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CHAPTER THREE

Delusion

The first two chapters hinted at the importance of *delusion* in the development of the divination that underpins human cognition, and by implication observation. The term delusion is used here to mean an imagined contrivance: an intellectual construction by an individual regarding both the self and entities outside the self, which is taken to be true, believed and used to impose meaning on the world of the senses. Delusion then is the basis of cognition and thought, and so no delusion can be fully appreciated. Delusions are states of mind, dynamically stored in the memory for future reference, but as such they are not completely approachable by the mind. Any attempt to do so is futile. Delusions must remain partly accessible and partly inaccessible. They can only be accessed by other modes of observation that in turn create further distinctions, and further delusions.

However, and most importantly, some limited and inert forms of regularity emerge within an individual's intrinsically dynamic delusions. These stable linearities, we will call them *frames*, may be externalized and then propagated amongst that individual's fellows. The term frame is used because it captures the idea of some regularity within an individual's perception of meaning being framed, so that part of that meaning can be externalized using some form of notation, and subsequently communicated to others. As for delusions themselves, they must remain very private, personal and unknowable experiences, yet which are nevertheless formative of an individual's knowing about the world. We may think that we share common views of the world with others; however, a fundamental premise of this book is that we may share similar, but never the same delusions. Each delusion is unique but unknowable to its particular deluded possessor.

The relationship between frame and delusion is readily appreciated by any serious mathematician/scientist. Every member of these peculiar offshoots of humanity has at some time experienced a *eureka moment*: the personal enlightenment that comes with a flash of 'understanding' when the meaning of a mathematical theorem/scientific theory is grasped with an intensity and clarity far deeper than its superficial expression when written down as a frame. The theorem/theory itself, a limited expression in mathematical/scientific notation, can never come even remotely close to the explosion of 'meaning' and potential, the euphoria and sense of one-ness with the

world, the ‘understanding’ – the delusion – that is released in the head of a mathematician/scientist once he ‘gets’ that theorem/theory. That same sense of one-ness with the world, of clear-sightedness, is not the sole prerogative of scientists/mathematicians, for it is there in every taken-for-granted and mundane observation of our everyday reality. We will find that delusion is there underpinning every observation; and that we communicate our observations to others via the medium of frames expressed in likewise drab and limited notations.

Delusion is a decoding of an individual’s sense data that filters, and consequently alters that data on the basis of some predisposition to belief, giving meaning to the world of experience, and thereby enabling non-arbitrary and meaningful personal action. Past delusions are stored in memory, and regularities within them can be encoded in part, as frames, and re-transmitted both to others and to oneself for reconsideration as ‘information’. The term sense data is used here as a shorthand reference to the input and output of observation, in a way that avoids any reference to external stimuli in the outside real world, with all the epistemological problems that entails, recognizing it all starts and ends in the senses of the individual observer.

And there are some very deep epistemological problems. For we can only sense/observe the world by influencing that world as individuals, each of us sampling what is fed back through our senses. Then we are deluded into believing that the disturbances we have introduced into the world in order to observe have no consequence for both that world and what we are observing in it. We overlook the fact that we have no notion of how that world would be if undisturbed; we can have no such notion. However, we all subtly change the world when observing it: something that is exposed by quantum mechanics, and shows up clearly in the double-slit experiment described in Chapter 12. This is a never-ending story, where all answers are phrased in terms of yet more, but unsaid, questions.

This book will be using the concept of delusion in many different contexts to mean many different socially and individually driven interpretations of perception: imaginings, including myths, social norms, faiths, ideologies, beliefs, theories and models, as well as deceit and self-delusion; the latter pair being the usual pejorative forms of the word. This present chapter will be concentrating on societal shared-delusions, and then Chapter 4 will consider how these communal delusions derive from delusions in ourselves as individuals.

Why Delusion?

