

***The Writing on the Wall #5:
“Don’t Take Any Wooden Nickels”***

J. Harmon Grahn

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Published by
The Wellspring Publishing Group
TheWellspringPublishingGroup.com
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v14, June 1, 2012
v15, Revised September 29, 2012

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1 Prologue

This edition of *The Writing on the Wall* was originally prompted in part by the statement in *The Writing on the Wall #4* that “The human invention of money emerged as an artificial commodity that acquired value simply because it suddenly came into existence, ostensibly for the human convenience of being exchangeable for anything valued by humans.”¹ Not mentioned was the necessary corollary that *not all things* valued by humans may be evaluated in terms of money—although one of the cumulative effects of the money economy has been the encouragement of that evaluation.

It is in the nature of money to encourage the grotesque error that anything not quantifiable in monetary terms has no value: because it has no price. What is the value of a rainbow? It has no price, can neither be bought, nor sold, nor owned, by anybody. *Ergo*, according to the logic of the money economy, it effectively has no value. Or it may be more accurate to say that in the money economy, non-monetary values tend to be eclipsed by monetary values, and consequently ignored, or overlooked. The same logic applies to planet Earth as a whole; to the Solar System; and to Cosmos at large: they have no monetary value, excluding only those parts of them accessible to commoditization, and to human commercial exploitation; and in consequence are frequently credited with no value at all. *Buy Jupiter*,² *I do believe this is a huge mistake!*

This essay was prompted also by *A Meditative Visualization of Everything*, particularly § 3 The Chain of Cause and Effect; which eventually asks, *Is it true, or untrue, that money makes people crazy?*³

Back of this question lies the observation that people engage in a great many astoundingly self-destructive activities in response to a tireless and insatiable quest for money. A single example is described at length, among many that would serve to strengthen the observation. More specifically:

. . . *if* the human invention, *money*, is possessed of such a powerful motivating force that it can impel enormous populations of intelligent, creative, and presumedly sane humans to imagine, create, and install hundreds of facilities around their planet which produce endless accumulations of substances that are, and will remain for thousands of years to come, lethal hazards to all liv-

¹Grahn, *The Writing on the Wall #4: "Don't Believe Everything You Think"*, The Wellspring Publishing Group, 2012, p. 13. wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#wow04

²“Buy Jupiter!” Title of a science fiction short story by Isaac Asimov (1920-1992), first published in *Venture Science Fiction Magazine*, May 1958, reprinted in *Buy Jupiter and Other Stories*, 1975.

³Grahn, *A Meditative Visualization of Everything: An Illustrated Essay*, The Wellspring Publishing Group, 2012, p. 39. wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#fractal

ing things—or to tolerate the creation, installation and maintenance of such facilities—then the nature and use of this human invention, *money*, should come under the intense and penetrating scrutiny of anyone and everyone envisioning a viable future for humanity.⁴

The suggestion was prompted in turn by recent disclosures, more than a year after the event, about the ongoing situation at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, Fukushima, Japan, in the wake of the 9.0 earthquake off the Japanese coast 11 March 2011. I have discussed this at some length in *A Meditative Visualization of Everything* § 3.1 Shift Into a Minor Key, and § 3.2 Why Would Anybody Want to do That? pp. 32-38; citing items that have been published recently on the Net—mention of which has been conspicuously absent from the “mainstream press.” I discuss it further below in § 4 The End. So what follows was originally intended to be mainly about money, economics, and the role these play in the unfolding process of human events.

However, during the course of writing, the decisive crossroads the human residents of planet Earth seem to have reached during the past year was gradually borne in upon me. It appears that the destiny of the human race upon planet Earth today may hang by a thread; and the issue might very well be decided, for weal or woe, during the current year 2012. All it would take, so it seems, is a single large earthquake near Fukushima, Japan—which geologists consider probable, within the current year.

In this essay, accordingly, I have attempted to draw together a number of threads developed at greater length in prior essays, along with threads developed by others; and weave them into a fabric that is intended . . . not to provide “answers” to the human challenge, but to provoke thought, and expanded vision and awareness. I suggest that thought, and expanded vision and awareness, are always useful, and today may be urgently needed among humans everywhere, anywhere, if any of us are to find our way to a brighter future.

What follows includes an abbreviation of the original discussion here of classical economics, including the nature and origin of money; followed by an expansion of scope, in § 2.1 Money, and § 2.2 Wealth and Power, to an examination of the nature of *coercive power*—which appears in our world to have an intimate relationship with *wealth*. It is a relationship, however, that does not seem to work very well, and has consequently led us into the “critical mess” in which all humans—and indeed all of life on this planet, willing or not—are mired at the present time. How will these issues finally be resolved? I develop one man’s vision—mine—of how it *might* play out. One way or another, we may not have long to wait for the “final outcome.”

⁴Grahn, *loc. cit.*

2 Economics

I have made a preliminary venture in the consideration of economics in a prior essay,⁵ which may have some bearing upon the following discussion. Surely, the work by Eisenstein⁶ to which it refers is richly relevant to this discussion. I have made some additional comments about money in a prior number of this series.⁷

Here, we shall consult the work of Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973) who “wrote the book” (*Human Action: A Treatise on Economics*, 1949) on what has become known as the “Austrian School of Economics”—which does not necessarily represent the thought of all economists. We will begin with a few direct quotations, interspersed with my comments:

. . . [Albert] Einstein [von Mises wrote] raises the question: “How can mathematics, a product of human reason that does not depend on any experience, so exquisitely fit the objects of reality? Is human reason able to discover, unaided by experience, through pure reasoning the features of real things?” And his answer is: “As far as the theorems of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain, and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.”⁸

However, the sciences of human action differ radically from the natural sciences. All authors eager to construct an epistemological system of the sciences of human action according to the pattern of the natural sciences err lamentably.

The real thing which is the subject matter of praxeology, human action, stems from the same source as human reasoning. Action and reason are congeneric and homogeneous; they may even be called two different aspects of the same thing. That reason has the power to make clear through pure ratiocination the essential features of action is a consequence of the fact that action is an offshoot of reason. The theorems attained by correct praxeological reasoning are not only perfectly certain and incontestable, like the correct mathematical theorems. They refer, moreover with the full rigidity of their apodictic certainty and incontestability to the reality of action as it appears

⁵Grahn, *A Discussion of Sacred Economics: Money, Gift & Society in the Age of Transition* by Charles Eisenstein, The Wellspring Publishing Group, 2012.

wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#sacred

⁶Charles Eisenstein, *Sacred Economics: Money, Gift & Society in the Age of Transition*, Evolver Editions, Berkeley, California, 2011.

⁷Grahn, *The Writing on the Wall #4: “Don’t Believe Everything You Think”*, § 5.1 What is Money? The Wellspring Publishing Group, 2012. wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#wow04

⁸Albert Einstein, *Geometrie und Erfahrung*, Berlin, 1923, p. 3—von Mises’s footnote.

in life and history. Praxeology conveys exact and precise knowledge of real things.⁹

I remain skeptical of “exact and precise knowledge of real things.” I do not deny that “real things” are exactly and precisely what they are. I only question whether humans can *know* exactly and precisely the nature of “real things.” The human view of things seems to me unavoidably “fuzzy;” as opposed to being “exact and precise.”

I have illustrated at least one reason for my skepticism in *An Illustrated Essay*,¹⁰ which includes 28 successive color images of the *Mandelbrot Set*, at increasing magnifications. In § 1 Introduction, I observe that

The Mandelbrot Set appears to me as a visual metaphor for . . . well, *everything*. The difference in scale between the smallest and greatest magnification of the Mandelbrot Set is comparable to the difference in scale between the smallest and largest physical objects we are able to apprehend. As in the “real world,” however, at any magnification, one cannot quite make out the finest visible details—which may be remedied by boosting their magnification, or “zooming in” on the part of the figure one would like to see in greater detail.

However, there is a trade-off involved in this. As in the “real world,” magnifying a particular feature brings into view details that were not visible at lower magnification; but it also throws the surrounding parts of the figure entirely beyond the field of view, so they cannot be seen at all, while the small feature of focus fills the frame with a surfeit of formerly invisible detail. Yet still there are details that cannot quite be made out, inviting further magnification, and expanding many or most of the formerly visible details beyond the frame of observation. . . .¹¹

This vastly expands the applicability of the *principle of complementarity*, or the *uncertainty principle*, articulated in 1927 by Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976), in reference to phenomena first encountered at the minute scale of quantum events: specifically, the rigorous impossibility of observing simultaneously the quantum and wave properties of light.¹²

⁹Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics*, Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn, Alabama, The Scholar’s Edition, Bettina Bien Greaves, 1998, p. 39.

¹⁰Grahn, *A Meditative Visualization of Everything: An Illustrated Essay*, The Wellspring Publishing Group, 2012. wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#fractal

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 1, ellipses in the original.

¹²Discussed at greater length in *The Writing on the Wall #7* § 4.1 “Quantum Weirdness” wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/wow07.html#many04.1.0

For another example [I have written], at the human scale, everyone “knows” himself in intimate detail; and everyone “knows” others with whom he shares close personal relationships. However, just as the complementary quantum and wave properties of light cannot be simultaneously observed, or described, just as rigorously, no one can “know” himself as another “knows” him; and no one can “know” another as he “knows” himself. All such “knowledge” consists of *partial descriptions* of individuals who cannot possibly be *fully* described, either by themselves, or by anybody else.¹³

The principle of complementarity was initially believed to be applicable only at the scale of the tiniest subatomic constituents of matter. However, exploration of “the real world” at the scale familiar to humans discloses innumerable pairs of complementary properties of real things that cannot be simultaneously observed, described, or known.

This complementarity [I have also written] is encountered as well between the perceptions of the *specialist*, and those of the *generalist*. The specialist focuses upon a highly detailed view of one minute sector of interest to humans, to the exclusion of all other concerns; whereas the generalist cultivates a broader perspective, at the expense of much detail appreciated only by the specialist. Neither of them has at once a comprehensive *and* a detailed view of anything. The specialist is the master of a small selection of related elements, but does not understand how those elements coordinate with the innumerable elements that lie beyond his specialized knowledge. The generalist understands the ways in which numerous diverse and less closely related elements work together, but fails to grasp many of the vital nuances of any of them. This combination provides only “fuzzy” views of everything, by everybody, compensated by human imagination and surmise—and fails to yield “exact and precise knowledge of real things.”¹⁴

Perhaps the largest imaginable instance of the applicability of the uncertainty principle, or the principle of complementarity, lies between any thing, and its *context*. The full context of every thing is *everything*—which lies beyond the scope of any observer at any place or time. Yet “exact and precise knowledge of real things” cannot be had absent “exact and precise knowledge” of their context—which translates for me into an unequivocal

¹³Grahn, *The Writing on the Wall #1: “Nothing Can Possibly Go Wrong, Everything is Out of Control!”* § 4.1 The Myth of Complementarity, The Wellspring Publishing Group, 2010, p. 10. wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#wow01

¹⁴Grahn, *A Meditative Visualization of Everything*, The Wellspring Publishing Group, 2012, p. 4. wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#fractal

statement that “exact and precise knowledge of real things” cannot be had, whatsoever. Am I mistaken in this assessment?

I must admit that there seems to be an element of circularity to this argument: inasmuch as, if certainty about anything is categorically impossible, then how can I be certain that this is so? In response, I shrug, and acknowledge that I cannot be certain that it is so; and fall back to the more “fuzzy” position that it is possible to hold convictions and beliefs, on the basis of rational analysis of the best available *partial* evidence, without claiming certainty, or “exact and precise knowledge” of said beliefs. In most cases, with flexibility, and the exercise of deliberate care, this seems to yield satisfactory results that, although not absolutely “error-free,” are usually “close enough;” and errors, when (not if) they do emerge, can often be corrected. I think I can live with that. Meanwhile, I’ll take my stand with Einstein: “As far as the theorems of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain, and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.”

