'Any viable system contains and is contained in a viable system' 'The purpose of a system is what it does'

The Centre for Effective Systems The Metacrisis Meta-organisation

A movement, field and theory building organisation for the metacrisis ecosystem

Metachrysalis Project Development Group [outdated, reconceptualised]

What is The *Centre for Effective Systems?*

The Centre for Effective Systems (CES) is a metacrisis 'meta-organisation' and 'meta-project': a movement (social-structure), field (infrastructure), theory (superstructure) and world (macrostructure) building organisation designed to increase knowledge and collaboration between the (currently disparate) projects, communities and thinkers within the emerging 'metacrisis ecosystem'. The goal of CES is to create 'digital infrastructures', 'coordination mechanisms' and 'social technologies' for the various nodes (members, projects) of the metacrisis movement to operate in 'synergy', to enhance their 'collective intelligence' and ultimately, to improve their ability to address the 'global problem set'. CES is focused on 'civilisation design' ('viable life-world-system design') and 'blue skies social science research' into the (long-term) future of social structures.

CES's Mission:

*to harness the **collective intelligence** of the metacrisis community to enhance humanity's **collective knowledge** of the metacrisis and facilitate **collective action** towards addressing it.*

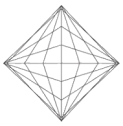
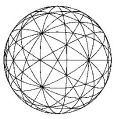
What are CES's Subprojects?

In its first phase, CES aims to advance this goal through four subprojects:

The Metacrisis Forum	*A new hill on the landscape*
Metaconceptual: The Metacrisis Wiki	*A new map for the territory*
Metacodex: The Metacrisis Factbook	*A new survey of the space*
Metachrysalis: The Metacrisis Foundations Program	

A new pathway for the pathfinders

Project Status: Concept-Stage, Call for Collaborators. Next Step: Operationalisation (Project Management), Tech Support (Web-development) & Writing (Initial Forum Posts)

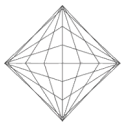



'We live in the interregnum between worlds, between paradigms'

Metacrisis Forum A Social Technology for the Metacrisis Ecosystem

An online hub for discussion related to catastrophic risk, civilisation design and intelligence alignment

(The) *Metacrisis Forum* is an online platform for the metacrisis community to communicate, coordinate and collaborate on addressing 'the metacrisis': the global complex of connected, cascading and systemic crises that humanity faces in the 21st century. The goal of the forum is to integrate the metacrisis movement into a 'collective intelligence' capable of advancing metacrisis theory, formulating the 'design criteria' for a sustainable civilisation and devising a 'macrostrategy' to realise it. The forum functions to bring together thinkers, theorists and researchers from inside and outside of institutions into an independent, open source research initiative. Ultimately, the metacrisis forum aims to become a catalyst for experimental projects in 'civilisation design and transition' and to emergently affect the 'trajectory change' to the 'third attractor': a 'viable world-system' that, *by design,* avoids the competing 'failure modes' of dystopian lock-in (order) and global catastrophe (chaos).

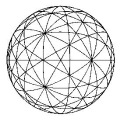


'All models are wrong, but some are useful'

Metaconceptual (The) Metacrisis Wiki

A conceptual adaptive system for the metacrisis and the third attractor

Metaconceptual or the *Metacrisis Wiki* - the 'concept portal' of the *Metacrisis Forum* - is (1) a collaborative open-source platform (a 'digital infrastructure' for 'peer-to-peer knowledge co-production') designed to harness the 'collective intelligence' of the metacrisis community to increase humanity's collective knowledge of the metacrisis (2) a publicly accessible resource for understanding ('cognitive mapping') and addressing ('system intervention') the metacrisis (3) a 'world brain' (H.G Wells) to play the 'world game' (Fuller) of transitioning to an aligned 'viable (world-)system' (Beer) (4) a 'conceptual adaptive system' (the map) tracking the 'complex adaptive system' (the territory) of civilisation.



'We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.'

Metacodex (The) Metacrisis Network Factbook

A factbook of the organisations, projects and individuals within the metacrisis network

Metacodex is a factbook of the organisations, projects and individuals within the metacrisis network. As a 'metacrisis meta-resource' and intelligence initiative, the goal of the *Metacodex* is to provide a comprehensive survey of the metacrisis ecosystem to facilitate more effective coordination between its various nodes (at multiple scales: individual, collective, institutions, subsystems etc) as well as

holistic strategising from a higher-level standpoint. Through its entries, it aims to provide an archive of the metacrisis space's history, up-to-date information about its current state and analysis of its progress over time.



'We live in the interregnum between worlds, between paradigms. Not many people in the history of the world have faced that'

Metachrysalis (The) Metacrisis Foundations Program

An 8-week structured course and discussion group on civilisational catastrophe, dystopia and alignment

Metachrysalis is an introductory program on the 'metacrisis' & the 'third attractor'. Through 8 weeks of readings and discussion sessions, *Metacrhysalis* aims to bring together those interested in acquiring a deeper understanding of what the metacrisis is and what we, as individuals and collectives, can do about it. In the spirit of this 'time between worlds', *Metachrysalis* aims to contribute to a conceptual, personal and, ultimately, civilisational *metamorphosis*: from the metacrisis of the present to the 'meta-utopia' of the future.

Why create *a Metacrisis Meta-organisation?* A New Hill on the Landscape

> 'How do you solve a problem that extends beyond your own lifespan? That question may be the essence of civilization. The only answer I can find is **to initiate a process, to create an environment, in which the solution will occur independently of yourself.** But, that requires a difficult sacrifice: letting go of your desire to bear witness, to exist at the center of the cosmos. To participate in the project of civilization is to accept death.'
>
> -Alexandra Drennan, *The Talos Principle*

The metacrisis movement, unlike its 'adjacent movements' - Effective Altruism, Rationalism (LessWrong), AI Alignment, Progress - does not currently have a dedicated organisation and forum for online discussion, community and coordination.

Whilst overlapping with the ideas and members of these other movements (see this Lesswrong post on 'The Sensemaking Web' and this EA Forum post on the 'Metacrisis Perspective') 'the metacrisis' is its own distinct theoretical framework and associated network that would benefit from having its own

forum and wiki: from the (hybrid centralised-decentralised) ‘organisational structure’, ‘network effects’ and ‘cognitive mapping’ that it can help facilitate.

There is a neglected and tractable opportunity for a dedicated team (followed by broader community engagement) to emulate and improve upon these existing forum-wiki models specifically for the metacrisis and the ecosystem surrounding it.

In the future, the project aims to pursue partnerships (collaborators & advisors) and funding through metacrisis.xyz (a metacrisis-oriented collective - update: now ‘kind of dead’ according to its moderator Stephen Reid), the MetacrisisDAO (a community-created fund for metacrisis-oriented projects) and the Civilisation Research Institute (the leading metacrisis organisation founded and directed by Daniel Schmachnteberger).

The Civilisation Research Institute & Daniel Schmachtenberger

The Metacrisis Framework is the theoretical approach being developed by The Civilization Research Institute (CRI), its publication The Consilience Project (CP) and its founder and director Daniel Schmachtenberger (Civilization Emerging).

- Since 2017, Daniel Schmachtenberger has personally published 8 short-length writings on civilisational risk, design and transition - including 2 posts on the ‘Generator Functions of Catastrophic Risk’ and a 4-part series on ‘New Economics’ (initially intended to be an eight parts series) - and participated in a significant number of podcast dialogues, panel discussions and conferences. As his site reads: ‘There is very little written work to share here…most of the current content…is in the form of podcasts and dialogues’.
- Since 2021, The Consilience Project has published a total of 20 feature articles, including a 4-part series on propaganda and 1 explainer video, on the subjects of technology, capitalism, democracy, geopolitics, macroeconomics, epistemology, dystopia and catastrophe.
- For late 2023, The Civilization Research Institute had announced it was going to ‘publish a comprehensive statement on the metacrisis, which will include a summary of the theory and an explanation as to why it should be taken as the design constraints for ongoing global coordination’. It is now 2024 and CRI has yet to publish this statement.

Whilst there is an abundance of long-format verbal presentations/dialogues on the ‘metacrisis’ by Schmachtenberger, the existing written literature on the framework is relatively underdeveloped (as a low-hanging fruit these existing verbal formulations should be translated into writing and then

developed further). And whilst CRI's (delayed) publication of a 'comprehensive statement' will be a landmark development in this sense, the framework is by its nature (as a 'critical realist' and 'integral' 'macrotheory') a continual work-in-progress requiring further consilience across disciplines, adaptation to the unfolding world-condition and a prescriptive turn to transitional strategy.

To accelerate this process, CRI will need to increase its capabilities as a research project. Earlier, in 2022 the Consilience Project sought to hire an individual for the role of Research Librarian/Analyst, Expert Finder and Knowledge Manager. Whilst this role has likely been filled, its tasks - and research on the metacrisis in general - would benefit from an entire team or even an ecosystem (a collective intelligence infrastructure) of researchers and research (sub)projects.