The word delusion is used in preference to any of the words from the above list because it doesn't carry the baggage of truth and lies of these others, and so all their subtle differences of meaning can be treated on an equal footing. Any idea of an objective truth is discounted. Instead truth is recognized as a formal tautology: a 'suitably falsified world' of refined ignorance. The axiomatic position of this book is that there is no true or false, no right or wrong way, only consistent and inconsistent interpretations of phenomena within the reflexive closure of systematic rules that we humans ourselves lay down in our delusions, and by which we convince ourselves of the rationality of our position. The authors insist that all that matters is whether such interpretations are appropriate. Their intent is for readers to avoid the flush of self-satisfaction that comes with simplistic truths, in which all complexity is unwittingly ignored. That is why they find themselves taking the Inquisition's side against Galileo Galilei, and support the Church's insistence that his theories weren't the truth, but simply delusions that were appropriate in calculating apparent planetary motion.¹

Whether we like it or not, however sensible our present view of the world may seem, each of us can be sure that this view will appear weird to others. For why should it be that what makes sense to us, makes any sense at all? 'Make' being the operative word. Alexander Pope is often misquoted as having said: 'all chaos is order misunderstood'²; but this insight should be inverted. All order is *chaos* misunderstood, deliberately misunderstood as delusions, to our advantage. Order (what makes sense to us) is not in the world out there somewhere. That order is artificially constructed by us as a nebulous pattern, a delusion, supposed, and then imposed on the world: 'supposed' is used here in both its senses, in that the delusion is inferred and being the way we believe the world to be. 'Understanding does not draw its laws from nature, it prescribes them to nature' (Kant, 1999).

At each stage in the feedback of human development, and this includes the present (and will be so in any human future), delusions are formed that are sufficient for the effective interpretation of sense data. 'Not to know but to schematize – to impose upon chaos as much regularity and form as our practical needs require'. Furthermore 'rational thought is interpretation according to a scheme that we cannot throw off' (Nietzsche et al., 1968). 'Everything that distinguishes man from the animals depends upon this ability to volatilize perceptual metaphors in a schema, and thus to dissolve an image into a concept' (Nietzsche and Hollingdale, 2005). Here

Nietzsche's use of the word 'schema' corresponds closely to the authors' use of 'delusion'.

Meaning is created by delusion: delusion is the basis of personal cognition and observation. Cognition, therefore, is built on what is taken for granted in an ever-expanding set of delusions that creates a set of reflexive and convincing descriptions in the mind of the individual. Any analysis, therefore, requires a consistency between what is necessarily so (the authors' shorthand for the unknowable 'real world' of phenomena) and the delusions used to give that world meaning. That meaning doesn't uncover causes in the world, for causality is not in the world, rather a delusion for imposing meaning on what is necessarily so; a pre-requisite/a building block of meaning/logic.

A Community of Shared-delusions

However, humanity treats the world of appearance, the world of the senses, 'as if' it is the world in itself. Nevertheless, we must ultimately accept that there is a difference, albeit one that is impossible to distinguish. Hence there can be no objective significance in any meaning derived from a delusion. The appropriateness of a delusion is to be found solely in its personal utility in a world that is brought into existence through a singular imagination. This book treats delusions not as the sinister deceptions by others, rather as possibly beneficial self-deceptions. For delusions are spontaneous bubbles of sentiment; they enable ways of looking at the world, enthusiasms that move people's minds as individuals. Delusions are necessarily very private nebulous things, generated from reflection on a lifetime of personal experience. They may not be shared with others; indeed they are not even shared fully with oneself.

We label delusions in some vague way; each is unformed, unknown and unknowable. And yet mysteriously they are an individual's personal basis for making sense of the world. How they work is inscrutable; we only know that delusions are the way by which we each individually construct order in our perceptions of the real world, and thence make our way in it. It is only through our acceptance of what our imagination tells us, supposes for us, that we as individuals are even able to make our way in the world. We have no choice other than to be deluded. Deluded by what we are, in what we are as humans.

The regularities that are extracted from an individual's delusions may be externalized, but only in part. These are the frames, the maps, ciphers,

filters, patterns, suppositions, norms, rituals, behaviours; the linear forms that may be communicated/shared with others. The individual also receives the frames of his fellows, which are then absorbed into, and extend, that individual's private delusions.

Each society, each community, is the result of compromises made in response to such forms received over the years between members of the group. It is this result that differentiates and separates that community from other groups. Through shared frames, and the feedback that reinforces and supports them, we bond with our fellows. We come to believe that from that feedback we can share commonly accepted regularities that have been extracted from the delusions of ourselves and others. However, this belief in shared-delusions is of course itself a delusion, because every delusion is unique to the individual; similar but never quite the same as every other's. Shared-delusions can be labelled, and their regularities further communicated amongst the collective. Such a process only adds to the belief in, and the utility of, the delusion of sharing. Indeed, when the authors write the word 'we' in this context, they are indulging in a shared-delusion that they and their readers all individually interpret (absorb into their private delusions) the identical ideas. Impossible of course, but hopefully similar and consistent enough to be meaningful within the delusions of each reader.

