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*The Rolling Apocalypse of Contemporary History*

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# THE ROLLING APOCALYPSE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Rosalind Williams

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## **Introduction: A Case Study That Did Not Happen**

When the Aftermath Network assembled in early 2009, our scholarly mission was based on a seemingly self-evident model of contemporary history. An economic crisis occurred in the fall of 2008. We would examine its aftermath, with special attention to its cultural dimensions. Crisis and aftermath, cause and effect: it seemed straightforward.

To be sure, there were pesky adjectives attached to the key nouns. Was the crisis essentially an *economic* one, or is it better described as *financial*, and if so what was the significance of the distinction? Or was it primarily *political*, as, for example, a “quiet coup” of privileged elites?<sup>1</sup> As for an aftermath, what makes it *cultural*? As Raymond Williams showed well over a half-century ago, the word and concept *culture* has been evolving since the early nineteenth century, along with other key terms such as *society* and *industry*. Their mutual evolution has both shaped and reflected changes in the world,<sup>2</sup> so what does *culture* mean in the early twenty-first century?

I decided to work through such questions in relation to what seemed a promising case study: the effects of the 2008 *economic crisis* on the University of California at Berkeley. In 2004 the state provided just over 40% of the financial support for the University of California system, or \$3.25 billion. For Berkeley, with a total budget of about \$1.1 billion, state funding provided \$450 million, or 35% of its funding.. The crisis of fall 2008 led to a severe drop in state revenues, which were especially vulnerable because of their dependence on the personal income tax. In 2009 state support for the entire system dropped from \$3.25 billion to \$2.6 billion; in 2010, to \$1.8 billion. This meant a severe and sudden drop in university income. The next largest sources were all much smaller than state funding (\$300 million in federal funding, \$150 million each for student tuition and private fundraising, and \$100-120 million from endowment income) and none of them could come close to filling the gap for the coming fiscal year.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently Berkeley leadership, in partnership with the University of California Office of the President, took immediate, painful measures to reduce expenditures. These affected everyone on campus through reduced services, mandatory furloughs (as a way to reduce salaries), raiding reserve funds, and sharp increases in tuition and fees: an 8% hike in spring 2009, 30% in a second round (fall 2009 and spring 2010), and 10% more in fall 2010, for a total increase of nearly 50% in just two academic years. Because tuition income remained a source of financial aid, this increase was a net gain for low-income students. For other students, there was no cushion for a sharp, unanticipated increase in the cost of higher education.

In undertaking this case study, I had assumed that the *cultural aftermath* most relevant to the Berkeley campus would be that of campus activism, which had emerged so noticeably during the loyalty oath controversies of the 1950s and the Free Speech Movement of the 1960s.<sup>4</sup> Unsurprisingly, given this cultural context, these efforts to reduce expenditures aroused organized protests. While it is common to refer to them as “student protests,” the individuals involved were a mix of Berkeley students, non-Berkeley students, and non-student activists, especially union members. All of them received encouragement, and more rarely active participation, from some faculty members, who were overwhelmingly concentrated in a few departments. For students, the primary complaint was the abrupt rise in the cost of their education; a secondary complaint was the reduction in student services, such as library hours. From the unions’ point of view, the primary complaints were layoffs, since union employees were protected from salary reductions in the form of furloughs. Faculty complaints were more generalized, focusing on accusations of administrative bloat and complicity with business interests.

The methods were familiar from Berkeley’s activist heritage: rallies in Sproul Hall Plaza, demonstrations outside California Hall (site of senior administration offices), and building occupations designed to disrupt the normal campus routine (for example, demonstrators often set off fire alarms, requiring building evacuations and emergency response). An occupation of Wheeler Hall in November 2009 led campus police to call in outside, non-university police for assistance, which ended in confrontations that in turn led to charges of police brutality. Sit-ins and rallies continued in early December, culminating in a nighttime march by one group of demonstrators, some masked and carrying lighted torches, to the Chancellor’s on-campus residence: they threw rocks at the windows and nearly succeeded in setting the building on fire. In the spring of 2010 there were further building occupations, demonstrations at Regents’ meetings, a hunger strike, and a “day of action” including a march on Sacramento.

These tactics and strategies were familiar ones on the Berkeley campus and were repeatedly explained and defended as part of “Berkeley culture.” As a response to the economic crisis, however, they were ineffective. In part this is because protestors’ demands were fundamentally inconsistent. Calls to maintain services, jobs, and salaries required more income, while demands to lower tuition and fees, or even to eliminate them, would further reduce the income stream, including that directed for financial aid. The protests were also ineffective in targeting campus and system administrators as culprits, although they had no responsibility for the dramatic drop in university income and were struggling to deal with its consequences. Protestors responded by asserting that university leaders had adequate financial resources if they just spent them more wisely, and/or that the state legislature could be convinced to fund the University of California system more generously.