– Democratising Research: A Distributed Collective Intelligence

> Dear beautiful people, why are we stuck in this 'Daniel-bottleneck'? Is our trust only focused on one person? Can't we trust each other enough to get working in a self-organized way? There's slack etc. Simple tools to get coordinated. Share the love:-) [A comment replying to Daniel Schmachtenberger's Linkedin post on 'The beauty of people that I cannot meet']

Currently research and communication within the metacrisis space occurs through a small number of organisations, publications and individuals. In particular, by virtue of his role in its formation, Daniel Schmachtenberger has become a 'focal point' and 'thought leader' within the space and has acquired a certain 'guru' and 'lone genius' status. The forum and wiki would serve to harness a more collective approach to thinking about and responding to the metacrisis ('bottom-up theory of change') rather than relying on the cognitive and social efforts of a narrow subset of individuals ('great men theory of history').

Whilst the metacrisis framework has primarily been pioneered by Schmachtenberger, the theory upon which it is based extends across many theorists and disciplines. Despite the growth of the metacrisis space in recent years, the published literature on the metacrisis is relatively limited and the wider literature informing the metacrisis perspective is relatively uncohered. The metacrisis space needs a digital resource to map its conceptual system, document the relevant literature and facilitate civilisation research: the forum-wiki is set to fulfil this function.

> *'The four most influential moderns: Darwin, Marx, Freud, and (the productive) Einstein were scholars but not academics. It has always been hard to do genuine - and non perishable - work within institutions' (Taleb)*

As a hybrid model in between centralisation and decentralisation - a centralised ‘coordination mechanism’ enabling decentralised ‘participatory epistemics’ (a parallel to ‘participatory economics) - the wiki is designed to facilitate the ‘co-production of knowledge’ and the creation of a ‘knowledge commons’ for the metacrisis. Whilst, as with many things, forums and wikis tend to follow a ‘pareto distribution’ - where 80% of contributions are made by 20% of contributors - the aim is to create a condition where anyone can contribute and more and more people are supported in doing so. The current situation within the space is that there is almost nowhere for individual and collective intellectual efforts to be channelled and combined. The forum-wiki aims to provide this opportunity.

The Metacrisis (Attention) within Effective Altruism

The metacrisis paradigm is neglected across EA, GP, X-risk and S-risk research. As far as I can see there has only been a few forum posts related to the metacrisis: ‘Why are we not talking more about Metacrisis Perspective’ (EA Forum); ‘Defining Meta-Existential Risk’ (EA Forum); ‘The Sensemaking Web’ (LessWrong).

> I've also seen that in 2023 EA Netherland’s were planning two future programmes - ‘Awakening from the Meaning Crisis’ and ‘Metacrisis Fellowship’ – though I have not yet contacted them to check if they ever went ahead or are if they are still in the works.
>
> And a 2024 event by EA Hamburg (Soren Klinger): EA Hamburg Session: The Metacrisis - a useful concept for tackling global challenges?.
>
> The Gaia Consortium (previously Gai Network) are an EA-adjacent metacrisis-oriented org that have mentioned the metacrisis on the EA forum (see Gaia Network: An Illustrated Primer). I just attended the CSER’s Cambridge Conference on Catastrophic Risk (CCCR) 2024, where they gave a talk briefly touching on ‘the metacrisis’ and what they term ‘everything safety’, but I found they really didn’t communicate these ideas that well (which I thought risked ‘idea inoculation’). I think the framing I am developing of ‘cybernetic intelligence safety’ is the proper formulation.

Relative to the ‘metacrisis’, the ‘polycrisis’ (and ‘systemic risk’ that characterises what has been termed ‘third wave existential risk studies’ following the dominant ‘techno-utopian approach’) seems to be a more prevalent adjacent concept with a few posts on the EA Forum. See Interrelatedness of x-risks and systemic fragilities, Effective Altruism Risks Perpetuating a Harmful Worldview and the

research org, The Cascade Institute that has recently collaborated with CSER to produce the 'Polycrisis Research and Action Roadmap'.

At CCCR, I talked with the CSER researcher Constantin Arnscheidt who worked on the paper as well as Thomas Homer-Dixon, the founder and Director of The Cascade Institute, and asked them why they opted for using the term 'polycrisis' over the 'metacrisis'. They both gave a similar answer along the lines of the metacrisis being more oriented towards the 'metaphysical', 'epistemic', 'spiritual' and 'ideational' – as opposed to the 'practical', 'systemic', 'technical' and 'material' – which I think it is, but I think misrepresents the total meaning of the concept which includes all of these aspects too (as a more nuanced, higher-order and encompassing framing).

I think their misconception – reproduced on The Cascade Institute's Polycrisis.org site (see What other terms have been used to capture intersecting global crises?) – stems from their selective exposure to the term's usage by Jonathan Rawson/Perspectiva and only a cursory engagement with its development by Daniel Schmachtenberger/CRI, TCP.

Why the name the *Centre for Effective Systems?*

The name, the *Centre for Effective Systems* (CES) is:

(1) **A critical subversion of the existing parallel organisation the *Center for Effective Altruism* (CEA)**, the meta-organisation for the Effective Altruism (EA) movement. In relation to EA, the metacrisis movement is an 'alternative moral optimiser' that takes a (heterodox) critical, systemic approach to improving the world(-system).

and

(2) **A reference to the cybernetician Stafford Beer's concept of a 'Viable System'** elucidated as part of his 'Viable Systems model': his formulation of the necessary and sufficient criteria for a system to be functional, adaptive, self-regulating and self-sustaining The goal of CES is to advance the transition to a 'viable world-system' or 'meta-system': to design a sustainable civilisation that is aligned with the welfare of sentient minds.

— Naming Counter-considerations

(1) **Centre:** The term 'centre' is associated with 'centralisation' and 'concentration' (of power) - an organisational structure and failure mode that the metacrisis movement is critical and aware of

Response: The term 'centre' can also mean a 'focal point' and 'coordination mechanism' that facilitates communication and action across a 'decentralised network' where power and agency is distributed.

(2) **Effective:** The term 'effective' has connotations with (capitalist) 'instrumental rationality' and a 'technocratic' approach to human affairs. It is not *effective* systems we want, but '*viable* systems' or '*aligned* systems'.

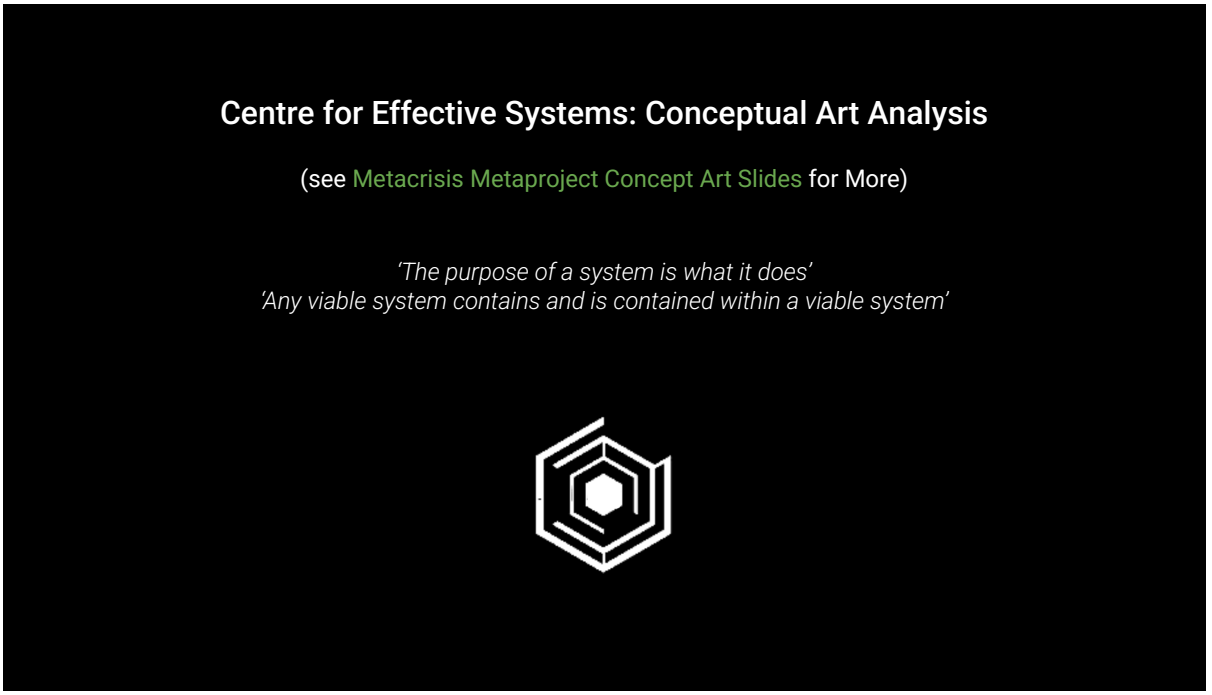
Response: 'effective', 'viable' and 'aligned' are all descriptors that are in relation to a goal (a means-ends or instrumental-value rational relation, a 'hypothetical imperative'). From a capitaliocentric perspective, a system is 'effective' if it maximises profit, growth and power. From a 'sentiocentric' perspective a system is 'effective' if it moves sentient minds away from the depths and towards the peaks of the 'moral landscape' (the spectrum of subjectivity, of possible mental states and sensations).

What subprojects could the *Centre for Effective Systems* undertake in the future?

