

***The Writing on the Wall #8:
“The Emergence of ‘Post-Civilization’”***

J. Harmon Grahn

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1 Foreground, and Background

Everybody goes through life with one person perpetually in the foreground of every view: each person's own self. It is natural and unavoidable that in the experience of every individual, that one person himself looms as the largest, most prominent and important feature in every scene that unfolds, birth to death, in any individual's life. Of course, it is a trick of perspective that nearby objects always appear to be larger than even much larger objects, such as mountain ranges, viewed at a distance; and nothing one experiences is nearer than one's own self. Thus even the entire Cosmos, which forms the background for everything, dwindles to relative insignificance in relation to the self, always in the most immediate foreground. For everyone on Earth, even our nearest stellar neighbor, the Sun, is eclipsed for 12 of every 24 hours, more or less, by the planet under our feet—an insignificant speck in relation to its comparatively vast primary (itself categorized astronomically as a "yellow dwarf") 93 million miles away.

We naturally form habits early, some of us, that to some extent compensate for this trick of perspective. Yet the constant presence, without exception, of the *self* in the most prominent foreground position within any scene, or event we ever experience, has a telling impact upon the views of each of us, regardless of our compensations for it. Our constant foreground presence is like a quiet, persistent drip, gradually wearing away the substance of unyielding stone.

Some of us may even go to the extent of puzzling out this trick of perspective, and reason somewhat to the effect that, "If I occupy the foreground of all my experiences, then everybody else must do the same, in relation to theirs: so that everyone who appears to me as minor details in the background of my experience, must conversely experience me, if at all, as a minor detail in the background of theirs. If my experience has any validity, it cannot be greater than the validity of anyone else's experience; in which, even among my immediate friends and associates, my life probably plays at most a quite minor part."

So far in the "civilized history" of Earth-humans, even this modest effort at puzzling out the trick of perspective that places the individual self in the foreground of every scene seems to be a rare occurrence—with the result in part that our planet is now occupied by seven thousand million humans, each one of whom is to various degrees "taken in" by the illusion that he or she, looming largest in the local view, really is the most important figure in any scene. And of course, in every generation there are those who take extra measures to make themselves large not only in their own experience, but in the experience of many others as well. Sir Winston Churchill, and Adolph Hitler, spring to mind as relatively recent examples of this kind, among many others throughout human history.

Complicating matters further, the illusion that one is the most important figure in any scene . . . is not entirely an illusion! Individuals really are of *Cosmic Significance*: for without individuals, where would *any* of us be? It is the experience of individual beings, from microbes to exceptional heroes or villains, who furnish in sum the *experience of being* for "All That Is:" in the same way that the combined experience of all of anyone's billions of bodily cells furnish the sensations—subliminal, or with conscious awareness—that combine in that individual's life experiences. How else than through the changes experienced by each of its constituent parts can a "whole organism" experience anything?

Indeed, *change* may be said to be the essence of *experience*, at any level, whether what we recognize as "conscious awareness" is involved in it, or not. Without change there can be no experience: thus change and experience seem necessarily to be complementary aspects of the same thing. Even something as "inanimate" as a mountain range may be said to "experience" change during the geological processes of tectonic shifts, volcanic eruptions, or of eroding away, and being washed into the sea.

Additionally, as discussed in prior numbers of this series, each individual is the author—or at the very least, the co-author—of his own "reality;" and consequently *really is* the figure of greatest singular importance to Cosmos: *his version of Cosmos*. In #5 of this series, § 6 Speculations, I wrote:

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.¹

Today, each of us finds ourselves sharing a planet with seven thousand million other humans, each one of whom in turn naturally and unavoidably occupies *the position of central importance* in our respective worlds. Our historical way of dealing with this, and corollary circumstances, we have been calling “civilization:” whereby those with the greatest coercive power dictate—or attempt to dictate—to all those of inferior power, what constitutes, and does not constitute, “reality;” what is “right,” and what is “wrong;” what is and is not permissible in the manner of behavior, belief, etc. among humans. It is swiftly becoming clearer to increasing numbers of us that this is an arrangement that *does not work*, and cannot be made to work, by any coercive means that may be exercised, or imagined.

There is a fundamental contradiction between the nature of things in which each individual is unavoidably the author of his own “reality,” and a “social system” in which the particulars of “reality” are dictated for one and all by those whose “authority” derives entirely from superior coercive power. Either the distinction between what is “real” and what is “unreal” is the natural prerogative of each creative individual to decide, on the basis of how well it works in practice; or creativity and invention among humans are the exclusive privilege only of those with the coercive power necessary to dictate such distinctions to all of inferior coercive power. The latter alternative *does not work*. So: are we “doomed,” or what?

I do not believe that we Earth-humans are “doomed;” although the self-contradictions inherent to “civilization” suggest its “early retirement,” one way or another, before very long. My belief is that “doom” has no significant meaning in an evidently perpetually

¹Grahn, *The Writing on the Wall #5: “Don’t Take Any Wooden Nickels”*.
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unfolding Cosmos; and that "death" is therefore an illusion: which only seems to occur when patterns that do not work, for that reason can no longer be sustained.

When a human body, for example, suffers such sudden or cumulative injury that it can no longer function, it ceases functioning; and the person occupying it is said to "die." Similarly, when the clothes one wears accumulate "wear and tear" (or "go out of fashion") such that their usefulness as clothing is lost, they are replaced by other, more appropriate clothing, and possibly discarded, or possibly recycled, and put to other uses.

The patterns exhibited in the "natural world" (as opposed to many patterns native to the Earth-human "civilized world") exemplify richly interrelated relationships of perpetual cycling. Such patterns *work*, and are consequently sustainable; whereas patterns that lack this sustainable quality cease eventually, and disappear from the Cosmic Scheme. In this way, Cosmos appears to function as a perpetual and inexorable "filter" for selecting, improving, and multiplying patterns that work; and culling out and discarding patterns that do not work: "a wheel that grinds slowly, but exceeding fine."

If Earth-human "civilization" is composed, in whole or in part, of patterns that do not work, then it may be expected with considerable confidence that such patterns will not be sustained, and may eventually be replaced by sustainable patterns that do work. The question we wish to address here is that, in a world populated by many individuals, each one of whom is always in the foreground of our respective views, and of foremost importance in our respective "realities," upon what basis may patterns be formed in which such individuals are able to share *in graceful and peaceful harmony*: a room, a house, a town, a nation, a continent, a planet, or Cosmos at large—instead of *in perpetual and mutually self-destructive suicidal war*?

Countless naturally occurring examples demonstrate, or at least suggest, that such a possibility may exist; yet humans seem to be unique on Earth, in the particular of having the potential for *limitless creativity*; which enables us to bring into manifestation anything we can imagine. This is at once a supremely liberating, and an awful capability. It is liberating, because unbridled liberty is an absolute prerequisite for the exercise of limitless creativity. It is awful, because this is a combination that can bring into manifestation the most sublime and horrifying creations of which the human imagination is capable; and the human imagination is capable of *anything*.

Innumerable examples from Nature suggest, but do not insure, that there might exist within some realm of possibility *patterns that work*, that are applicable to limitlessly creative humans with unbridled liberty; and that there might be ways for such humans to live together without destroying ourselves, one another, or our world. If such patterns exist within the realm of possibility, what are they, and how may they be implemented by Earth-humans, as we are, where we stand, right here, right now? That is the question.

2 The “Secret Ingredient”

In *The Writing on the Wall* #7: “Not All That Can Be Imagined Works In Practice” § 3.6 Love,² Jesus is quoted as having said: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (*Matthew* 5:44, *Luke* 6:27-28) Or in more prosaic paraphrase: “Love those you don’t even like.” Is this “sound advice?” And if so, how—and *why*—might it be followed, with sincerity, meaning, and persistent consistency; and not just as an empty form, giving meaningless motion to effectively meaningless words? How can anybody actually *love* somebody they dislike? Is this not an irreconcilable contradiction in terms, with no possibility of being put into practice in any meaningful way, by anybody?

In § 5 Convergences of the same essay, a sketch is suggested of what a “post-civilized” society might possibly be: “a population of loving, responsibly self-governing individuals who grant to themselves, and to one another, the liberty to make choices, and execute them, without limitation. Because each of them are *loving*, they are particularly deliberate that none of their choices cause harm to themselves, to each other, or to their world. Because they are *responsible*, they take responsibility for any damage that may inadvertently result from any of their choices, and take whatever measures are necessary to repair such damage if it occurs. And being *self-governing*, they require no other governance whatsoever.”

Being *loving* in the sense described means loving without exception, not excluding even those one dislikes; and it applies to every member of such a “post-civilized” society. On the basis of universal human experience, how can such a condition possibly be achieved—or even imagined?

On the basis of universal human experience—*so far*, in the course of remembered “civilized history”—maybe such a condition cannot be achieved, or even imagined. However, “universal human experience” is as yet quite brief. In the overall Cosmic Scheme of things, we Earth-humans haven’t been around for very long at all; and it is quite plausible to suppose that the “universal human experience” so far logged on planet Earth is but a minute fraction of as yet mostly unexplored, unexperienced, and unimagined “universal human possibility.”

