial or other forms of support, whether covertly or overtly, to enable creativity and social change. Ironically again, it could be said that these are complemented by supporters of regressive initiatives readily framed as "demonic" if not as "demons".

The essentially elusive nature of inspiration is especially evident in religious belief -- irrespective of the degree to which this may be challenged by the natural sciences. This frames a difficulty for those who focus their belief on the latter, as to whether their belief acquires the form of an unquestionable religion, sustained by practices which are beyond criticism. This is most obvious in the case of [scientism](#). Clarification of such matters in a technocratic context is much challenged by the experience of the so-called [reality distortion field](#) engendered by some highly charismatic entrepreneurs.

Potentially far less controversial as a source of inspiration are those engaged in social change and reform, most notably those recognized in terms of criteria such as the [Right Livelihood Award](#). or -- far more contraversially -- the Nobel Peace Prize.

Tolerance and freedom of opinion: the unrealistic nature of human rights

As noted above, the question here regards the collective lack of acceptance of the ecosystem of conspiracies and inspiracies. The challenge has of course long been specifically framed in terms of the freedom of opinion and tolerance articulated in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. This clearly has little effective traction, especially in the light of the abuses anticipated in its final article:

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.

However the inspiration framed by the understanding of freedom and tolerance in that declaration is itself variously challenged by:

- other declarations reframing and refining its intentions:
 - [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (1953)
 - [American Convention on Human Rights](#) (1978)
 - [Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights](#) (1981) of the Islamic Council
 - [Arab Charter on Human Rights](#) (2008) of the Arab League
 - [ASEAN Human Rights Declaration](#) (2012)
- the narrow interpretation of "human rights", and its failure to extend to other manifestations of humanity, as explored separately (*Universal Declaration of the Rights of Human Organization: an experimental extension of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1971)
- various initiatives to recognize that "rights" imply responsibilities:
 - [Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities](#), proposed by the [InterAction Council](#) in 1997 (as amended in 1998) and evoking a UN-approved [Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#) (53/144, 9 December 1998).
 - [Universal Declaration of Responsibilities of Human Intercourse: a draft proposal](#) (2007)
 - [Universal Declaration of Patent Responsibilities: a draft proposal](#) (2007)
 - [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) adopted as a non-legally-binding resolution passed by the United Nations in 2007.
- the questionable restriction to "human beings", deliberately excluding the "rights" which might be appropriately honoured with

respect to other forms of life -- and potentially to other inhabitants of the "universe" (despite the desperate quest for life elsewhere). Efforts in that respect have included:

- [Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth](#), drafted as one of the outcomes of the Cochabamba World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (2010)
- [Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare](#) as a proposed inter-governmental agreement to recognise that animals are sentient, to prevent cruelty and reduce suffering, and to promote standards on the welfare of animals such as farm animals, companion animals, animals in scientific research, draught animals, wildlife and animals in recreation.
- [Universal Declaration of Animal Rights](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Plant Rights](#) (2004), as described by Siddharth Singh ([Plant Rights: A Neglected Regime](#), *Modern Diplomacy*, 17 June 2020)

Debate continues as to whether and how the rights and responsibilities of robots and artificial intelligence are to be recognized, as noted by [Wikipedia](#) ([Robot rights](#); [Laws of robotics](#))

- the recognition of significance variously accorded to other features of the natural world, as a source of inspiration (implying a right to experience them), typically in the form of:
 - [sacred mountains](#): (see [List of mountains](#) so recognized; F. Bernbaum, . *Sacred mountains of the world*. Sierra Club, , 1997)
 - [sacred rivers](#): (Meredith Carey, [Sacred Rivers Around the World](#), *Conde Nast Traveller*, 2018)
 - [sacred lakes](#)
 - [sacred valleys](#)
 - [sacred landscapes](#), most obviously in terms of the consideration given to [songlines](#) and [sacred rocks](#) by some planning authorities
 - [sacred forests](#) and [sacred groves](#)
 - [sacred waterfalls](#)
 - [sacred springs](#)

The ability to experience the inspiration associated with these goes to the heart of concerns about the [human disconnect from nature](#), and currently from star light ([Unadulterated star light as a human right](#), 2019). The issue is taking new form through the framing of exploitation of outer space, notably the Moon. As with colonial exploitation of the past this is viewed as [terra nullius](#) -- irrespective of the potential claims of any form of life to be found there. As an extreme example, there is no constraint on recolouring the Moon to red in the course of mining activity.

Psychosocial diversity: a neglected complement of biodiversity

Recognizing the diverse; There is necessarily a degree of acknowledgement of social diversity, notably in the workplace (Guy Tchibozo (Ed.), [Cultural and Social Diversity and the Transition from Education to Work](#), 2013). As noted by Troy Duster ([Social Diversity in Humans: Implications and Hidden Consequences for Biological Research](#), *Cold Spring Harbor Perspectives in Biology*, 6, 2014, 5):

Humans are both similar and diverse in such a vast number of dimensions that for human geneticists and social scientists to decide which of these dimensions is a worthy focus of empirical investigation is a formidable challenge....For social scientists, the matter of what constitutes the relevant borders of a population is equally complex.... Although race and caste are categories deployed in both human genetics and social science, the social meaning of race and caste as pathways to employment, health, or education demonstrably overwhelms the analytic and explanatory power of genetic markers of difference between human aggregates.