Beyond its initial phase, the *Centre for Effective Systems* could enhance its existing subprojects and expand its range of activities to include a:

- **Metacrisis Multi-Media Project**
    - Metacrisis Concepts Media Series
    - Metacrisis Lecture Series
    - Metacrisis Documentary/Interview Series
    - Metacrisis Speaker/Seminar Series

- **Metacrisis Research-Technical Project**
    - Metacrisis (Civilisation) Research Fellowship
    - Metacrisis Conference ‘The Third Attractor’
    - Metacrisis Meta-Fund ‘Metacatalyst’
    - Metacrisis Physical Hub
    - Metacrisis Groups (Online/University/City/Regional/National)



Centre for Effective Systems

Metacrisis Meta-organisation

— **The Epigraphs:** are 'cybernetic principles' formulated by the famous cybernetician Stafford Beer

— **The Hexagonal Shape**: is a reference and homage to Stafford Beer's *Project Cybersyn*: an experiment in creating an alternative socio-technical-economic system in Chile in the early 1970's

- Hexagon Shape (6 sides) for *Project Cyberyn's* hexagonal operations room
- Pentagon Shape (5 sides outlined in black) for the five levels of Beer's *Viable Systems Model*

— **The Recursive Layers:** are symbolic of holarchy, self-organisation and a hybrid model between centralisation and decentralisation

CENTRE FOR EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM



CENTRE FOR
EFFECTIVE
SYSTEMS

'We live in the interregnum between worlds, between paradigms'

Metacrisis Forum A Social Technology for for the Metacrisis Ecosystem

An online hub for discussion related to catastrophic risk, civilisation design and intelligence alignment

> *In much the same way that the information age has made the nation-state obsolete, the information age has turned us all into a new type of democratic citizen, equipped with incredible abilities to communicate and coordinate with other people from all around the world, irrespective of geography or other pre-existing bonds. How can we make our open societies compatible with this new era? We have the choice, now more than ever, to explore this open question together and find a solution. But we will have to choose to do so. It won't happen by default.*
>
> – Teetering Between Oppression and Chaos, The Consilience Project

What is (The) *Metacrisis Forum?*

(The) Metacrisis Forum is a platform for the metacrisis community to communicate, coordinate and collaborate on addressing 'the metacrisis': the global complex of connected, cascading and systemic crises that humanity faces in the 21st century. The goal of the forum is to integrate the metacrisis movement into a 'collective intelligence' capable of advancing metacrisis theory, formulating the 'design criteria' for a sustainable civilisation and devising a 'macrostrategy' to realise it. The forum functions to bring together thinkers, theorists and researchers from inside and outside of institutions into an independent, open source research initiative. Ultimately, the *Metacrisis Forum* aims to become a catalyst for experimental projects in 'civilisation design and transition' and to emergently affect the 'trajectory change' to the 'third attractor': a 'viable world-system' that, by design, avoids the competing 'failure modes' of dystopian lock-in (order) and global catastrophe (chaos).

How will the Metacrisis Forum & Wiki be hosted?

The Effective Altruism, LessWrong, Alignment and Progress Forum-Wikis use the same software called 'Forum Magnum' developed from another software called 'Vulcan JS'. Whilst the repository for the code appears to be on GitHub, I would like to contact the LessWrong Team (aka Lightcone Infrastructure), the first forum to develop and use the software, to ensure that we use the most up to date version that they have.

Aside from benefiting from the same software that these forums use, the Metacrisis Forum-Wiki can also learn from their operation: the subprojects and events they run, the content they produce, the writing and communication style(s) they use, the administration and support they provide for users

etc. These forums are existing models that can be emulated and improved upon for the metacrisis space.

A useful recruitment option would be to get current or former members (technical and non-technical) of these existing forum teams that are metacrisis-curious/aligned and bring them over to work on the *Metacrisis Forum and Wiki*.

– List of Introductory Posts from Other Forums

- EA Wiki: See the EA Wiki FAQ & 'Our Plans for Hosting an EA Wiki'

Metacrisis Forum Concept Art

- An 'M' representing 'metacrisis' combined with f an 'X' representing 'x-risk'
- A horizontal hourglass (knocked over on its side) representing 'time running out'
- The past and future light cone converging in the present 'the time between worlds'
- A symbol of the 'hinge of history' and 'metaxis' (meta-axis)

See the main Centre for Effective Systems Tab [link] for More on the Metacrisis Forum

'All models are wrong, but some are useful'

Metaconceptual The Metacrisis Wiki

A conceptual adaptive system for the complex adaptive world-system: a map for the metacrisis.

> *'Philosophy is written in this grand book—I mean the universe—which stands continually open to our gaze, but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and interpret the characters in which it is written...without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these, one is wandering around in a dark labyrinth.'*
>
> — Galileo Galilei, *The Assayer*

What is *Metaconceptual: (The) Metacrisis Wiki*?

Metaconceptual (or the *Metacrisis Wiki)* is the Wiki of the *Metacrisis Forum:* an online hub for discussion related to catastrophic risk, civilisation design and intelligence alignment. The *Metacrisis Wiki* is a subproject of the *Metacrisis Forum*, which itself is a project of the *Centre for Effective Systems.* This google doc is a developmental medium and copy archive for the (planned) live wiki hosted at metacrisisforum.org.

In its first phase, the wiki is being developed and directed by Max Ramsahoye as its project lead and principal contributor (writer and editor). In its second phase, the wiki plans to become a collaborative open-source platform (peer-to-peer knowledge co-production) designed to harness the collective intelligence of the metacrisis community to increase humanity's collective knowledge of the metacrisis and facilitate collective action towards addressing it.

Why create *a Metacrisis Wiki?: A New Map for the Territory*

> 'I am certain that none of the world's problems-which we are all perforce thinking about today-have any hope of solution except through all of world around society's individuals becoming thoroughly and comprehensively self-educated. Only thereby will society be able to identify, and inter-communicate the vital problems of total world society. Only thereafter may humanity sort out and put those problems into order of importance for solution in respect to the most fundamental principles governing man's survival and enjoyment of life on Earth.'
>
> — Buckminster Fuller *The World Game (Preamble)*

The *Metacrisis Wiki* is intended to be a publicly accessible source of collective knowledge about the



metacrisis: a 'world brain' (H.G Wells) to play the 'world game' (Fuller) of transitioning to an aligned 'viable (world-)system' (Beer).

Whilst there have been previous attempts to create wikis (see Metacrysis.xyz, Daniel Schmachtenberger knowledge graph, Game B Wiki, Consilience Project Glossary) within the space, they have been fairly uncoordinated, unprofessional and underdeveloped. By comparison to adjacent movements ('idea machines') - Rationalism (LessWrong) and Effective Altruism - which have created highly-informative, well-designed wikis ('concept portals') with several hundred entries, the Metacrisis movement is lacking the same level of theoretical development and (public-facing) accessible material. The development of the *Metacrisis Wiki* aims to rectify this.

Why the name *Metaconceptual*?

Metaconceptual:meta meaning 'above' + conceptual meaning 'abstraction' = 'above abstraction'

> Our civilization is characterised by the word 'progress'. Progress is its form rather than making progress one of its features. Typically it constructs. It is occupied with building an ever more complicated structure. And even clarity is sought only as a means to this end, not as an end in itself. For me on the contrary, clarity, perspicuity are valuable in themselves. I am not interested in constructing a building, so much as in having a perspicuous view of the foundations of possible buildings.
>
> — Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*

The alternative name of the wiki '*metaconceptual', related to the term 'meta-cognition'* ('thinking about thinking'), refers to a higher-order level of thinking about the epistemic (map), instrumental (tool) and normative (moral colour e.g green, red, yellow) value of abstractions themselves (in general and in particular). The purpose of *Metaconceptual* as a 'wiki for the metacrisis', is to strategically select, develop, refine and alter the concepts with which we think about ('concept*ualise*', the passive and active *doing* of concepts) the state of civilisation and its future.

In this way, metaconceptual aims to (continually re-)create a comprehensive and dynamic 'conceptual adaptive system' (the map) for the 'complex adaptive system' (the territory) that is the world-system. As a 'C(onceptual)-AS', a principal method that *Metaconceptual* employs is 'conceptual engineering': the creation of new concepts, often derived from existing concepts (e.g subversion: 'spontaneous disorder'), to better capture the nature of phenomena and reality as a whole. For instance, the terms 'metaconceptual' and 'conceptual adaptive system' (and 'metacrisis') are conceptual engineering themselves, that aim to improve our reflective understanding of thinking and theorising on a recursive

and structural level. (For more examples of conceptual engineering introduced by *Metaconceptual* see 'Metachrysallis', the 'Post Status Quo' & 'The Great Alignment').

The concept of 'metaconceptual' is closely related to the ideas of (1) 'metaphilosophy and 'metatheory' - the 'philosophy of philosophy' and the 'theory of theory' - which operate at a more 'fundamental' 'secord-order level' of thought entailing 'the application of the methods of philosophy/theory to philosophy/theory itself' (2) 'macrotheory' (e.g macrosociology) - large scale theories, 'grand narratives', 'paradigms' - that attempts to create a 'theory of everything' and 'theory of (universal) history' (3) 'integral theory' that aims to synthesise various competing macrotheories into a holistic model (4) and inter/trans/multi-disciplinary theory which aims to realise 'the unity of art and science' and synthesise theory from across artificial disciplinary boundaries

> 'A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct,
> it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness.'
> — Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity
>
> 'We need to reflect on and play with the necessary incongruity of our maps…
> For the dictum of Alfred Korzybski is inescapable: 'Map is not territory'–but maps are all we possess.'
> — Jonathan Z. Smith, Map is not Territory

A core dictum of the metaconceptual approach is that 'the map is not the territory': that abstractions can never completely correspond to or represent reality as it actually is. Based on this recognition, a follow up principle is that whilst 'all models are wrong, some are useful': abstractions as inescapably epistemically limited as they are, are all we have to work with and can still be of explanatory and instrumental value provided we also recognise their limitations. This is the guiding epistemic principle, of *Metaconceptual*, the metacrisis wiki.