These arguments failed to persuade the overwhelming majority of staff, students, and faculty at Berkeley, who did not rally to the demonstrators, except for supporting complaints about police actions related to the Wheeler Hall occupation. Sometimes reenactment of familiar protest tactics even aroused pushback if onlookers regarded them as inappropriate for the situation. At one Regents’ Meeting in November 2009 student protestors began singing “We shall overcome.” Some African-American staff present at the meeting were outraged at this cooption of a civil rights anthem to protest fee increases.<sup>5</sup>

Not long after, on December 2, 2009, the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mario Savio's "put your bodies upon the gears" speech inspiring the Free Speech Movement, a group of Berkeley student and faculty planned to commemorate the event with speeches on the steps of Sproul Hall. They were prevented from doing so by demonstrators who wanted to substitute their causes for "a dead movement." Instead of letting other students and faculty speak, the demonstrators repeated in unison some lines from Savio's speech. The irony was not lost on those who had planned the commemoration, who felt their right to free speech had been overturned, nor on observers such as a newspaper reporter who commented that

The demonstration...showed continued confusion over the issues. Signs held by the protesters addressed everything from fee hikes to minority enrollment, and several aimed anger at the UC regents—but not at the Legislature, governor or voters, all of whom have a more significant say in how much money the university receives.<sup>6</sup>

Campus protests continued in 2011 but around causes that were increasingly detached from the economic crisis—for example, demanding amnesty for demonstrators arrested at earlier events, or protesting anti-immigrant legislation recently passed in Arizona. Close to two years of protests had no impact in mitigating budget cuts or in arousing broad-based popular support to restore state funding to the UC system.

In the meantime, the institutional budget of Berkeley underwent a revolution. In 2004 state support was the largest source of income for the university, 40% of the total. A long-range budget agreement had been reached between the university system and the state. In the particular case of Berkeley, this agreement pledged that by the year 2011 state support to the campus would total \$600 million. When 2011 actually arrived, state funding for Berkeley was \$235 million--\$365 million less than had been promised. Another \$15 million will be lost if the State's revenue projections are not met.

State support is now the fourth largest source of university income, 12 % of the total. Federal research funds made up the largest source (\$500 million), followed by student fees (\$315 million, increasing to at least \$340 million in 2012) and private philanthropy (also about \$315 million). Going into the next fiscal year, Berkeley faces a shortfall of at least \$110 million, which it plans to address by again increasing tuition and fees (8% for CA residents), admitting larger numbers of non-Californians (approaching 20% of the student body), raiding emergency reserves, and pressing forward with private fundraising and operational savings.<sup>7</sup>

The near-collapse of state support had redefined the character of the University of California at Berkeley. In a few years it has been transformed from a "state-supported" university to a "state-located" one.<sup>8</sup> Berkeley has not so much been "privatized" as it has been transformed into a quasi-federal, quasi-private institution, with a residual but hugely diminished mandate to provide excellent higher education to the citizens of California. This is not because system and university administrators have sought privatization. On the contrary, they have protested the decline in state support and warned of its results.<sup>9</sup>

What has been most privatized is the consciousness of the voters of California. While I was following attention-getting actions on campus, the most important cultural aftermath was taking place in public opinion. Longitudinal data assembled by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) indicate that the financial crisis of 2008 if anything raised public awareness of the value of education, especially of K-12 but also of higher education, and reinforced desire to support a strong educational system. Only support for public safety rates higher than education as a priority for the state.

This support, however, by no means translates into a conviction that the cuts in state support are a serious problem for the university system. Voters are willing to consider higher taxes or higher fees to support higher education but they have strong reservations about whether such they are really necessary to maintain the system. One strong sentiment is that the California system of higher education must accept its “fair share” of cuts at a time when all services are having to do this. Another extremely strong sentiment is that the system must get rid of the “waste” which pervades these institutions, especially the number and compensation of senior administrators.