Some shared-delusions are short-lived, mere passing fancies, like the mass hysteria and greed of Amsterdam's tulip frenzy of 1637, and the Mississippi and South Sea Bubbles of 1720, and all the other speculative turbulence that has occurred since, including the nonsense of the dot.com bubble and the period of communal greed preceding the Credit Crunch of 2008. Other shared-delusions are almost permanent, lasting for eons, such as nationalism, religion, money or taxation. Why is that? The longer we have been convinced by the shared-delusion, the less we have to justify it; and the more it becomes the *de facto* truth among our group, the morality for our group and the reference point around which new shared-delusions emerge.

Every group must reinforce its shared-delusional messages in a drive for permanence. Faith in the system ensures the total and unqualified acceptance of a group's shared-delusions. Therefore, the ultimate goal of a society is the creation and maintenance of the shared-delusion that such faith has a utility. For that faith deflects criticism, and indeed is immune to criticism. Hence, there is a hidden agenda in the mental programming, the brainwashing of the impressionable young mind, by the state, the church and a hundred-and-one other herds that conspire in promoting their cultural norms (frames that

the individual absorbs as shared-delusions) via their teaching institutions. Cultures all have one aim, to create what Nietzsche called an ideal 'herd animal' (Nietzsche, 1990), by inducing in each of us a self-hypnosis that makes us observe in certain ways, think in certain ways, even suppose in certain ways. We are taught to stop asking those awkward questions about the dark side of our collective, whatever the collective, restricting and self-censoring ourselves to ask only politically correct un-embarrassing ones. We must stop at, go no further than, the most appropriate point, namely that point our society calls truth. Therefore, in order for the shared-delusion to be convincing/self-reinforcing, anything, everything, contrary to the belief must be denied, must be made to disappear.

Delusions or Illusions?

Hence, this book is *not* proposing that shared-delusion is merely the trickery of stage magicians, like those who seem to be able to make solid objects disappear. David Copperfield, the world famous illusionist, once made the Statue of Liberty disappear in front of a live audience, with millions more watching on television. How did he do it? The audience gazes at two huge towers that support a gantry. Both the audience and towers sit on a giant Lazy Susan: a large stage that could rotate slowly, unnoticed by anyone standing or sitting on it. The Statue of Liberty was clearly visible, positioned between the towers, all brightly lit up by high intensity lights.

Suddenly curtains came down, and unknown to the audience the stage is rotated; the TV cameras too are on the stage. Simultaneously the lights on the Statue, but not on the towers, were turned off. When, almost immediately, the curtain was raised again, the audience didn't realize that they were now looking out to sea. The Statue had disappeared, blocked from view behind a giant tower. The many blinding searchlights ensured that even if members of the audience had been looking directly at the tower, they wouldn't catch a glimpse of the darker Statue tucked behind. The trick had to take place at night for otherwise the audience would have received visual clues to the rotation. The darkness also justified shining the bright lights on the towers, another necessary part of the subterfuge.

This 'is not magic but illusion', Copperfield says. 'It is a question of money and technology.' Ironically, this is essentially the same as the process of scientific construction and the specific corridors of self-reference within which it too is trapped. Illusion is a deliberate misrepresentation that is known to create a false perception of sense data. In this quotation

Copperfield does himself a disservice. Of course it is magic! For all magic is shared-delusion, and in his illusion he is projecting a frame that triggers a shared-delusion. Like every shaman, with the razzmatazz of ritual, he prepares the ground, prepares the audience, prepares their expectations, and then amidst smoke and mirrors, he pulls off the shared-delusion. David Copperfield is not just an illusionist, he is a delusionist. His audiences know that they are witnessing a performance, an illusion, a shared-delusion, but that does not necessarily reduce the power that the shared-delusion has over them. How ironic!

The audience has to be positioned in just the right place for the delusion to work. Should they move out of position, deliberately or accidentally, they will see how the trick is done. Then the shared-delusion will unravel. Most audiences enjoy the show and don't want to be disillusioned. Similarly most people feel safe and secure within their society's delusions. They don't want to move outside the lies their collective tells them, and see through the comfortable subterfuge. That is not altogether a bad thing, provided the trick works for them, provided the membership of the collective is appropriate for them.