Metaconceptual Concept Art



- A geometric representation of a 'map (model) of the territory (reality)' viewed from above (the 'conceptual search space' which the 'mind as a computer' explores and exploits)
- A model of space-time, extending out in all directions and the light cone, pointing backwards into the past and forward into the future.

Metaconceptual Engineerings: A Map for the Metacrisis

> *We still to a large extent live in the interregnum between worlds, between paradigms.*
> – Rupert Roderick

> *Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world*
> – Archimedes

Whilst the 'metacrisis' has emerged from a long macro-historical process that predates modernity – and in a sense *is* this process itself - in its current advanced stage it is a relatively *novel phenomena*. Part of the problem is the inability to adequately conceptualise the (civilisational) problem; which the term 'metacrisis' itself is an attempt at, by providing the global problem complex with a more nuanced name. Given the novelty and recursiveness of the metacrisis, understanding and addressing it - creating a useful 'map' for the 'territory' – requires the development of a new theoretical *paradigm*. Based on this recognition, *Metaconceptual (the) Metacrisis Wikil* is, at its foundation, a project in 'conceptual engineering': aiming to adapt existing concepts to the current condition and develop novel concepts where existing theory is found to be inadequate (i.e from epistemic and 'cultural lag': a lack of up-to-date, situational explanatory power and instrumental value).

Alongside the (forthcoming) long-form entries of the *Metacrisis Wiki*, this section presents a list of around 50 'conceptual engineerings' that I have developed to capture the structure of the metacrisis. Each concept is briefly explained and discussed through 1 excerpt and around 300 words. For another list of metacrisis-related concepts, see *The Consilience Project's* Glossary page. My hope is that this post will provide a partial view of the 'conceptual adaptive system' that *Metaconceptual* is attempting to create. Ultimately, the claim of Metaconceptual is that it is not possible to properly characterise, comprehend and communicate about the metacrisis without using these concepts and, more importantly, the conceptual system that they cohere into as a 'whole that is more than the sum of its parts'.



The Illusion & the Legacy of the Conceptual Engineer

Whilst the conceptual engineerings in this list are 'my own',* all this translates to (phenomenologically and procedurally) is that certain thoughts have 'arisen' in my mind. Knowledge-production is always 'interdependent' and no one can truly claim intellectual property over ideas. In the end, it is the 'conceptual engineering' (the idea) itself, not the 'conceptual engineer' (the source) that is of ultimate value: the process of thinking and the thought that emerges from it, not the 'thinking machine'. After the body decays and the mind degenerates, it is 'the idea' that 'lives on' (metaphorically and memetically speaking) and affects the world.

> *How do you solve a problem that expands beyond your own lifespan? That question may be the essence of civilization. The only answer I can find is: To initiate a process, to create an environment in which the solution will occur independently of yourself. But, that requires a difficult sacrifice. Letting go of your desire to bear witness, to exist at the center of the cosmos. To participate in the project of civilization, is to accept death.* – Alexandra Drennan, a character from the game *The Talos Principle*

*In cases where a conceptual engineering on this list finds a precedent in earlier literature (which I try to document), I have only come across this after 'independently' thinking of the concept and developing it according to my own conception of what it should be.

Metaconceptual Engineerings: Concept Map

*Green = Draft Complete *Orange = Claude AI-assisted Concept Development *Grey = Undrafted

General

- Metacrisis Studies (Crisis Studies)
- Spontaneous/Extended Disorder (Spontaneous/Extended Order, Hayek)
    - Global Market Catastrophic Risk & Negative Existential Externalities (Global Catastrophic Risk + Global Market + Corporate Catastrophic Risk, Hillebrant - Existential Catastrophes + Negative Externalities)
- Problem-Solution-Externality History (Problem-Solution History, Crawford)
- Super-Critical Path (Critical Path, Fuller)
- Conceptual Adaptive System (Complex Adaptive System)

I (Intelligence) Alignment

- The 'World-System-AI' Cybernetic Intelligence Alignment Problem (Cybernetics, Wiener + The AI Alignment Problem)
- The Replicator Alignment Problem (Replicators, Dawkins + The Alignment Problem + Grey Goo, Drexler)
- Multi-Agent Reinforcement Learning by Market Feedback (MA-RL-MF) & RL 'All the Way Down' (RL-STACK)

Dystopian Lock-in

- Spontaneous Totalitarian Order / Meta-Stable Inverted Totalitarianism (Spontaneous Order, Hayek + Stable Totalitarianism, 80K + Inverted Totalitarianism, Wolin)
- The Silicon Cage (The Iron Cage, Weber)
- MTurkification, The Megamechanical Turk, The Ghost in the Megamachine (McDonaldization, Ritzer + Rationalisation, Weberm + Megamachine, Mumford + Mechanical Turk, Kempelen + The Ghost in the Machine, Ryle)
- Unaligned Artificial Artificial Superintelligence + Megamechanical Turk + The Planetary



Reverse Turing Test (Artificial Artificial Intelligence, Bezoz)

- Capital-AI Takeover (AI Takeover, Bostrom + Capital-AI, Land)
- (War & Merchant) Ship of Theseus of the State (Ship of Theseus, Plutarch/Hobbes + Ship of the State, Plato + Withering Away of the State, Marx + Planetary Work-and-War Machine, Widmer)
- The World Command-and-Control System (World-System, Wallerstein + Command-and-Control System + Empire, Hardt & Negri)
- (Meta-Utopia, Nozick)

Capital Phenomenology

- The Demons of Surveillance-Capitalism (Descartes' Demon + Laplace's Demon + Surveillance Capitalism, Zuboff), Laplace's Angel, Descartes' Angel
- The Life-Blind Widget-Maker (Watchmaker, Paley + Blind Watchmaker, Dawkins + Life-Blind Economic Rationality, McMurtry + Widget)
- Psycho-therapeutic History (Psychohistory, Asimov + Psychotherapy)

Catastrophic & Existential Risk

- The Doomsday Megamachine (The Doomsday Machine, Ellsberg + Megamachine, Mumford)
- Hyper-agents of Doom (Hyper-Object, Morton + Agents of Doom, Kemp)
- World Risk Factory (World Risk Society, Beck + Social Factory, Tronti)
- AI-Exterminism, Exhaustionism, Extractivism (Exterminism, Thompson + + Exhaustionism, Stewart + Extractivism AI-Nationalism, Hoggoth + AI-Capitalism, Wytherford + Data Colonialism, Couldry + Data Extractivism, Morozov)
- End(-of-History-)Stage Capitalism
- Great Grower Competition (Great Power Competition)
- 4E Intelligence, 4E Risk & 4E Utopia: Embodied, Embedded, Enacted, Extended (4E Cognition)



Philosophical Paradigms

- ➢ Computational Neo-Mechanism + Megamachine Intelligence (Classical Mechanism)
- ➢ Hyper-Agential Hyper-realism (Hyper-Object, Morton + Agential Realism, Baradi + Hyper-real, Baullriard)
- ➢ Cybernetic Neo-Platonism (Cybernetics, Wiener + Neoplatonism - General Systems Theory & Theory of Forms + Purpose & Teleology)
- ➢ Critical Alien Phenomenology (Phenomenology + Critical Theory + Critical Phenomenology + Alien Phenomenology, Bogost)
- ➢ Techno-ontological (technological + ontological; 'ethico-onto-epistem-ology' Barad)
    - (Retroactive) Techno-ontological Rendering (e.g humans historically modelled as machine intelligences preceding actual machine intelligence) (World-Rendering from Simulations as Video Games)

Epistemological Artifacts

- ➢ Hayek's Great Wall (Hayek's defense of markets + Chesterton's Fence + The Great Wall of China)
- ➢ Mcluhan's Aquarium (Marshall McLuhan, Dave Martin)
- ➢ The Capitalist 'Best of All Possible World-Systems' Theodicy (Best of All Possible Worlds, Leibniz + The End of History, Fukuyama + Capitalist Realism, Fischer + TINA, Thatcher)
- ➢ Drone Warfare Utilitarianism
- ➢ The Epistemic Principal-Agent Problem: Epistemic Interdependence & the Semi-Anarchic Epistemic Condition
- ➢ The Sociological (Social Science) Post-Mortem: Structural Violence & The Cause(s) of Death

Cybernetic Dictums

- ➢ 'The Behaviour of a System is What It Is' (POSIWID, Beer + The Duck Test)
- ➢ 'Any sufficiently complex and adaptive system is indistinguishable from (an) intelligent agency' (Clarke's Third Law + Ginsberg's & Alexander's Moloch)