Finally, and most complex of all, there is a sentiment that in maintaining excellence and accessibility “where there is a will there is a way.” Institutions can remain excellent if they eliminate bureaucracy, overcompensation, and lax supervision. Individuals and families should pay a significant share of the costs of higher education, even when family income is low. (Currently families earning \$80,000 or less pay no tuition.) While campus protestors and the voting public share a conviction that universities could be well run for much less money, the protestors usually want dramatically lower fees, or none at all, while the voters resist anything seeming like a “free ride”

These same voters, however, have strong worries about accessibility to the university system. In one poll, three-fourths of the voters agreed that students have to borrow too much to pay for a college education. At the same time, a majority (55%) thought that almost anyone who needs financial help can get loans or financial aid (40 % disagreed). The principle of universal access is strongly approved, and the threats to this access have voters “very worried” (up from 43% to 57% between October 2007 and November 2010). But along with this strong fear of being priced out of the market for public higher education, voters apparently also worry that too-low rates will be taken advantage of by some others.

These findings are complex and fluid, but overall they indicate is a sharp decline in civic consciousness. First, voters have dramatically lost trust in state government, including its ability to plan for the future of California’s higher education system. In a neat if troubling symmetry, the percentages of voters who have some or a great deal of confidence in state government’s planning for higher education, as opposed to those who have very little or none, has reversed in just under three years. Between October 2007 and November 2010, confidence dropped from 57% to 40%, while little- or no-confidence climbed from 42% to 57%.

Second, voters perceive the system of higher education not so much as a collective good as a consumer commodity. The university system is looked upon first and foremost as provider of education that enables young individuals to have a better economic future. When voters are reminded of the role of the university system as a research enterprise, by which it plays a critical

role in creating economic opportunities, they acknowledge this role—but their primary view of the university is as an educational institution. Furthermore, the strong belief that this education remains accessible to those who appreciate its value assumes that its value is a private benefit, primarily for the ambitious and deserving. Again, the idea that the system of higher education has a collective benefit is weak at best. When this benefit is expressed at all, it is usually defined as an economic one. The idea that public education has non-economic benefits—to create a well-informed and thoughtful citizenry as the fundamental basis for democratic self-governance—is nowhere visible.<sup>10</sup>

Is this still the *crisis*? Or the *aftermath*? While such a significant shift of consciousness follows the economic crisis, this does not mean it is an *aftermath* that was caused by the *crisis*. Instead, it may be a revelation of cultural processes already underway that have been reinforced. State university systems have been the backbone of American higher education in its period of unprecedented expansion period after World War II. They have attracted two of every three American college students, including the overwhelming majority of students from poor or modest families. Within three years of the 2008 economic crisis, even the largest and strongest of the “states” were scrambling to reinvent themselves as quasi-federal quasi-private institutions, as well as to attract non-state students who would pay higher tuitions. The poorer and smaller public institutions were just trying to survive.

Little did I realize, as I began to follow events at Berkeley, how representative it would be of the American cultural aftermath to the economic crisis of 2008: an aftermath that does not correct the causes of a crisis but rather intensifies them. In the country at large, a human disaster triggered by multiple, systematic deceptions and structural flaws in financial systems, especially in housing financing, has led to.... layoffs of schoolteachers and librarians.

This is oversimplifying the cause and effect, to be sure, but not by much. What disasters do, above all, is to reveal how things work normally. “One of the most salient features of severe downturns is that they tend to accelerate deep economic shifts that are already under way.” In this case, the disaster has revealed “with rare and brutal clarity” the sorting out of Americans into “winners and losers, and the slow hollowing-out of the middle class.”<sup>11</sup>

This astounding *non sequitur* is not only a California story, not only a higher ed story, and not only an American story. In both the United States and the European Union, dangerously high national unemployment has led to calls not for government pump-priming but for austerity budgets that are likely to slow further already slow economic growth, although such growth is the most plausible source, over time, of higher employment and balanced budgets. This utterly illogical and self-defeating pattern is proclaimed to be the “new normal.” What is happening in the US and EU today feels like a bewildering fall down the rabbit hole, with no bottom in sight.

When I realized this, I also realized that the Berkeley case study, or any case study, would be unproductive without first reviewing the tacit model with which we began: crisis and aftermath, cause and effect, economic and cultural. Accordingly, this paper now turns to these questions:

What is the meaning, in today’s world, of the oft-used, under-analyzed term *crisis*?

What is the distinction between a *crisis* and its *aftermath*? When is a *crisis* over and when does the *aftermath* begin?

In this context, what do we mean by *culture* or *cultures*?

How do individuals and groups perceive, experience, and understand contemporary events as *history*?