Social diversity is usefully clarified by Dania Santana, namely as:

A successful community in which individuals of different race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, language, geographical origin, gender and/or sexual orientation bring their different knowledge, background, experience and interest for the benefit of their diverse community. As they all contribute to the success of the community, individuals in a healthy diverse society practice daily understanding and respect of the different ideas, viewpoints and unique perspectives of those who are somewhat different from them, as they recognize that those individuals share and are actively working towards achieving many common goals for the benefit of the community as a whole. With countries becoming more diverse, the ideas and understanding of social diversity are evolving and expanding due to the access we now have to interact through digital media with people all over the world. ([What Is Diversity And How I Define It In The Social Context](#), *Embracing Diversity*)

Social diversity can be considered from a psychological perspective, as with the focus on intersubjectivity by John B. Rijsman ([Social Diversity: a social psychological analysis and some implications for groups and organizations](#), *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 6, 1997, 2). Related recognition is accorded to [cultural diversity](#) and [biocultural diversity](#).

Commonality? The degree of commonality is however disputed:

Many evolutionary psychologists have asserted that there is a panhuman nature, a species typical psychological structure that is invariant across human populations. Although many social scientists dispute the basic assumptions of evolutionary psychology, they seem widely to agree with this hypothesis. Psychological differences among human populations (demes, ethnic groups,

ances) are almost always attributed to cultural and sociological forces in the relevant literatures. However, there are strong reasons to suspect that the hypothesis of a panhuman nature is incorrect. (Bo Winegard, et al, *Human Biological and Psychological Diversity, Evolutionary Psychological Science*, 3, 2017):

Especially challenging with respect to any sense of "common humanity" is how the subtleties of commonality and unity are to be comprehended -- beyond simplistic affirmations in that regard, as argued separately (*Comprehension of Unity as a Paradoxical Dynamic: metaphors reframing problematic engagement with otherness*, 2019). The argument is especially relevant given the widespread appeals for unity and consensus -- over decades -- and their potential naivety in the highly divided world of the present times. It can even be argued that belief in the possibility of viable consensus is itself problematic (*The Consensus Delusion: mysterious attractor undermining global civilization as currently imagined*, 2011).

In contrast with the research investment in identifying the elements of biodiversity (most notably the range of species currently threatened with extinction), it is questionable whether this can be similarly recognized with respect to the elements of psychosocial diversity and their dynamics, as exemplified by:

- **religions:** There are an estimated 10,000 distinct religions worldwide -- each clearly meriting recognition as a source of inspiration, despite efforts by dominant religions to suppress those in a minority, typically in support of political agendas. The religions with smaller numbers of adherents have long been framed as a challenge to the spiritual missions of the most dominant religions. These readily frame minority religions as a nexus of conspiracy.
- **languages:** The SIL International's *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* lists over 7,100 spoken and signed languages. Whilst these may well be a source of inspiration, it is appropriate to recall the religious and colonial policies which have contributed to the suppression of languages (*Lists of extinct languages; Lists of endangered languages; and List of revived languages*). Any process of repression is typically associated with recognition that the threatened language could be seen as enabling conspiracy among those inspired to speak it, rather than the official language (*List of official languages*).
- **disciplines:** As a mode of knowing, in contrast to the range of topics pursued, each mode is appropriately understood as a particular inspiration to its practitioners. The information sciences typically conflate a discipline with a range of topics making it difficult to estimate the number of distinctive modes of "disciplined" knowing. One exercise to this end, a section in an early edition of the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* (1976), recorded the existence of 1845, variously interrelated (*Intellectual Disciplines and Sciences: cross-referenced to world problems*, 1976).
- **values:** Potentially to a far higher degree than religions, languages or disciplines, particular human values can be understood as a special source of inspiration. As with disciplines, and despite frequent reference to "values", it remains a challenge to determine just how many such sources of inspiration frame the recognition of problems and the strategies by which they can be addressed. A systematic approach to this challenge features as Human values and wisdom, one of the databases of the online *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*. That exercise specifically addressed the ambiguity between values deemed "constructive" (1987) and those deemed "destructive" (1992), through clustering them in "value polarities" (230) (*Human Values Project: Explanatory Comments*).
- **concepts and models:** Arguably there is a case for recognizing how models constitute a source of inspiration with the expectation of the possibility of identifying comprehensive listings of them. If available, these tend to have a highly specialized focus. In contrast to "subjects", a case can be made for identification of "concepts" as a source of inspiration (*Toward a Concept Inventory: suggestions for a computerised procedure*, 1973; *Encyclopedia of Conceptual Insights from the World's Cultures: proposal to UNESCO in relation to the Decade on Cultural Development*, 1988)

If acknowledged, how are the dynamics between such constructs to be understood in any way as constituting a coherent psychosocial ecosystem -- by analogy with that of the natural environment? Do problems and strategies each become a focus for both inspiration and conspiracy?

Recognizing the "abnormal"? Perhaps appropriately, explicit recognition of "psychosocial diversity" has highlighted the need to recognize those framed as not conforming to social norms, as in the *Declaration of Lima of the Latin American Network of Psychosocial Diversity* (2018)

We are a historically discriminated collective composed of users, ex-users and survivors of psychiatry, mad people, people with psychosocial disabilities, among other identities of psychosocial diversity. We live common experiences in which we face torture, deprivation of liberty, isolation, trauma, violence, stigmatization, exclusion and violation of our rights.

Such recognition merits extension to those considered problematically "radical" -- beyond the esteem in which "extremists" and the radically innovative may be held, if only by history. This dimension can be variously explored:

- *Radical Innovators Beware -- in the arts, sciences and philosophy: terrifying implications of radical new deradicalisation initiative in France* (2017)
- *Identifying the Root Cause Focus of Radical Identity: reframing the complex space of radicalisation dynamics* (2015)
- *Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism: "rooting for" normalization vs. "rooting out" extremism?* (2005).