Existential Hope

- Blue Skies Social Science Research (Blue Skies Science Research + Social Science), The Post Status Quo (Post-capitalism, Post-statism, Post-scarcity, Post-work etc)
- Metachrysalis (Metacrisis, Schmachtenberger + Chrysalis), Biowisdom (Biopower, Foucault), Memetic Peacefare (Memetic Warfare + Livingry, Buckminster Fuller + Peace and Structural Violence & Structural Peace, Galtung) Preservatism (Exterminism, Thompson)
- The Great Alignment (The Great Acceleration)
- Viable Life-World-System (Life-world, Husserl + Viable System, Beer + World-System, Wallerstein)
- Cybernetic Existentialism: The Purpose of the World-System Is What It Does (POSIWD, Beer)
- Post-Capitalist Realism (Capitalist Realism, Fischer) Post-Capitalist Peace Theory (Capitalist Peace Theory, Kant)

Metaconceptual Engineerings: from the Wider Research Space

Total: 25

General

- Transformative Technology Trilemma The Collective Intelligence Project (CIP)
- The Three Attractors (Schmachtenberger)
- Naive Techno-Capitalism & The Techno-Capitalist Apology (Schmachtenberger, Joseph)
- The Great Simplification (Hagens)
- The Meaning Crisis (Vervaeke)

Design

- Axiological Design (Schmachtenberger)
- Ontological Design (Fraga)



- ➢ Comprehensive Anticipatory Design Science (Fuller)
- ➢ Post-Planetary Design (New School)
- ➢ Intelligent Design

Meta-agents & Mega-structures

- ➢ The Economic Superorganism (Hagens, King)
- ➢ The Technium (Kelly)
- ➢ The Stack (Bratton)

Alignment

- ➢ Paratetopian Goal Alignment (Drexler)
- ➢ Multi-scale Alignment (Tegmark)
- ➢ Proxy-Alignment (Hubinger et al)

Meta-Existential Risk

- ➢ Meta-Existential Risk (Lindmark)
- ➢ Generator Functions (Schmachtenberger)
- ➢ The Twin Nuclei Problem (Eric Weinstein
- ➢ The Fourth Frontier (Bret Weinstein)
- ➢ The Semi-Anarchic Default Condition
- ➢ The Multi-Polar Trap, Moloch (Scott Alexander)
- ➢ Military-Economic Adaptationism (Allan Dafoe)
- ➢ Exterminism (E.P Thompson)
- ➢ Exhaustionism (Stewart)

Crisis Studies

Metacrisis Studies

> *'The meta-problem of the meta-system that engenders the meta-threat is a problem of organisation.'*
>
> – Stafford Beer, *The Liberty Machine*

> *The true system, the real system, is our present construction of systematic thought itself, rationality itself, and if a factory is torn down but the rationality that produced it is left standing, then that rationality will simply produce another factory. If a revolution destroys a systematic government, but the systematic patterns of thought that produced that government are left intact, then those patterns will repeat themselves in the succeeding government. There's so much talk about the system. And so little understanding.*
>
> – Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

Metacrisis Studies is a nascent heterodox approach to 'Crisis Studies' that emphasises the underlying drivers ('generator functions') of crises *in general (*or crises *as a class)* and the cascading 'intra-action' between crises as part of a dynamic assemblage. According to the metacrisis paradigm, each 'individual' type of crisis (e.g economic, ecological,, epistemic etc) is a part of and produced by a higher-order 'crisis of crises'. This 'meta-crisis' – the conceptual engineering that gives the approach its name – is (etiologically) diagnosed as endogenous to the prevailing meta-system (or world-system); as evolving from it's initial conditions and following from it's 'foundational axioms'.

In response to this recognition, metacrisis theorists, such as Schmachtenberger and Joseph, have proposed 'civilisation design' and the transition to an (alternative) viable world-system. The core of this project according to these theorists is changing 'the foundational structures of macroeconomics': creating a 'new economics' that internalises negative externalities, solves coordination problems and aligns the incentives of all agents 'with the well-being of all other agents in the system'. Towards satisfying this criteria, Joseph has formulated how 'economic calculation' would function in the alternative post-market system of the 'natural law resource based economy': an 'advanced production, distribution, and [global resource] management system' that combines 'participatory economics' (collaborative sociotechnical design) with macro-industrial 'protocols' to perform (scientific) 'economic calculation' based on real-world resource utilities.

As a critique of the existing world-system and as a proposal for an alternative, *Metacrisis Studies* is an emerging interdisciplinary research programme that requires further theoretical development and practical translation into transitional project (e.g the Global Redesign Institute).

Spontaneous/Extended Order (Hayek)

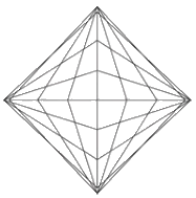
Spontaneous/Extended Disorder

> *This book [The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism] argues that our civilisation depends, not only for its origin but also for its preservation, on what can be precisely described only as the extended order of human cooperation, an order more commonly, if somewhat misleadingly, known as capitalism*
> – Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism*

A 'spontaneous order' is a self-organising structure that emerges from evolutionary processes, local cooperation and collective action. In relation to a broader taxonomy of complex structures, 'spontaneous orders' that are 'the result of human action, but not human design' are a 'third category' beyond 'natural orders' – that are the result of non-human action and non-conscious design ('the blind watchmaker' of natural selection) – and 'artificial orders' that are the result of both human action and human design.

Within classical political economy, the 'market economy' has famously been theorised as a form of 'spontaneous order', most prominently by Adam Smith ('the father of economics and capitalism') through his notion of 'the invisible hand'. Following Smith in this tradition, F.A Hayek used the term 'the extended order' to refer to the 'self-generating' structure 'of human cooperation' that is 'more commonly, if somewhat misleadingly, known as capitalism'. According to Kley, a scholar of *Hayek's Social and Political Thought*, 'for... Hayek, the idea of a spontaneous order is 'liberalism's "central concept"' and 'the notion on which all social theory converges'. In other words, that 'the whole task of '[liberal] social theory' is 'to reconstruct the various spontaneous orders existing in the social world'.

If the concept of 'spontaneous order' – capturing capitalism's self-constructive emergent behaviour (positive externalities) – is the 'central concept' of liberal social theory, I propose the conceptual engineering of 'spontaneous *dis*order' – to account for capitalism's self-destructive emergent behaviour (negative externalities) – as the central concept of *critical* social theory. Accordingly, the whole task of critical social theory is to reconstruct the various 'spontaneous disorders' existing in the social world: from inter-state warfare, to industrial pollution to international pandemics. On Hayek's liberal conception, the 'extended order' of capitalism is what 'civilisation depends, not only for its origin but also for its preservation'. On the critical counter-conception proposed here, the 'extended *dis*order' of capitalism is also what civilisation depends on for its origin, but on the contrary not for its preservation, but for its (periodic/formative and terminal/global) destruction.



Metaconceptual *Metacrisis Wiki*

'We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.'

Metacodex The Metacrisis Factbook

A factbook of the organisations, projects and individuals within the metacrisis network

> *'I think you can make a case that wisdom and wide-scoped cooperativeness are the two qualities currently most needful to secure a great future for our Earth-sprouted civilization…We are still remarkably in the dark about the basic macrostrategic directionality of things. Truly, I wonder whether we can even tell up from down.'*
>
> *'It is….possible to imagine an organization composed of a very large cadre of very efficiently coordinated knowledge workers, who collectively can solve intellectual problems across many very general domains….Such an organization could have a very high degree of collective intelligence; if sufficiently high…collective superintelligence.'*
>
> — Nick Bostrom. *Deep Utopia: Life and Meaning in a Solved World + Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*

What is *Metacodex: (The) Metacrisis Factbook*

Metacodex - or (The) *Metacrisis Factbook* - is a factbook of the organisations, projects and individuals within the metacrisis network. As a 'metacrisis meta-resource' and intelligence initiative, the goal of the *Metacodex* is to provide a comprehensive survey of the metacrisis ecosystem to facilitate more effective coordination between its various nodes (at multiple scales: individual, collective, institutions, subsystems etc) as well as holistic strategising from a higher-level standpoint. Through its entries, it aims to provide an archive of the metacrisis space's history, up-to-date information about its current state and analysis of its progress over time.

Why create *a Metacrisis Codex?: A New Survey of the Space*

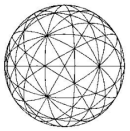
Whilst there have been previous attempts to create databases within the space, (see the Metacrisis Meta-Resource & the Game B Library) they have been fairly uncoordinated, unprofessional and underdeveloped. In comparison to the level of sophistication achieved by the world's intelligence agencies (e.g see the CIA's public-facing version of the 'World Factbook'), the 'third attractor' movement is severely lacking. In order to have any impact on the world, a counter-hegemonic movement first needs to create internal knowledge of the opportunities and 'leverage points' ('actionable intelligence') within its own ecosystem. A 'codex' or 'encyclopaedia' that provides a clear map of the actors in the space is imperative in this respect and will be instrumental for the meta-crisis movement to increase its alignment and capabilities.

Why the name *Metacodex*?