As discussed in #7 § 5, “love is *not* a reflexive, knee-jerk response to conditions favoring it; or . . . reserved only for those fortunate enough somehow to ‘fall into it.’ Rather,

²Grahn, *The Writing on the Wall* #7: “Not All That Can Be Imagined Works In Practice”.
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love is a deliberate *choice* that may be made by anybody, under any circumstances, in relation to anything.”

If so, then *to love even those they dislike* really is a possible option for anyone. Yet why would anyone exercise such an option? One plausible reason is because it is a choice that demonstrably *works better* than alternative choices. This may be verified experimentally by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances; and does not rely upon mine, or anyone else’s say-so.

As discussed in #7 § 2 “Civilization”, “the trend of this series of essays has taken the position that human ‘civilization’ is a mechanism that *does not work*: for the reason that all human ‘civilizations’ have been established and maintained by means of the coercive power of the more powerful, exercising their will at the expense of the will of the less powerful.” Yet this is a pattern as old as “civilization” itself, and is all Earth-humans know of “governance.” If it really *does not work*, and cannot be made to work, as contended in this series of essays, then we humans are faced by the formidable challenge of (somehow) arriving from a standing start at alternative human social patterns that do work. This is a tough situation; and it is immediate, and urgent, *right now*, for all residents of planet Earth.

We Earth-humans may not know where we’re going; yet we may know as clearly as we know anything that if we’re going anywhere, *where we are isn’t it*. This may be alarming to many; yet it has the singular virtue of providing powerful and persistent *motivation* that in the past has been much more subdued and obscure than it is swiftly becoming in the present. Earth-humans today, individually and collectively, are faced by a “survival imperative:” such that those who meet it may go on to participate in successive stages of human evolution; whereas those who do not . . . may not. This applies to every individual, and to “civilization” as a whole. The challenge is formidable; and the motivation to meet it is compelling. The outcome, for each of us, and for all of us, remains (for awhile) undecided: and is therefore as rich with limitless possibility, as with the potential for eventual calamity, or oblivion, for Earth-humanity.

The “secret ingredient”—deficiency in which singularly excludes “civilization” from being among the vast majority of mechanisms in Cosmos that manifestly *work*—is *love*. That is all. Yet it is not a matter of there being an absence of love within the matrix of “civilization;” for love is not a complete stranger among “civilized” humans. But there is not enough of it; and mainly, *love is not the foundation upon which “civilization” was built*.

As elaborated in #5 of this series, § 2.2 Wealth and Power, the foundation upon which “civilization” was built is *coercive power*, not *love*; and it was motivated by the fear among ancient humans that unless they developed, and vigilantly maintained a capacity for coercive power themselves, they were sure to be attacked, enslaved, or annihilated by other

humans who had developed such a capacity. Love and coercive power are mutually exclusive, and cannot coexist operationally in a functional system. One or the other, but not both, may form the core of any system, from sub-atomic to super-galactic scales. Some (including myself) believe that love forms the core of Cosmos—which in a single word, is why Cosmos *works*. Coercive power forms the core of “civilization”—which is why “civilization” *does not work*; and why any system built upon such a foundation does not work, and has no permanent or lasting place within the Cosmic Scheme.

This is not a condition, in my view of things, for which anybody, past or present, must take responsibility, or may justly be “blamed.” It appears to me as having been unavoidable for an emerging creative species, such as early Earth-humanity; and I imagine the “birth trauma,” or “dark night of the soul” now challenging us is a familiar ordeal through which many such creative species, elsewhere in Cosmos, may have passed. Now, in our time, and place, it is our turn—to make it, or break it, individually, and as a species. As it plays out, the human drama may not be confined to “third dimensional reality,” or to what we “know,” or think we “know”—any more than the ongoing life of a newborn infant is informed by its experience as a fetus in the womb.

As I imagine it, the Cosmic Scheme is an exquisitely crafted “filter” for selecting, gestating, and nurturing the quality of *love*: for the practical reason that *love* is essential to all systems that *work*; and without it, *nothing works*. Cosmos does its work slowly, patiently, with apparently limitless allowance for all possibilities; and without coercion of any kind. It evolves on the basis of the operational fact that *patterns that work* persist; and *patterns that do not work* desist; and that all things that persist have *love* at their core, and as their foundation.

As I imagine it further, nothing is ever lost within the Cosmic Scheme; for it is perpetual, and “death” as conceived by Earth-humans is an illusion. Thus in our “dark night of the soul,” even for those who do not “make it,” but instead “break it,” it is not “the end.” For the Cosmic Scheme is a “one-way street;” yet it is not a “dead-end street.” There is no “end,” but only the onward evolution, and further perfection of *patterns that work*; and the gradual attrition, and eventual disappearance, of *patterns that don't work*. I imagine that “civilization”—a human-engineered mechanism in which *love* has no essential part—will be among the latter; and that Earth-humans, if any, who survive “civilization,” will be those who have mastered at least the rudiments of loving even those they do not like.

If it is actually “true,” as speculated here, that “death” is an illusion, then what happens to “the rest of us,” who do not “make it,” may be a matter of some interest; and it is more than somewhat mysterious. My guess—although I have no way of “knowing” that this is

so—is that those who fail to master love within a “lifetime” are in some way “recycled,” and may take another shot at it in another “lifetime.”

There are those who believe that people “reincarnate” in the form of an identifiable personality, or spirit, in successive bodily forms in the course of time; and repeat “the cycle of birth and death” many times, presumedly until they “get it,” and achieve the minimal threshold necessary to transcend that repetitive cycle. This belief is discussed at some length in *The Writing on the Wall #2: “Who Do You Think You Are? Anyhow?”*³

Also discussed in that essay is the idea that, with possible exceptions, identifiable personalities do not transcend particular “lifetimes,” as such; yet the qualities they have achieved in “life” are in some way preserved, perhaps in fragmentary form, for further evolution in other “lives,” in diverse times and places. This may be illustrated in what we might call “the Soup Kettle analogy.”

According to “the Soup Kettle analogy,” There exists “somewhere” a “Cosmic Soup Kettle” containing the essential and cumulative “flavors” of all life; and each time a new being is born into a specific “lifetime,” in three-dimensional bodily form, an appropriately proportioned ladle-full of this “life-soup” is poured into it, thereby furnishing the vitality required for the living of a single “lifetime.” The being is then at liberty to live its allotted “life” in any way it chooses; and the choices it makes have the effect of “flavoring” its portion of “life-soup,” given at birth. Some make choices that enrich the “flavor” of their portion of “life-soup.” Others make choices in the course their “lives” that give their portion a “bitter flavor” instead. In all cases, at the end of a “lifetime,” the being’s allotment of “life-soup,” as “flavored” by the conduct of that being’s life, is returned to the “Cosmic Soup Kettle.” In this way, all the qualities of life are blended and stirred into a dynamically evolving “broth,” to the “flavor” of which all living beings contribute by the conduct of their “individual lives.”

This analogy is not my own. I am unsure where I first heard it, so I am unable to attribute it properly; yet it has stayed with me as one possible way of thinking about the repetitive panoply of “birth, life, and death.” It suggests to me that, although individual lives are agents of evolutionary change, what is actually *evolving* are not necessarily individual lives—which, by the choices we make, may either “evolve,” or “devolve”—but rather, it is the overarching quality of *all life in Cosmos* that is evolving: by means of this entirely unconditional and unfettered process, impelled by what may be termed *Cosmic Love*.

³Grahn, *The Writing on the Wall #2: “Who Do You Think You Are? Anyhow?”*.
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Because there is reason to suppose that in the nature of things, only those patterns that work persist, and that all patterns that do not work sooner or later desist, there is likewise reason to suppose that the gradual trend of the “flavor” of the “Cosmic Soup,” regardless of the detailed conduct of the “individual lives” that contribute to it, is in the single direction of “improvement.”

One way *improvement* may be understood is in terms of accumulating *syntropy*, as opposed to accumulating *entropy*. These terms were discussed in #2 § 9 So, What Does It All Mean? (pp. 28-31) in which I explained that *entropy* is the tendency toward mounting chaos; whereas *syntropy* is the complementary tendency toward emergent organization. (In a footnote, I mentioned that “The physicists have named this tendency ‘negentropy,’ which I think is a ‘bass ackward’ approach to something intrinsically positive and creative. I like my word better, and I’m sticking to it.”) In that essay, I also mentioned that

Formerly, I had considered [a preference between entropy and syntropy] to be an arbitrary choice, neither “better” nor “worse” than its opposite choice would be: because overall, regardless of what my, or anybody else’s choices may be, in any particular moment, *syntropy and entropy always balance*. (Maybe.) If so, then anything I do to advance the trend of syntropy is inevitably balanced by some other action, sometime, somewhere, to advance the trend of entropy—and vice versa.

However, symmetrical systems in Nature are often—maybe always—marked by various asymmetries, and there quite plausibly *may be* a bias in the universe favoring syntropy over entropy. This may offer an alternative “explanation” of why the universe expands, and systems evolve from the small and simple, to the large and complex. And according to Gaelic,⁴ the intent of Cosmos is exactly this: *the expansion of self-consciousness by means of increasing awareness*; which may also be expressed as *the growth of syntropy*.