Dynamics between the diverse? Missing is an extension of the systemic insights of the environmental sciences to encompass the

problematic dynamics of the psychosocial system -- in appropriate collaboration with those with insights into their nature. The question as to why this situation prevails goes to the heart of any meaningful response to the challenges of "climate change" -- whether natural or psychosocial. The argument can be developed with respect to what is acclaimed as the major strategic preoccupation of governance:

- *Psychology of Sustainability: embodying cyclic environmental processes* (2002)
- Peter Schmuck and Wesley P. Schultz: *The Psychology of Sustainability Development* (2002)
- Susan M. Koger, Britain A. Scott: *Psychology and Environmental Sustainability: a call for integration* (*Teaching of Psychology*, 34, 2007, 1)
- Annamaria Di Fabio: *The Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development for Well-Being in Organizations*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 19 September 2017)

The approach to so-called **ecological psychology** is usually characterized by its stark opposition to representational and computational theories of perception, namely the (direct) perception of how the environment of an organism affords various actions to the organism. As argued by **James J. Gibson**, animals and humans stand in a 'systems' or 'ecological' relation to the environment, such that to adequately explain some behaviour it was necessary to study the environment or niche in which the behaviour took place and, especially, the information that 'epistemically connects' the organism to the environment (*The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, 1966; A. Chemero, *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science*, 2009).

Perception is then held to require neither the manipulation of contents nor the formation of mental representations of the world. Instead, perception is said to consist of the detection of specifying information. Framed as radical embodied cognitive science, this is an explanatory framework that aims to account for different cognitive processes without positing representational states and computational processes.

Although valuable clarification of the academic debate in relation to **radical enactivism** is available (E. W. Myin and D. D. Hutto, *REC: Just radical enough. Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*, 41, 2015, 54; Segundo Ortin, et al, *Ecological psychology is radical enough: a reply to radical enactivists*, *Philosophical Psychology*, 32, 2019, 7). It is questionable whether this addresses the dramatic nature of the governance challenges of humanity and of individuals in engaging with an environment in extreme disarray. In particular, is the nature of the academic debate on this matter an instance of the failure to frame those differences of perspective highlighted in ecosystemic terms -- irrespective of the dimensions that the debate ignores?

It could be appropriately asked whether the much-cited quotation of physicist **Niels Bohr** is more relevant to the situation, as said to **Wolfgang Pauli** after his presentation of **Heisenberg's** and Pauli's nonlinear field theory of elementary particles (1958): **Your theory is crazy, but it's not crazy enough to be true**. Why is it too readily assumed that the challenges of engaging cognitively and strategically with the environment are of a far lesser order than those faced by fundamental physics in engaging with elusive phenomena?

The challenge to any clarification of inspiracy in relation to conspiracy is well-framed by another quotation of Niels Bohr: *We are suspended in language in such a way that we cannot say what is up and what is down. The word "reality" is also a word, a word which we must learn to use correctly.* (Quoted in *Philosophy of Science*, 37, 1934).

Role of metaphor in engaging with dynamics: A case can be made for a subtler approach to the pattern of inspiration and conspiracy. This is one which neither environmentalists nor social scientists have as yet been prepared to consider, as argued separately (*Biodiversity as a metaphor for psychosocial diversity?* 2019).

As noted there, environmentalists have been remarkable in rendering comprehensible the riches of biodiversity and its current vulnerability. However, beyond their preoccupations, global civilization is faced with multiple tensions and vulnerabilities with respect to what might be termed psychosocial diversity. Like it or not, these may be held to be of greater relevance by many. How is it that loss of "biodiversity" has become a matter of legitimate concern (at least for the natural sciences), but that the increase or decrease of "psychodiversity" is ignored so systematically?

Beyond "radical", as understood academically and politically, there is therefore a case for exploring "theories" which may indeed need to be "crazy enough", as discussed separately (*Cognitive Embodiment of Nature "Re-cognized" Systemically: radical engagement with an increasingly surreal reality*, 2018). The latter developed the argument in the following sections:

Indications in place of reasoned argument	Intercourse with the environment as cognitive
Nature as a cognitive exoskeleton for humanity?	"shapeshifting"
Renaissance of the environment and psychology of sustainability	Potential cognitive speciation understood otherwise
Potential cognitive embodiment of other species: "re-cognized" in a global context?	Humanity as epiterrestrial "psiors" rather than extraterrestrial "cyborgs"?
	Embodying the universe as a strategic opportunity

As argued there, a key to an alternative approach is the use of metaphor, previously presented as a new frontier, with all the challenges that implies (*Being the Universe: a metaphoric frontier*, 1999). The case has been "reasonably" made by **Douglas Hofstadter** and **Emmanuel Sander** (*Surfaces and Essences: analogy as the fuel and fire of thinking*, 2013), and argued by **Aldo Matteucci** (*Analogies (and metaphors) as mental maps*, *Diplo*, 19 July 2012).

Engaging otherwise with spiral dynamics

This argument was introduced by noting **the strange association between inspiration and conspiracy -- potentially extended to expiration via transpiration**. These share a common etymological root which offers clues to a means of transcending the dynamic in which people are embroiled. **Why indeed should they share an association with "spire" and "spiral"?** Are these seemingly disparate processes all governed in some way -- if only in the manner in which they are perceived -- by a spiral dynamic?