As Master Confucius wisely advises, any effort to bring order to the world should begin by “rectifying names.” Let us begin with the terms *crisis* and *aftermath*.<sup>12</sup>

### **Crisis and Aftermath as Historical Concepts**

As soon as the financial world began to quake in the fall of 2008, Americans tried to provide a label for the event. In American English, one that gained and still has some traction is “the Great Recession.” This was an exercise of historical calibration, being a term somewhere between the Great Depression of the 1930s and the milder recessions that have regularly occurred since then. But already we begin to confuse *crisis* and *aftermath*, since depressions and recessions alike are aftermaths of some other triggering event. In the case of the Great Depression, that event is the Crash of 1929, referring to the stock market crash that October. What happened in 2008 was more general, and before long the whole cluster of events of that fall (a word conveniently serving to describe both the time of year and the trend of events) was simply summarized as “the crisis.”

*Crisis* comes from the Greek word *kerein*, meaning to separate or cut, to make fixed, settled, or stated (as, for example, in the expression “a date certain”). It therefore refers to a sharply defined, climactic event, maybe dangerous, but in any case decisive. The earliest uses of the word, dating back to the 1500s, are in relation to medical and also astrological events, which were believed to be closely related. In this context *crisis* describes “The point in the progress of a disease when an important development or change takes place which is decisive of recovery or death; the turning-point of a disease for better or for worse....”

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the crisis began to be used in a more general sense to apply to politics and commerce, as “A vitally important or decisive stage in the progress of anything; a turning point; also, a state of affairs in which a decisive change for better or worse is imminent; now applied *esp.* to times of difficulty, insecurity, and suspense in politics or commerce.” It is notable that in both the medical and more general usages, *crisis* is defined in contrast to ongoing *progress*—initially progress of an illness, and by the 17<sup>th</sup> century “of anything.” In other words, the idea, or more properly the ideology, of progress emerges as the dominant concept of history at the same time the concept of crisis is beginning to be applied to history as a sinister episode disrupting the underlying march of progress. Their dialectic becomes more evident in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as, for example, in his much-read translation of Plato published in 1875, Benjamin Jowett writes “The ordinary statesman is also apt to fail in extraordinary crises.” *Crisis* also began to be used in phrases such as *crisis-mongers* (1841) *crisis-centre* (1898, referring to the Near East), and (as a compliment) *crisis-avoiding* (1900).

In the twentieth century, crisis began to displace progress as an ongoing state of affairs. In interwar period, new hyphenated versions were used to define a general state of anxiety: *crisis-minded* and *crisis-conscious* (1938) were invented. In 1940 William Empson, in the aptly titled *The Gathering Storm*, wrote that “The point is to join up the crisis-feeling to what can be felt all the time in normal life.” The challenge of *crisis-management*—a term first used by Herman Kahn in writing about the danger of military escalation—becomes routine.<sup>13</sup> Once the ability to *manage* crisis becomes an attribute of political and military leadership, the question arises: is “normal” history *progress* or *crisis*? And if *crisis* begins to pervade ordinary history, what is the distinction between *crisis* and *aftermath*?

We were a year and a half into our project (I am embarrassed to admit) before I happened to read in a novel (Joseph O’Neill’s *Netherland*, 2008) that the English word *aftermath* relates to agriculture. I had ignorantly assumed it had to do with mathematics, but, prompted by O’Neill, I looked it up too in the OED. Like *crisis*, *aftermath* is first used in English in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the earliest use dating from 1523. Also like *crisis*, *aftermath* refers to an organic process: “Second or later mowing; the crop of grass which springs up after the mowing in early summer.” For example, a 1601 English translation of Pliny’s *History of the World* states that “The grasse will be so high growne, that a man may cut it down and haue a plentiful after-math for hay.” The sequence is not of cause and effect, but of an organic cycle whereby a first growth is followed by a second harvest, usually less abundant and desirable than the first. (Poet Andrew Marvell in 1673: “The after-math seldom or neuer equals the first herbage.”)

Beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century *aftermath*, like *crisis*, developed additional, more general meanings, as “a state or condition left by a (usu. unpleasant) event, or some further occurrence arising from it.” Examples of the “event” range from disappointed love (Coventry Patmore, 1863: “Among the bloomless aftermath....”) to rebellion (Hartley Coleridge, 1851 “The aftermath of the great rebellion”). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the agricultural origins of the word largely disappeared, as *aftermath* became applied to great historical events, especially war (Churchill in 1946 proclaiming that the “life and strength of Britain...will be tested to the full, not only in the war but in the aftermath of war”).