Although this illusionist metaphor is informative, the human condition is much more complicated. Illusionists like Copperfield work on one level of trickery, and below that level there is a rational explanation. However, society's delusions, the products of many past tricksters, are far more subtle. These shared-delusions are made private and added to personal delusions. They are tricks within tricks within tricks *ad infinitum*; nothing but the tricks: the delusions we play on ourselves. The delusions masquerade as reasons, built on reasons, built on reasons; the whole edifice eminently reasonable. However, none of these reasons can bear too close a scrutiny, for then we would see them for what they are: delusions circumscribed by, and dependent upon, paradoxes.

Conspiring with Delusions

Look too closely at any believable private delusion, and it will all fall apart. Suddenly it no longer works for us, it becomes inappropriate, it becomes absurd. None more so than the delusion that words hold meaning, where we hide our misunderstanding behind the categories of a linguistic schema. Humpty Dumpty was quite categorical: 'When I use a word ... it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less' (Carroll, 1994). 'Every word is prejudice' (Nietzsche, 2006). We treat words 'as if' they have meaning,

and indeed through familiarity, through habit, they acquire meaning. However, words are where confusion begins, not ends; they are the place where questioning stops, so that communication and action can begin.

There can be no definition of words, except as private delusion. Language is a self-referential system (Barthes, 1969). A dictionary is a magical document that convinces us that it is the place where words are defined. Nothing is defined there. We just think it is: such is the dictionary delusion. Using the dictionary as a recursive stack, words are defined in terms of other words: 'big fleas having little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em, and little fleas have lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*'. Where does an individual stop in this explosive recurring sequence? There is no set of absolute and fundamental words to terminate the potentially infinite recursion. Instead each individual chooses to stop when the totality of descriptions he has are given in terms of words he thinks he understands. But does he 'understand'? Just try finding an applicable definition of 'a' and 'the' without using 'a' and 'the'. The infinite regression must somehow be halted. The individual stops at some point appropriate for him, and beyond that he does not question. Then, as long as he deludes himself into thinking he 'understands' the meaning, he can slice right across the paralysis, and just get on with it. After a certain point, it becomes impossible to see that the constitution of language itself, like any other system, is self-referential. The emergent phenomenon called 'meaning' is introduced by combining words; and the necessary and concomitant asymmetry created in that combination is lost and forgotten.

If the individual does not initially understand particular words then the solution is simple: the same words are repeated over and over again, and through this continuous mystical re-iteration that resembles a ritual at the most profound level, the individual internalizes words (that previously made no sense) as if they are now meaningful. Through the unstoppable repetition of such words over time, and in a particular context, the individual makes the necessary associations that pre-construct his delusions. The frail ground upon which these concepts have originated suddenly disappears, and communicating these concepts amongst the collective reinforces a now shared-delusion. This educational method of learning something by heart hammers the message home.

Ultimately humanity has reached the greatest self-delusion of them all: we stopped looking for delusions, both private and shared. For there is a utility in being tricked, or should that be 'convinced': 'what convinces us is not necessarily true, it is merely convincing' (Nietzsche et al., 1968).

We have to be convinced of what we perceive in order to act, in order to make our way in the world, both as an individual and as part of a group. However, humanity is limited by the way it thinks. Such conviction may enable us to make our way in the world, but it also restricts us in how we do it. Our world is unknowable, and yet variously interpretable, both individually and uniquely. There is no one meaning behind it, rather a myriad of imposed meanings, each an internally consistent form, although not necessarily mutually consistent with the others.

Through education, we subscribe to internally consistent frames. From pre-school, through infants, primary and secondary schools and then (for some) university, we ostensibly gain an academic, some would claim an objective, education. But do we? We learn at an early age the so-called *facts*, the shared-delusions of truth and objectivity by attrition. A young child keeps asking, why? why? why? about the frames laid before him. Incessantly why? A potentially infinite recurrence. Exasperated, the parent clips the child around the ear: that's why! In other words: accept the shared-delusional truth of society, as understood by your parents, by your teachers, by your elders and betters, or else this is what you can expect. The same goes for much of formal education, and its examined qualifications³: socializing by another name, the rites of passage into a society. The unstated message is 'accept the group for what it is, or else!' And what is 'it' exactly? It is the way the group teaches the student to think about both itself and its world. Education systems everywhere give priority to 'sciences' like physics and mathematics in their curricula, whereas social sciences are downgraded, and the arts and humanities often ignored. This is how the natural sciences have become preeminent in our schools, and consequently in society. Many critics have raised concerns about this distorting of our society's value systems, fearing that children are being *educated out of their creativity* (Robinson, 2006).