If so, then here may be a solid basis for a conception of *morality* that has nothing to do with “authorities,” sacred scriptures, exclusive priesthoods, or coercion. Even if syntropy and entropy do exactly balance out on the Cosmic scale, every entity in Cosmos—or at least every entity within human view—lives and acts locally; and locally, it may be said in general that “syntropy is better than entropy;” or that “it is better—in a *moral* sense—to increase order, and diminish chaos, than the other way about.”⁵

⁴*The Gaelic Manuscripts* channeled by Betty White, written by Stewart Edward White. wellspringpublishinggroup.com/w1/gaelic/gaelic.html

⁵*The Writing on the Wall* #2, pp. 30-31.

Because of their chronic misuse as instruments for plundering the less powerful by the more powerful, I have meanwhile grown profoundly skeptical of the applicability of so-called "moral principles" to functional systems of human organization. Therefore, although I originally suggested this observation as the basis for a "moral principle," I now prefer to think of it in terms of the practical contrast between *patterns that work* and *patterns that do not work*; and leave so-called "morality" entirely outside of consideration.

Additionally, upon further contemplation, I am increasingly persuaded that it cannot be so that "syntropy and entropy always balance:" for the reason that, if they did, they would exactly cancel each other to a zero (0) sum, and existence would not be possible—and would be even less possible than that (0) if Cosmos as a Whole were biased in favor of entropy. This being manifestly not so, I am persuaded that it must be so instead that *existence* implies an asymmetrical Cosmic bias in favor of syntropy.

Accordingly, another way to put the observation that "syntropy is better than entropy" is that systems that increase syntropy *work better*, and last longer, than systems that increase entropy. Is this not a plausible statement? Is there any compelling reason to doubt that it is effectively *so*? Are there any identifiable exceptions to its validity?

Clearly, systems characterized by consistent gains in entropy, and complementary losses in syntropy, are on the path to extinction, unless this trend may be reversed. This is a condition that is unambiguously applicable to "civilization;" which is why I feel no hesitation in declaring that the days of "civilization" are numbered.

Conversely, any system characterized by consistent gains in syntropy, and complementary losses in entropy, seems to be headed toward a brighter future. Are there any circumstances in which this might not be so, or as in the reverse case, in which it must eventually lead to a "limited shelf life?"

An increase in syntropy for any system translates into "better than breaking even." It means "good, and getting better." It means "healing its wounds, and achieving an improvement upon its condition before any wound was sustained." It describes a condition "bursting with health and vitality which is constantly improving." Is there any necessary limit to a trend in this direction?

According to "scientific orthodoxy"—in particular *the second law of thermodynamics*⁶—it is said that in closed systems "entropy always increases;" never the reverse. An easily visualized example illustrating this "one-way street" is a closed jar $\frac{1}{3}$ filled with a layer of salt; on top of which the next $\frac{1}{3}$ of its volume is occupied by a similar layer of pepper; the top $\frac{1}{3}$ remaining empty, or occupied by a layer of ambient atmosphere. Such a

⁶https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laws_of_thermodynamics

system is said to contain very little entropy, because the salt and the pepper components are entirely segregated, not mixed.

However, if the jar is moved about at all, there is a tendency for the salt and the pepper to mix at the boundary between them: so their high-syntropy segregation begins to decay, and entropy within the jar is said to increase. Further motion tends further to increase the entropy; and rolling the jar about energetically pushes the entropy in the jar swiftly to a maximum, in which the salt and pepper are homogeneously mixed. This is obviously a "one-way street," and no amount of moving, rocking, rolling, or shaking the jar may reasonably be expected to restore its high-syntropy state of completely segregated layers of salt and pepper.

I suppose that "scientific orthodoxy" might cite such a principle in objection to my suggestion of a system in which syntropy increases, and entropy diminishes. However, the system to which I am applying the idea of increasing syntropy and diminishing entropy—"post-civilization"—would be a human-engineered system, aimed at intended outcomes, characterized, top to bottom, by purpose and design—in the very same way the jar came to be $\frac{2}{3}$ filled with carefully segregated layers of salt and pepper.

Additionally, there seems to be little certainty that the Whole of Cosmos is a *closed system* in which "entropy always increases." This is a cosmological question in relation to which the contemporary fashion among the "scientifically orthodox" seems to favor an effectively "closed system" with a beginning and an end in time and space. This may be "how things really are;" however, I am unconvinced that it is irrevocably so, and consider the question open to speculative interpretation.

On Earth, there are countless examples of systems in which syntropy increases, and entropy diminishes, operating all around us, all the time: specifically, biological systems, which are highly organized, self-replicating, and self-sustaining, through processes which assimilate myriads of randomly distributed components, such as air, water, and food, into intricately organized systems of molecules, cells, and bodily organs, including the cyclical energy to run them indefinitely. Such processes combine in systems of organization vastly more complex, intricate, and rich in syntropy than any jar of unmixed salt and pepper; and it may fairly be said that all (healthy) living organisms are systems rich in syntropy, which tends to increase, while entropy tends to diminish. These trends are reversed only under conditions of injury or ill health; and lead to "death," if not reversed in turn. Biological systems too are not closed systems in which "entropy always increases." They are richly interrelated with each other, and with Cosmos at large, which among possibly many other inputs, supplies them (us) with the energy required for sustained functioning.

Healthy biological systems without exception are systems in which syntropy is increasing, and entropy is diminishing—which may be as succinct a description as any of what is meant by biological health. Biological systems work, in other words, as long as the condition of sound health is maintained; and they cease working when for any reason the condition of sound health is reversed.

In these terms, “civilization” is clearly an “unhealthy” system that does not work, simply because it is a system in which entropy is steadily increasing, and syntropy is steadily diminishing. Is this not an accurate description of the human condition on planet Earth, with empirically verifiable validity? It makes no “moral” claim; it is simply either “true,” or “not true.” Which is it? And why?

The (presumed) intent behind “civilization” is the increase within it of syntropy, and the reduction of entropy; or more generally, its evolutionary *improvement*, “every day, in every way.” (The *actual* intent of “civilization” is the steady accumulation of coercive power by the powerful.) However, because “civilization” does not work as intended—or at least as advertised—its (presumed) intent is not achieved, and its reverse, historically, and now, is achieved instead: the steady increase of entropy, and the decrease of syntropy: or “civilization’s” accelerating descent into chaos. Hence, “civilization”—as has been so from its inception thousands of years ago—is on the path to extinction.

As mentioned earlier, this is not a condition for which anybody, past or present, must take responsibility, or may justly be “blamed.” It is, however, a condition with which every resident of this planet, human and non-human, must now deal, one way or another. One quite imaginable outcome is the irreversible extinction, swiftly, and soon, of all life on planet Earth.⁷ So long as we are still here to talk about it, we may presume that this is not the only possible outcome; and we may turn our attention to what I have been calling “post-civilization.”

If “post-civilization” is to work any better than “civilization” has done, it must not share “civilization’s” self-sabotaging deficiencies; and here I am enumerating “civilization’s” self-sabotaging deficiencies as one (1): the absence at its foundation of *love*—without which, *nothing* can persist forever, or for very long, full stop. This is a statement that may not be easily verified empirically. I shall leave its verification as an exercise for the interested reader, if I may suggest, by “inquiring within.”

⁷For one scenario detailing this eventuality, see *The Writing on the Wall* #5 § 4 The End. wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/wow05.html#end04.0 This unwelcome scenario is also discussed further below (pp. 17-19).

3 A “Post-Civilization” Founded Upon Love

What might a “post-civilization” with *love*, instead of *coercive power* as its foundation, be like? This is not an easy question to answer, for any Earth-human with only a “civilized” heritage. Nevertheless, a preliminary exploration of some of its possibilities may provide a stimulus to further exploration.

The underlying premise for the emergence of “post-civilization” is that “civilization,” throughout “civilized history,” to the present day and hour, is fatally flawed, does not work, and cannot be repaired. Some of the reasons for this assessment are given at length in prior essays, particularly in *The Writing on the Wall* #5 § 2.2 Wealth and Power, *The Writing on the Wall* #7 § 2 “Civilization”, and in the same, § 5 Convergences. Were this not sufficient, we could proceed with a litany of perhaps thousands of different ways in which “civilization” fails as a sustainable mechanism for the organization of creative beings, on this or any other planet—all of which may be summarized succinctly as a conspicuous *absence of love* at “civilization’s” foundation, and *the discouragement of love* in the practical conduct of “civilization.”

Without further development, such criticisms are only “gripes,” and convey little that is useful for the remedy of their complaints. Additionally, to the “civilized” mind, a proposal that the element of *love* has any significance of practical relevance to the manifold challenges now emerging like a forest of swords in every part of the “civilized world” is likely to be dismissed at least ⁹⁹⁹/₁₀₀₀ of the time as frivolous, and utterly without merit.

Very well. *If* in the course of time “civilization” is able to pull its bacon out of the fire, and put itself on an even keel, and a sustainable course, I shall withdraw my criticisms, have nothing further to say, and pitch in with good will and hearty participation in the unfolding progress of *civilization*. I shall even amend my habit of enclosing “civilization” in quotes.