A similar and dramatic usage comes in John Hersey’s account of the bombing of Hiroshima, first published in *The New Yorker* in 1946, as told through the lives of five survivors. In a new book edition, published 35 years later, Hersey almost doubles the length of the account by following the lives of these individuals in subsequent decades. The new second part is titled “Aftermath.” The possibility of happier outcomes remained (Martin Luther King, 1958: “The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness”). For the most part, however, *aftermath* has more negative connotations, such as depression or a hangover.<sup>14</sup>

I began to appreciate that tracking only these two words would be inadequate to understanding their interactive evolution. Any sensitive and sophisticated approach to language must not make a “fortress out of the dictionary” (to quote Justice Learned Hand on judicial decision-writing) but must consider the larger purpose or object that are their context.<sup>15</sup> This context was made clearer for me when in the fall of 2010 I was asked to participate in an MIT panel on “communications

in slow-moving crises.” The title of the event struck me as an intriguing oxymoron: a crisis is supposed to be a sharp and decisive turning point, so how can this be slow-moving? I puzzled that maybe the self-contradictory concept of a “slow-moving crisis” points to what Leo Marx has called a “semantic void”: a situation when existing language proves inadequate for new historical conditions, because historical changes outstrip linguistic resources to express and analyze them. Marx has argued that such a void existed in the later 19th century that began to be filled by the relatively recent emergence of the word and concept *technology*.<sup>16</sup>

I began pay attention to news reports and commentaries on the 2008 crisis that gave particular attention to its slow-moving qualities. My method, so-called, was entirely impressionistic and could not have been narrower: it relied mainly on daily reading on the New York *Times*. Nevertheless this extremely limited sampling gave me plenty to ponder about slow-moving crises and other variants of *crisis* and *aftermath*. Almost weekly columnists Bob Herbert and Paul Krugman complained that while the crisis was “over” by some financial measures, the “real” crisis, which they defined as economic and most particularly as high unemployment, was not at all over.

A year after the crash a New York *Times* News of the Week section headlined, “The Recession’s Over, but Not the Layoffs.”<sup>17</sup> A year and a half after that, in spring 2011 (this time in written and on-line versions of *Newsweek* magazine) former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown ominously predicted that:

...if the world continues on its current path, the historians of the future will say that the great financial collapse of three years ago was simply the trailer for a succession of avoidable crises that eroded popular consent for globalization itself.<sup>18</sup>

Also in the spring of 2011—now back to the *Times*--the confirmation hearings of MIT economist Peter Diamond to serve on the board of the Federal Reserve hinged on the assumption that the economic crisis still continued. Senator Richard C. Shelby (R-AL) questioned “Does Dr. Diamond have any experience in crisis management? No.” Evidently *crisis management* was the new standard of fitness for service on the Federal Reserve Board.<sup>19</sup>

It was not just the economy. Questions asking “will-this-crisis-really-ever-be-over?” were raised over and over again in reference to American-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. “After four years of war,” wrote the primary war correspondent for The New York *Times* from Afghanistan, “the endgame here has finally begun. But exactly when the endgame itself will end seems anyone’s guess.”<sup>20</sup> The same kind of question—is this event over or not?—dominated 2011 commemorations of the tenth anniversary of 9/11. The official *9/11 Commission Report* is subtitled *The Attack from Planning to Aftermath*,<sup>21</sup> and at least two of the many books about the attack are titled *Aftermath*.<sup>22</sup>

Similar language, describing seemingly neverending crises, was used to analyze environmental disasters that came one after the economic one: the Pakistani floods of 2009, the Haitian earthquake in early 2010, the Gulf of Mexico oil spill that began soon after, the Japanese earthquake and tsunami early 2011, and spring 2011 tornadoes and floods in the American

South, Midwest and New England. For example, one report on Haitian earthquake crisis—or was it the aftermath?—was titled “The Special Pain of a Slow Disaster.”<sup>23</sup>

One consequence of applying the concept of a slow-moving crisis to economic and military crises as well as supposedly natural ones could be to naturalize the human-generated processes, to give them the appearance of unstoppable forces beyond human control—in short, to deny human agency. But it works in both directions, in that natural disasters can be humanized, in acknowledging their partially human origins as well as their sharply differential human effects. The effects of the Mississippi floods of spring 2011 on people of modest means—“thousands of backyards are under water”—was contrasted with the high ground found by “the financial elites who have built walls around their prosperity, while flooding downstream markets with torrents of toxic assets.”<sup>24</sup> The eruption of Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland spring 2010 was called an “ash shock” in analogy to an “oil shock.”<sup>25</sup> Most notably, almost immediately after the partial meltdown of nuclear reactors in Japan following the 2011 tsunami—a prime example of a hybridized crisis, composed of both “acts of God” and human error—the global economy was more than ever referred to as being in “meltdown.”<sup>26</sup>

By this time it was evident that contemporary discussions of *crisis* and *aftermath* were not only redefining these terms but also generating a set of new metaphors to describe contemporary history. The historical pattern that kept being evoked was not one of logical cause and effect, but rather an aesthetic one. In a sort of collective exercise of free association, an image of fluid flow kept being repeated: a “spill” (especially in 2010, when the Gulf spill was on everyone’s mind), a “flood,” an “ash cloud,” or, most persistently, a “meltdown.” Back of these images no doubt is that of the falling towers of the World Trade Center, which seemed to turn into fluid as they collapsed in a cascade.