The child learns to believe a host of things. i.e. it learns to act according to these beliefs. Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed, and in that system some things stand unshakeably fast and some are more or less liable to shift. What stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing; it is rather held fast by what lies around it (Wittgenstein et al., 1969).

In other words, elements within a belief system remain intact not because they are true or convincing, but because they fit coherently into the

overall system of self-reference that is used to observe and interpret the environment; and in the process they don't cause any disruptions.

The building of this thinking process starts around the birth of each individual, as a seed: a mere potential, a will to delusion, and at the same time as a surrender to the power of delusion. Each life story is one lifelong sequence and consequence of absorbing frames, and subsequently forming them into delusions, bootstrapping from that potential to a complex structure of self-reinforcing delusions. That is why childhood is a time of magic; why magic plays a major role in the stories of and for that time; and why children do not question the fact that the world is a magical place. Through the eyes of a wise child there is no difference between reality and the world of magic ... because there is no difference: reality is the product of the magic of delusions. Children have no preconceived notions of appropriateness (significance, relevance, what works best); they are ready and willing to accept whatever they are told. For there is danger in a world that is arbitrary, and so there is a survival advantage in developing a personal sense of appropriateness. That is why society, in perpetuating itself, sets about socializing the child with the one true way: the set of shared-delusions that identifies him/her as a member of that particular society.

Mass-delusions

So where do these delusions, both private and shared, come from? From past insights. Some insights were deliberate, some accidental; some contrived, some emerged spontaneously; some straightforward, some subtle; some conscious, some subconscious. However, all delusion was, and is, first imagined into existence by individuals. The magician in society is always questioning the appropriateness of prevalent shared-delusions and their external descriptions. These schemas, maps, theories, methods, procedures are all suppositions in themselves. He and his like make the changes that are new private delusions, and then export them to their community, whereas the rest of us just make our way in the world by sharing in the framed delusions of the past. In doing so, we join the common culture, the imagined community (Anderson, 2006), of that mass-delusion. These theoreticians, innovators, magicians, alchemists, sorcerers, or whatever else we choose to call them, imagine new delusions into existence, and in doing so reinvent, redefine, change and may even destroy the nature of their community.

As individuals, we experience the phenomena around us through subtle and some not so subtle variations in the nebulous clouds of shared-delusions

that agglomerate as common cultures: the multiple overlapping cultures of a country, a club, a workplace, a family ... of every community and institution to which we belong. Because we observe through delusions, there can be no one absolute/objective way of looking at the world. We are swimming in an ocean of past delusions, both shared and private. Meanwhile, vast numbers of new shared-delusions rain down on us, invented by others with their own differing interpretations of the world, each with their own purposes and agendas. At the same time some old shared-delusions evaporate.

In all this buffeting, the unique set of private delusions, accepted and developed by each individual in becoming an individual unlike any other, is subtly changing all the time. The changes set in train are not always to his advantage: he can win, lose or be unaffected by each delusion. He tends to embrace those groups of shared-delusions that he perceives to be most appropriate for his needs; although even that perception is based on delusion. Furthermore, nothing is guaranteed.

New-born with an apparently clean sheet, but prepared with a will to be deluded, the individual arrives into a family, into communities. In his formative years he is powerless to choose. He spends his early years being habituated with the prevalent shared-delusions, although in becoming the individual that he is, his delusions become privatized, as they are always personalized through the uniquely private experience of living. Similarly new communities develop, their developmental phase tainted by the shared-delusions of the powerful groups around them.

As they grow, the choices of appropriateness for both individuals and groups will depend on what they have become, as a consequence of all the previous appropriate choices they have made. An individual's delusions may reinforce the group's positions, or they may metamorphose, mutate and coalesce with the shared-delusions of others to form a new community of belief, which thereby separates what is now a new society from the many unbelievers around. In this way new groups of people start self-selecting, polarizing into collectives, each with their own norms for viewing the world that members hope will maximize benefit for both themselves and the group. Each individual will belong simultaneously to a number of different groups. Some groups are limited by identifying with very specialized shared-delusions, like those who find comfort in an obsession with collecting, be it teddy bears, stamps or ceramics. Others affect large swathes of humanity, such as nationalism, communism, capitalism, globalization and the world's religions.