However, I do not anticipate this happening any time soon; and it looks to me like time is running short. On the contrary, I anticipate the accelerating descending spiral of “civilization” to end quite swiftly, one way or another, possibly in a catastrophic crash, from which it may never rise again. Or if it does, as it may have done in long-forgotten epochs of the prehistoric past, its rise will be as meteoric, as short-lived, and as futile as its most recent, and historically remembered venture.⁸

If so—and if anyone remains alive on this planet, with a will to pick up whatever pieces of the wreck are found in any way useful, and begin again on the basis of *fresh*

⁸Five or ten thousand years, in this view of things, is counted as “a brief episode;” and at something on the order of two million years, genus *Homo* is considered among the species on planet Earth still to be “an infant race.”

premises—then perhaps the idea that *love should be at the heart* of “whatever comes next” may not be so casually dismissed.

In any event, and whatever circumstances, if any, in which it may emerge, a “post-civilized” human social entity, with reciprocal love at its core and foundation, *must be the mutual product of its self-motivated constituents*. It cannot possibly be brought about by a hierarchy of “leaders” dictating to their “followers” how it is to be done. That is what “civilization” has been, and it doesn’t work. Nobody can govern anybody but himself; and only those who govern themselves with love can participate in symbiotic relationships that work. “Post-civilization,” whatever else it may be or become, must first, last, and always, be a congregation of *friends*.

Friendship does not require unblemished perfection among friends. Nor does it require conformity to a particular pattern, or exclusion of alternative patterns in others—provided those patterns *work*. It requires only that friends take responsible care that none of their choices cause harm to one another, to themselves, or to their world; and by corollary, that each takes responsibility for any damage that may inadvertently result from any such choices, and takes whatever measures are necessary to repair such damage if or when it occurs. Perhaps surprisingly, friendship does not require that all friends even like each other, or agree with each other, about anything—excepting only *the mutual agreement, and practice, of treating one another as they wish to be treated, and allowing one another the liberty they wish themselves to enjoy*.

There now. Is that too high a hurdle for people to clear, in order to live in a “post-civilization” that works—to carry on from a “civilization” that has never worked, and has been doomed from its earliest inception to a succession of progressively mounting catastrophes, and inexorably intensifying human misery that, if not succeeded by an alternative that works, can only end in irreversible planetary self-destruction? Is it a challenge that *you* could imagine yourself meeting, perhaps in the extreme circumstance that everything around you is collapsing into chaos and self-immolation? Or would you “rather die first?”

But that is a grotesquely unbalanced over-simplification! [I can hear a chorus of voices protest] First and always, how are such a bunch of starry-eyed fools going to *defend themselves* against the first army, or gang of road warriors that encounters them? And then, how are they going to *enforce their standard of love*, even among themselves? The notion is an absurd pipe-dream from the very start!

It may seem like an over-simplification, because it can be described in principle with very few words. Yet in practice, there is nothing simple about it: because it involves

completely unfettered interactions among a potentially limitless number of humans, in a fabric whose complexity may be anticipated to expand beyond all reckoning.

Also, the *context* is crucial in which a "post-civilization" founded upon love is first likely to emerge. It will not emerge simply because somebody (such as myself) thinks it would be a good idea. If it emerges at all, it will be because a significant number of observant humans have come to the realization that "civilization" isn't working, and is not going to work; and that "something else" must emerge to take its place. This is not an easy position for any "civilized" human to reach.

With mounting anxiety, I have been anticipating the imminent collapse of "civilization" for the past forty years; and wracking my brain all the while for a plausible idea of what, if anything, might take its place when it does. Meanwhile, forty-some years later, "civilization" seems still to be clanking on, and evidently has not (yet) collapsed. I might conclude from this that my youthful anxieties were unfounded, and that there is nothing to worry about after all. Except that . . . I haven't.

My experience during the past forty years has only served to strengthen my conviction that "civilization" is fundamentally unsustainable, and will not be sustained forever; and therefore that "something else," sooner or later, must take its place—if Earth-humanity are to remain in any form upon this planet. Meanwhile, a number of possibilities have occurred to me, which I had not imagined earlier; so although the end of "civilization," one way or another, appears to me nearer and more probable than ever before, I am now feeling much less anxiety about the anticipated transition than ever before.

And of course, I will be the first to admit that my "chorus of detractors" may be at least partially "right," and that my notions of the imminent collapse of "civilization," and the possible emergence of "post-civilization" may not be more than a "pipe-dream" after all. I don't think so—but then nobody ever really believes that they're "wrong," do they? No matter how partial or incomplete a budding idea may be, it appears as the veriest of plausibilities to he who believes it. I do not suppose that I am particularly exceptional in this regard. So if you believe that all this is no more than a crazy old man's pipe-dream—why are you still reading?

If "post civilization" emerges, the *context* in which it emerges will necessarily be one in which it is increasingly obvious to increasing numbers of humans that "civilization" is *not* pulling its bacon out of the fire, and *does not* have what it takes to create a sustainable future for anybody. This perception changes the ballgame. It creates a situation in which growing numbers of people are willing to experiment with their own lives in ways they were not willing, or even able, to consider or imagine during the period when they placed their whole reliance upon "civilization." It is symptomatic of an extreme situation

in which "business as usual" is no longer practiced: because "business as usual" is no longer possible.

Such circumstances are not without precedent, and have been experienced at different times in the course of our lives by many people: for instance by those overtaken by wars, earthquakes, or catastrophic storms. Those who survive make the best of a bad situation, and somehow get past the rough places with our skins still on tight. Such events usually have margins in time and space, and assistance is often available from those beyond the epicenter, who are not severely affected by the event itself. None of us, however, have ever experienced, or have historical memory, of an event whose epicenter has engulfed the entire planet. It is a circumstance not to be wished for by anyone—and from which, if it eventuates, no one will be exempt. This is the most likely context in which "civilization" may *possibly* be succeeded by "post civilization."

Pray it never happens. Yet *if something like this ever does occur*, I submit, first of all, that those who have given the matter some thought in advance will enjoy at least slight advantages over those who have never considered the possibility at all. And I submit further that those who have mastered at least some of the rudiments of *friendship* will enjoy advantages over those who have not.

When all roads vanish, all the road signs have been blown away, and no map any longer conveys useful information, the most precious and sought after treasure among those still standing will be *friends*: other humans who may be trusted *not* to be sources of further calamity, but of help, companionship; and who may be helped in turn. Those who persist in the "civilized" practice of doing what they can, and forcing others to suffer what they must, will not be welcomed, or valued. And they will not last.

Those still standing will quickly grasp the necessity of quickly and accurately assessing the character of other humans they encounter; and taking effective measures in distinguishing honest friends from those who do not reciprocate the gifts of friendship. Conversely, the ability to convey one's friendly intent, and gain the trust of strangers, will be vital. Loving one's enemy without becoming his prey may become a formidable challenge for many. . . .

If such a calamitous circumstance were to materialize on a near-future Earth, in what way would its aftermath differ from the circumstances thousands of years ago, that followed from the human discoveries of agriculture and animal husbandry, as discussed in #5 of this series, § 2.2 Wealth and Power?

For many—possibly for most contemporary humans—perhaps the major difference between the sequence of human events that produced the first "civilizations," and the sequence of human events that would most probably follow in the wake of a global upheaval in the approximate present, might be the *suddenness*, the *swiftness*, and the *global*

scope of the latter. In that event, it might be “back to the stone age,” and the long, tortuous climb back through the labyrinths of new dysfunctional “civilizations,” for most contemporary survivors, and their follow-on generations. Or worse.

In the event of a global collapse into chaos of contemporary “civilization,” it is difficult to imagine how the scenario could be avoided that was described in #5 § 4 The End. Were the entire “civilized” infrastructure to collapse on a global scale—or if even a significant fraction of it were to collapse, it is possible if not probable that in the ensuing chaos, at least many, if not all of the hundreds of nuclear waste sites (nuclear power plants) around the world would cease to be manned: simply because it might no longer be possible to man them. Without constant vigilant human maintenance, and competent oversight, it would then be only a matter of a relatively brief span of time without human attendance, before the nuclear waste now being kept cool in constantly circulating spent fuel pools, would run dry, ignite from its own residual heat, and start discharging without interruption enormous quantities of highly radioactive fission products into Earth’s atmosphere and oceans. With nobody available to prevent or contain these spontaneous conflagrations, it seems likely that the path to extinction of all life on planet Earth would then be the only path open for anyone, or anything living: a one-way, dead-end street; end of story.

The course of human events on Earth may already have passed “the point of no return” upon such a path; and every one of us, even as we speak, may already be “dead men (and women (and children (and animals, fish, and forests))) walking.” Yuri Kageyama, AP Business Writer, reporting on the aftermath of the 11 March 2011 disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan, implied in an article 18 July 2012 that the slow progress in cleaning up after the disaster may be prolonged by the unmet need for advanced technologies that have yet to be developed.

Hiroshi Tasaka, [Kageyama wrote] a nuclear engineer and professor at Tama University who advised the prime minister after the disaster, said the spent-fuel pool poses a danger because the building is not sufficiently secure to stop radiation escaping in the case of a strong aftershock. Tens of thousands of aftershocks have hit the region, and a number have been magnitude 6 or stronger.