Continuing with von Mises:

If we scrutinize the meaning of the various actions performed by individuals we must necessarily learn everything about the actions of collective wholes. For a social collective has no existence and reality outside of the individual members’ actions. The life of a collective is lived in the actions of the individuals constituting its body. There is no social collective conceivable which is not operative in the actions of some individuals. The reality of a social integer consists in its directing and releasing definite actions on the part of individuals. Thus the way to a cognition of collective wholes is through an analysis of the individuals’ actions.¹⁵

“Actions performed by individuals,” and “actions of the collective wholes,” of which the acting individuals are constituents, appears to me as yet another of the innumerable instances of *complementarity*. By our enlarged application of Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, information about one does not yield information about the other. Therefore, *If we scrutinize the meaning of the various actions performed by individuals we must necessarily learn everything about the actions of collective wholes* seems to be an unreliable statement—analogueous to saying that by scrutinizing the individual behaviors of the cells in a man’s body we must necessarily learn everything about the actions of the man. Specifically, it overlooks the phenomenon of *synergy*, which R. Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983) described as “the behavior of whole systems unanticipated by the behaviors of their parts.” Synergy is a universal phenomenon of wholes constituted of parts, applicable alike to populations of cells in an organism, and to populations of humans in a nation. Fuller

¹⁵Von Mises, p. 42.

was not the first to observe this relationship; nor did he originate the word. He used it frequently, and he popularized it.

Further, as discussed in *The Writing on the Wall #3: "How Do You Know That You Know What You Know?"*¹⁶ § 7 Consciousness, and Metaconsciousness; and in *The Writing on the Wall #4: "Don't Believe Everything You Think"*¹⁷ § 4.1 Metaconsciousness, there seems to be a synergy in operation within the vast network of neurons in the human nervous system that is somehow instrumental in the phenomena we experience as intention, purpose, design, consciousness, intelligence, and creativity—entirely unanticipated by the sum of the individual neurons out of which these phenomena evidently emerge. How this occurs is still beyond human understanding; yet we have no way of accounting for the phenomena of consciousness in humans that does not include the electro-chemical interactions among our neurons: i.e. behaviors of whole systems unanticipated by the behaviors of their parts.

Moreover, humans are not the only beings on Earth known to have large and complex nervous systems; and ours are by no means the largest or most complex nervous systems on our planet. Many species of cetaceans—the dolphins and the whales—are endowed with significantly larger and more complex nervous systems than ours, and have been observed to exhibit behaviors rich in the qualities of consciousness, intention, purpose, and intelligence.¹⁸ They may indeed be creatures who, like humans, possess the capability of purposeful action, aimed at intended results.

The association of purposeful action with large and complex networks of information exchange, as exhibited in human, and possibly in cetacean nervous systems, suggests the possibility in turn that such purposeful action may emerge in any network of information exchange of sufficient size and complexity; that the volition to act may be found to varying degrees in association with information networks of many different kinds, at many different scales, on Earth, and maybe throughout Cosmos; and that it may exist to a lesser extent among numerous non-human species on Earth. This is not a claim that it is so, but only that it is possible; and that investigation along these lines might disclose that the ability to act purposefully, with the intent of achieving specific ends, may not be a characteristic unique to humans at all, but may be common in varying degrees to all life—and may even transcend the distinction humans have made between “organic” and “inorganic.” Indeed, it may plausibly be a characteristic of Cosmos as a whole—that is, of *everything*.

¹⁶wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#wow03

¹⁷wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#wow04

¹⁸Joan McIntyre, Ed., *Mind in the Waters: A Book to Celebrate the Consciousness of Whales and Dolphins*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1974.

As mentioned in *The Writing on the Wall #3* § 7 Consciousness, and Metaconsciousness, such “wild speculations” are *anathema* within the community of “scientific orthodoxy,” and research into these domains is simply *not funded*. The speculations alone, however, open at least a glimpse into one potential meaning of “behaviors of whole systems unanticipated by the behaviors of their parts.”

My speculations probably would not have found congenial agreement with Ludwig von Mises either. We seem to be operating on “different wavelengths”—which is not at all the same as claiming, where we are not in perfect accord, that von Mises is “wrong,” and that I am “right.” On the contrary, in *The Writing on the Wall #4: "Don't Believe Everything You Think"* § 4.2 Belief, I have written:

. . . In general, I have found myself *suspending belief* in growing numbers of instances. That is, I don't necessarily believe everything I think. In most cases anymore, I neither believe nor disbelieve a candidate for inclusion within my unique corpus of personal beliefs—which has become quite compact—but instead remain agnostic about most possibilities. This is because I have gained by experience a healthy respect for my own capacity for error.

One item I have come firmly to believe, however, is that whatever I believe about anything, I am most likely “wrong,” to at least a significant degree; and that “at best,” I am surely only “partly right” about anything I believe at all.

Yet being an individual human, I too hold convictions and beliefs, based upon a unique amalgam of experience, research, introspection, and maybe inspiration, that I feel are as worthy of expression as are those of others; which are as likely as not to differ from mine. It so happens that “apodictic certainty” is not claimed for any of my beliefs, arouses my skepticism when claimed for the beliefs of others, and I suspect may not lie within the reach of human possibility.

Von Mises again:

The *Ego* [von Mises's emphasis] is the unity of the acting being. It is unquestionably given and cannot be dissolved or conjured away by any reasoning or quibbling.

The *We* is always the result of a summing up which puts together two or more *Egos*. If somebody says *I*, no further questioning is necessary in order to establish the meaning. The same is valid with regard to the *Thou* and, provided the person in view is precisely indicated, with regard to the *He*. But if a man says *We*, further information is needed to denote who the *Egos* are who are comprised in this *We*. It is always single individuals who

are comprised in this *We*. It is always single individuals who say *We*; even if they say it in chorus, it yet remains an utterance of single individuals.

The *We* cannot act otherwise than each of them acting on his own behalf. They can either all act together in accord; or one of them may act for them all. In the latter case the cooperation of the others consists in their bringing about the situation which makes one man's action effective for them too. Only in this sense does the officer of a social entity act for the whole; the individual members of the collective body either cause or allow the single man's action to concern them too.

The endeavors of psychology to dissolve the *Ego* and to unmask it as an illusion are idle. The praxeological *Ego* is beyond any doubts. No matter what a man was and what he may become later, in the very act of choosing and acting he is an *Ego*.¹⁹

As far as it goes, this may be "true" enough. However, it seems to me to have left out an awful lot that might relevantly have been included. Von Mises's emphasis was upon the action of individuals; and sure enough, the acts of individuals do add up, in part, to the acts of the collective whose constituency is the sum of its acting individuals. Yet the collective constituency is greater than the sum of its parts, and exhibits a clearly perceptible identity, transcendent of the individual identities of its constituents. "The French" are quite distinguishable from "the Japanese," for example, without scrutinizing any single member of either constituency.

Here again, we seem to encounter another instance of *complementarity*. One's sense of conscious self-identity in the ego, which maintains the distinction between "self" and "others," is legitimate. However, as with practically anything one may call to mind, this is "not the whole story," and the earlier discussion of complementarity (p. 4) applies; particularly the discussion of *context* (p. 5).

More specifically, the ego—the identity of the differentiated self—seems unavoidably to be but one complement of a vastly larger entity, in the absence of "whom" the differentiated self would have nowhere to stand, nothing to eat, or drink, or breathe, and nothing to do. For the essential complement of the individual ego is *everything else*, "excluding no detail, however slight." Absent everything else, the individual ego could not possibly exist. This is not a mere philosophical device, or a mystical superstition. It is as close as anything I can imagine—if I may borrow a term—to an "apodictic certainty."

Is it not? If not, then you tell me: How can anyone, or anything, anywhere in Cosmos, possibly exist without the existence of Cosmos itself? Without any credible doubt, *That*

¹⁹Von Mises, p. 44.

is an absolute “Given;” and *Thou art That* is as literal a “truth” as anything I can imagine, applicable alike to you, to me, and to everything that exists. Yet this too is but a partial truth: for it is also “true” that *Thou art an Ego*—a differentiated self.

Therefore the ego identity, that distinguishes “self” from “others,” is completely legitimate—as far as it goes. Yet it is “not the whole story,” and does not fully describe what an individual, human or non-human, *is*. This is not a criticism of the ego concept, or of the ego identity; for what an individual, human or non-human, *is* cannot be fully described, or understood, or known, by anybody, “self,” or “other.” If we can understand this much, I believe we shall have gained something.

O.K.; so it appears that there are differences between mine, and the operating assumptions upon which von Mises built his analysis of human action, or praxeology. Nevertheless, his views—particularly of the origin and nature of *money*—are not without interest.

2.1 Money

Von Mises built his analysis upon the assumption that the action of specific individuals, at specific times and places, is the engine that drives human events. This perception is not without merit, but as with all finite perceptions, it is incomplete. This too is no criticism of von Mises’s analysis; which as I understand it, applied to the emergence of a medium of exchange, unfolded approximately as follows:

Wherever, whenever, and however it developed, *direct exchange*, or barter among humans, emerged because individual humans desired or needed goods and services not locally available to them, that could be acquired from other humans living elsewhere, in exchange for locally available goods and services that in other places were reciprocally desired, and scarce. Salt, and other minerals and commodities that are unevenly distributed geographically, may serve as examples of the content of direct exchange.

Experience made it evident that some commodities were more suited than others for this commerce, because they were in more widespread demand. Such commodities became recognized as desirable trade goods, simply because being in demand, they were assured of a favorable exchange for other desirable goods and services. In this way, *indirect exchange* emerged: acquisition of certain commodities specifically intended to facilitate trade, as opposed to being used for other purposes by those who acquired them. Such commodities became *media of exchange*, or effectively, *money*.

A medium of exchange [von Mises wrote] is a good which people acquire neither for their own consumption nor for employment in their own production activities, but with the intention of exchanging it at a later date

against those goods which they want to use either for consumption or for production.

Money is a medium of exchange. It is the most marketable good which people acquire because they want to offer it in later acts of interpersonal exchange. Money is the thing which serves as the generally accepted and commonly used medium of exchange. This is its only function. All the other functions which people ascribe to money are merely particular aspects of its primary and sole function, that of a medium of exchange.²⁰

The emergence of money as a medium of exchange was thus, in von Mises's view, a virtually "automatic process" driven by the natural interests of individuals seeking desired commodities not locally available. They found that such commodities may be had through exchange with "foreign" individuals for remotely scarce commodities more readily available locally. The uneven distribution of commodities variously abundant and scarce in different regions naturally facilitated this commerce; and some commodities emerged as universally desired among all trading partners. These came to be valued, in addition to their value as commodities for use, for their property of facilitating trade; and some of these came gradually to be used exclusively as media of exchange, with no other use than as money.

All this seems quite sensible and plausible; and it illuminates the emergence of money as a natural—one might even say "organic development"—among the acts of many individuals, rather than the deliberate invention of some isolated archaic economic mastermind. In this sense, the emergence of money may be seen as another example of "the behavior of whole systems unanticipated by the behaviors of their parts."

This is all very well; yet it still leaves unanswered the question as to how this "organic" emergence of money became the exclusive prerogative of "the rich and powerful," instead of the universal practice of everybody engaged in interpersonal commerce. That is, how did "the money makers" acquire their unique prerogative of creating the commonly used media of exchange in every nation on Earth, and how have they defended this powerful and exclusive prerogative from those who might like to share it?

2.2 Wealth and Power

These questions are more easily asked than answered—which is to say that the answers to them are more complicated than the questions. One account worth reading, of how "the money makers" consolidated their power in the U.S., is Griffin's *The Creature from*

²⁰Von Mises, p. 398.

Jekyll Island.²¹ It is about the formation of the Federal Reserve in America, and more generally, about the institutions of central banking.

Generically, *wealth* and *power* seem to go together naturally—to the extent, perhaps, that they often seem to be different expressions of the same thing. If this has not “always been so,” it seems to have been part of the prevailing pattern among humans for the entire duration of historically recorded “civilization”—say for the past five or six thousand years.