In all these cases, the locus of vulnerability sets up ever-expanding circles of trouble, which intersect with those from other such points, in a new historical pattern of intersecting and mutually reinforcing calamities. One New York *Times* essayist gave the name *spillonomics* to the “natural” human tendency to underestimate risks such as that of the Gulf oil gusher.<sup>27</sup> Another *Times* commentator, writing as the spewing well in the Gulf of Mexico was finally being brought under control, proposed that the oil well was “more than an environmental catastrophe.” He argued that the spill

has become a festering reminder of the disarray afflicting so many areas of national life, from the cancerous political culture to the crisis of unemployment to an intractable war in Afghanistan, ...

...the imagery insinuated itself into our collective consciousness – gnawing evidence that something enormous and confounding is still operative, despite the labors of our brightest engineers and our most expensive machinery.<sup>28</sup>

This imagery insinuates itself just as much into collective *subconsciousness*, which is arguably more than waking reason the level of human mentality where imaginal activity is most active. Across the spectrum of consciousness, *crisis* and *aftermath*, both “natural” or “human,” are

conflated in the imagistic pattern of relentless waves of damage endlessly reenacting rounds of destruction.

When these media accounts of contemporary history are read with sensitivity to tone, allusion, and context, the aesthetic pattern they convey takes us to a level of culture that Michel Foucault called the “positive unconscious” of knowledge: an “archaeology” of knowledge, below the level of conscious discussion, yet shaping that discussion at every moment as taken-for-granted. As Foucault describes it in *The Order of Things* [*Les Mots et les choses*] such an inquiry focuses on

how a culture experiences the propinquity of things, how it establishes the tabula of their relationships and the order by which they must be considered...in short, with a history of resemblance....<sup>29</sup>

The contemporary history of crisis and aftermath is a “history of resemblance” in this sense. As lived experience, this 2008 economic event is perceived and experienced as part of a network of events that resemble it as a spreading, damaging spill: this is how contemporary history is experienced, through the “propinquity” of these “things.” The intersecting episodes of spill are “normal accidents,” to use Charles Perrow’s term, that collectively make up the “new normal” of contemporary history.<sup>30</sup> Crisis is no longer a turning point in history but rather an immanent condition of history, part of its “normal” working, indistinguishable from its own aftermath. In that case, the 2008 crisis has had a cultural dimension of intensifying and accelerating nothing less than the emergence of a new historical consciousness.

*History* is ultimately an exercise in pattern-making, and since the late 18th century, the dominant pattern of Western concepts of history has been that of linear progress. The assumption that humans were dramatically increasing their material command over non-nature made it possible for the first time to imagine that history would no longer be stuck in cycles of repetition and frustration. Instead, material capabilities would reshape history into a pattern of gradual but steady social progress. In the later 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the material basis of progress gradually came to define the goal as well as the means of progress: a critical change in the concept, but one that did not alter the belief that the basic pattern of history was shaped by a gradually expanding set of human powers.<sup>31</sup>

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, many events of contemporary history are occurring that do not fit well into this mental model. Belief in historical progress remains strong especially when technological machines and gadgets are presented as evidence. But when larger systems are involved—especially environmental, military, and economic ones—the pattern of contemporary history associated with them is visualized not as a line but as a pattern of crisis centers spreading with no end in sight. Each center incorporates its own aftermath and sets up interference patterns with other spreading centers so that the problems of the whole are far greater than the sum of the parts. Just as technological devices and systems usually accumulate rather than displace each other, so do conceptions of history that are so closely related to these devices and systems. Historical progress and historical crisis, linear pattern and network pattern, coexist as explanations of the contemporary world.