The two rods removed Wednesday are among 204 that have not been used to generate power and are not as prone to releasing radiation as the 1,331 spent-fuel rods also sitting in the pool.

Tasaka said the government target of removing all the rods by the end of next year may prove too optimistic because of many unknowns, *the need to develop new technology* and the risk of aftershocks.

“If we are asked whether things are completely safe, we cannot say that,” he said. “If there is another major earthquake, we don’t know what may happen, although we hope for the best.”

Summarizing Kageyama’s brief report:

1. Although the article is not specific, I am presuming we are talking about the spent fuel pool at Fukushima unit number 4, the most critical of the six units at the power plant;
2. One-and-a-half years out, two of 204 of the more benign (unused) fuel rods in the fuel pool have now been removed, and none of the 1,331 spent-fuel rods sharing the same fuel pool have yet been removed;
3. The latter 1,331 spent-fuel rods represent the greater hazard, because having been spent in use within the nuclear reactor, they are more “prone to releasing radiation” than those that have not been used;
4. The objective of removing all the rods, now numbering 1,533, spent and unspent, “by the end of next year” is uncertain, due to “many unknowns, the need to develop new technology and the risk of aftershocks;”
5. “Tens of thousands of aftershocks have hit the region, and a number have been magnitude 6 or stronger.”

I should possibly mention that I am not singling out the nuclear industry because of arbitrary antagonism to one among innumerable sources of serious and mounting difficulties now being encountered by “civilization.” There are many other sources of grave concern for “civilization’s” probable future. However, the nuclear industry has been in steadily expanding operation for the past 70 years, during which time, now at more than 400 sites around the world, it has produced a vast, widely distributed accumulation of highly radioactive, toxic, literally *hot* nuclear waste that *will spontaneously ignite*, melt, burn, and inject into Earth’s atmosphere and oceans plumes of lethal fission products *unless constantly and deliberately prevented from doing so*. That is what a spent fuel pool is: a means of preventing that eventuality. This is a condition of contemporary life on planet Earth that has accumulated over the past 70 years, on the basis of policies established by the more powerful, without informing or consulting the wishes of the less powerful. It

⁹Emphasis added.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2012/07/18/japan_utility_takes_out_2_fukushima_nuke_fuel_rods/?camp=pm

is a condition that did not exist prior to 1942, when the first fission chain reaction was ignited experimentally at the University of Chicago.

This condition now exists, and nobody has to do anything in order for it to fall spontaneously out of human control, into a potentially lethal situation for the entire planet. In order for this *not* to happen, many people in many places must exercise constant vigilance to maintain *all* of the spent fuel pools around the world, in keeping their respective spent fuel inventories submerged in constantly circulating water. Right now, and since 11 March 2011, at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Japan, the responsible people have been facing enormous difficulties in recovering from the magnitude 9 earthquake/tsunami of that date, and preventing that eventuality from occurring. It is a condition that is not going away any time soon.

Perhaps understandably, information is scarce detailing the ongoing situation at Fukushima; and “hoping for the best” may be as good as any of us can do under the circumstances. One thing we can say with considerable reliability is that the consequences of the March 2011 Fukushima Disaster have not yet run their entire course; the situation is not stable; and the clock is ticking. Happy Halloween, walking ghouls and ghosts!

3.1 Veering Off the Map

As mentioned earlier, the human drama may not be confined to “third dimensional reality,” or to what we “know,” or think we “know,” on the basis of “conventional wisdom.” This may be fortunate, because the situation faced by the living beings now resident upon planet Earth may not have a “three-dimensional” resolution. This is not a “pronouncement,” only a speculation, which may have no appeal or credibility for those strongly tethered to “common sense,” and “conventional wisdom.”

Additionally, so long as “business as usual” in “third dimensional reality” continues in operation, there seems to be no compelling reason to believe that it might, in some undisclosed future, cease operating. Ah . . . except for the fact that included among the expectations of “common sense,” and “conventional wisdom” is the “certainty” that everyone now “living” will at some time “die.” “Death and taxes,” according to “conventional wisdom,” are the two pillars of “certainty” for life in the “civilized world.”

Such a casually philosophical approach to mortality might imply that the possibility of all life on Earth going extinct within the near-term future should not be overwhelmingly dismaying to anybody. After all, if “we’re all going to die sooner or later anyway,” and “nobody gets out of here alive,” what difference does it make if we depart this world singly, or “like bananas: all in a bunch?”

Indeed, among the power elite, especially when victory or defeat of great powers are at stake—a chronically multiplying condition of “civilization”—there exists a strong tradition of playing fast and loose with the intricately interrelated systems upon which depend the planet’s ability to sustain life. When vast human projects based upon half-vast comprehension of their consequences, wreak havoc among enormous populations, many people for some reason have this bothersome attachment to their own and one another’s lives, and to the lives of their children. *Love* seems to be tangled up in some way with this incomprehensible collision of interests—that strangely “soft” human emotion that occupies no practical place in the conduct of “civilization,” or of *realpolitik*.

Notwithstanding those of “common sense,” and “conventional wisdom” seem to be more or less reconciled to the idea of “dying” someday, the prospect is not characterized by exuberant popularity—although this may be changing:

New research in the American Journal of Public Health reports suicides have surpassed car crashes as the nation’s leading cause of injury-related deaths.

The suicide rate increased 15% from 2000 to 2009, according to the report.¹⁰

The rising popularity of suicide does not appear to be a “healthy” trend, but rather one of a galloping succession of emerging symptoms of the dysfunction of “civilization” itself—remedy for which, as I have suggested, may no longer lie within three-dimensional reach. Which leads me further to suggest exploration of “transdimensional” possibilities; and I have initiated such exploration in prior numbers of this series. Perhaps for many people, the “difficulty” with such explorations is that they swiftly part ways from “common sense,” and “conventional wisdom.” That is why this Subsection is titled *Veering Off the Map*. So fasten your lap-strap; here we go!

In #7, § 2 “Civilization”, a number of ways were listed, and briefly described, in which Earth-humans spend the greatest part of our time “elsewhere” than within the fences of “third dimensional reality;” which may demonstrate to some, as I observed, “that there is a great deal more to human life than ‘third dimensional reality.’ This alone is something worthy of pondering.”¹¹

Ponder it we did; yet in § 3.1 Transdimensional Possibilities of the same essay, we also warned that “Stepping deliberately beyond the fences of ‘third dimensional reality’

¹⁰27 September 2012.

thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2012/09/27/suicides-outpace-car-crashes-as-leading-cause-of-deaths-from-injuries/

¹¹wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/wow07.html#civ02.8

at once opens vast, unexplored, and mostly unimagined domains of possibility; and casts us upon uncharted seas that may be sown with hazardous reefs, and unknown dragons of the deeps—and *perhaps* . . . with unimagined blessings as well.”

The unvarnished fact, like it or not, is simply that Earth-humans have never come up with a satisfactory answer to the universal childhood question, “Where did I come from, Mommy?” Erudite philosophers, theologians, and scientists, whose explorations from as far back in history as are still remembered, have struggled in vain to render an “answer” to this question superior to that attributed to an unnamed Native American, in reply to a nosy Anthropologist:

“This land,” the Native American said, “the mountains, the sea, the sky, the stars at night, all stand upon the back of a Turtle. That is why we call this world ‘Turtle Island.’”

“Upon what does Turtle Island stand?” the Anthropologist inquired.

“Another Turtle,” the Native replied.

“And upon what does that Turtle stand?” asked the Anthropologist.

“Another Turtle,” the Native replied.

“And that one?” persisted the Anthropologist.

“You just have to understand,” the Native replied: “it’s nothing but Turtles, all the way down.”

In what way are any of the “answers” ever delivered by philosophy, theology, or science, fundamental improvements upon that of the unnamed Native American?

Existence is an undeniable fact, and an unimpeachable certainty: because any who would deny it, in order to do so, must themselves *exist*. Beyond that, what else may truthfully be said to be certain? A chain of some length may plausibly be linked together:

1. In order to exist, one must have a place to stand.
2. A place to stand implies the existence of a *place*, such as an island, a continent, a world.
3. Existence of a world implies existence of a sun, a solar system, a galaxy, Cosmos.
4. In order to exist, one’s place must be more than a sterile, empty desert.
5. One’s existence implies the existence of others of similar kind.
6. Existence of others of similar kind implies the existence of others of different kinds.

7. The existence of any thing implies the existence of *everything*.
8. All existing things are related to all other existing things.
9. The further a "chain of certainties" is extended, the less "certain" become its successive links.

Existence is a jaw-dropping, inexplicable, undeniable fact. To me, it is the most amazing, astonishing, exquisitely wonderful, otherwise indescribable fact I have ever encountered; and for all I "know," or guess, "nothing but Turtles, all the way down" is as satisfactory an explanation for it, or description of it, as any I have ever found. To me, existence is simply a "Cosmic Given," and a priceless gift, that I appreciate and cherish beyond any possible mode of expression. All I can say in response to it is a simple "Thank You, Whoever, Whatever You Are . . ." and then fall silent, in awestruck, *loving* appreciation. This may not be everyone's response to existence; but it is mine.