When I mention “civilization,” by the way, I tend to enclose it in quotes: because the term is frequently used as a distinction from other terms, such as “barbarism,” or “savagery.” Although “civilization” has made possible innumerable, often spectacular human achievements, it has displayed a great many “barbaric” and “savage” qualities as well; which seem to me significantly to blur the distinction. Viewed from the vantage point of some future retrospect, it may turn out that what we have been calling “civilization” will eventually be recognized as an episode along the human path out of barbarism and savagery, toward a condition of sustainable equilibrium—evidently, and we may hope, *possibly*, yet to be achieved.

As discussed briefly in *The Writing on the Wall #1*²² § 5 Symbiosis and Predation, there are two forms that relationships between or among living beings can take: *a) symbiotic*; or *b) predatory*.

Symbiotic relationships [I wrote] are those in which *all parties* to the relationship benefit by the relationship equally. Symbiotic relationships among beings are *social* relationships.

Predatory relationships are those in which some parties to the relationship profit at the expense of others. Predatory relationships are *antisocial*: predators and their prey cannot participate with each other in social relationships—although predators can have symbiotic and social relationships with each other, so long as they never prey upon each other.²³

Applied impartially, this distinction makes clear that there are as yet many predatory relationships among “civilized” humans—not only between, but *within* clearly identifiable “civilized societies.” Is there not a fundamental contradiction embedded within any “society” (so called) in which *antisocial* predatory relationships are a universal component of what is smilingly called “business as usual?” In what *fundamental* way do contemporary “civilized societies” differ from a society of cannibals? Perhaps in this: that cannibals

²¹G. Edward Griffin, *The Creature from Jekyll Island: A Second Look at the Federal Reserve*, Fourth Edition, American Media, © Copyright 2002, 1998, 1995, and 1994.

²²wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#wow01

²³Grahn, *loc. cit.*

usually abstain from eating each other within their own societies, and practice their cannibalism only in relation to members of rival societies; whereas such abstinence is not a necessary condition for “civilized societies.”

Illuminating this perhaps counterintuitive observation further is *The Parable of the Tribes*,²⁴ a social theory which poses the following conundrum:

Imagine a group of several neighboring tribes which, initially, are all at peace with one another, and on amicable terms. Then at some point one of these tribes turns hostile and aggressive, and commences a campaign of conquest among its peace-loving neighbors. According to this theory, the outcome for any of the non-aggressive tribes can be one of four, and only four, alternatives:

1. The tribe is conquered, and all its inhabitants are annihilated;
2. The tribe is conquered, and its surviving inhabitants are forced to subordinate their wills to the will of the conquering tribe;
3. The tribe flees to an inaccessible or inhospitable region, abandoning its territory, which is appropriated by the conquering tribe;
4. The tribe resists conquest, and defeats its would-be conqueror.

The point of the parable of the tribes is that *all four possible outcomes* to this situation result in the expansion of the *ways of power*,²⁵ or predatory relationships among humans, at the expense of symbiotic relationships. In order for the fourth option to take effect, the conquest-resisting tribe is forced to imitate—with improved effectiveness—the ways of power initiated by the would-be conquering tribe: because power can be countered only with greater power.

The parable of the tribes [Schmookler writes] is a theory of social evolution which shows that power is like a contaminant, a disease, which once introduced will gradually yet inexorably become universal in the system of competing societies. More important than the inevitability of the struggle for power is the profound social evolutionary consequence of that struggle once it begins. *A selection for power among civilized societies is inevitable.*²⁶

²⁴Andrew Bard Schmookler, *The Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution*, Second Edition, State University of New York Press, 1995.

²⁵According to Schmookler: “Power may be defined as the capacity to achieve one’s will against the will of another. The exercise of power thus infringes upon the exercise of choice, for to be the object of another’s power is to have his choice substituted for one’s own.” (p. 20.) Schmookler’s *ways of power* thus correspond to the predatory relationships discussed above.

²⁶Schmookler, 1995, p. 22, emphasis in the original.

When I first encountered it, I did not want to hear this argument: for I held at the time what I imagined to be more idealistic, less cynical views. However, I was not able to refute Schmookler to my own satisfaction; so, I courageously occupied my attention with more “cheerful” interests. The parable of the tribes has not gone away meanwhile, and human events have continued unswervingly toward their inevitable intersection with “destiny”—not in any way contrary, so it seems, to what follows from Schmookler’s parable.

In Schmookler’s view, as we have seen with von Mises’s account of the emergence of money, the emergence of the ways of coercive power may be seen similarly—like it or not—as a virtually “organic” development among humans; both of which seem to have about them the quality of *inevitability*.

When you come right down to it, how else could it have been? People have needs, and desire goods and services they cannot fulfill for themselves. They discover that their needs and wants can be fulfilled by others; and also that they have goods and services desired by others. And so trade naturally develops among diverse groups of people; and some goods emerge as being particularly useful for facilitating such commerce, as described by von Mises. What could be more natural than that?

Then, how long was it likely to be, before somebody got the idea of fulfilling their needs *at the expense* of some of those “others,” without compensating them in trade? These people may be presumed to have understood that in order to live, something or somebody had to die. So what was the difference between killing or robbing an animal in order to live, and killing or robbing another human for the same reason? So long, of course, as those “others” were not members of your own family, or tribe, or species—unless maybe they were?

Schmookler seems to agree with me about the ambiguity of the distinction between “civilization” and “savagery.”

War [Schmookler writes] is a problem of civilization. Our language obscures from view the true nature of the step our species took into the civilized state. “If only people would behave in a more civilized fashion,” we say, “we would all be better off. Our security is threatened by outbreaks of savagery.” Perhaps we civilized folk are projecting our own savagery onto the comparative innocents of the primitive state. Perhaps the apparently inappropriate connotations of terms like “civilized” and “savage” reflect the ethnocentric bias of those whose legacy has shaped our language. Or perhaps this distortion should be seen as part of the means by which our systems seduce us into giving them our allegiance and unquestioning service. But really it is with civilization that human “savagery” becomes an agonizing part of the human

condition. As civilization dawns, the ground of human existence turns an unearthly shade of red.²⁷

Schmookler cites numerous sources corroborating that, prior to the emergence of “civilization,” warfare was virtually unknown among Paleolithic and Neolithic peoples; and that conflicts among them, when they occurred, took place on such a limited scale that they can hardly be described as “war” in the context in which the term is applied among “civilized” peoples today.²⁸

Those who see in our species a threat to the survival of the entire ecosystem [Schmookler writes], who look upon the carnage we inflict upon our own kind, and who regard the ever-growing mountains of armaments as a manifestation of insanity also seem to suffer guilt for belonging to so dangerous a species. Using a very commonsense view of human action, they regard the unquestionable destructiveness of our works as indisputable proof of the monstrosity of human nature.

The parable of the tribes does not hold that view. That theory offers no indictment of human nature. The irresistible social evolutionary forces that have swept us along since the breakthrough to civilization have depended very little on human nature for their origin and their direction. All that was required was that we be creative enough to develop culture to a certain point of freedom from natural limits, and that we be capable of (not necessarily inclined toward) aggressive behavior. . . . We have no need of Ardreyesque²⁹ images of bloodthirsty primate hunters to explain the bloodiness of civilized history. Thus any creature who met those two requirements would have been condemned to a similar fate. Its nascent civilized culture would, like ours, have become caught up in the parable of the tribes, its social evolution compelled toward power maximization with all its destructiveness. Similarly, wherever else in this immense universe life may have evolved, and evolved to

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

²⁸In an article dated 14 September 2009, Schmookler qualified this mild assessment of Paleolithic and Neolithic people, on the basis of subsequent anthropological evidence—but maintained that even if early tribes were more aggressive than he had at first supposed, this still does not upset the thrust of the parable of the tribes. See Schmookler, *THE PARABLE OF THE TRIBES After a Quarter Century: A Revision*. www.opednews.com/articles/THE-PARABLE-OF-THE-TRIBES-by-Andrew-Bard-Schmoo-090914-647.html

²⁹Robert Ardrey, 1908-1980, author of the widely read books, *African Genesis*, 1961, and *The Territorial Imperative*, 1966, which attributed to our hominid ancestors a viciously predatory character.

the point where a cultural creature has broken free of biological constraints, we may suppose that the same problem of power has arisen.³⁰

Schmookler addresses von Mises's argument, quoted above, that "If we scrutinize the meaning of the various actions performed by individuals we must necessarily learn everything about the actions of collective wholes."

For some [Schmookler writes] it seems logically necessary that civilization is a mirror of man, the product of human choices. Is not history made by people acting deliberately? Therefore, must we not conclude that deliberate human choices must rule the course of social evolution? Excluding such extra-human forces as earthquakes and climatic shifts, is it not inescapable that history reveals the nature of our species writ large?

. . . This logic is so common because it is an outgrowth of the bias of much of our Western scientific tradition according to which the whole is merely the sum of its parts. Employing the logic of such reductionism, it has been asserted at various times that chemistry is only physics, that biology is only chemistry, that psychology is only biology, and (as in this instance) that aggregate human phenomena are only psychology. By this reasoning, the ultimately satisfactory explanation of so aggregate a phenomenon as "the evolution of civilization" would be expressed not in terms of human choices and actions but in terms of physics. . . . If you understand the pieces, you will understand the whole.

What is wrong with this approach? What is the whole besides the sum of its parts?

The whole is the way the parts are put together. The higher level of organization is the structure in which the parts act. By determining the environment of the constituent elements, the structure shapes how the elements act. The behavior of the parts is therefore fully explicable only in terms of the surrounding whole.³¹

Schmookler goes on to examine the meaning of "free choice"—not in terms of the age-old controversy of free will vs. determinism, but in terms the spectrum of choices people actually have available under varying circumstances.

He uses the example of a man walking on an empty street, confronted with a pistol barrel thrust into his back, and offered the choice, "Your money or your life!" This is naturally no choice at all, because it is "offered" under duress of life-threatening coercion.

³⁰Schmookler, 1995, p. 31.

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

Alternatively, he invokes the image of a fire breaking out in a crowded theater: a circumstance chosen by no one, with which everyone present must deal, somehow. If someone with a commanding voice takes charge immediately, and directs people to make orderly use of the exits—and the audience respond cooperatively—an orderly exit might be achieved. Otherwise, the anarchy of panic may quickly sweep the theater, leaving each individual the unchosen choice of remaining seated, or joining the stampede toward an exit, probably either trampling others, or being trampled in turn. “Individuals who are neither murderous nor suicidal may be forced to choose between murderous and suicidal courses of action.

“When unchosen overarching circumstances foreclose all acceptable options,” Schmookler notes of these examples, “the subsequent choice cannot be regarded as a free one.”

The parable of the tribes [he continues] shows how civilized peoples have been compelled over millennia to make such unfree choices. The anarchic system of civilized societies has indeed been like a crowded theater on fire. Perhaps worse, for there has been no real chance of introducing a beneficial order (at least until now). The historical scramble for survival among inevitably competing societies has been like a panic in slow motion. And peoples who under more benign circumstances might have opted for a gentle and vital approach to human life have been forced by the emergent order of civilized societies to choose between murder and suicide.³²

The logic of the parable of the tribes seems to be as inescapable as it may be unwelcome. Schmookler compares it with classic Greek tragedy. “We are like the hero who cannot escape the fate described before his birth by an oracle. As the old and chastened Oedipus says of himself in *Oedipus at Colonus*, we have suffered our deeds more than we have acted them, have been more the victim than the criminal.”³³

In summary:

1. Humans are naturally observant, resourceful, inventive, adaptable—all admirable qualities, endlessly useful for thriving on a lush planet.
2. Some observant, resourceful, inventive Paleolithic individual notices that the food his people eat grows from seeds—and experiments with planting seeds deliberately, and nurturing their growth.

³²*Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 32.

3. Further experimentation gradually discloses the basic secrets of agriculture, and enables humans for the first time to produce their own food—thereby liberating themselves forever from the tyranny of ecological restraint.
4. The discovery spreads from tribe to tribe, and people who had sustained an adequate but not always certain livelihood on the bounty of Nature, are now able to thrive in even greater abundance, producing more food whenever more food is needed.
5. Human populations grow: and agricultural production improves, and expands.
6. Human populations grow: and inevitably, sooner or later, collide with other growing human populations.
7. Competing interests can no longer be resolved peacefully; resort is made to power; the victor triumphs over the vanquished, with one of the four results described above (p. 13).
8. Facing similar circumstances, other tribes either resort to power themselves, or prepare to defend themselves against those who would.
9. Thus, the contagion of *coercive power* is released irrevocably into the world, and willing or unwilling, becomes the dominant factor in human life, everywhere, always—until this very day and hour.
10. Whose “fault” is all this? Who are “the bad guys,” and who are “the good guys?”