This coexistence of conflicting historical patterns presents a fundamental contradiction in contemporary thinking about history. To return to the *New York Times*, there is no better example of this than columnist Thomas Friedman, who in 2006 published a best-selling “brief history of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” titled *The World is Flat* emphasizing great opportunities for humankind on a flat earth. In 2008 Friedman published *The World is Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution and How It Can Renew America*. In 2011 he published an op-ed piece titled “The Earth is Full,” warning of the intersecting loops of population growth, global warming, food price rises, oil price rises, and political instability. In this latest appraisal, Friedman warns, “We will not change systems...without a crisis. But don’t worry, we’re getting there.” As we head for a “crisis-driven choice” (here Friedman cites the authority of Paul Gilding, a “veteran...environmentalist-entrepreneur”), humans will manage to find their way to a new sustainability rather than global collapse.<sup>32</sup>

The earth is flat and it is full. Its saviors are environmentalists and also entrepreneurs. The historical lifeworld is driven by crisis but a new sustainability is just over the horizon. These confused and conflicted ways of imagining the patterns of contemporary emerge from new historical conditions where human demands on the planet are far greater than can be sustained, but where the dominant ideology of capitalist accumulation through technological innovation only intensifies the crisis.

### **History as Lifeworld**

In Foucault’s words, we are trying to understand “the same ground that is once more stirring under our feet.”<sup>33</sup> How is it the same, and how is it stirring? Or, to ask the question of contemporary history that Leo Marx asks of technology, what are the new conditions of the world that give rise to the need for new words and concepts to apprehend and analyze them?

In *The Order of Things* Foucault remarks that he rejects “the phenomenological approach, which gives absolute priority to the observing subject,” when this “leads to a transcendental consciousness.” Instead of a “theory of the knowing subject,” he seeks a “theory of discursive practice.”<sup>34</sup>

Admittedly there is a long way between the highly selective and impressionistic evidence presented above—basically random snippets of the American mainstream press—and the sweeping hypothesis that cultural concepts of contemporary history are deeply conflicted between deep-seated beliefs in progress and a rising tide of crisis-events that challenge these beliefs. Placing this inquiry on a more substantial base of evidence presents a wonderful opportunity for collaborations of historians and social scientists, especially in examining “discursive practice.” The tools most important to understanding contemporary perceptions and experiences of history are those of the humanities in general and of literary criticism in particular. Word counts and linguistic maps would be helpful, but these exercises are incomplete. Discerning patterns of contemporary history requires contextual and imaginative readings of various sources to reveal the underlying, less-than-conscious epistemic rules and presuppositions of our epoch.

Also exciting are the possibilities for collaborations of historians and social scientists in other studies that study history “from the bottom up.” This vivid spatial metaphor has often been used by historians who seek to study common people as opposed to elites, and in particular to bring into the historical account various neglected groups (workers, colonized, women, as well as non-human “actors”). Nevertheless the assumption persists that the card-carrying professional historian is the one who is doing the work of inclusion. In evaluating the hypothesis of conflicting models of history, we need history from the bottom up in the sense of asking non-historians—people living in history—how they perceive and experience it. How do they describe and account for both change and continuity in the world? How do they see themselves in relation to past and future history? In short, how do they experience their lifeworld as a historical one?

The concept of lifeworld was articulated by early 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenologists in order to define the everyday world of experience that precedes and grounds scientific inquiry. In 1936 Edmund Husserl describes the distinction in this way:

It is so trivial a remark that the truly vivid, truly lived and truly experientiable world, in which all our life takes place practically, remains as it is [...] and remains unchanged by the fact that we invent a special art called physics.<sup>35</sup>

In distinguishing semi-conscious, common-sense experience from the abstract approaches of scientific reflection, Husserl is also making a value judgment. He believes the lifeworld, in all its richness and complexity and even confusion, should be valued over the derivative and in his view more dessicated scientific models derived from it. When so much effort is put into a scientific explanation of the world, the grounding facts of daily and active participation in it were forgotten. Husserl believed that this diversion of attention was nothing short of a crisis-- “the crisis of European sciences,” which is causing ongoing damage to the lifeworld itself.<sup>36</sup>

The word *history* could be substituted for *physics*, as a “special art” that implicitly assumes a “truly lived and truly experientiable” world, preceding and grounding the work of historians. The practical consequences are two-fold. First, the inquirer seeking to apprehend the world as lifeworld must include evidence through all the senses and forms of cognition, both conscious and less-than-conscious. Second, the validity of lifeworld evidence is evaluated through intersubjective experiences of people in it. Not *a priori* reasoning but repeated, fundamental human activities (such as creating and using language and social institutions) provide ongoing reality checks of shared experience.

Foucault disapproves of “the phenomenological approach” because it gives “absolute priority to the observing subject,” but this priority is not necessary. Instead this approach at its best includes, in an integrated and reflexive whole, the study of “the perceiver, who from his embodied location approaches the world as a lived, horizon[t]al field; the act of perceiving; and the content of the perceived.”<sup>37</sup> In the case of the historical lifeworld, it is apprehended by “the observing subject,” but only as the subject is immersed in acts of perception involving discourse and representation, and only as the subject is engaged with the “content” of what she perceives. The complexity is that this content is changing as it is perceived. The historical lifeworld, itself has a history. The ground shifts below our feet.