I have found an unanticipated advantage in this response to the fact of existence, and it is this: I am no longer tethered by the strictures of "common sense," and "conventional wisdom." Anything imaginable seems possible to me now, and the realm of possibilities is not bound even by the limitations of my own imagination. Although "not all that can be imagined works in practice," many things that work in practice may lie beyond the pale of "common sense," and "conventional wisdom." For me, this is a profoundly liberating realization. Given the indications mentioned above that there is a great deal more to human life than "third dimensional reality," vast spectra of unimagined possibilities open before those of us who are able and willing to entertain them.

For example: even if contemporary Earth-humans have irrevocably foreclosed upon the near-future biological habitability of planet Earth—and I am not suggesting that this is a certainty, but only a possibility—at worst, this is a circumstance confined only to "third-dimensional reality;" and only to that minute fraction of "third-dimensional reality" occupied by three-dimensional planet Earth. If indeed there is a great deal more to human life than "third dimensional reality," then Earth-humans may not be irrevocably quarantined upon three-dimensional planet Earth, or limited only to the experiences that occur between the three-dimensional events of "birth" and "death."

We have discussed in prior essays reasons for giving consideration to these speculations: for instance in the Near Death Experience of Anita Moorjani;¹² *The Theory of the Universal Wave Function*¹³ developed in 1956 by Hugh Everett III;¹⁴ the remote viewing

¹²wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/wow07.html#p-civ03.6.27

¹³wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/wow07.html#many04.2.0

¹⁴wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/wow07.html#many04.2.9

explorations of Courtney Brown¹⁵ and associates; among others. We have, in the course of our explorations, encountered numerous reasons for skepticism of “common sense,” and “conventional wisdom,” and have mentioned on various occasions that “reality” is probably in many ways quite unlike it is imagined to be by most Earth-humans. Nevertheless—and perhaps paradoxically—how each of us *imagines* it may be as near to “reality” as any of us ever get; yet that may be “near enough.” If so, vast realms of possibility may be within reach of those who *achieve mastery of our own imaginations*.

This seemingly “little thing” is more easily said than done; but it is not impossible. One obstacle to achieving it is the presence throughout “civilization” of concentrations of coercive power with strong and persistent interests in controlling human imagination for their own purposes; and with potent and effective means of achieving such control. Ubiquitous examples are found in corporate entities seeking markets for their products, support for their agendas, agreement with their beliefs, and subordination to their power.

As discussed briefly in #7 § 3.6 Love:

. . . this planet . . . is inhabited by seven thousand million mostly “civilized” humans—whose imaginations are almost entirely in thrall of “civilized” power. This condition renders each human so placed incapable of governing himself, and consequently reliant upon the “governance” of “civilized” power—for better or worse, so long as it may yet linger.

However, although one’s imagination may be captivated by others, it nevertheless really does belong to each individual: because it is essential to what each individual *is* in Cosmos. Therefore, though lost, one’s imagination may be recovered. This requires individual effort, for there is no way it may be done by proxy. Conversely, there is no way it may be prevented by anyone, or anything.

Recovery of one’s imagination is accomplished by choice, or by a series of choices, entirely exclusive to the one making them, and without conflicting with the choices of anybody else—including even the choices of whoever or whatever may have captivated one’s imagination in the first place.¹⁶

So, mastery of one’s own imagination is opposed by the obstacle of competing interests whose intent is control of the imaginations of others; but it is an obstacle that can be overcome. A more formidable obstacle to mastery of one’s own imagination—or a significant hazard associated with it—is the circumstance, mentioned above, that “not all that can be imagined works in practice.”

¹⁵wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/wow07.html#many04.3.1.5

¹⁶wellspringpublishinggroup.com/wl/wow07.html#p-civ03.6.20

Within "third-dimensional reality," this hazard is minimized by the considerable effort required for the translation of imagined creations into three-dimensional actualities. In this sense, life in "third-dimensional reality" is analogous to making one's way through a thick, viscous atmosphere that allows action only at the expense of persistent and strenuous effort—in fortunate consequence of which, many things that are imagined by humans never reach manifestation in "third-dimensional reality." While still in the "imaginary state," they may be perceived as unworkable, destructive, or simply not worth the effort of giving them a "3-D" presence.

However, if life becomes impossible on three-dimensional planet Earth, and/or significant numbers of humans "graduate" into "transdimensional" realms beyond "third dimensional reality," conditions may be quite different than those experienced on Earth. Because, as mentioned above, Earth-humans spend most of our time "elsewhere" than in "third dimensional reality," most people are not entirely unacquainted with at least some of the peculiarities of "transdimensional" states. Vivid dreams are not uncommon in which shifting circumstances are vastly more fluid, dynamic, and swift than anything experienced in "normal 3-D waking consciousness;" and one is sometimes relieved on waking to find that the experience was "only a dream."

In our time, large numbers of people have experienced—and experience routinely, habitually, as a way of life—altered states of consciousness under the influence of psychoactive substances, in which "reality" is reshaped in many ways; not all of which are "blissful." Also in our time, our commercial "dream merchants," the creators and producers, for instance, of entertaining motion pictures, have gained access to sophisticated technologies which give them the capability of reproducing with full color, and three-dimensional photorealism, images that spring entirely from vivid creative imaginations—many of which would be unbearable nightmares, if encountered outside the theater, or television, in "real life."

What if you found yourself in a domain of "reality" in which everything you imagined came into immediate actuality in your "real world?" Many people, one way or another, have had experiences in some ways equivalent to this, and can testify passionately that "It's no joke!" Perhaps you, or someone you know, have glimpsed some of the terrors that may spring uninvited from a "runaway imagination."

If, as discussed above in § 1 Foreground, and Background, each of us is the author of our own "reality;" and if how each of us *imagines* it is as near to "reality" as any of us ever get, then *achieving mastery of one's own imagination* may involve hazards as well as blessings—or responsibilities as well as liberties. Conversely, allowing others control of one's imagination may be no less hazardous than taking charge of it oneself. These are not trivial, or inconsequential issues.

In the most general terms, the hazards associated with the human imagination are related to the statement that “not all that can be imagined works in practice;” which implies in turn that a favorable outcome of the exercise of the human imagination requires discrimination. A favorable outcome is one that works, as opposed to an outcome that doesn’t work. We discussed earlier a reliable means of discriminating between patterns that work, and patterns that do not work: “on the simple basis of the operational fact that *patterns that work* persist; and *patterns that do not work* desist; and that all things that persist have *love* at their core, and as their foundation.”

From this we may surmise that the hazards of a “runaway imagination” may be avoided by cultivating the practice of wielding one’s imagination only with love, never with malice. This is *simple* in principle, but not necessarily *easy* in practice. It is especially challenging in encounters with beings one doesn’t like—which of course, particularly within a congregation of *friends*, are the very encounters in which its exercise is most crucial.

3.2 The Emergence of “Post-Civilization”

As implied above in § 3 A “Post-Civilization” Founded Upon *Love*, “post-civilization” may emerge anywhere, anytime one or more persons are able to establish *the mutual agreement, and practice, of treating one another as they wish to be treated, and allowing one another the liberty they wish themselves to enjoy*. This is an “agreement” that may be established unilaterally: in effect between one and himself. That is why “post-civilization” may begin with as few as a single person, and may be expanded by more than one person, without limitation. It may be practiced without regard as to whether or not the practice is reciprocated—which is fortunate, because this practice, at least initially, is often not reciprocated. Yet as with every worthy endeavor, mastery comes only with practice.

Perhaps it should also be mentioned that mastery of any discipline is never a “dead-end street.” It is a journey, not a destination, and even “perfect mastery” may always be improved. That is why its practice is perpetually satisfying, and its satisfaction never wanes, always waxes—like syntropy, in healthy systems that work.

The practice of treating one another as we wish to be treated, and allowing one another the liberty we wish ourselves to enjoy, not excluding even those we do not like, may be close enough to *love* to satisfy most requirements for it, most of the time; and provide adequate nourishment to sustain infant “post-civilization” in its further growth and development. As “practice makes perfect,” the longer the practice is sustained, the closer to “real love” its approximation will approach. The only essential is persistent practice, by any who wish to bring “post-civilization” into manifestation; and this may be anyone,

anywhere, anytime, under any circumstances, singly, or in groups of any size. Fanfare and publicity are not required, and may be more a hindrance to the practice than an aid.

As to the “gloomy outlook” for Earth-humans: as mentioned earlier, the situation faced by the living beings now resident upon planet Earth may not have a “three-dimensional” resolution. Reviewing “civilized history,” the impression I get, as the march of human events approaches the present moment, is of an unswerving trend proceeding from “bad” to “worse,” and thence “downhill all the way:” a career of steadily mounting entropy. Unchecked, this is a career with an inevitably final terminus in oblivion.

The thought has occurred to me, and gains in plausibility as I consider it, that the function of “third dimensional reality” may be the temporary quarantine, and the cyclical incubation of creative races of limitless potential, who have not yet learned the necessity for *love* as the essential precondition for all creativity. Without “graduating” from this “required course,” no limitlessly creative race may be trusted to roam at large within the wider “dimensions” of Cosmos.