There is indeed a model of the evolutionary development of individuals, organizations, and societies known as [spiral dynamics](#). It was initially developed by [Don Edward Beck](#) and [Christopher Cowan](#) based on the [emergent cyclical theory](#) of [Clare W. Graves](#) (Don Edward Beck and Christopher C. Cowan, *Spiral Dynamics: mastering values, leadership, and change*, 1996; Clare W. Graves, *Levels of Existence: an open system theory of values*, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 10, 1970, 2).

The model incorporated insights framed by [memetics](#) as proposed by [Richard Dawkins](#) and further developed by [Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi](#). A later collaboration between Beck and [Ken Wilber](#) produced [Spiral Dynamics Integral](#), Wilber subsequently incorporated his own modified version into his overall [Integral theory](#). Each of these undertakings can be recognized as distinctive sources of inspiration to different constituencies -- render especially distinctive by the dynamics between them.

Recognizing global "weather" patterns -- in psychosocial terms: The existence of such distinctive understandings of spiral dynamics in psychological terms is known to relatively few in comparison with the degree of familiarity with the spiralling form of cyclones and anticyclones -- as presented in daily meteorological broadcasts.

The variants of the psychological models each imply that individuals tend to be associated with levels of the spiral -- effectively embedded in them, irrespective of their awareness of what such levels are held by some to imply. It is of course the case that exposure to the weather implies a degree of embedding in cyclones or anticyclones whose spiralling form is most obviously made evident by the media -- unless people are faced with the dramatically visible effects of a hurricane.

Arguably the familiarity with weather patterns can be fruitfully compared with the familiarity with any form of inspiration. Both offer a sense of being "drawn in" -- even "up" -- the former in physical terms, the latter in behavioural, cognitive, or spiritual terms. More intriguing is any comparison with a dynamic at some distance -- of which one is aware, or whose existence one suspects. In the case of the weather, this is most obvious with respect to reports of an advancing hurricane. The experience could be compared with that of a conspiracy of which one is only indirectly aware -- through reports, rumours and suppositions.

The challenge in more general terms is how to engage with the inspiration and conspiracy to which one is exposed. Referring again to the weather, is it a case of adjusting one's clothing and shelter to probable variations in the weather? The need for such adaptation is a common experience, especially when the weather constitutes a threat in some way. People also adjust to the inspiration and conspiracy to which they are exposed. As a primary source of such exposure, the daily engagement with the media is indicative.

Daily global weather reports suggest another perspective -- as would be possible from an orbiting satellite. Global news, whether appreciated as a source of inspiration or indicative of conspiracy, suggests a similar perspective. The obvious challenge is then how this is held to be distorted and manipulated in various ways -- and how then to engage with it. What is the shift in perspective required -- perhaps analogous to an "orbital view"?

As noted above, there is perhaps more to be learned from the capacity of many species of bird to use the updraft of spiralling [thermals](#) to enable them to fly long distances -- a capacity now emulated by gliders. Is there a skill to an analogous use of "thermals" in a period of "heated" discourse -- recognizing the need to manoeuvre in relation to the cyclones and anticyclones which pose the greatest constitute a potential threat? Can a spiralling source of inspiration and hope -- perhaps experienced by those identifying with it -- enable such facility?

As noted again, there is some irony to the failure in this respect of the "body politic", given the extent to which it is so explicitly recognized as endowed with a "right wing" and a "left wing". As argued separately, widespread use of that metaphor clearly does not extend to much understanding of the ability to "fly", especially as may be required for appropriate global governance ([Counteracting Extremes Enabling Normal Flying: insights for global governance from birds on the wing](#), 2015; [Coordination of Wing Deployment and Folding in Politics: bird flight and landing as complementary metaphors of global strategic coherence](#), 2018). The latter argument explores:

Flying in the winds of change?	Dialogue misunderstood as wingless flight?
Calm required for balloon flight?	Extremism and flight capacity?
Birds as national symbols of identity -- and of peace	Wing-folding and sustainable "flight capacity" of social systems
Bird flight and wing clipping: constraining dialogue	Coherent visualization of social diversity

Recognizing the spiral configurations of the universe -- in psychosocial terms: It is curious that spiral dynamics figure so obviously in the atmosphere of the globe -- and are echoed so obviously in the spiral form of many galaxies in the universe within which the globe is embedded. Just as the spiral forms in the atmosphere develop and evolve, a corresponding dynamic is held to be the case with respect to the galaxies.

Humanity has presumptuously appropriated the universe, if only with respect to its fundamental *Declaration of Human Rights* -- a potential source of irritation to hypothetical extraterrestrials. The visible universe has also been appropriated otherwise for millennia throughout the manner in which its visible features have been named as having psychosocial significance in the tales associated with the founding myths of each culture. The night sky continues to be an inspiration to many, especially as articulated by poets.

Reference is now made to the universe of knowledge (Fulvio Mazzocchi, [Ranganathan's universe of knowledge and categorial thinking](#)). The [Wikiverse](#) project is a 3D visualization of *Wikipedia*, reimagined as a "cosmic web of knowledge". As the understanding of astrophysics and cosmology advances, use has been extensively made of concepts such as a "black hole". This is now a dominant metaphor with regard to the financial condition of collectives and societies. In the anticipation of collapse -- expiration -- considerable inspiration is derived from the concept of a [singularity](#) ([Emerging Memetic Singularity in the Global Knowledge Society](#), 2009).