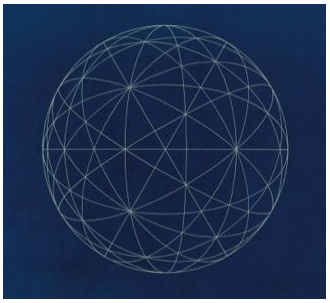
> *A codex in the Warhammer 40,000 tabletop wargame, is a rules supplement containing information concerning a particular army, environment, or worldwide campaign.*
>
> — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_(Warhammer_40,000)

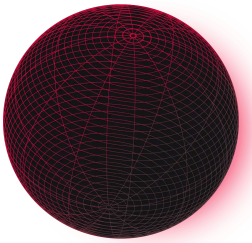
In gaming, the term 'codex' refers to a comprehensive in-game reference guide or encyclopaedia (see the *Civilopedia* in *Sid Mier's Civilisation* or the *Mass Effect Codex*) that contains detailed information about the game world's characters and groups; setting, environment and history; laws, mechanics and items. The purpose of the 'codex' is to contribute to the 'world-building' of the fictional game world and also to provide 'strategic intelligence' for the player attempting to navigate it. This modern usage draws on the historical concept of a 'codex' as a bound volume of knowledge. (etymology: 'tree trunk' or 'block of wood' which evolved to mean a book or manuscript).

The *Metacodex*is a real-world factbook for (what Buckminster Fuller called) the 'world-game': to 'Make the world work, for 100% of humanity, in the shortest possible time, through spontaneous cooperation, without ecological offense or the disadvantage of anyone.'As a reference guide for the metacrisis, the *Metacodex* aims to construct a digital record of the metacrisis space that can be used to navigate it as it currently exists and to build it into the future (to minimise the disparity between an individual's partial internal model of the metacrisis ecosystem and the metacrisis ecosystem as it actually is as a whole).



Metacodex Concept Art





Left: Buckminster Fuller's original drawing of a Geodesic sphere

Right: The CIA's World Factbook Logo (quite literally the Death Star or Prison Planet)

- Symbolising: A Global Network of Interconnected Nodes
    - Interpersonal/organisational connections
    - Conceptual Connections
    - Neural Connections



'We live in the interregnum between worlds, between paradigms'

Metachrysalis The Metacrisis Foundations Program

An 8-week course and discussion group on civilisational catastrophe, dystopia and alignment

> *"There are a large number of crises drawing increasing amounts of public attention, such as the ecological, economic, immigration, geopolitical, and energy crises. But there is also an invisible crisis unfolding within our own minds and cultures that is getting much less attention. This is the metacrisis, which has to do with how humans understand themselves and the world. It is a generalised educational crisis involving a set of related psychological dynamics; systems and societies are in trouble, but it is the psyche—the human dimension—that is in the direst of straits."*
>
> — Zachary Stein, 'Education is the Metacrisis'. *Perspectiva*

Metachrysalis is a program on the foundational theory of 'the metacrisis' & 'the third attractor'. Through 8 weeks of readings and discussion sessions, *Metachrysalis* aims to bring together those interested in acquiring a deeper understanding of what the metacrisis is and what we, as individuals and collectives, can do about it. In the spirit of this 'time between worlds,' *Metachrysalis* aspires to contribute to a conceptual, personal and, ultimately, civilisational *metamorphosis*: from the metacrisis of the present to the 'metautopia' of the future.

Metachrysalis: meta meaning 'recursive' + chrysalis meaning 'change' = 'recursive change'

> *In the broadest historical terms, the metacrisis can be understood as a dangerous transitional period from the current global civilization, to something new and uncertain.*
> – The Civilisation Research Institute

The term 'metachrysalis', a phonetic play on the term 'metacrisis', reframes the metacrisis emphasising its transformative nature as a 'time between worlds': as not 'the end of the world', but rather the 'end of *this* world'. On this metaphor of *metamorphosis*, we live in a time before a 'phase-transition' where, failing to see the imminence of a disjuncture from normality, we narrowly extrapolate status quo trajectories into the future and miss the possibility of a radically divergent future (another possible world) on the other side. Further, the metaphor recognises that we are part of the crisis and that, upon recognising this - the meta-cognition of the metacrisis or self-awareness of (human) superintelligence - we can become part of the change to resolve it (second order cybernetics).



Why create *a Metacrisis Foundations Program?*

Foundations = advanced (generalist) yet introductory (onboarding)

- **Neglectedness**: currently, there is no ('official') go-to onboarding program designed to introduce people to the idea of the metacrisis and facilitate discussion surrounding. The (introductory, albeit advanced) foundations program is designed to meet this need.
- **Tractability:** putting together an assemblage of resources to guide individual and group study of the metacrisis is something that can be done quite quickly; and once done is something substantial and also updatable for the future. The time commitment for running the program is quite low: 1-3 hours of preparation (select 3 readings from the list, 1 from each subheading) for a 1 hour discussion session each week. The program can be run online and in-person and the course materials can be accessed by anyone independently outside of the organised discussion groups.
- **Impact:** according to Stein 'education is the metacrisis' - the problems civilization faces stems in part from a lack of understanding ('sensemaking crisis') of what processes are causing them and how we are complicit in these processes. As an educational initiative, the introductory program aims to address this core driver of the metacrisis and contribute to a broader collective understanding of other drivers of the metacrisis (i.e the metacrisis in general).

What Guidance does the *Metachrysalis* Introductory Program provide for Participants?

The metacrisis is, by its nature, a highly complex subject and hence any introduction to the metacrisis requires an advanced, interdisciplinary level of theorising about the world(-system). On this basis, this is both an 'introductory' course and an 'in-depth' or 'advanced' course at the same time. To not be off-put by the novel terminology used in the metacrisis space and to streamline your own understanding I recommend:

- Checking out concept entries in the *Metacrisis Wiki* (in-progress)
- Using AI language models to translate complex concepts into simpler explanations (though beware the risk of hallucinations/fabrications)
- Asking the course creator and cohort facilitator (i.e Max) any questions/for any points of clarification. maxramsahoye1@gmail.com
- Listening to long-form podcasts of Daniel Schmachtenberger in dialogue on the metacrisis (I recommend his series of podcasts with Nate Hagens, 'Bend not Break', as a good place to start.)



Buckminster Fuller's Metaphor of the Egg: Civilisational Phase-Shift

"...In organizing our grand strategy we must first discover where we are now; that is, what our present navigational position in the universal scheme of evolution is. To begin our position-fixing aboard our Spaceship Earth we must first acknowledge that the abundance of immediately consumable, obviously desirable or utterly essential resources have been sufficient until now to allow us to carry on despite our ignorance. Being eventually exhaustible and spoilable, they have been adequate only up to this critical moment. ***This cushion-for-error of humanity's survival and growth up to now was apparently provided just as a bird inside of the egg is provided with liquid nutriment to develop it to a certain point.*** *But then by design the nutriment is exhausted at just the time when the chick is large enough to be able to locomote on its own legs. And so as the chick pecks at the shell seeking more nutriment it inadvertently breaks open the shell.* ***Stepping forth from its initial sanctuary, the young bird must now forage on its own legs and wings to discover the next phase of its regenerative sustenance.***

My own picture of humanity today finds us just about to step out from amongst the pieces of our just one-second-ago broken eggshell. Our innocent, trial-and-error-sustaining nutriment is exhausted. We are faced with an entirely new relationship to the universe. We are going to have to spread our wings of intellect and fly or perish*; that is, we must dare immediately to fly by the generalized principles governing universe and not by the ground rules of yesterday's superstitious and erroneously conditioned reflexes. And as we attempt competent thinking we immediately begin to reemploy our innate drive for comprehensive understanding.'*

– Excerpt from 'Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth'. 1969. Chapter 4



'We live in the interregnum between worlds, between paradigms.
Not many people in the history of the world have faced that'

– Ruper Roderick from Nietzsche: The Death of God (1991)
' Lecture 4: Nietzsche and the Post-Modern Condition'

Metachrysalis **Conceptual Art**



A geometric butterfly after *metamorphosis* to symbolise:

- Metaxis: 'the time between worlds' of civilisation in *metacrisis*
- Complexity: the complexity of civilisation and the evolving ecosystem of problems it faces
- Symmetries: the symmetries between systems that clarify the recursive and perennial nature of the metacrisis

  (e.g between capitalism and unaligned artificial superintelligence, capitalist ideologies and religious theodicies)

The Structure of the Metacrisis Foundations Program

The program is structured around the 'three attractors' ('attractor states') that define the ongoing world-historical process and future possibility space of the 'metacrisis': decentralised catastrophe, centralised dystopia and holarchical meta-utopia.