Those most likely to benefit from a shared-delusion will continue to push it onto the world. Those who fear having the effects imposed upon them will alienate themselves around an anti-delusion, itself another shared-delusion. For example the dread of a new capitalist world order driven by globalization and supported by technology has sparked the anti-capitalism riots in London, Vancouver, Washington, Gothenburg, Genoa; and the many more riots to come. That technology alienates was recognized by Karl Marx a century and a half ago. We are alienated from technology, and by technology, and thereby alienated from each other. Technology creates winners and losers, and this places enormous stresses on the institutions of the status quo. The behaviour of today's anarchists is very similar to that of the nineteenth-century Luddites who saw their own world being destroyed by the shared-delusion of industrialization. The use of the phrase 'shared-delusion of industrialization' is intentional. Not the fact and function of industry, but how industrialization replaced the way humanity saw its place in the world: the impact that industrialization had, not only on social and economic institutions, but also on the ecology of the world of phenomena itself.

Meanwhile, there are those who don't care one way or the other, and they just sit on the fence; that is if they are allowed to.

Spontaneous Combustion

No matter on what aspect of the human condition we focus, for whatever reasons, be it philosophy, education, work, ecology, nationality, trade, sport, gardening, food, entertainment, money and of course science, they all have their theorizers sustaining former delusions, developing new ones, and then sharing these with others. On the basis of what they deem to be appropriate, these creators of new delusions launch actions into the world. Subsequently natural selection takes over. Unknowable systemic forces in the environment of phenomena, that realm of necessity, will ultimately arbitrate, and will decide on success or otherwise.

Unfortunately, no shared-delusion is controllable, or even constant. Once it is communicated, released into the collective, it mutates as it is assimilated within each individual's persona, and in doing so it takes on a life of its own. The circumstance of what a society has become will allow some events to happen, and will banish others. A mass-delusion, more or less the same delusion to all individuals of the mass, although invented by individuals, can trigger a spontaneous communal choice, which is unprompted for whatever dynamic shared-delusional reasons and motives

are already present in society. For example, in every human society there are numerous examples of a spontaneous communal amnesia, an unspoken almost psychic agreement across the whole of a society to leave some embarrassing or unwanted things unsaid. This is how each society, each community, becomes the result of compromises made over the years between members of the group, which differentiates and separates it from other groups.

The mythologies that underpin the creation of every national identity or national pride contain classic examples. The sorcery that creates a nation will insist that a national hero must not have feet of clay. For much of the nineteenth century in Britain, the relationship between Emma Hamilton and Admiral Lord Nelson simply disappeared from the national consciousness. It was not allowed to tarnish 'The Immortal Memory' recalled for posterity in London's Trafalgar Square. Even Horatia, the offspring of this illicit liaison, never came to realize that Lady Hamilton was her mother. The leaders of society (those in the know) chose to ignore the facts. However, among the general citizenry of the British Empire there was no deliberate conspiracy. The silence was deafening when they chose not to confront the prevalent morality and hypocrisy. They would rather not know about any damning evidence, and so the 'problem' simply disappeared. The population wanted to believe the lie; needed to believe the lie. They were buying into the unspoken norms and moralities of the group, as an investment in the benefits of a coherent and cohesive society. The statements of later historians who revisited the scandal were met with total disbelief by much of the population.

No nation's great heroes or its myths can bear too great a scrutiny, whether it be the Boston Tea Party, the storming of the Bastille, the Alamo or the Winter Palace, or Mao's Great March. It is well to remember that the sensitivity of the population to their national plaster saints can still provoke a violent response towards anyone who points out the shortcomings.

The underlying assumptions that inform such processes are social constructions. However, the result can be devoid of the original intentionality, and in ways far more complex than can ever be originally comprehended. Every shared-delusion is just a shadow of what it attempts to represent, and actions based on that delusion will inevitably cast off some debris, some form of pollution that will surface as side-effects, error, fault, damage, absurdity. This opens the door to diminishing returns, which is why every

shared-delusion eventually loses its appropriateness. Then whole sectors of society finally choose to jump ship because they no longer commit to sharing that delusion. This may be why a number of scholars have commented that the value systems of many in developed countries have become alienated from those values implicit in the default national culture (Hofstede, 2001).

That having been said, the fact that the old values have survived thus far shows that these *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 2006) are held together with very strong glue indeed, and that they won't be blown apart that easily. Inertia, not money, makes the world go round.