There is therefore a case for building on this intimate relationship with respect to the challenges of inspiration and conspiracy. Stars and galaxies offer imaginative models of sources of inspiration -- most obviously in the light of their distance from one another. Reference to "star" is now common in referring to celebrities in the arts and sciences. There is of course the convenience that these are a feature of a

larger psychosocial universe in which the nature of their interaction can be avoided. Little is formally said about the interaction between such sources of fruitful of inspiration -- although their problematic dynamics are reported otherwise.

The widely promoted enthusiasm for travelling to distant parts of the physical universe can be reframed as reflecting the appeal of tourism around the globe. Of greater relevance to this argument is the manner in which psychosocial diversity can be understood as reflected in an effective dispersal of humanity throughout a psychosocial universe of as yet unrecognized dimensions -- potentially driven by incommensurable inspirations evoking only the most limited interactions between them. Ironically it could be said that whilst many aspire to "travel to the stars", it could be said that in their quest for inspiration many have already done so. In that sense humanity is already a "star-faring species", as imagined by science fiction.

It is however intriguing to note that cosmologists continue to debate the [shape of the physical universe](#) -- in a period in which little can be meaningfully said about the "shape" of the psychosocial universe, beyond simplistic references to the globe. If indeed humanity is dispersing across the psychosocial universe, some understanding of its shape could be considered relevant. Ironically understandings of multidimensionality, a [multiverse of multiple universes](#), and [wormholes](#), have now been borrowed to reflect the complexity which people experience and the manner in which connectivity may need to be comprehended. There is no lack of reference to groups held to be effectively inhabiting "different universes".

With the currently immense investment in space travel and astronautics, it is appropriate to ask what this implies cognitively and imaginatively with respect to "travel" across the psychosocial universe, as separately explored ([Towards an Astrophysics of the Knowledge Universe: from astronautics to noonautics?](#) 2006). The latter invited reflection on:

- [Diversity of Understandings of any Universe of Information -- from matter-as-information to cosmic consciousness](#) (2006)
- [Dynamics and Singularities in the Knowledge Universe](#) (2006)
- [Governance and Spin in the Knowledge Universe: implications for governance, sustainability and alternatives](#) (2006)
- [Noonautics: four modes of travelling and navigating the knowledge "universe"?](#) (2006)

Given the extent to which each language can be recognized as a form of inspiration (as noted above), it is appropriate to note the motto of one repertory of the world's languages, namely the [Linguasphere Observatory: In the galaxy of languages, each person's voice is a star](#).

With the degree of investment in supercomputers to model both global weather patterns and the features of the universe, it might be asked what form the modelling of the psychosocial universe now takes -- given the implications for global governance. The [Sentient World Simulation](#) (SWS) has been designed as a "synthetic mirror of the real world with automated continuous calibration with respect to current real-world information" with a node representing "every man, woman and child". As with the European [FuturICT](#) project, whose goal is to find ways to understand and manage complex, global, socially interactive systems, these would however seem to avoid providing a node for every perceived problem, insight, advocated strategy, or value ([The FuturICT Knowledge Accelerator: unleashing the power of information for a sustainable future](#)).

Curiously considerable controversy has been attached to the manner in which supercomputers are used to profile users of the web and social media for marketing and other purposes (Daniel Faggella, [Sentient World Simulation and NSA Surveillance: exploiting privacy to predict the future? Emerj](#), 19 May 2019). published by . Less evident is how this serves to enrich the collective understanding of the dimensions of psychosocial universe.

Inside outside versus Outside inside? There is clearly a manner in which individuals and groups tend to project their imagined preoccupations onto the perceived environment, whether consciously or unconsciously -- a case of "inside outside".

Potentially more intriguing is the complementary manner in which the outer world is reflected or mirrored within, as more recently argued by [Joseph Campbell](#) ([The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: myth as metaphor and as religion](#), 1986) and in the early reflections of [Marsilio Ficino](#) ([Thomas Moore, The Planets Within](#), 1990). A key question is then these seemingly incommensurable perspectives are related, as separately explored ([Cognitive Osmosis in a Knowledge-based Civilization Interface challenge of inside-outside, insight-outside, information-outformation](#), 2017;).

The future will clarify to a more fruitful degree the possibilities and constraints of such cognitive modalities, as may be speculatively explored ([Being the Universe: a metaphoric frontier](#), 1999). That argument noted the comment of [Kenneth Boulding](#):

Our consciousness of the unity of the self in the middle of a vast complexity of images or material structures is at least a suitable metaphor for the unity of a group, organization, department, discipline, or science. If personification is only a metaphor, let us not despise metaphors - we might be one ourselves. ([Ecodynamics; a new theory of societal evolution](#), 1978, p.345)

This can be compared with the insight of the poet John Keats:

A man's life is a continual allegory - and very few eyes can see the mystery of his life -- a life like the scriptures, figurative.