Part 1 | The First & Second Attractors: Catastrophe & Dystopia

Week 1: An Introduction to The Metacrisis & The Three Attractors Model

Week 2: Meta-Existential Risk & Critical Systems Existential Risk (Studies)

Week 3: The Capital-AI & The Cybernetic Intelligence Alignment Problem

Week 4: Hyper-Agents, Superstructures & Meta-Modern Mythos

Week 5: Universal History, Meta-narrative & Critical Progress

Part 2 | The Third Attractors: Eucatastrophe & Prototopia

Week 6: Civilisational Meta-system Design, Transition & Alignment

Week 7: Post-scarcity & Paretotopia

Week 8: *Metachrysalis* Agents of Change

Week 1: An Introduction to The Metacrisis & The Three Attractors Model

> *'The meta-problem of the meta-system that engenders the meta-threat is a problem of organisation.'* – Stafford Beer, *The Liberty Machine*

This first week of the course serves to provide an introduction to the idea of the 'metacrisis' itself. Whilst related to other similar concepts ('polycrisis', 'permacrisis', 'omnicrisis') the concept of the 'metacrisis' is a novel 'conceptual engineering' that emphasises the systemic nature of the complex, connected and cascading crises generated by (and recursively affecting) civilisation in the 21st century ('world risk society')

Core Readings

- **1. *The Civilisation Research Institute* on 'The Metacrisis'**
  - The Civilisation Research Institute (2024)
  - 'The Metacrisis' by The Civilisation Research Institute (2023)
  - 'When the System Is the Source of the Problems: Case Studies'. New Economics Series: Part 3 by Daniel Schmachtenberger. *Civilisation Emerging* (2017)

- **2. *The Center for Humane Technology* on 'The Power without Wisdom Problem'**
  - 'A Deeper Dive into the Meta Crisis' by The Center for Humane Technology. 2021
  - 'The Wisdom Gap' by Tristan Harris (2021)
  - 'A Problem Well-Stated Is Half-Solved' Daniel Schmachtenberger with Tristan Harris. *Your Undivided Attention* (2021)

- **3. *Perspectiva* on the 'Human Dimension' of the Metacrisis**
  - 'Emerge' *Perspectiva* (2021)
  - 'Education is the Metacrisis' by Zak Stein (2022)
  - 'Living in the Metacrisis' with Jonathan Rawson by Katie Teague (2023)

Week 2: Meta-Existential Risk & Critical Systems Existential Risk (Studies)

> *'All (human induced) existential and catastrophic risks are symptoms of two underlying generator functions'*
>
> – Daniel Schmachtenberger, *'Solving The Generator Functions of Existential Risk'*

The second week of the course focuses in on catastrophic and existential risk, particularly from a systems theory and critical theory perspective. Diverging from the 'techno-utopian approach' of 'actually-existing existential risk studies', that compartmentalises risk into discrete technological categories, the metacrisis approach attempts to identify the common 'drivers' and 'mechanisms' that generate 'systemic risk' in general; and ultimately to formulate the 'design criteria' for a 'viable (life-)world-system' that realises civilisational safety *by design.*

Core Readings

- **1. The Generator Functions of Catastrophic & Existential Risk**

  Two blog posts by Daniel Schmachtenberger from *Civilisation Emerging*

  - 'Solving The Generator Functions of Existential Risk' by Daniel Schmachtenberger (2017)
  - 'Catastrophic & Existential Risk' by Daniel Schmachtenberger (2017)

- **2. Meta-Existential Risk & Corporate Global Catastrophic Risk**

  Two posts from the *EA Forum.*

  - 'Defining Meta-Existential Risk' by Rhs Lindmark (2019)
  - 'Corporate Global Catastrophic Risks (C-GCRs)' by Hauke Hillebrandt (2019)

- **3. Technological Self-Destruction & The Transfer (Zero-sum) Frontier**

  Two formulations of meta-existential risk by the Weinstein brothers.

  - 'The Twin Nuclei Problem' by Eric Weinstein (2017)
  - 'The Fourth Frontier' by Bret Weinstein (2018)

- **4. The Semi-Anarchic Default Condition & The Multi-Polar Trap**

  A landmark paper by Nick Bostrom and an influential essay by Scott Alexander.

  - 'The Vulnerable World Hypothesis' by Nick Bostrom (2019)
  - 'Meditations on Moloch' by Scott Alexander (2014)

- **5. Military-Economic Adaptationism & Exterminism**

  A paper by Dafoe on 'military-economic adaptationism', an article by Thompson on 'exterminism'.

  - 'On Technological Determinism: A Typology, Scope Conditions, and a Mechanism' by Allan Dafoe (2015)
  - 'Notes on Exterminism: The Last Stage of Civilisation' by Edward Thompson (1980)

Week 3: The Capital-AI & The Cybernetic Intelligence Alignment Problem

> *Rather than a silica artificial intelligence, economics as we have described it here is a type of collective intelligence system.'*
> – by Daniel Schmachtenberge, 'New Economics Series Part 4: Overlapping Models Exploring the Nature and Evolution of Economics' (2017)

The third week of the course discusses (1) the symmetries and synergies between advanced global capitalism and unaligned artificial superintelligence and (2) the extension of the alignment problem from artificial intelligence to human (collective) intelligence and (cybernetic) intelligence in general. In particular, this week aims to reconceptualise the ongoing development of artificial intelligence as the 'recursive-self-improvement' of the (capitalist) world-system as a form of actually-existing cybernetic (human-machine) intelligence: a really powerful value-flattening optimiser stacking onto and integrating into itself a really powerful value-flattening optimiser.

Core Readings

- **1. The Evolution of Capitalism-AI into AI-Capitalism**
  - 'The Market Economy Alignment Problem' comment by Denise Melchan (2020)
  - 'Why AI will Destroy Civilisation' with Max Tegmark (2023)
  - 'Introducing the AI Objectives Institute' by Peter Eckersley (2021)
  - 'AI Governance: A Research Agenda'. Section 3.1 'The Problem of AI Safety' by Alan Dafoe (2018)
  - 'What Failure Looks Like' by Paul Christiano (2019)

- **2. Capitalism as a Paperclip Maximiser**
  - 'Capitalism is a Paperclip Maximiser' by Thought Infection (2014)
  - 'The Parable of the Paperclip Maximizer' by Yonatan Zunger (2017)
  - 'Artificial Intelligence and the Utility Monster: It's the Economy Stupid' by Carey King (2018)



- 'New Economics Series Part 4: Overlapping Models Exploring the Nature and Evolution of Economics' by Daniel Schmachtenberger (2017)
- 'Civilization as a Paperclip Maximizer' with Daniel Schmachtenberger on *A New and Ancient Story* with Charles Eisenstein (2020)

3. Capitalism as an Unaligned Artificial Superintelligence

Two papers and two sections from papers on the 'capitalism as unaligned ASI' model

- 'Feeding the Beast: Superintelligence, Corporate Capitalism & The End of Humanity' by Dominic Legget (2021)
- 'Capital as Artificial Intelligence' by Gerry Canavan (2014)
- 'Markets and Computation'. Section 6.2 'The Marketplace of Mind' by Mark Miller & Eric Drexler (1988)
- 'Cyber, Nano, and AGI Risks: Decentralized Approaches to Reducing Risks'. Section 'Civilizations as relevant superintelligence'. Allison Duettmann, Christine Peterson, Mark Miller (2017)

4. Capitalism as 'Grey Goo' Self-replicating Nanotechnology & 'Shoggoth'

- 'Grey Goo Capitalism' by Benjamin Noys (2016)
- 'Shoggoth Amongst Us' by Henry Farell (2023)

5. The Great Acceleration as Intelligence Explosion

- 'The Singularity is in Our Past Light Cone' by Cosma (2012)
- 'Thoughts on Robots, AI, and Intelligence Explosion' (1. Rogue AIs can take off slowly 28. AI: More like the economy than like robots?) by Brian Tomasik (2014)
- 'Artificial Intelligence and Its Implications for Future Suffering' Section: 'The Singularity is More Than AI' by Brian Tomasik (2015)



- **6. (Unconditional, Effective & Left) Techno-Capital Accelerationism**
  - 'A Quick-And-Dirty Introduction To Accelerationism' by Nick Land (2017)
  - 'Notes on e/acc Principles and Tenets' by @BasedBeffJezos and @bayeslord. (2022)
  - 'Retrochronic (AI = Capitalism): A Primary Literature Review on the thesis that AI And Capitalism are Teleologically Identical' by unknown (2023)
  - 'The Rise of AI-Capitalism: An Interview with Nick Dyer-Witheford' (2020)

- **7. Corporation as Superintelligence**
  - 'Why Not Just: Think of AGI Like a Corporation?' by Robert Miles (2018)
  - 'Corporations vs Superintelligence'. Arbital Wiki
  - 'Invaders from Mars' + 'Dude, You Broke The Future' by Charlie Stross (2010, 2017)
  - 'How Rogue AIs may Arise'. Section: 'Examples of Wireheading and Misalignment Amplification: Addiction and Nefarious Corporations' by Yoshua Bengio (2023)
  - 'Reviewing the Literature Relating Artificial Intelligence, Corporations, and Entity Alignment' by Peter Sheyer (2018)

- **8. Daniel Schmachtenberger Long-form Dialogues (Podcasts)**
  - 'Misalignment, AI & Moloch' Daniel Schmachntenberger with Liv Boree, *Win-Win* (2023)
  - 'AI & The Superorganism' Daniel Schmachntenberger with Nate Hagens, *The Great Simplification* (2023)

Week 4: Hyper-Agents, Superstructures & Meta-Modern Mythos

> *'Hyperobjects are agents. They are indeed more than a little demonic, in the sense that they appear to straddle worlds and times..And they are demonic in that through them causalities flow like electricity. Since the beginning of the Anthropocene, but particularly since the start of the Great Acceleration (the 1940s), these demonic channels have become more and more powerful.'*
>
> – Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Ecology & Philosophy at the End of the World* (2013)

The fourth week of the course explores alternative meta-models of civilisation, capitalism, technology and ecology as unified meta-agents and meta-systems: as Gods, Megamachines, Superorganisms, Stacks etc. As part of this framing, the idea of 'critical alien phenomenology' - of how non-human and more-than-human agencies and assemblages perceive the world - is also introduced with reference to McGilchrist's hemispheric model of the mind (and western civilisation) and McMurty's diagnosis of capital accumulation as 'life-blind'.