How else is this essential lesson to be learned? It cannot be dictated, or enforced, by any coercive means, without compromising the liberty necessary for the exercise of creativity. Somewhere within the universal wave function of all possibilities, there must be a domain for young and immature creative races, where we may exercise our creativity without hindrance or let, without endangering the evolution of other creative races who have “graduated” with the experiential understanding that *creativity without love is an infallible formula for destruction of self and others*. I am speculating that such a domain is what we experience as “third dimensional reality.” It functions as a Cosmic “school” for infant creative races, such as Earth-humans.

Still, this does not feel to me like a complete picture—a whole equation—and some pieces may be missing. In particular, Earth-humans are not the only, or necessarily even the most important residents of planet Earth. Yet as described above (pp. 17-19), we may already have fixed things here such that, before very long, life may no longer be possible for any biological form now thriving, or at least surviving, on our planet.

One of the missing pieces may have something to do with the “transdimensional” nature of Earth, and of all who reside upon her. The pessimistic scenario imagined as possibly cascading from the Fukushima epicenter seems to be limited to “third dimensional reality.” Three-dimensional planet Earth might imaginably become a nuclear wasteland without affecting the “transdimensional” aspects of herself, or her human and non-human residents. If so, what about the three-dimensional “school” necessary for allowing Earth-humans to learn that love is essential to human creativity? Frankly, these are matters far beyond my ken, and my speculations dwindle to “inconclusions.”

Nevertheless, speculate I must: for these mysteries, even if they remain impenetrably mysterious, have become of compelling interest in the immediate present. A "vision of reality" is taking shape within my imagination: a variation upon the idea of cyclical "sowing, cultivation, and harvesting."

If the purpose of "third dimensional reality" is to function as an incubator for immature creative races, enabling us to learn the crucial necessity of love as the bedrock foundation for creativity, then the design of "third dimensional reality" must have anticipated considerable self-destruction as a necessary element of the learning process. One consequence of our being quarantined upon a single planet is that if we destroy it, at least our destructive folly can spread no further; and if we destroy ourselves, at least the damage is securely restricted to a single, quarantined planet.

However, being "transdimensional" beings, who actually spend most of our time "elsewhere" than within "third dimensional reality," our "unschooled" self- and planetary destructiveness may be limited only to "third dimensional reality." If so, then our and our planet's "transdimensional" aspects may not be similarly affected. This could be a source of the widespread and multiple sensations among many of us that we have a past that precedes our "birth," and a future beyond our "death."

On the basis of recorded human history on planet Earth, learning the essential lesson of love on a planetary scale is a course that seems to occupy many generations of human lives. It can seldom, if ever, be learned within the span of a single "lifetime;" and while it remains unlearned, humans have shown ourselves to be vigorously active agents for the increase of entropy. This condition seems unavoidable, short of having passed the "required course."

When I contemplate the *death* of Mother Earth—as an actual, plausible, immediate possibility: watching this exquisitely beautiful blue-green jewel, teeming with vigorous and indescribably various interrelated life forms . . . turn into a radioactive wasteland, void of life, and becoming lethal to any biological form unfortunate enough to wander here—the thought wrenches my heart, and triggers a flood of grief; even though the thought has not (yet (fully)) materialized in "reality," and still remains but a possibility.

However, if that possibility is "part of the plan," and was budgeted for as part of the project of "schooling" a newly gestating creative race, perhaps if necessary the grief of losing Mother Earth might be borne. "Birth" and "death" are already intimate parts of universal human experience; as are loss, and bereavement. In this (speculative) view of things, "birth" and "death," for all beings, including people and planets, may be seen as an exclusive artifact of "third dimensional reality," and may not be applicable in "transdimensional realities."

Even within the circumscribed scope of “third dimensional reality,” Earth is a planet in one of billions of three-dimensional solar systems, which comprise one of uncounted billions of three-dimensional galaxies. So if Earth-humans “flunk out” of the “required course” by turning our planet—our “schoolhouse”—into a radioactive wasteland, I imagine we shall find ourselves “before long” quarantined on another three-dimensional Earth-like planet, in a three-dimensional solar system, in a three-dimensional galaxy, somewhere . . . and the “required course” will continue: until even the last of us “get it,” and may finally be turned loose into the wider “dimensions” of Cosmos. There, we may be invited to take our places as junior partners in a “post-civilization” that has already been flourishing for countless billions of “Earth-years,” among the “transdimensional” solar systems and galaxies throughout “transdimensional” Cosmos; and whose only “law”—“enforced” by the love of each partner for every other partner (including even those who do not like each other)—has always and ever been: *Treat one another as you wish to be treated, and allow one another the liberty you wish yourself to enjoy.*

4 Harvest

The sketch in the prior Subsection is not intended as a description of “how things really are.” Frankly, I have no idea “how things really are.” Well, like everybody, I do have a few *ideas* about it. But I have no way to confirm or refute any of them; and I feel fairly confident that this applies as well to everybody else’s ideas about “how things really are.” This is not an extravagant claim; yet it may be one of the elements (corollary to *love*) essential to a functional “post-civilization.”

On the basis of human experience so far on planet Earth, it is safe to say that people who have a firm grasp of “how things really are” thereby inoculate themselves quite effectively against the possibility of learning anything new: a condition that naturally interferes with onward human evolution. Those, on the other hand, who are willing to admit the baffling mystery of “how things really are,” although not necessarily any more “enlightened” than those who “*know* how things really are,” are perpetually open, and receptive to previously unimagined possibilities.

Now, *unimagined possibilities* are almost entirely what “how things really are” *is made of*. (This is one of my ideas about “how things really are,” that I can neither confirm nor refute.) So, we may plausibly imagine that everybody, no matter how much or how little any of us suppose that we “know,” are more or less equally “at sea” in relation to “how things really are.” Surprisingly, however, none of this seems to make a great deal of difference in the conduct of our daily lives. Each of us, believing one or another of an endless variety of wildly contradictory ideas about how we think “things really are,”

somehow muddle through, from one day to the next, miraculously keeping all of our various balls in the air, for what seems like impossibly prolonged acts. Of course these "impossible dreams" always fall to pieces eventually—not because of their errors about "how things really are," but because of the missing ingredient of *love* at their respective cores.

To put it another way, I am suggesting that *any* idea about "how things really are" will suffice in the day-to-day conduct of human affairs—*provided that love* resides at the core of that day-to-day conduct; and conversely that, absent love at its core, *no* idea about "how things really are" will yield satisfactory results, for anybody. So the decisive factor as to whether an idea about "how things are" *works*, or not, is not determined by whether the idea is "right," or "wrong," but by whether the idea is animated by *love*, or not.

To put it yet another way, all human ideas about "how things really are" are *partial equations*, because being parts, are "not the whole story," and are consequently unbalanced. There is no way any human idea about anything can be "entirely right," or can avoid being "partly wrong." However, the "*x*-factor" of *love* has the miraculous property of bringing balance to unbalanced partial equations—with the consequence that *with love, anything can work*; and conversely, *without love, nothing can work*.

This is not a very complicated idea, and it is not inherently difficult to grasp; but it is far removed indeed from the heritage shared by all "civilized" mentalities, whose reflexive response to it is likely to be summary dismissal, without a second glance. However, "civilization," not love, is now in an advanced and accelerating process of failure, and collapse. As this process continues, something like the above view of things may gain appeal with surprising swiftness. Even so, however, it is far from certain that everybody on Earth will "get it," and "graduate" from the "required course" at this time. At the moment of writing, it is looking (to me) like some of us may "get it," but a great many of us probably will not. This is unavoidably a very partial view, and subject to an incalculable factor of surprise. The game's not over 'till it's over.

In any case, this brings us to the idea of *harvest*. "Civilization" is on a path of mounting and accelerating entropy; and as mentioned earlier, unchecked, such a career cannot avoid a final terminus in oblivion—that is, within the fences of "third dimensional reality." So the "gloomy outlook" for Earth-humans, or something like it, may soon materialize for many or even most Earth-humans; and it could even spell the end of "third dimensional reality" for all life on our planet. Legends in circulation in some circles today, of lost civilizations, and great cities submerged under the sea, may be echoes of similarly catastrophic events in prehistory—dismissed with scoffs and derision by those who "*know* how things really are."

Within "third dimensional reality," one thing seems as clear as anything can be, and that is that a career of self-destruction cannot go on forever. It has to come to an end sometime, and this seems particularly and immediately applicable to "civilization." If the purpose of "third dimensional reality" is to function as a "school" for nascent creative races, such as Earth-humans, then this "limited shelf-life" must involve periodic episodes of "recycling," whereby the process proceeds until it is exhausted, then is somehow refreshed, and starts over: so that those who fail to "graduate" at the end of one cycle, may continue their "education" in the next.

As to whether this means it's "back to the stone age" for those who don't "get it" by the end of the current cycle, I imagine rather that everybody on this planet is at a unique point in our respective courses, and consequently that each of us will have a unique experience as we "cross over" from "last term" to "next term." Presuming that *mastery of love* is the core agenda behind the entire exercise, I feel confident that each of us will encounter "exactly what we need" in the next phase of our respective "educations." Hence *fear* is not an appropriate response for any of us, to the transition we are now experiencing.