Assisted by her poetry, the possibility has been articulated to a greater degree by Mary Angela Nangini ([Being Metaphor: a metacognitive strategy](#), 2002; [Part II](#)). The charm of it, as Bateson stated in concluding a conference on the effects of conscious purpose on human adaptation, is that: *We are our own metaphor* ([Our Own Metaphor: a personal account of a conference on the effects of conscious purpose on human adaptation](#), 1972, p. 304)

In addition to any sense in which those of incommensurable inspiration effectively inhabit different worlds, any such framing highlights the extent to which there is a degree to which this implies cognitive processes of "world-making" -- or of "re-cognizing" the world as

inhabited. This has been variously explored by a range of authors, as summarized separately (*World making, diasporas and virtual communities*, 2019), including:

- Nelson Goodman: *Ways of World Making* (1978)
- Mikhail Epstein: *The Art of World-Making* (*Philosophy Now*, 95, 2013)
- Jerome Bruner: *Self-Making and World-Making* (*The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 25, 1991, 1)
- Mario J. Valdes: *World Making: the literary truth-claim and the interpretation of texts* (1992)
- Pete Mandik and Andy Clark: *Representing and World-Making* (*Minds and Machines*, 12, 2002, 3)
- Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen: *Truth-Making and World-Making* (1996)
- Luke Dickens: *World Making, Critical Pedagogies, and the Geographical Imagination* (*Antipode*, 49, 2017, 5)
- Kenneth J. Gergen: *From Mirroring to World-Making: research as future forming* (*Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*)
- Barrie Axford: *The World-Making Power of New Media: mere connection?* (2017)
- Mark-David Hosale, et al: *Worldmaking as Techné: participatory art, music, and architecture* (2018).
- David Delaney: *The Spatial, the Legal and the Pragmatics of World-Making: nomospheric investigations* (2010)
- Nathalie Karagiannis and Peter Wagner (Eds.): *Varieties of World Making: beyond globalization* (2007)

.Whilst any such world may derive from an "inspiration" -- from a shared dream -- it may well be framed from other perspectives as a "conspiracy". The "come-uppance" may be anticipated as a "transpiration" of the illusory nature of the dream -- prior to a final "expiration".

There is however no question that people may choose to inhabit several different worlds -- or be able to do so, possibly of necessity. The implications of such alternation for the locus of identity merit particular exploration (*Living as an Imaginal Bridge between Worlds: global implications of "betwixt and between" and liminality*, 2011; *Stepping into, or through, the Mirror: embodying alternative scenario patterns*, 2008). Arguably the art to be imaginatively developed is one of balancing the response to inspiration, to conspiracy, to transpiration, and to expiration.

Fundamental spiralling controversy evoked by "con"

In the quest for a "universal" model of conspiracy theory, it is curious to note that inspiration is not a major focus of controversy -- except when people are inspired by what is held to be misinformation and are believed to be misled. It is the reframing of inspiration collectively appreciated which readily arouses assertions of conspiracy and conspiracy.

Use of the prefix "con" in conspiracy serves an amazing variety of purposes in English, thereby highlighting the ambiguity of conspiracy itself -- contrasted as it is with the prefix "pro" in the identification of "pros and cons". It is fundamental to various processes through which connectivity is established in any "pattern which connects", as originally highlighted by [Gregory Bateson](#) in making the point that:

The pattern which connects is a meta-pattern. It is a pattern of patterns. It is that meta-pattern which defines the vast generalization that, indeed, it is patterns which connect. (*Mind and Nature: a necessary unity*, 1979)

The challenge is the extent to which any such connectivity, as perceived by some, is a form of conspiracy as perceived by others. Any such pattern typically excludes consideration of those who perceive matters otherwise, as might be variously framed:

- *Walking Elven Pathways: enactivating the pattern that connects* (2006)
- Søren Brier: *Bateson and Peirce on the Pattern that Connects and the Sacred* (*A Legacy for Living Systems. Biosemiotics*, 2008)
- Helene Finidori: *Patterns that Connect: exploring the potential of patterns and pattern languages in systemic interventions towards realizing sustainable futures* (2016).

The role of "con" is most obvious in the deperate quest for **consensus** in a society riven by disagreement -- and the multitude of ineffectual pleas for what "we" should do, in the absence of any meaningful "we", despite the binary framing of "us and them". It is especially appropriate to note the controversy regarding the so-called [Washington Consensus](#) -- now widely criticized as a form of conspiracy by the [Anti-globalization movement](#) and the [Occupy movement](#). With respect to "consensus" can be said to have become the inspiration for widespread "**insensus**" ([Stéphane Hessel](#), *Time for Outrage!* 2010).

Any such consensus is in turn vitally dependent on **confidence**, as widely remarked with respect to a society with a trust deficit of a high order. This frames the widespread concern with confidence trickery, and susceptibility to it, by increasing proportions of the population.

- *New Paradigms via a Renewed Set of Prefixes? Dependence of international policy-making on an array of operational terms* (2003)
- *Prefix "Re-cognition" as Prelude to Fixing Sustainability -- "Pro" vs "Con"? Speculative review of missing emphases potentially vital for psychosocial balance* (2017)

That inquiry followed an interest in the role of "con" in its association with the confluence and consensus sought through conferences in anticipation of an integrative resolution of the crises of the times:

- *Considerable Conglomeration of "Cons" of Global Concern: eightfold constraint on constructive conflict control?* (2010)
- *Exploration of Prefixes of Global Discourse: implications for sustainable confidality* (2011).
- *Embodiment of Identity in Conscious Creativity: challenge of encompassing "con"* (2011)

The inquiry was taken further in exploring the cognitive role of "con" with respect to the configuration implied by a consensual mandala beyond the focus on conviction and conquest (*Checklist of words prefixed by "con" with frequency of usage*, 2016) -- notably from a

speculative perspective with respect to the fundamental role of confidence as the basis for any future global currency (*Primary Global Reserve Currency: the Con? Cognitive implications of a prefix for sustainable confidelity*, 2011).

There is clearly a fundamental sense of integration implied by use of "con". Understood in spiral terms, this is framed by the sense of "being in the loop". However this is primarily experienced appreciatively by those complicit in the associated inspiration. As experienced by those otherwise inspired, that integration is readily perceived as suspect -- as a conspiracy.