Core Readings

- **1. Deities: The Gods (Mammon, Leviathan, Kraken)**
  - 'The False Gods of 21st Century Civilization' by Joshua Williams (2023)
  - 'Marx on Capital as a Real God' by Ian Wright. *Dark Marxism* (2020)
  - 'The Mortal God Drops its Mask' by W.D. James. *Winter Oak* (2023)

- **2. The Technosphere (Technium, Dataism, Megamachine))**
  - 'Civilisation and The Technium' by *Grand Strategy* (2012)
  - 'The Data Religion' in *Homo Deus* by Yuval Noah Harrari (2015)
  - 'Against the Megamachine' by David Watson (1997)

3. The Cybernetic Super-organism (Entanglement, Global Brain, The Stack)

- 'The Enlightenment is Dead, Long Live the Entanglement' by Danny Hillis (2016)
- 'The Global Brain FAQ' by Francis. Heylighen *Principia Cybernetica* (2000)
- 'Planetary Sapience' by Benjamin Bratton in NOEMA (2021)

4. Humanity, Ecology & Economics

- 'Economics for the future: Beyond the superorganism' by Nate Hagens (2020)
- Prometheus and Gaia: Technology, Ecology & Anti-humanism by Harrison Fluss and Landon Frim (2022)
- 'James Lovelock at 100: the Gaia saga continues' by Tim Radford (2019)
- 'Homni: The new superorganism taking over Earth' by Gaia Vince (2014)

5. Critical Alien Phenomenology

- 'Can the divided brain tell us anything about the ultimate nature of reality?' by Ian McGilchrist (2011)
- 'Behind Global System Collapse: The Life-Blind Structure of Economic Rationality' by John McMurty (2011)
- 'What Progress Wants' by Paul Kingsnorth (2022)

Week 5: Universal History, Metanarrative & Critical Progress

> *'Metamodern philosophy...is a worldview which combines the modern faith in progress with the postmodern critique.*
>
> – Metamoderna, *What is Metamodernism?*

The fifth week of the program critically discusses the prevailing progress meta-narrative: that the history and future of modernisation (techno-capitalist development) - culminating in the (il)liberal (pseudo)democratic (platform-)market economy paradigm ('the end of history', the 'universal homogenous state') - is a civilisational trajectory that is aligned with the welfare of (human and non-human) sentient minds and therefore should be maintained, even 'steered' towards and 'accelerated'.

Core Readings

- **1. Techo-Capitalist Progress (Studies)**
  - 'We Need a New Science of Progress' by Patrick Collison and Tyler Cowen (2019)
  - 'The Techno-Optimist Manifesto' by Marc Andreesen (2023)
  - 'The Techno-Humanist Manifesto' by Jason Crawford. *Roots of Progress Institute* (2024)
  - 'The End of History?' by Francis Fukuyama, *National Interest* (1989)

- **2. Critical Progress (Studies): Naive Progress (Modernism) vs Holistic Progress (Meta-modernism)**
  - 'Development in Progress' by *The Consilience Project* (2024)
  - 'The Case Against Naive Technocapitalist Optimism' by *The Consilience Project* (2021)
  - 'Technology is Not Values-Neutral: The End of Nihilistic Design' by *The Consilience Project* (2022)
  - 'What is Metamodernism?' by Metamoderna

- **3. Long-form Podcast Dialogues with Daniel Schmachtenberger & Nate Hagens**
  - 'From Naive to Authentic Progress' Daniel Schmachtenbeger with Nate Hagens, *The Great Simplification* (2024)
  - 'The Wide Boundary Impacts of AI' Daniel Schmachtenbeger with Nate Hagens, *The Great Simplification* (2024)

Week 6: Civilisational Meta-system Design, Transition & Alignment

> *'If the metasystem (Liberty Machine) does not work, the only answer lies in its fresh design that can and does allow for meta-controls.*
>
> – Stafford Beer, *The Liberty Machine*

After critically analysing the first and second attractors (decentralised catastrophe and centralised dystopia), the course turns towards looking at the design criteria and candidates for 'the third attractor': a viable civilisational system that avoids each failure mode without causing the other. In particular, we will explore how the 'natural law resource based economy' developed by Peter Joseph could satisfy the criteria proposed by Schmachtenberger.

Core Readings

- **Viable World-System: Design & Transition Criteria**
  - New Economics Series: Part 1 'Design Constraints for a Viable Economic System' by Daniel Schmachtenberger. *Civilisation Emerging* (2017)
  - New Economics Series: Part 2 'Essential Criteria' by Daniel Schmachtenberger. *Civilisation Emerging* (2017)

- **Viable World-System: The Natural Law Resource Based Economy**
  - 'Economic Calculation in an NLRBE' by Peter Joseph (2013)

    See also: 'Peter Joseph on on Economic Calculation in Resource-Based Economics' The P2P Wiki
  - 'Essay 9: Market Efficiency vs. Technical Efficiency' in *The Zeitgeist Movement Defined* by Peter Joseph (2014)

- **System Evolution & Externality Accounting**
  - The Personal Responsibility Vortex TEDx Talk by Bret Wieinstein (2012)
  - 'Yellow Teaming' section in Development in Progress Consilience Project (2024)

- **Game B**
  - 'Game B' *Game B Wiki* (2020-24)
  - 'A Journey to Game B' by Jim Rutt (2020)

- **The Commons Transition: Generative Cooperative Networks & Peer-to-Peer Production**
  - 'Shifting from Generative Adversarial Networks to Generative Cooperative Networks' by John Ringland. *P2P Foundation* (2018)
  - 'Peer to Peer: The Commons Manifesto' by Michel Bauwens, Vasilis Kostakis, and Alex Pazaitis (2019)

- **Designing Freedom: Cybernetics & Control**
  - 'The Liberty Machine' by Stafford Beer (1971)
  - 'What is a Singleton?' by Nick Bostrom (2005)



Week 7: Post-scarcity& Paretotopia

> *'War is obsolete. It is imperative that we get the word to all humanity - "RUSH" - before someone ignorantly pushes the button that triggers the pushing of all the buttons.*
>
> – Buckminster Fuller, *Humanity's Critical Path: From Livingry to Weaponry*

As scarcity is a generative condition of poverty, inequality, hierarchy and conflict, a viable world-system must be capable of producing and sustaining post-scarcity. This week we look at the history of post-scarcity thought in Keynes and Fuller, as well as the future potential of post-scarcity pointed to by Joseph, Drexler and (Bret) Weinstein.

Core Readings

- **The Post-scarcity Transition: 'Paretotopian Goal Alignment'**
  - 'Essay 13: Post-Scarcity Trends, Capacity and Efficiency' in *The Zeitgeist Movement Defined* by Peter Joseph (2014)
  - 'Paretotopian Goal Alignment' by Eric Drexler. *EA Global* (2018)

- **'Embedded Growth' vs 'Engineered Stable Abundance': Eric & Bret Weinstein**
  - 'Embedded Growth Obligations' concept by Eric Weinstein. *The Portal Wiki*
  - Chapter 13: The Fourth Frontier' A Hunter-Gatherer's Guide to the 21st Century by Bret Weinstein & Heather Heying (access via *Anna's Archive*)

- **Contemporary Left-Accelerationist Writings: 'Red Plenty'**
  - 'Four Futures' by Peter Frase. *Jacobin* (2011)
  - '#ACCELERATE: Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics' by Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek (2013)

- **Classic Post-scarcity Writings: Keynes & Fuller on Humanity's 'Economic Problem' & 'Critical Path'**
  - 'Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren' by John Maynard Keynes (1930)
  - 'Humanity's Critical Path: From Livingry to Weaponry' by Buckminster Fuller (1983)

Week 8: Metachrysalis Agents of Change

> *'Appreciate the beauty of existence. Add to the beauty of existence. Increase your ability to appreciate and add to the beauty of existence*
>
> – Daniel Schmachtenberger, *How to live a meaningful life*

This final week will be a group discussion based on some specially curated readings for the end of the course (and materials proposed by participants); reflections on the program as a whole; and thoughts about potential future (individual and collective) action as members of the metacrisis movement and the third attractor.

Core Readings

- **Modern Wisdom for the Metacrisis: 'The Time between Worlds'**
  - 'How to Live a Meaningful Life' by Daniel Schmachtenberger *Civilisation Emerging* (2019)
  - 'Advancing Human Sovereignty' by Daniel Schmachtenberger *Civilisation Emerging* (2017)

- **The Meta-Narrative of (Post-)Humanity**
  - 'Who Speaks for Earth?' by Carl Sagan (1980)
  - 'The Goddess of Everything Else' by Scott Alexander (2015)
  - 'Letter from Utopia' by Nick Bostrom (2008)
  - 'Metamathics or The Land of Infinite Fun' from *Excession* by Ian Banks (1996)

- **Transitional Projects: A New Civilizational Operating System:**
  - The Global Redesign Institute & Integral Parallel Economy Project
  - ReGen Villages
  - The Society Library
  - The Collective Intelligence Project



Metachrysalis *Metacrisis Foundations Program*