With this overarching process firmly established, the name of the game, for everybody, like it or not, is *power*: “the capacity to achieve one’s will against the will of another.” Here’s the deal: One’s will either prevails over the wills of others, or he submits without choice to the will of others. Maybe *nobody* really likes this deal; for after all, what is there to like about it? Nevertheless, it is the universal human condition that emerged several thousands of years ago, as “naturally,” and as “organically,” as anything that has ever lived and grown upon this planet. And it is the bedrock foundation of “civilization.”

Therefore, in answer to our unanswered question (p. 11) as to how the “organic” emergence of money became the exclusive prerogative of “the rich and powerful,” instead of the universal practice among everybody engaged in interpersonal commerce: *Of course* money is an instrument of power; and *of course* the powerful would have taken whatever measures they found necessary to keep exclusive control and use of it, and keep the making of it as their exclusive prerogative. It’s a no-brainer—once you understand the

name of the game. Money has become probably the most potent instrument of power in the formidable arsenal of the “power-elite.” There’s only one little hitch-up. . . .

3 It Doesn’t Work

Not only *money* doesn’t work. The *whole bloody mess* doesn’t work; and was doomed to catastrophic failure from the day the first Paleolithic horticulturist put a seed into the ground, lo! these many thousands of years ago. The reason it doesn’t work. . . . Well, I’ll get to that, in a minute.

But first, I need to remind you, as stated in *The Writing on the Wall #4* § 4.2 Belief, and quoted above (p. 8), that this is just my take on all of this, on the basis of the fragmentary flotsam and jetsam that happens to have drifted within my short horizon of awareness. To me, it is *believable*—meaning, *able to be believed*. You will have to decide for yourself whether it is believable to you; and having decided that, whether you actually do believe it; or not.

O.K. The reason “civilization,” top to bottom, doesn’t work—well, actually, in the largest sense, “civilization” *does* work: in fulfilling the vital function for which it was . . . ah, “intended:” *the womb for the gestation of infant humanity*.

Top to bottom, beginning to end, “civilization” was, and remains, an instrument of naked *power*—often “clothed,” however, in benign and appealing raiment. Every “civilized” institution, such as education, religion, government (of course), the media, entertainment, industry . . . everything “civilized,” is first an instrument of power; or is tolerated because it does not interfere with the exercise of power. Now this is not all a “bad thing,” and Schmoookler goes into how the various “powers that be” (some of them) learned early that power is more easily maintained when unopposed, than in the face of opposition. The more “tyrannical” powers have faced greater difficulties, and have often been significantly shorter lived, than the more “benign” powers.

For of course, the exercise of power is a precarious enterprise, subject always to usurpation by the rise of a more potent power. So perpetual warfare rose with “civilization,” and is a prominent and unavoidable feature of the “civilized” human condition. Too bad. Can’t be helped. It just “goes with the territory.” So it has always been, for the past five or six thousand years, or however long it has been from where, historically, you like to place the rise of “civilization.”

Only today, the wheels are coming off the whole contraption, and it is skidding to an abrupt halt: because (I am suggesting) humanity have reached the end of our “gestation period,” and the time has at last arrived for us to be born as a fully formed *human race*.

3.1 Red Sky at Night

This is a time,³⁴ for all humanity, that certain individuals have sometimes called “the dark night of the soul.” It is the time and place where all paths vanish; where darkness is complete; where hope fades, and dies. Jesus of Nazareth, dying on the Cross, is said to have cried out in despair, “*E’li, E’li, la’ma sabachthani?* that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (*Matthew 27:46*) That was Jesus’s “dark night of the soul.” Today, everybody on Earth are experiencing ours.

Yet it is also during “the dark night of the soul,” according to some who have endured the ordeal, when one sometimes reaches a catharsis, transcends the “dark night,” and welcomes the dawn of a new day, in which the nightmares of the past have no part. Ours is a planetary, or a collective human “dark night of the soul”—yet von Mises was not entirely “wrong” in stating that all collectives are composed of individuals. Each of us are experiencing our “dark night of the soul,” at once individually, and together—and “how it all turns out” may be decided by each of us, for each of us, individually.

Now if you are willing, I shall share with you my vision, such as it is at the moment of writing, of “how it all turns out—*maybe*.” The *maybe*, of course, is for a number of reasons, such as: 1) nothing in this world is certain; 2) as Schmookler makes clear, one’s available choices may be preempted by the choices of others; such as 2.1) what the people in Japan decide to do, or not do, about their ongoing nuclear accident at Fukushima;³⁵ and 2.2) what the people in the rest of the world decide to do, or not do, to help them out; 3) possibly imminent circumstances of which no one on Earth is aware, or able to imagine.

3.2 Vision of a “Post-Civilized” Dawn

My vision of “how it all (might) turn out” relies upon a few provisional assumptions, or beliefs about “how things are” that have been discussed in prior essays. These were originally presented as *myths*, on the basis of the idea that myths are the closest anyone can come to a functional understanding of “reality.” I still believe this is essentially so; however, calling them myths may in retrospect have been an unfortunate choice of words: For to practically everybody in the English-speaking world, a *myth* is assumed by default to be *untrue*, or indistinguishable from a *superstition*; whereas I was endeavoring to use the term to indicate the provisional and uncertain nature of what is usually called

³⁴This Subsection introduces a sequel, in a sense, to a section in Schmookler, 1995, Red Sky at Morning: The Dawn of Civilization and the Rise of Warfare, pp. 74-81.

³⁵Discussed in Grahn, *A Meditative Visualization of Everything*, 2012, § 3.1 Shift Into a Minor Key, pp. 32-37; wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#fractal—and discussed also below, § 4 The End.

“knowledge,” or “fact.” Accordingly, here I shall amend my terminology, and call them *principles*. In particular:

3.2.1 The Principle of Complementarity

This has been discussed above (pp. 4-5), and in *The Writing on the Wall #1* § 4.1 The Myth of Complementarity. It vastly expands the applicability of Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle beyond the originally assumed scale of quantum events, and implies complementary relationships mutually exclusive of observation or “knowledge” at all scales within Cosmos.

3.2.2 The Principle of Repeating Patterns

This has been discussed in *The Writing on the Wall #1* § 4.2 The Myth of Repeating Patterns, and implies that there is never only one of anything. Where there is one, it may be relied upon that there are many others of the same kind, even if none other than the one have been discovered, or observed. This applies to snowflakes, atoms, newly discovered specimens of previously unknown species, Earth-like planets—and to beings who, like humans, are capable of purposeful action aimed at intended results.

3.2.3 The Principle of Metaconsciousness

This has been discussed above (p. 7); in *The Writing on the Wall #1* § 4.3 The Myth of Metaconsciousness; in *The Writing on the Wall #3* § 7 Consciousness, and Metaconsciousness; and in *The Writing on the Wall #4* § 4.1 Metaconsciousness. It implies that intent, and purposeful action, may not be at all unique to the human residents of planet Earth, but in accordance with the Principle of Repeating Patterns, are likely to be operative anywhere and everywhere in Cosmos, in association with networks of information exchange of sufficient size and complexity—exemplified by, but not limited to, the human nervous system.

3.2.4 The Principle of Universal Reciprocity

This has been discussed in *The Writing on the Wall #1* § 4.4 The Myth of Universal Reciprocity. It implies that every thing throughout Cosmos is reciprocally related to, and in some way—potentially if not actually—interactive with every thing else. Recent discoveries in quantum physics of non-local interactions among and between complementary entities in “no time” suggest the possibility of metaconscious information exchanges with

no temporal or spacial limitations whatsoever. Intuitive analogies with the relationship between human consciousness and the human nervous system suggest the possibility of "Cosmic Consciousness" of limitless scope. What else it implies probably lies entirely beyond contemporary human imagination.

3.2.5 The Vision

In keeping with the Principle of Repeating Patterns, the simple presence of humans on Earth implies the presence throughout Cosmos of many other beings, capable like ourselves of purposeful intent, inventiveness, creativity, and resourcefulness. If so, our *brief* presence here as an identifiable species suggests that there might be many others like ourselves "out there"—significantly *senior* to us, and having many capabilities far in advance of our own. Indeed, there are numerous accounts, at least some of which are difficult to dismiss, claiming human observation and/or actual contact with such beings; whose very presence here strongly implies many capabilities in advance of ours. If they come here from "somewhere else," then they have decisively trumped our abilities at a stroke: for unless I am mistaken, nobody on Earth is able by any means to go "anywhere else."

Now if the compulsion to power illustrated by the parable of the tribes were in Cosmic operation at all times and places—and particularly if we have indeed been visited here by beings from "somewhere else"—a provocative question emerges: *Why have they not plundered us, or enslaved us, or annihilated us?*

So far, all the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" we have suffered have been inflicted upon us mostly by ourselves—or by each other, our fellow humans; and not at all, so far as we are able to perceive, by "aliens from outer space." This suggests that the universe "out there" is either uninhabited—which by reason of our presence in it seems so unlikely as to be *unbelievable*—or is significantly more benign a place than we have to date caused our planet to be.

Further, as quoted above (p. 15), Schmookler observed that "wherever else in this immense universe life may have evolved, and evolved to the point where a cultural creature has broken free of biological constraints, we may suppose that the same problem of power has arisen." On the basis of our experience here on Earth, and by the logic enumerated above, pp. 17-18, this is certainly a plausible statement.

If we may assume, on the basis of the Principle of Repeating Patterns, that we are not alone; that there are beings like ourselves "out there;" that on the basis of reported encounters with such beings, we may be sure that spacefaring beings exist far in advance of ourselves technologically, who could, but have not molested us—then we are given persuasive reason to believe that such benign, spacefaring beings must have, like our-

selves, encountered the parable of the tribes, and dealt with it successfully. Otherwise, they would have annihilated themselves, as we are in imminent jeopardy of doing to ourselves, and would never have ventured beyond their home solar systems.

If we can say this much, then we have surely said a mouthful: because it means that *the parable of the tribes is not insurmountable*. There may be a way beyond Schmookler's parable that does not involve planetary self-immolation. These are encouraging grounds for optimism; and it has often proven true that belief that a solution exists is more than half way to finding it.

By the Principle of Metaconsciousness, and the Principle of Universal Reciprocity, we may plausibly imagine ourselves as part of an aware, purposeful, benign Whole, everywhere and always present, within Whom there may be *nothing* without an intended purpose.

Every Blossom, every Bee,
Every Leaf on every Tree,
Every Snowflake, every Drop in every Sea,
Every Atom, every Planet, Star, and Galaxy
Is a Part, and has a Place
In the Whole that forms the Face
Of Living, Loving Divinity.

If so, then we may plausibly imagine a benign and embracing *context* for our planetary "dark night of the soul." We have no obligatory ties to the widespread myth among "civilized" humans that our lives are meaningless, purposeless, and highly improbable "accidents," in a dead, purposeless, and meaningless universe; destined inevitably for the eventual oblivion from whence it inexplicably came. Perhaps such myths serve the purposes of coercive power: by crippling the mind, and breaking the spirit of those who would otherwise yearn for the unfettered liberty essential to the fulfilled potential of humanity; but they have no purpose for those who actually aspire to achieve it.

The living, loving Cosmos in which we find ourselves does not function on the basis of power—"the capacity to achieve one's will against the will of another." That is why the ways of power that have prevailed on Earth among humans for the past few thousand years are today skidding to a standstill. Because that is not the way Cosmos works.

Power doesn't work on Earth either—any more. It may have, "once upon a time," for the temporary purpose of nurturing humanity; but the sun has set for the regime of power, and the sky is red with promise of a beautiful day in the morning—after we pass our "dark night of the soul." The "dark night" is the necessary birth trauma through which all must pass who would grasp the liberty beyond the discipline of the biological

constraints that regulate the lives of all those who are not prepared to govern themselves. It is “the end of the world” for coercive power.