Matters are more complex is those embodying the integration -- complicit in its dynamics -- frame those who fail to "share the dream" as disruptive unbelievers. Rather than being "in the loop", the sense is more pejoratively offered by "being in a bubble" whose natural rise is be threatened by outsiders (*Pricking the Bubble of Global Complacent Complicity: hyperdimensional insights from the physics of bubble blowing, bursting and collapse*, 2017). For those experiencing consensus, and the process of "singing from the same hymn sheet", a need for the eradication of unbelievers may be recognized as a vital option (*Eradication as the Strategic Final Solution of the 21st Century?* 2014).

The peculiar dynamic of which there is limited integrative perspective could be explored in the relation between conspiracy, consensus and confidence -- culminating in "confidelity" -- in contrast with the sense of inspiration culminating in "infidelity". Failure to concur with the inspiration of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, or analogous articulations, frames an "otherness" of inspiration then to be understood as a form of infidelity which is a threat to any consensus. Global modelling has yet to encompass this dynamic in order to enable individuals (and human collectives) to "move on".

Curiously the paradoxes, exemplified in the divisive nature of discourse at this time and the uncertainties of global governance, could be understood as requiring an adaptation of the mode of thinking which gave rise to the oft-cited [Uncertainty Principle](#) of fundamental physics and quantum mechanics (*Adaptation of the Uncertainty Principle to the social sciences?* 2020).

Succinctly expressed, is it a case that within a conspiracy of those complicit in a shared inspiration any alternative inspiration is necessarily questionable as a conspiracy? Efforts to achieve global consensus, as with respect to COVID-19, climate change or terrorism, are then to be recognized as naive in their failure to encompass dynamics of a higher order of complexity.

The theologians of the Abrahamic religions could be seen to have demonstrated this inadequacy over centuries in the light of their respective claims to the unique universal perspective. The simplicity of interfaith initiatives could then be understood as a reflection of this. Framed otherwise, is there a systemic requirement for a requisite diversity of inspirations -- and their complimentary appreciation of each other as dangerous conspirations? ([Stephen Prothero](#), *God Is Not One: the eight rival religions that run the world -- and why their differences matter*, 2011)

Ironically it could be argued that, as the current threat to global civilization, the protein spikes with which the COVID-19 virus is adorned offer an imaginative visual model of a pattern of psychosocial "spikes" with which the globe is endowed -- whether understood as inspirations or conspirations (*Spike-endowed Global Civilization as COVID-19: humanity "bristles" as the world "burns"*, 2020; *Cognitive Engagement with Spike Dynamics of a Polyhedral Coronavirus*, 2020). Whereas progress in achieving that visualization in the case of the virus has recently been announced, the social sciences have yet to map any psychosocial analogue (Carl Zimmer, *The Coronavirus Unveiled*, *The New York Times*, 9 October 2020).

Memetic implication in cognitive engagement with the environment

Commonality can be emphasized in terms of the shared genetic heritage of humans as proof that all are equal -- acclaimed as unity in diversity. Given the difficulty of physics in clarifying and rendering comprehensible a unified understanding of reality, any reference to "equality" is necessarily overly simplistic, if not naively so. Equality as an inspiration might then be usefully explored as a form of conspiracy, however beneficial (*Cultivating the Myth of Human Equality: ignoring complicity in the contradictions thereby engendered*, 2016).

Genetic bond with nature: It is acknowledged that **humans share a very high proportion of genes with the animal species from which they have evolved**. A related understanding is fundamental to [de-extinction](#) -- also known as resurrection biology, or species revivalism -- namely the process of generating an organism that is either an extinct species or resembles an extinct species.

This has framed the question as to whether an extinct species of hominid could or should be engendered by that process (Virginia Hughes, *Return of the Neanderthals: should scientists seek to clone our ancient hominid cousins?* *National Geographic News*, 6 March 2013; Lucy Ingham, *Should We Bring Back Neanderthals from Extinction?* *Factor-Tech*, 30 May 2017).

Memetic bond with nature? Given such technical possibilities, and arguments for a degree of correspondence between genetics and memetics, a different question could be asked. Would it be possible to engender a pattern of behaviour governed by the memes of species from which humans have developed? To what extent can it be said that the **humans share memes with animals species from which they have evolved**? Expressed otherwise, to what extent is it possible to evoke Neanderthal-like behaviour and attitudes from the subconscious -- possibly through the use of drugs (as conspiracy theorists might well imagine)?

One supporting argument for the possibility is recognition of the extent to which ontogeny replicates phylogeny, as famously framed by the [recapitulation theory](#) of [Ernst Haeckel](#). Since embryos evolve in different ways, the shortcomings of the theory have long been recognized. The Haeckelian form of recapitulation theory is now considered defunct. However embryos do indeed undergo a period where their morphology is strongly shaped by their phylogenetic position, rather than by selective pressures, but that means only that they resemble other embryos at that stage, not ancestral adults as Haeckel had claimed.

Analogies to recapitulation theory have however been formulated in other fields, including cognitive development, music criticism, and theology. Reference continues to be made to it in developmental psychology (Donna Varga, *The Legacy of Recapitulation Theory in the*

History of Developmental Psychology, Oxford Research Encyclopedias, 2020; Henry W. Morris, *The Heritage of the Recapitulation Theory*, Institute for Creation Research, 1 September 1988).

Memetic recapitulation: It could well be claimed that recapitulation theory has been an inspiration to evolutionists, but any continuing belief in it is held by many to be a deprecated conspiracy.