It seems to me there is good reason to make every effort to be, if possible, among the "harvest," or the "graduating class" of the cycle now winding up: that is, to be among those who really do "get it" that *love* is the key, and *the only way* for onward progress in "transdimensional" Cosmos. This achievement is not the "end," or the "final purpose" for existing. It is *only the beginning* of an endless, limitless adventure in the infinite, endless, and limitless field of possibility: and *mastery of love* is the essential credential for entrance into that limitless adventure. The "end of term final exam" is now upon us. Do your best to be included in the "graduating class."

4.1 The Practice of "Post-Civilization"

In sum, "post-civilization," as imagined here, is a spontaneously emerging state of relationships *that work* among humans, because each participating human has unilaterally taken the initiative to cultivate within himself the quality of *love* for all things—including in particular people and things he does not like. It is easy for anybody to love people and things they like anyway; and there is nothing "wrong" with that. It's fine, and gives everybody plenty of experience of the sensations associated with love in all its manifestations. However, "where the rubber meets the road" is in relation to elements one does not like: that is, learning to cultivate the sensations of love in relation to people and things one dislikes. Like learning to ride a bicycle, this is not easy, particularly for beginners who have never attempted it. But it is not impossible: because where one directs one's love is a matter of individual choice, not a whimsy of circumstance.

Because of the complementary unity of all things, love of *anything* may be equated with love of self. As suggested earlier, "The existence of any thing implies the existence of *everything*;" and "All existing things are related to all other existing things." These are plausible ways of thinking about "how things really are," regardless of whether they are believed to be rigorously "true," or not. Thus anybody may legitimately and plausibly consider his local *self*, and "everything else," like the wave and quantum properties of light, to be complementary aspects of a single, indivisible Whole.

Considered in this way, if one is able to love oneself, one is able also to love *everything*—including even those elements one happens to dislike—because self and "everything else" are considered to be complementary parts of an all-inclusive Whole. Conversely, dislike of *anything* translates into dislike of the corresponding element within one's all-inclusive self. Yet one's self depends for its very existence upon the existence of "everything else," regardless of whether or not one likes everything thereby included. This does not imply a necessity to grit one's teeth, and adore everything without discrimination; but rather a possibility to love even things one dislikes, because of the necessary part they play in the Whole, of which one is a complementary and appreciative part.

It is possible, in other words, to recognize ugliness as ugly; yet at the same time to acknowledge that it too is part of the Whole that makes everything possible; and is therefore not excluded from one's love and appreciation of the Whole. Similarly, it is possible to acknowledge faults in a friend without making him an enemy. Among a friend's faults may be that he is sometimes disagreeable, "on a different wavelength," and maybe irritating—yet one may *choose* to treat him as one wishes to be treated, and allow him the liberty one wishes to enjoy. If this falls short of genuine *love*, it may suffice until genuine love is achieved. It offers at least a point of departure for the *practice* of love; which is essential to the *practice* of "post-civilization." As mentioned, this practice can begin unilaterally with a single individual. Yet where there is one, by implication there must be others of similar kind.

4.2 Friendship

I have a friend, who is an author, and a poet.¹⁷ Ron Chávez has lived a full life, rich in triumph, and despair. He was born in the remote village of Puerto de Luna in eastern New Mexico; and as a barefoot youth he shined shoes outside a restaurant in nearby Santa Rosa, along Rout 66; which at that time was a major artery connecting the East and West Coasts of North America.

¹⁷www.timeoftriumph.net/about.html

Later in life, Ron became the owner of that very restaurant, and prospered; serving up a rich and simple menu of home-cooked Mexican cuisine that satisfied the appetite of the busy, hungry world that for many years passed his threshold daily. During that time, Ron met many people, from many places, and heard and told many tales. He became influential in his part of the world, prosperous, and content. Time, and the richly textured procession that passed his perch, rolled along.

A time arrived when the Interstate System replaced the two-lane highway that had been the old Route 66, and bypassed Ron's thriving restaurant. A well-known franchise built a flashy new restaurant on the Interstate nearby; and overnight, Ron was out of business, and nothing could be done about it. He was wiped out. He sold what he could for what he could get, and hit the road himself.

For some years, Ron lived mostly in his car. He camped for awhile in the wilderness of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico; and he knew the depths of bottomless despair. He decided to commit suicide. He rigged a length of hose from the exhaust pipe of his car, and through a slightly opened window into the car's interior. He figured he would start the car, roll up the windows . . . and that would be the end of his sorrows. Simple. Effective. Painless. Final.

Having worked that out, Ron looked around himself, and began to notice how quiet, and peaceful everything was in the Sangre de Cristo high country. He found himself in a strange and unaccustomed state of peace and contentment. All his sorrows had vanished, because he now knew exactly what he was going to do about them; all that remained was simply to do it.

Well, he could do that anytime. For the moment, Ron was content just to sit, breathe the clear mountain air, watch the hawks soaring in the endless blue sky, listen to the rustle of the quaking aspens, and the voice of the clear babbling spring nearby. If this was the last day of Ron's life, *mañana* was soon enough for suicide.

Mañana came. Yet Ron's peace and contentment had not left him. He shrugged, and decided to live another "last day of his life." Why not? He was in no hurry—to die, or for anything else. He decided that he would live as many "last days of his life" as he felt like living; and that as long as he continued to hang around, he would devote his life to writing; he would never allow stress to invade his life; and he would become a man of peace, and forsake the violent anger that had always been close to the surface of his former life.

Years came and went, and Ron gradually fashioned for himself a simple existence in which he has kept the bargains he made with himself years ago, on "the last day of his life."

Ron recently came to me with a question that had been troubling him. "I can't understand it," he said, "but everything is working out so well for me, and going so smoothly—what is happening to me?" He described to me how, even when he received a ticket for parking in a Handicapped zone recently (which would have cost him a painful fine) when he talked to the Judge, he was told that the fine could be waived, if he produced a statement from his Doctor that he requires access to handicapped parking. Accordingly, he got the statement, applied for Handicapped status, got a sticker to that effect for his car, and never had to pay the fine—all practically without any effort at all. He wanted me to tell him what it is, in my opinion, that accounts for the smooth, effortless ease with which his simple life is unfolding for him now.

Of course, there is no way in the world I can deliver a simple answer to a simple question. In a personal "reality" in which every thing is intricately connected to everything else in the entire universe, I don't have many "answers," simple or complex, to anything. Only questions; and highly tentative speculations. In reply to Ron's question, I tried to stammer out something; but he stopped me, and asked me to write something instead.

Well, so I've written something. It may not be quite what Ron had in mind; but to condense it into a few words, I think Ron is making himself into a "post-civilized man."

Ron will be the first to tell you he's nobody special; and he makes no claim to being without faults. He hasn't much patience either, for people he doesn't like; and if you want to really get him mad, just utter a racial slur within his hearing—and stand by for squalls.

Nevertheless, Ron treats others as he likes to be treated—even people he doesn't like, unless they treat him badly; and then, watch out! And he allows others the liberty he enjoys himself—which for a guy who lives "the last day of his life" every single day, is pretty liberating. In sum, Ron governs himself responsibly; and makes no effort to govern anybody else.

Like everybody, Ron occupies the foreground of his own "reality;" and for him, *love* is the word that applies to the magic that sometimes develops between a man and a woman. So in Ron's case, the more comprehensive "Cosmic Love" might be described in terms of its opposite: *fear*. I do not believe that Ron is *afraid* of anything. Certainly not "death," which he voluntarily embraced, and turned out to be the doorway into his wide-open liberation. So might it not truthfully be said of a man without fear, who governs himself responsibly, treats even those he doesn't like as he wishes to be treated, and allows all others the liberty he himself enjoys, that he is, in a Cosmic sense, "a man of love?"

If not, Ron comes close enough to it to pass at least a summary inspection. And like "All That Is," he has acted as a meticulous "filter" within the sphere of his own life, by eliminating every element within it that does not work, and nurturing and improving

every element that works for him. Unsurprisingly, after awhile, the result is a life in which “everything is working out so well for me, and going so smoothly” that he is prompted to ask a friend, “What is happening to me?” Heck, Ron, it’s nothing to worry about. You have become more an agent of syntropy than of entropy. That is a pattern that works. Keep doing what you’re doing, for as long as you like. Enjoy “the last day of your life”—forever.

In sum, I think that Ron Chávez is the stuff of which a “post-civilization” *that works* might be made. I just wish there were more of him, or like him. But then, if it is so that “where there is one, by implication there must be others of similar kind,” there probably are more like him, somewhere. I just haven’t met many of them yet. So I am mighty pleased to be able to call Ron Chávez *my friend*.

4.3 Postscript

Making oneself a “post-civilized” human does not make certain the eventual emergence on Earth of “post-civilization,” as imagined here. What may be said with certainty is that if no one makes of himself a “post-civilized” human, “post-civilization” will never emerge on planet Earth—or in other words that, absent “post-civilized” humans, “post-civilization” will most probably take the form of a lifeless desert; and planet Earth, for the first time since the dawn of “civilization,” will at last enjoy peace: “the peace of the grave.” However, as long as we continue to hang around, that is not the only possible outcome.