Our ancestors, surely with no comprehension of the significance of the step they were taking at the time, thousands of years ago launched the human bid for unfettered liberty when they planted the seeds from which they learned to make their own food. They did this, not knowing why, because it is the destiny of humankind to take our place as gods and goddesses beside our peers in Cosmos—a destiny far more easily expressed in words than achieved in fact.

In order to walk as gods and goddesses, it is essential to be godlike. This lies within the human potential, as a forest lies potentially within an acorn. But an acorn is not a forest, and our ancestors were not gods—and so, they fell into the toils of power: the crucible in which gods are forged.

Thus our challenge, during this “dark night of the soul,” is to learn how to walk as gods: to learn how to be godlike: to *learn how to be human*, and fulfill the full godlike human potential. Where shall we begin?

Through the murk and darkness, some of us can at least dimly make out that the “house of cards” built by coercive power is collapsing all around us; and by morning there will be nothing standing where it once stood. So perhaps we can glean a “positive” lesson, even from a “negative” example: *Do not do as the lords of coercive power have done*. It doesn’t work. What does work?

Although much has been laid waste by the toils of power, yet still many examples of *what works* surround us—and may even be found within us. Perhaps within each of us are the richest and most instructive examples available, because they are so intimate, immediate, and always accessible. How do you like to be treated? If you were a conscious, aware, sensitive, fully alive planet like Earth, hosting with unconditional love, and boundless generosity, innumerable species and populations of living beings, including infant gods and goddesses in human form, how would you like them to treat you? The way the lords of coercive power have treated her until the present moment, for the past several thousand years? Or differently? If differently, differently how? “Go thou, and do likewise.”

These are not questions, and this is not a process, to which anybody may contribute usefully on behalf of anybody else. The “dark night of the soul,” even on a planetary scale, is still a “do-it-yourself” project. Nobody can teach anybody else how to be a god, or a goddess, or how to be human. For all of us, this is still uncharted territory. We’ve never been there before—just as a birthing fetus can have no conception of what adventures await beyond the womb. “You have to be there.” And in order to “be there,” you have to “get there.” How? Any way you can. That *works*.

There are many reasons to believe, however, that we are not alone, or without capable guidance. If Cosmos is alive, intelligent, purposeful, and doesn't operate on the basis of coercive power, we may have to ask for guidance, and possibly demonstrate that we are willing and able to learn to correct the culturally habituated patterns that have brought us here, and replace them with different patterns that can take us beyond our "dark night of the soul." Such guidance may not be pressed upon us unasked; yet may be readily available in response to our invitation. This may be a matter that can only unfold on an individual basis, and different individuals may have different experiences. None of us know what to expect—which may be a crucial reason guidance is essential, and should be sought.

4 The End

In any case, we have now reached the place from which some of us may see that the ways of coercive power do not work; and we can imagine vividly how that path might very plausibly play out.

In the wake of the 11 March 2011 earthquake off the east coast of Honshu, right now, at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, Fukushima, Japan, there are 1,535 spent fuel rods, weighing approximately 460 tons, in the fuel pool at Fukushima unit number 4, that must be kept submerged at all times in circulating cooling water, in order to keep them from heating up through their long-term residual nuclear radiation, and exploding into a burning, melting mass of nuclear fission products. The spent fuel pool at Fukushima unit 4 is situated 100 feet above the ground, inside a structurally damaged seven-story building without a roof.³⁶ Situated some 50 meters (yards) away from unit 4, there is another common fuel pool containing an additional 6,375 spent fuel rods, or another 1,912 tons of highly radioactive long-term nuclear waste. There is reasonable concern that if the spent fuel pool at Fukushima unit 4 runs dry for any reason—such as another earthquake large enough to topple the building in which the unit 4 fuel pool now resides—the resulting conflagration could involve the additional nuclear waste in the nearby common fuel pool. This "worst case" scenario would of course occur outside of any containment whatsoever, and insert enormous volumes of radioactive fission products directly into the atmosphere, and the immediately adjacent Pacific Ocean.³⁷

³⁶There is a photograph of Fukushima unit 4 posted here:
akiomatsumura.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/reactor-4.jpg

³⁷Much of this information is provided in greater detail, including videos, and links to other sources, in the article, *The Fuel Pools of Fukushima: THE GREATEST SHORT-TERM THREAT TO HUMANITY* by Washington's Blog. www.globalresearch.ca/PrintArticle.php?articleId=30207

In that scenario—or even the “milder case” not involving the common spent fuel pool—Fukushima would be unapproachable by any human. Tokyo/Yokohama, 150 miles to the south, would become uninhabitable, and would have to be evacuated immediately. The Tokyo/Yokohama urban area is the most populous in the world, with an estimated population in the current year 2012 of 37,126,000.³⁸ Evacuated to where?

The cascade of consequences from this unfortunately quite plausible eventuality seems endless. For instance, 330 miles southwest of Fukushima, as the winds blow, lies the 17,000,000 urban population center of Osaka/Kobe/Kyoto.³⁹ If Tokyo/Yokohama were to require complete evacuation—never mind where—it is difficult not to imagine the population of Osaka/Kobe/Kyoto, at the very least, being severely disrupted as well—along with Nagoya lying between them, with a 2012 population of 10,027,000.⁴⁰ We have just tallied up a combined urban population of 64 million people potentially affected directly by a single additional contingency at Fukushima. However, the cascade of consequences is not confined only to the island nation of Japan.

The spilling of the unit 4 fuel pool, and the ignition of its contents, would release into the open air and surrounding waters an estimated ten times the cesium-137 that was released during the Chernobyl Disaster in 1986.⁴¹ Cesium-137, according to the cited article, has a half-life of 30 years, and “gives off penetrating radiation as it decays and can remain dangerous for hundreds of years. Once in the environment, it mimics potassium as it accumulates in the food chain; when it enters the human body, about 75 percent lodges in muscle tissue, including the heart.”⁴²

So now we’re talking about an escalating nuclear disaster the equivalent, in terms of cesium-137, of “ten Chernobyls.” Maybe nobody can even approach the scene of the accident to attempt to bring it “under control,” or to monitor its progress “on the ground.” It amounts to an ongoing, out-of-control nuclear conflagration that perpetually releases fresh deadly fission products into the planetary environment . . . until when? Until all the available spent nuclear fuel has been burnt up? That’s how a normal fire works, isn’t it? It burns until there is no more fuel left to burn—or until somebody puts out the fire. Who’s going to do that, if nobody can get anywhere near it? Just asking.

³⁸*Demographia World Urban Areas: 8th Annual Edition* (2012.04), Table 1 LARGEST URBAN AREAS IN THE WORLD, p. 16.

³⁹*Demographia, loc.cit.*

⁴⁰*Demographia, loc.cit.*

⁴¹*The Worst Yet to Come? Why Nuclear Experts Are Calling Fukushima a Ticking Time-Bomb.*
www.alternet.org/environment/155283/the_worst_yet_to_come_why_nuclear_experts_are_calling_fukushima_a_ticking_time-bomb?page=entire

⁴²*Ibid.*

But it seems only to get worse. *If* the out-of-control, unmonitored nuclear fire in the unit 4 fuel were to spread to the common fuel pool 50 yards away, then we're talking about an escalated release of "an amount of cesium-137 equaling a doomsday-like load, roughly 85 times more than the release at Chernobyl."⁴³ How many "Chernobyls" can the biosphere of planet Earth absorb, without going extinct?

Before we're done here, the residents of planet Earth may have a chance to find out. There's more in the pipeline. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is not the only nuclear power plant in Japan. Every one of these sites are also loaded up with spent nuclear fuel inventories, being kept cool in constantly circulating spent fuel pools.

How do I know this? Because from day zero of the "Atomic Age," the unavoidable corollary to nuclear energy has always been nuclear waste—and *it has never been dealt with effectively*, from that day to this. Therefore, every nuclear site, on land or at sea, anywhere in the world, has been, and remains, a producer of nuclear waste; and that nuclear waste has been accumulating now for the past seventy (70) years, and counting. Accumulating? Where? Mostly—almost entirely—in spent nuclear fuel pools like the one threatening to spill its load at Fukushima Daiichi unit 4. Not all of them are up in the air, like that one is (although many of them are); but all of them are contained only by the ordinary industrial buildings that house them—designed to keep the rain out, but not to contain the emissions of a dry and burning fuel pool. Please, somebody—*tell me it isn't so!*

This is one of the "hidden costs" of so-called "clean," and "cheap" nuclear energy. It may seem "clean," when it comes out of the wall, to light a lamp, or run a computer; and it may seem "cheap," on the utility bill. But that is only because the real cost of nuclear energy—along with the *dirtiest dirt on Earth* that it produces—has been for the past seventy years "swept under the rug," as a matter of universal "energy policy," dictated by *coercive wealth and power*, for future generations to deal with—if we can.

Why? *Why* have the lords of coercive power taken such pains, and gone to such excruciating lengths to develop nuclear energy, when surely *they* must have known all along the terrible hidden costs involved in its development?

I suggest you pause here for a deep breath or two. The 9.0 earthquake off the east coast of Honshu 11 March 2011 really did open a huge can of worms; and we're going to have a look into that can of worms—because here we come to the crux of the matter of coercive power in our time. I'm not going to go into the details here. For many of those,

⁴³*Ibid.*

see Joseph Trento's illuminating 9 April 2012 article, *United States Circumvented Laws To Help Japan Accumulate Tons of Plutonium*.⁴⁴

In sum, at the bottom of it all, is the parable of the tribes. As quoted above:

The parable of the tribes is a theory of social evolution which shows that power is like a contaminant, a disease, which once introduced will gradually yet inexorably become universal in the system of competing societies. More important than the inevitability of the struggle for power is the profound social evolutionary consequence of that struggle once it begins. *A selection for power among civilized societies is inevitable.* (Schmookler, quoted above, p. 13.)

The dawn of the "Atomic Age" in 1945, whatever else it may have been, or how it may have been advertised, was in essence an escalation of *power* among the lords of coercive power operating at that time. The parable of the tribes tells us that the nature of power is to proliferate; and sure enough, that is exactly what nuclear arms have been doing, steadily, inexorably, ever since they were first employed in war, in August, 1945.

But 1945 is not when nuclear proliferation began. Albert Einstein, possibly one of the most peaceful men then alive on the planet, prompted by scientific colleagues, drafted a letter to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dated August 2nd, 1939, urging him to develop a nuclear weapons capability: because of the likelihood that Nazi Germany was endeavoring to develop such a weapon. The response of U.S. officialdom was initially sluggish; but finally a major nuclear effort was launched 6 December 1941—the day before Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. It was named the "Manhattan Project" in August 1942.⁴⁵

Again, this was not anybody's preferred choice. It was the mandate of the parable of the tribes: If the Allies were to have lost the power of nuclear arms during World War II, and Nazi Germany were to have gained it, the probable consequences were seen as utterly unacceptable. So, reluctantly, pacifist Einstein recommended to President Roosevelt the development of a nuclear weapon; and reluctantly, the program was put in motion, and the proliferation of power was ratcheted up another notch. Again: Who are "the bad guys?" And who are "the good guys?"

So at bottom, this is what nuclear energy is all about; and what it has always been about, from day zero of the "Atomic Age." The proliferation and escalation of *power*. But

⁴⁴Joseph Trento, *United States Circumvented Laws To Help Japan Accumulate Tons of Plutonium*, National Security News Service, April 9th, 2012. www.dcbureau.org/201204097128/national-security-news-service/united-states-circumvented-laws-to-help-japan-accumulate-tons-of-plutonium.html#more-7128

⁴⁵www.dannen.com/ae-fdr.html

not electric power; not the power to light cities, or even to turn the wheels of industry. All that may have been useful; but it was essentially “window dressing,” to camouflage the nuclear weapons program, and to make nuclear energy—essential for nuclear weapons development—appear more palatable. The name of the *real game* was *power*: the power to resist and overcome the power “to achieve one’s will against the will of another.” And through nobody’s fault, but only as the play-out of an epic human tragedy—or maybe it were better to express it, “species infancy,” or “adolescence”—*it does not work*. Maybe some among us can see that now.