Related questions have however been asked from a memetic perspective, as by Tim Tyler:

Does ontogeny recapitulate phylogeny in the cultural realm? Probably less so than in the organic realm. The reason ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny at all is because developmental processes build on top of prototypes without going back to refactor them out of existence. There's also layering processes in development. So, for example, the "reptilian" brain appears in mammal embryos before the neocortex does - a case of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny. The same kind of thing happens in the cultural realm - occasionally - and it's probably a universal evolutionary process. (*Does cultural ontogeny recapitulate phylogeny?* On *Memetics*, 8 March 2012)

Recapitulation theory refers to the idea that organism development recapitulates evolutionary history. As Ernst Haeckel's put it, "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny". Most biologists would describe Haeckel's ideas as being widely discredited... Will cultural recapitulation theory suffer the same fate as its organic counterpart? It is, perhaps too early to tell. However, maybe cultural recapitulation theory will help to revitalize recapitulation theory in the organic domain. It is a bit of a shame that recapitulation theory is so widely labelled as a dud idea. Perhaps cultural examples will help to illuminate the truth at the core of the idea. (*Cultural recapitulation theory* On *Memetics*, 26 December 2015)

A valuable summary of the arguments is provided by Susan Blackmore (*Memetics does provide a useful way of understanding cultural evolution*. In: Francisco Ayala and Robert Arp (Eds), *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Biology*, 2010) who concludes:

These are just a few examples of a meme's eye view on human and cultural evolution. I have outlined most of the major objections to memetics and shown why none of them effectively prevents memetics from being a viable scientific theory. In terms of the wider view of human nature and evolution, memetics clearly provides a novel way of looking at the world.

Aspects of the question are also reviewed by Michael Bradie and William Harms (*Evolutionary Epistemology*, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020)

Radical cognitive possibility: These debates tend to avoid a more radical possibility which may prove essential to any regeneration of the environment by humanity -- or to any sustained reconnection with nature by individuals. The possibility is partly evident in the preoccupation of [deep ecology](#).

It is however especially evident in understandings characteristic of indigenous knowledge, as documented for the United Nations Environment Programme by Darrell A. Posey (*Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity: a complementary contribution to Global Biodiversity Assessment* 1999). The mode of knowing is evident in the engagement with [totem animals](#) in indigenous cultures (*Native American Totem Animals and Their Meanings, Legends of America*; James Cowan, On Totems, *Resurgence*, 138, 1990, pp. 30-34).

Distinct from that engagement, but ironically indicative of it, is the widespread adoption of natural species as totems or symbols, whether by countries, political parties, teams, military groups, tribal factions, and other bodies -- even scouts and guides.

These indications frame the possibility of engaging with the environment -- with "otherness" -- in a quite distinctive manner, as separately presented through quotations from a wide variety of authors ("*Human Intercourse*": "*Intercourse with Nature*" and "*Intercourse with the Other*", 2007). It might indeed be compared to cognitive shapeshifting (*En-minding the Extended Body: enactive engagement in conceptual shapeshifting and deep ecology*, 2003). How indeed is it possible to recover in a form of "memetic de-extinction" modes of knowing from which current modes have evolved?

The possibility can for example be recognized in the articulations of David Abram (*The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*, 1997; *Becoming Animal: an earthly cosmology*, 2010). In that spirit it can be argued that humans have much to learn from a more radical cognitive engagement with nature (*Life-skill Learning from Animal Shareholders and Collaborators: cognitive opportunity for engaging radically with a complex world in crisis*, 2014). The latter including discussion of:

Clues to cognitive possibilities of "being an animal"
Varieties of animal behaviour of potential strategic value to humans

Implication of embodiment of the human mind in totemism
Implications of animal-inspired proprioception and knowledge management?

As information processing patterns, "humans" may well be able to "reincarnate" in animal behavioural patterns (or be effectively obliged to do so by their behaviour). Hence the intuitive recognition of this transformation through nicknames and adoption of totems. Aspects of the argument are presented separately (*Life-skill Learning from Animal Shareholders and Collaborators: cognitive opportunity for engaging radically with a complex world in crisis*, 2014) in the following sections:

Clues to cognitive possibilities of "being an animal"
Varieties of animal behaviour of potential strategic value to humans

Navigating the dynamics of information fluidity
Enacting a cognitive array of systemic functions
Existential choice and feasibility: freedom to be otherwise

Implication of embodiment of the human mind in movement Transcending genocidal objectification
Implications of animal-inspired proprioception and knowledge Enabling imaginative possibilities
management?

Future cognitive evolution: Exploration of any such possibility can be framed by the question as to the nature of future cognitive evolution. Given the poorly understood displacement of the Neanderthal people by the Cro-Magnon, what skills and attributes did the Cro-Magnon have, and the Neanderthal lack, that enabled this transition? How might an analogous displacement of *Homo sapiens* be imagined at this time? (*Authentic Grokking: emergence of Homo conjugens*, 2003; *Emergence of Homo undulans -- through a "grokking" dynamic?* 2013). Is the prevalent modality to be challenged as "cyclopean"? (*Cyclopean Vision vs Poly-sensual Engagement*, 2006).

Any such transition, or Renaissance, is provocatively framed by the arguments of [Alexander Wendt](#) (*Quantum Mind and Social Science: unifying physical and social ontology*, 2015). Are there indeed possibilities of engaging "otherwise" with "otherness" -- if only in the future (*Encountering Otherness as a Waveform -- in the light of a wave theory of being*, 2013)?

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