Meanwhile, every one of the nuclear waste sites (a/k/a nuclear power plants) that have proliferated around the world have to be manned constantly, and constantly maintained. What if, because of an escalating disaster at Fukushima, that becomes physically impossible? Japan is not the only nation on Earth with multiple nuclear waste sites. Chances are, there’s one near you, wherever on Earth you happen to live—although “near” is a relative term, and doesn’t have to be “right next door” to be “too close for comfort.” Right now, “the other side of the Pacific Ocean” is “too close for comfort,” for those living in North America; and every nuclear waste site maintains a constantly growing inventory of nuclear waste, mostly in the form of spent nuclear fuel in circulating nuclear fuel pools.

Chain reaction is a term that springs from the earliest beginnings of the “Atomic Age,” way back in 1942; when the first nuclear chain reaction was secretly ignited beneath the West Stands of Stagg Field, University of Chicago, thereby demonstrating the essential “proof of concept,” from which followed the “Atomic Age.”

However, at the time, it is doubtful that anybody even came close to imagining that a “chain reaction” might eventually be ignited on Earth, potentially involving hundreds of nuclear waste sites dotted all around the world—and the unequivocal *end of all biological life* on this planet. Since March 2011, such a “chain reaction” seems much more imaginable.

Does that sound too “theatrical” to you? Too “melodramatic?” Too “alarmist?” Maybe so—but before dismissing these speculations out of hand, you might want to check out Michel Chossudovsky’s On-line I-Book, *Fukushima: A Nuclear War without a War*,⁴⁶ which brings together a broad and detailed collection of corroborative information about the nature and long-range implications of the Fukushima Disaster.

Anyway, this has been one imaginary scenario of *The End*—for humanity, and for all life on planet Earth. It is not a prophesy of “What is Going to Happen.” It is a possibility that seems to be “hanging by a thread,” and could be set in motion by a single earthquake,

⁴⁶Michel Chossudovsky (Editor), *Fukushima: A Nuclear War without a War: The Unspoken Crisis of World-wide Nuclear Radiation*, January 25 2012. globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=28870

too near to Fukushima, before the people of the world rally round and deal with this “accident waiting to happen;” before it happens; if we can.

Of course, the “accident waiting to happen” has already happened; and there remain several hundred others like it around our planet, still “waiting to happen.” But although the one in Fukushima is “bad enough,” it has not yet developed its fully extended potential for catastrophe. So far, its full potential is only a plausible speculation—at least, it seems plausible to me. It could happen, but it hasn’t happened yet; and maybe it won’t. There may still remain other possible scenarios, with other possible outcomes.

5 The Beginning

As discussed above in § 3.2.5 The Vision, the parable of the tribes seems to furnish an unchosen planetary mandate among humans which, willing or not, has been operative for the inexorable proliferation of coercive power throughout human history so far; yet does not seem to be operative on a Cosmic scale. If it were, we Earth-humans should have been attacked before now, and either annihilated or enslaved by beings vastly more *powerful* than ourselves. This has not happened; although there are reasons to believe that we have been visited by such beings, from early in our history, to the present time.

If as Schmookler predicts, the parable of the tribes lies in wait for any species, from here, or “elsewhere,” that is able to break free of the kinds of ecological/biological constraints that govern the balance among all species resident on planet Earth (excepting humans); and if we have in fact been visited by beings from “elsewhere,” who have thereby demonstrated themselves to be under no such constraints either: then we may reasonably surmise, as already mentioned, that there may be a “loophole” in the parable of the tribes, through which we humans may escape its self-destructive consequences. If the parable of the tribes is not “air-tight,” it might be worth our while to seek an opening in it through which we may pass beyond our planetary “dark night of the soul.”

It is an evident fact that, like it or not, we currently share our planet with other humans who have accumulated for themselves many formidable and pervasive coercive powers over their fellow humans. Such powers have ebbed and flowed historically, some rising, others falling; yet never within historical human memory have they been absent, or inactive in human affairs. Such powers are not at all simple. They are complex, multi-form, multi-layered, and richly and subtly woven into the fabric of all “civilized” cultures. The single quality they share in common, that is becoming glaringly evident at this time, in addition to being coercive, is that *they do not work*.

The reason the “patterns of coercive power” do not work is also becoming evident at this time: they are out of sync with the “patterns of Nature;” and are therefore self-negating, self-destructive, and consequently cannot, and will not persist. Another way of putting it is that they are by nature unsustainable, and consequently will not be sustained.

Not everybody, evidently, is able to appreciate this; yet among those who can, at least fractionally, the burning question of the moment is: *Can any of us pass beyond the self-destruction of the “patterns of coercive power;” or must it inevitably consume our entire planet in its self-immolation?* The prior § 4 The End, describes one way in which this global self-immolation might actually come about, quite swiftly, and quite soon. There are doubtless innumerable other routes to equivalent destinations, should that one fail to materialize.

Yet it is probably a safe surmise that virtually nobody is deliberately seeking a “final end” to the human adventure in Cosmos, and that we may expect universal agreement among all Earth-humans in favor of avoiding such a contingency, if we possibly can. How to achieve the substance of this universal human accord is where disagreements are likely to emerge.

Of course, the wielders of coercive power have always had ideas about how to achieve desirable ends; and being the wielders of coercive power, their ideas have generally prevailed in practice over contrary ideas, regardless of relative merit. However, historically—and especially at this time—the combination of their ideas with their power have not yielded uniformly satisfactory results, for themselves, or for anybody else; and practices that have often seemed to work in the past are exhibiting an increasing tendency to work no longer. Since we have been focusing our attention upon it in the prior Section, *nuclear energy* springs readily to mind as an example—although it is by no means the only example that might be mentioned.

These developments are swiftly becoming an escalating source of widespread stress and dissatisfaction among people throughout all strata of contemporary human society; with correspondingly widespread opposition and resistance to its perceived flaws and shortcomings. This is a natural response to the increasingly obvious and fatal flaws in “civilized” societies; which flaws are themselves the automatic agents of “civilization’s” self-executed disassembly.

Therefore, I would like to submit to your consideration the suggestion that opposition and resistance to the flaws and shortcomings of “civilization” are not the most fruitful use of time and human effort; and that more fruitful endeavors would focus upon *functional alternatives* to failed and failing “civilized” practices. “Civilization,” in other words, which top to bottom, from its first inception several thousand years ago has been an artifact of coercive power, is now in the process of its final self-destruction. It requires no assistance

to push the process along: for it has borne the seeds of its own destruction from the very beginning, articulated in the parable of the tribes, and the consequent selection for power that has driven it toward its inevitable end in the present time. Before long, “civilization” will be extinct. If humans remain on Earth, *what shall we build in its place?* We might call it “post-civilization.” What will that “look like?”

These are questions that require the most fertile creativity we can muster among us. Put another way, *If not this, what?* If not what we have had throughout the past thousands of years of “civilized” history, what shall we have instead? These are not easy questions, and they will not yield easy answers. “Civilization” was an easy answer: *Do what we (the powerful) say: or we’ll kill you.* Easy. Simple. A no-brainer. But it didn’t work, doesn’t work, and will never work: because that is not the way Cosmos works; and it now stands in the way of fulfillment of what human beings *are*: infant gods and goddesses, with the *potential* to govern ourselves.

5.1 Governance

“Civilization” was the necessary crucible for the nurture of the potential for human self-governance: for when our ancestors first began, they could no more govern themselves than could a babe in the woods. They needed strong governance—which vanished into air when they put seeds in the ground, and learned how to make their own food. They *needed* easy answers, and the parable of the tribes came into operation, with easy answers. And so, “civilization” was built by the wielders of power upon the backs, and with the toil, of those they conquered. As mentioned earlier, this was not entirely a “bad thing.” It gave infant humanity a place to stand, and a succession of worthy challenges against which to measure ourselves, and glimpse our godlike potentialities. “Civilization” was a sandbox, a kindergarten, in which we have discovered fragments of our limitless human potential in Cosmos. It has served its purpose well enough; and now the time has arrived to move on to the next phase of our Cosmic evolution.

You may have heard of the Barber Paradox. It goes like this:

There is a Barber in our town who shaves every man who does not shave himself. The crux of the Barber Paradox is: Who shaves the Barber?

One resolution of the Barber Paradox is: The Barber in our town is a woman; and she is very beautiful. There is not a man in town who is not in love with her, secretly or openly, and who does not love the tender way she shaves his face, every day. There is not a beard to be seen in our town, and no man shaves himself.

Now here is a “real life” paradox, similar to the Barber Paradox; but somewhat more challenging. Call it the Governor Paradox:

There is a Governor on our planet who governs all those who do not govern themselves. The crux of the Governor Paradox is: Who governs the Governor?

Originally, the Governor was *ecological/biological necessity*; and for those, like humans, who “jumped the fence” of ecological/biological necessity, for instance by making their own food, the Governor became *the parable of the tribes*—with a multiple succession of “little-g governors” wielding coercive power, and waging an interminable sequence of wars.

Trouble is, the parable of the tribes is a “temporary measure” that can work for awhile, but is ultimately a dead-end street: because all its roads lead eventually to Fukushima, Japan; and to similarly catastrophic contingencies. For humans, there is only one possible resolution to the Governor Paradox: *self-governance*. When our ancestors “jumped the fence” of ecological/biological necessity, they made it necessary for their descendants eventually to be among those who govern themselves—or to perish in the attempt.

Fortunately, self-governance is possible; whereas governance of others is not. The inescapable fatal flaw of “civilization” is that it involves the governance of some by others: specifically, the governance of the less powerful by the more powerful. Even with the best of intentions, this is an impossibility, and doomed to eventual failure, as we are seeing in our time. The only being any being can possibly govern is itself. It can kill, or terrorize, or befriend, or defend another being; but the only functional *governance* possible is the governance of each by himself, or herself. Governance of others looks easy, but is ultimately impossible. Governance of self is possible, but not easy. It requires maturity.

The matter was aptly summarized by Peace Pilgrim (1908-1981):

What people really suffer from is immaturity [Peace Pilgrim wrote]. Among mature people war would not be a problem—it would be impossible. In their immaturity people want, at the same time, peace and the things which make war. However, people can mature just as children grow up. Yes, our institutions and our leaders reflect our immaturity, but as we mature we will elect better leaders and set up better institutions. It always comes back to the thing so many of us wish to avoid—working to improve ourselves!⁴⁷

⁴⁷www.peacepilgrim.com/

“. . . working to improve ourselves!” How might we do that? Mohandâs Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) put it this way: “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” I submit to your considered evaluation the suggestion that this is a succinct and simple statement of the essence of *self-governance*. It is simple; but it is not easy. Is it? However: it is essential.

Otherwise, *Who governs the governor?* That is a question to which “civilization” has never had a satisfactory answer. Some “little-g governors” may at rare intervals have made efforts to govern themselves, as well as their “administrative constituents” (conquered peoples). Such “little-g governors” have been few; and the “success,” if any, of the best of them has been mixed. “Civilization” has always been about governing others, and precious little about governing oneself. That is why “civilization” doesn’t work, and is coming to an end. If you would like to contribute to the progress of the evolutionary change from “civilization” to “post-civilization,” then you must *become* that evolutionary change: you must, if you are willing to accept the challenge, *learn how to govern yourself*. Simple. Not easy. Essential.

5.2 Birth

So how does this play out in “the real world?” It looks to me like we need help. We live on a planet with seven thousand million other humans, at the moment when our several-thousand-year “civilized” heritage seems to be hitting the wall, and collapsing. Our only experience of so-called “governance” has been the “governance” of coercive power; and that doesn’t work. If anybody still remembers how to pray, now might be a good time to start doing it.

O.K. Let’s tally up some of our steps so far:

- By the Principle of Repeating Patterns (§ 3.2.2) we have reason to believe that we are not alone; that others like ourselves probably dwell “elsewhere” in Cosmos.
- By the Principle of Metaconsciousness (§ 3.2.3), and The Principle of Universal Reciprocity (§ 3.2.4), we have a basis at least to speculate that intent, and purposeful action, may not be unique to humans, and may plausibly be properties of our own planet, and of Cosmos at large.
- On the basis of a large body of credible and difficult to dismiss eye-witness published accounts,⁴⁸ it is evident that Earth has in the past, and continues to be, visited

⁴⁸For one example among many: Paul R. Hill, *Unconventional Flying Objects: A Scientific Analysis*, Hampton Roads Publishing Company, Inc., Charlottesville, Virginia, 1995.

by beings from “elsewhere,” having technological capabilities far in advance of our most advanced “Earthly” technologies.

- Such “aliens from outer space” evidently possess the *potential power* to defeat the combined military forces of planet Earth, annihilate or enslave Earth-humans at will, and/or plunder our planet even more thoroughly than “civilization” has done. However, whatever else they may have done, such as alleged occasional human abductions, cattle mutilations, etc., they have exhibited little inclination in the direction of major hostility, or conquest.⁴⁹
- The surprisingly benign nature exhibited by visitors from “elsewhere” implies that the parable of the tribes, which exercises such an iron grip upon “civilized” humans, does not apply to our visitors; and so, under some potential circumstances, may not be applicable to humans either.
- The apparent collapse of “civilization,” and the end of the regime of coercive power, seem to bear some resemblances to the birth trauma of an infant human. Being born is not something of which any infant, unaided, is capable. Analogously, the birth of humanity from the womb of “civilization” may require significant assistance—which is imaginably close at hand: possibly in the presence of interested visitors from “elsewhere;” and certainly in the always-everywhere presence of Cosmos at large.
- Perhaps the most effective human policy, under the circumstances, is to “trust the gods:” that where assistance is required, it will be provided; and surrender to the birthing process as it unfolds.

When a fetus is pushed out of the womb, and born into the world, everything that is required is either prepared in advance, or taken care of at the moment of birth. No detail is overlooked: even the infant’s first breath has been meticulously anticipated in advance, and a pair of perfectly formed lungs with no prior purpose inflate for the very first time, exactly when they are required; orchestrated by a complex reflex mechanism primed to operate when, and not a moment before, there is air to breathe.

This is one of a literally numberless combination of successive and simultaneous miracles in the lives of each of us, without which our very existence would be impossible. Why should we fear that the manifold miracles necessary for our ongoing evolutionary

⁴⁹Unless, of course, our Earthly population of “little-g governors” have been clandestinely infiltrated by “aliens from outer space,” impersonating Earth-humans.

adventure will not be forthcoming? Our lives have always been sustained by miracles, every moment of every day we have drawn breath. Rather than fear that they might cease, why should we not be filled with gratitude that the miracles that perpetually sustain us have continued for as long as they have?

More to the point: *What's it all in aid of?* If purposeful action aimed at intentional results is not unique to humans, but is a property of Cosmos at large, does it not follow intuitively that high on the list of priorities for such a purposeful, intentional Cosmic Being would be the *company* of many other purposeful, intentional beings? Suppose for a moment that there actually is such a thing as "Cosmic, Creative, Purposeful Intelligence"—and that *you* are "That:" All of It: the Cosmic Awareness of "All That Is." You have the ability to imagine *anything*; and imagining, bring it into existence—for that is what existence is: Your imaginative creativity at work, or in play.

Trouble is, there's only one of You: because You are "All That Is." There simply is nothing else, anywhere; and nowhere else for anything to be. You are Absolutely *It*. Full stop. Unless . . . You make something. This You can do: because You are imaginative, and creative; and anything You can imagine, thereby *exists*. "Let there be light," You say: and there is light. What would You make?

You might, we may imagine, spend a good deal of "time" (whatever that is) making many different kinds of things, or experimenting with different kinds of imaginative thoughts; and combining them in different ways, to find out how they work together; and gradually perfecting those that work, and discarding those that do not work. In this way, not being in a hurry, You would gradually learn much about how things must be, in order to work together in harmony and balance, and not disappointingly self-destruct.

Eventually, we may imagine, You will have made many kinds of things: such as—oh, atoms, for instance; and galaxies; and stars; and planets; and intricate little beings to populate some of them. And having worked out to virtual perfection how all these things have to be, in order to work, and sustain their presence in Your imaginative creation, in a balanced, mutually nurturing way—there arrives a moment when You are ready to embark upon Your most formidable challenge so far in Your immensely successful creative career. You venture to imagine a being like Yourself, who unlike all You have imagined so far, is like You, capable of *limitless creative imagination*.

This is Your most formidable challenge, because the being You have in Mind is not just another intricate automaton that operates flawlessly within the infinitely complex matrix of principles You have found by timeless experience that work in synergy for the dynamically balanced sustenance of "All Things." The being You have in Mind is one who, like You, *is not bound by anything at all*. It is a being who, like You, is capable of

conducting its own experiments, and making its own mistakes, and learning, as You have, how to make creations that *work*.

It is a formidable and perilous challenge: because once You turn such a being loose, and release all tethers and constraints . . . not even *You* will be able to predict the path such a being might take. Your only "safety net" is reliance upon the principle that only *patterns that work* are able to sustain themselves without self-destruction; and that patterns that don't work . . . don't last, and cannot be sustained. This is a principle that has applied to Your creations; and is the means by which You have learned something, but maybe not everything, about possibilities that might work as well as the Cosmos You have imagined.

For this, You need help; and if You can pull it off, and bring to *birth*, and nurture through infancy, a kind of being able to learn for itself, as You have, what works, and what doesn't work, and is able to thread its way through the labyrinth of errors that You have partially explored in the infinitely infinite domain of *possibility*—aye, *then* You will no longer be *alone*! Is this not a worthy challenge for "Cosmic, Creative, Purposeful Intelligence"—if there is such a thing?

5.3 Back to "Reality"

Sir James Jeans (1877-1946) observed:

The stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the Universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears to be an accidental intruder into the realm of matter.⁵⁰

The idea that "the Universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine" has not gained currency within the domain of "scientific orthodoxy." However, what if "the real reality" *really were* "more like a great thought than like a great machine?" That would change a few things, would it not?

The view of "reality" as "a great machine" is difficult to reconcile with the often observed presence of "visitors from elsewhere" navigating around and within Earth air space. The mechanical distances even among "local" solar systems is measured in light-years, the physical span light is able to cross within the length of a Solar year on Earth. Current understanding of the mechanics of the "great machine" is that no physical object—or radiant flux, such as light itself—is able to move within it more swiftly than light. Therefore, physical beings from "elsewhere," in order to be present here, must

⁵⁰*The Mysterious Universe*, Cambridge University Press, 1930, p. 137.

have traversed vast distances to get here; which must have occupied correspondingly vast stretches of time. Even communication with their home solar systems, according to the mechanics of the “great machine,” cannot be exchanged more swiftly than the speed of light. If so, then interstellar commerce must be conducted at a *v-v-v-e-e-r-r-r-y-y-y s-s-s-s-l-l-l-o-o-o-w-w-w* pace; and it is difficult to imagine what possibly might have motivated it at all.

The view of “reality,” however, as “a great thought,” changes everything. The light from our nearest galactic neighbor, the spiral galaxy in Andromeda known to astronomers as M31, takes about two million, six hundred thousand years to reach telescopes on Earth aimed in its direction. When the light visible from Earth tonight left its source in M31, our early hominid ancestors had at least a million years ahead of them, before they would learn how to kindle fire. However, the distance to M31 may be spanned in an instant—with a thought.

If “reality” were really “a great thought,” instead of “a great machine,” then all our accumulated scientific discoveries, from our most elementary, self-evident certainties, to our most esoteric and abstract leading-edge speculations, would have to be reconsidered. One can easily appreciate why such an idea would not have found favor among the keepers of “scientific orthodoxy.” One can hardly blame them; and as mentioned in § 3 *It Doesn't Work*, every “civilized” institution—including “scientific orthodoxy”—is first an instrument of power, before it is anything else. It has to be, not because that is anybody's choice: but only because it is mandated by the parable of the tribes. One doesn't have to dig very deep to understand how the Universe as “a great machine” is far better suited to the requirements of power than would be a Universe cast as “a great thought.” This will be elaborated further below in § 6 *Speculations*.

Ah, but the edifices of power are now collapsing under their own weight, structural flaws, and imbalances. In consequence—in part—we are now entering a highly nebulous and uncertain time in which *everything* must be reconsidered. The “reality” that we thought we knew and understood during these past few thousands of years, is now morphing into we-know-not-what. Like being born, this may be a terrifying and wrenching transmutation of all that has been familiar—indeed a “dark night of the soul,” for all of humanity. But like being born, it may also be a first step into a realm of possibilities never before imagined in any human mind.

In order to grasp what “may become,” it may be necessary for each of us, who will, to release what “once was.” Or not. If not, then not. It is a choice. Cosmos does not operate on the basis of coercive power. Our choices have been circumscribed, as Schmoekler has described, by the parable of the tribes, and by the “civilization” that rose from that foundation. Now we are passing our “dark night of the soul,” in which *all that* is being

swept away; and those of us who so choose, are facing the dawn of a new day, in which human choices may no longer be circumscribed—or limited in any way.

What might it be like to live in a Cosmos that is experienced as “a great thought,” instead of as “a great machine?” Right now, I am sure that few among us can more than begin to imagine it. We will have a lot to learn. Fortunately, on the basis of our experience, even in the world of the “great machine,” we are assured that we are not alone, and that everything we need will be available to us as we need it. So it was, the last time we were born. We have no reason to expect it to be otherwise this time.

6 Speculations

Of course, everything discussed here so far is highly speculative. There are those—probably many, especially among those who don’t (or didn’t) live there—who may think the situation at Fukushima has been exaggerated, or that the sources I have cited are not “reliable.” My bias leans the other way, and tends toward skepticism of so-called “reliable sources:” because these, like all “civilized” institutions, are first instruments of power, before they are reliable sources of information. But that is probably neither here nor there, either way; because in a Cosmos in which *certainty* seems impossible, naturally perceptions of anything are likely to differ widely among the parties to any non-trivial discussion.

Sir James Jeans’s speculation discussed briefly above in § 5.3 Back to “Reality” that “reality” “begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine” is one I find highly stimulating to further speculation. In *The Writing on the Wall #3: “How Do You Know That You Know What You Know?”*⁵¹ § 3 “Virtual Reality”, I described an imaginary enclosing sphere surrounding each being, upon the inner surface of which each of us projects our subjective interpretation of everything we see, hear, and sense in any way—each our own interpretive rendering, moment to moment, of how we perceive “reality.” Each of our enclosing spheres, I wrote, “is invisible to all who are not enclosed by it, and is the *only thing* visible to the consciousness within it. It is transparent to sensations originating without, which are received by the being’s organs of sense (or ‘extra-sense’); are processed by the being’s central nervous system; and are projected upon the inner surface of the enclosing sphere, producing a ‘3-D, Surround-Sound, Living Technicolor, virtual reality,’ or dynamic map of *local perceptions* of the ‘real reality,’ *as imagined* by the subject being.”

⁵¹wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/download.html#wow03

In this way, we may imagine the circumstance in which each of us lives our entire lives within a mostly imaginary world whose features are projected by our thoughts, ideas, understandings; and influenced by sensations received from “without,” subject entirely to our interpretation of them “within.” Is this not a plausible figurative description of the conditions in which each of us actually live our lives in “the real world?”

If so, then each of us already lives within a world that much more resembles a complex of thoughts and concepts than it does an assembly of interlocked mechanical parts. Now if “the real world” is made of “the same stuff” as our thoughts and concepts about it, then *hay Presto!* “reality” is effortlessly transformed into something that much more resembles “a great thought” than it does “a great machine.”

Such a radical transformation is really quite possible: because it is a transformation only of one’s conceptual interpretation of a “reality” that is otherwise not even slightly changed from whatever it “really is”—yet for those experiencing the transformation “in here,” not “out there,” *it changes everything*.

If the world in which each of us lives is mostly or entirely a fabric woven of our own thoughts, concepts, sensations, and interpretations, then where, if anywhere, should we “draw the line” between our “imaginary world” and “the real world” which we may (or may not) imagine is made out of “real mechanical stuff,” like a “great machine?” We are not only beings ourselves, but are also constituents of larger beings, such as planet Earth; in the same way that we are constituted of smaller beings, such as our individual cells. Therefore, if we must acknowledge the world of our actual experience as a fabric woven of “mind stuff,” how can we evade the corollary that this must be applicable as well to “everything else?”

What I am suggesting is that, for all practical purposes, the only “reality” to which any of us has experiential access is the “imaginary world” that is composed of our individually unique interpretations of all our combined sensations, beliefs, and concepts, imbibed from parents, teachers, “authorities,” books, media, etc. Our interpretation of everything we experience is influenced by what we have learned from any source, and have incorporated within our individually unique corpus of beliefs and disbeliefs. We are naturally convinced at all times that our beliefs and interpretations of our sensations are reliable, and that the “3-D, Surround-Sound, Living Technicolor, virtual reality” we project on their basis is a perfectly accurate representation of “reality,” indistinguishable in every detail from “the real thing”—and indeed *is the real thing*, without any doubt, or hesitation. So most of us naturally believe.

However, when we compare notes with our fellows, we frequently find that our “imaginary world” is not entirely congruent with that of even those who are standing right next to us, observing the same phenomena we are. We observe details that others

overlook; and/or others observe details that have escaped our notice. We attach significance to details that have no, or different significance for others; and vice versa. It is not uncommon, in fact, that different individuals hold such divergent perceptions of “reality” that they may even be led mutually to mistrust one another’s sanity.

Leaving that question aside, it nevertheless emerges, considered in this way, that each of us lives in a “virtual reality,” each of our own imaginative fabrication, composed almost entirely of “mind stuff:” the sensory stimuli conveyed to us through our organs of sensation, as filtered through the combined matrix of our beliefs and concepts about the nature of “reality.” Of *this* is composed the sum and substance of all human experience. Or in other words, in as real and literal a sense as may be expressed in word-symbols, *each of us is the author of our own “reality”*—than which there is no other we can in any way experience.

Now this is something worth pondering: for the vast diversity of human experiences of “reality” indicates that “reality” itself may in effect be variable without limit—the absolute antithesis of a rigid, mechanical system that may “correctly” be perceived in one, and only one way. You may wish to pause here for a moment, and give this a bit of quiet contemplation.

Whether “reality” looks to you more like “a great machine,” or more like “a great thought,” it seems to be as “certain” as anything can be, that the “realities” you and I *experience*, are almost entirely fabrications of our respective imaginations—and they are not alike. The “realities” experienced by any two identifiable beings are not identical, anywhere, ever. The “reality” you experienced yesterday is not the same as the “reality” you are experiencing today: because you have changed in the interval, and the “reality” you experience today reflects the changes you have passed through since yesterday.

What this amounts to is that everything you experience, every moment of every day, is a unique and flawlessly accurate *reflection of who and what you are*, returned to you in a real-time feedback loop that will come to an end only when (if) you do.

Now this may not be entirely “welcome news” to everybody; and you may be able to appreciate how it is a view of things quite unsuited to the purposes of coercive power. In order for the parable of the tribes to function indefinitely, it is essential that “reality” be universally understood, at least in concept, to be like “a great machine,” that may “correctly” be perceived in one, and only one way: the way the *powerful* say it is.

This may be a succinct summing up of the ideal of “civilization” itself: achievement—by force, if necessary—of a unified, global, universal, “correct” (or “politically correct”) understanding of “the great machine,” that is always and only what it is, and not anything else, ever. Absolute. Rigid. Eternal. Impossible. This ideal was exemplified, among a great many other failed or failing attempts at it, in the “Thousand Year Reich”

of Adolph Hitler, and Nazi Germany—which began 30 January 1933, and came to an end 9 May 1945.⁵²

However, as mentioned before, the parable of the tribes is not able to function indefinitely: because the purposes of power are in fundamental conflict with the principles of Nature, cannot be sustained, have run their course on planet Earth, and are in the final phase of collapse and dissolution.

How this “exit proceeding” unfolds may take many different paths. There are approximately seven thousand million humans now inhabiting our planet—each experiencing his or her unique “reality,” reflective every moment of who and what each one of us is. This view of things may be thought of as consisting of as many different “Earths,” and as many different “Cosmoses,” as there are beings experiencing them in our various “realities.” In some of these—possibly in many—the “worst case scenario” at Fukushima, as described above in § 4 The End, may eventuate; leaving in its wake a gray planet Earth, void of life, and dusted from pole to pole with lethal layers of cesium-137, and other long-lived radioactive isotopes—piled in heaps and drifts during succeeding years, as the no longer manned nuclear waste sites around the world decay and collapse in neglect, adding their radioactive poisons to the dead planet’s atmosphere, surface, and oceans.

Other human “realities” may take different paths, reflective of those who are living in them. For some, maybe, the 11 March 2011 earthquake off Honshu may turn out to have been relatively inconsequential after all. In the “realities” of others, perhaps many of the world’s people rally round, and volunteer money, manpower, and whatever else it takes to assist the Japanese recovery from the disaster, and invest whatever is required to stabilize the fuel pools, and encapsulate their contents in “dry cask storage,” with minimal hazard of the radiation exposure of the “worst case scenario.” This would be a very “costly” undertaking—especially if applied to all of the nuclear waste sites on Earth. It might be considered by many, however, to be far less “costly” than the loss of the planet; or even than the loss of Japan.

In this view of things, what “other people” do, or don’t do, may not be very important: because “other people” live within “other realities.” What happens in “your reality,” however, and in “my reality,” are important—to you, and to me, respectively: because *a*) they are reflections of what we are; and *b*) they lie within our legitimate prerogatives to shape as we decide.

Within “your reality,” and “my reality,” we may, depending upon what we decide to do, have an opportunity to “save the world”—“your world;” “my world”—or to contribute to their rescue, and elevation into the next phase of planetary evolution. What shall we

⁵²William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1960.

do? You cannot tell me, and I cannot tell you, what to do. Each of us, however, can tell ourselves; and then do it.

This is the practice of *self-governance*: deciding what needs to be done, and then doing it—regardless of what others decide to, or not to do; or whether they do it, or don't. This is the practice of *being the change we would like to see*.

We may even be "wrong." We easily could be, you know. Our respective "realities" unavoidably have many "holes" in them: vacancies filled in imaginatively, so as to appear "seamless" to us, yet overlooking much of which we are simply not aware. We are likely to err; can hardly avoid it; and I think we should budget for that, as best we can. Fortunately, we are not alone; and ours is a collaborative endeavor, not a solo performance. Complementary to our individual decisions, choices, and actions, are the decisions, choices, and actions of "everything else."

As discussed above in § 5.2 Birth, it makes sense to me that Cosmos—by whatever name you wish to call it—is alive, aware, and purposeful; and that our very *existence* here is no "accident," but is directed by intent. If so, then all of human history and prehistory has taken the course it has with the intent behind it of achieving some eventual outcome. It makes sense to me that the intended outcome has something to do with the emergence of beings capable of *liberty*, unencumbered by the ecological/biological constraints under which all species on Earth live—including our hominid ancestors, before they discovered how to make their own food. This is so because liberty is essential for the exercise of *limitless creative imagination*; which is essential in turn for beings intended for resonance with an alive, aware, and purposeful Cosmos. If so, what is wanted are beings capable of achieving responsible self-governing liberty, in conscious, purposeful synergy with aware, purposeful Cosmos.

At the time, however, our hominid ancestors—as anticipated—were not equal to the challenge of liberty, or self-governance; so the parable of the tribes came into automatic operation, and established the foundation and structure for "civilization," as already described.

It is no "accident" either, that this process emerged on an isolated planet, thoroughly quarantined from other races in Cosmos, that may or may not have passed the ordeal of "civilization." The ascent to responsible liberty and self-governance is perilous, and as we are seeing on Earth today, is not assured with certainty of eventual success. The human race could easily fall into any number of alternative "end games," such as, but not limited to the tragic possibilities that might emerge soon in Japan. In any variation of that eventuality, the experiment on planet Earth would come to a final end, without its intended outcome—and perhaps without hazard to other races beyond our Solar System.

The purpose of the project, however, may be presumed never to have been failure, but instead, the successful birth of another race of beings fully equal to the challenges of unfettered liberty, and responsible self-governance. I believe we may rest assured that every effort is being made to shepherd our infant race through the planetary “dark night of the soul;” which may enable us soon to take our place beside our future peers: the responsibly self-governing Cosmic races.

However, in order for these efforts to fulfill their purpose, we Earth-humans must do our part. At least some among us must achieve responsibility as self-governing beings, fully capable of *symbiotic* relationships with other self-governing beings and races. This is necessarily an *individual* endeavor, to be achieved, or not, by every individual human who undertakes the challenge.

So that, as I see it, is the situation on planet Earth today, for humans, and for all planetary life. The game is in play; the outcome is pending; the clock is running out. Each of us, who will, is eligible to vote in the election of Earth-humanity into the peerage of self-governing Cosmic beings—simply by *becoming* a self-governing Cosmic being.

7 Epilogue

Those of you who are still privileged to view a sky filled with stars at night—why do you suppose they are there? Do you imagine that their only purpose is to decorate the night for the amusement and wonder of humans on planet Earth? For Earth-humans, that is the only “purpose” they have ever served—that, and in more recent times, as beacons useful for navigation on Earth’s oceans. Oh—and lest we forget—they have also fulfilled the “useful function” of making visible to us the “local neighborhood” in a vastly larger Cosmos, without which our Galaxy, nor Solar System, nor planet, nor ourselves, could possibly exist. My, but it is disconcertingly easy to overlook that one, isn’t it? The stars at night, whether we can see them or not, are as vital to our lives as our own hearts, and livers, and brains—which we also cannot see, and often neglect; often also, to our cost.

On the basis of what our astronomers have learned about our Solar System, and surrounding Cosmos, and on the basis of the Principle of Repeating Patterns, it is no longer a very great leap to imagine other solar systems like ours as the homes of other beings similar to ourselves. Here, we have made that leap, with hardly a backward glance; and along with many others before us, have imagined a thriving communion among the stars and galaxies, involving spacefaring beings in many ways similar to humans—and in other ways quite senior to us, having capabilities we may not yet be able even to imagine. And of course, many among us may dismiss such beings as having no substance beyond the fevered imaginations of storytellers and dreamers.

Nevertheless, having recognized that *everybody's* perceptions of "reality" are almost entirely imaginary anyway, we feel quite entitled to imagine the creative ferment of interstellar and intergalactic cultures—no less than anybody else is entitled to imagine an endless vacuum, dusted sparsely with stars and galaxies, void of life, purpose, or meaning.

Accordingly, we have ventured further: to imagine that the "commerce among the stars" has, from our ancestors' earliest and most primitive beginnings on planet Earth, been the aim and purpose of our presence here all along; and that what we have grandly labeled "the sweep of human history" has after all been but the gestation rumblings of our not yet fully formed species identity in Cosmos. Our historians view our past with awe and wonder; whereas we have dismissed it as the obligatory "front matter" of an epic tale among the stars, the opening sentence of which has yet to be written. The question we are asking here is, *Who will write it?*

It will be a collaborative work. Any on Earth who aspire to the privilege and the responsibility of joining our peers—and Cosmos itself—in writing the first sentence of the first chapter of "The Epic of Earth-Humans Coming of Age in Cosmos," in order to qualify, must first make of ourselves *self-governing Cosmic beings*—and in the process somehow derail the momentum of planet Earth's human-engineered destruction. This will be our "Entrance Exam," and it too will be a collaborative work. Those Earth-humans who would undertake it will have help; but our responsibility is to initiate it, and to do what we can to push it forward; even if the best we can do seems too little, too late, and doomed to failure. In all of this, only one thing is certain: if we do not attempt, we will not achieve; and the human experiment on planet Earth will very likely perish, as if it had never been. Give that some thought; and then decide: *What shall I do?*

Thank you for your time, and attention. Don't take any wooden nickels.