One of the most common ways of describing the contemporary historical lifeworld, in contrast to earlier ones, is that the rate of change is speeding up. As concepts of history as linear progress evolved in the 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, more and more attention was given to “technological change” as a descriptor of historical progress, as opposed to more general social change. The rate of social progress might continue to be gradual, but in the technological sphere what Henry Adams called “the law of acceleration” seemed to rule. In his autobiographical *The Education of Henry Adams* this eminent American historian—a founder and the first president of the American Historical Association—sketched out this “law,” using back-of-the-envelope calculations to conclude that exploitation of new sources of energy was causing historical change to speed up, a sort of collective stepping-on-the-gas-pedal effect. Adams was careful not to claim this as *progress*, but he did emphasize it was a *sequence* with immeasurable significance for humankind.<sup>38</sup>

If anything Adams underestimated the acceleration effect by focusing on energy. Other historians since him have shown that many other material processes exhibit a dramatic “hockey stick” upward break beginning at the same moment Adams was writing in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: dramatic accelerations of population, industrial production, resource consumption, species extinctions, and other many other measures of human activity affecting the entire planet.<sup>39</sup>

It took 20th historians some time to appreciate how much the tempo of natural history was being sucked into the accelerating pace of human history. Historians of the *Annales* School in the interwar period brought into the study of history “from below” events of *la longue durée*—collective, long-term changes in the material conditions of life, taking place largely below the level of human consciousness. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, for example wrote a what is often regarded as a crowning achievement of the *Annales* school in the form of a study of the peasants of Languedoc in which the protagonist is an agrarian cycle lasting three centuries. The cycle is followed through massive evidence accumulated from land tax registers, grain prices, population registers, changes in literacy, and many other measures. *Annales* historians contrasted slow-acting events (changes in climate, soil productivity, population, and similar factors) with the more rapidly unfolding histories of *conjuncture* (social and political change on a scale of two or three centuries) and *événement* (of *courte durée*, discernible within a human lifespan, including people with names and events that take place within one lifetime).<sup>40</sup>

At the time the *Annales* historians were bringing the natural world into human history, the “hockey stick” material changes were creating a historical lifeworld in which previously *longue durée* events might now take place within a human lifetime. Far from being the unnoticed backdrop to human history, such changes are arousing a high degree of attention both individual and collective. In the terminology of the founding *Annales* historians, a *crisis* would by definition be applied to *histoire événementelle*: a sharp and sudden turning point in history. Now *environmental crisis* is a common name for events measured in decades rather than centuries.

This was not the lifeworld of 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Greece, when the concepts and practices of history were first articulated. The inventors of *historiē* as research or inquiry assumed a planet providing a stable, durable, and predictable home for the relatively transient, frail, and contingent accounts of human deeds and words. The time constant of human history seemed vastly

different from that of natural (in the sense of non-human nature) history. The contemporary historical lifeworld is utterly unlike that of the Greeks, and also utterly unlike that of the scientific and industrial revolutions, which assumed that expanding intellectual and material powers would lead to human mastery over the planet.

Instead, the historical lifeworld emerging in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century appears to be one of lingering hopes for progress mixed with growing anxiety about intersecting crises. In this lifeworld, progress becomes more and more defined as material “change,” which relentlessly accelerates, rather than social progress, which seems as slow as ever. At the same time crises keep coming, reinforcing each other and mutating into seemingly endless aftermaths which are hard to distinguish from the originating crisis.

Many of the subtleties and apparent contradictions among California voters, I believe, are best understood in terms of this conflicted, unstable historical lifeworld. The PPIC polling data suggest not so much a split consciousness as a double consciousness of contemporary history. The pattern of history as progress is still present and powerful, but so is the pattern of history as crisis: the two patterns are layered over each other in the consciousness of many citizens, together providing a compelling template with which to interpret current events. When contemporary history is perceived as a pattern of progress, then it makes sense for the individual (and his family) to invest in higher education, which will lead to a better economic future, as it has long done in the United States. When history is perceived as a pattern of intersecting crises, then distrust of institutions in general becomes detached from any particular circumstances and becomes a free-floating standing accusation. Even universities, which have long enjoyed a higher level of civic trust, are pulled into this force field of rolling mistrust, which is stronger than the perception of benefits from institutions of higher education.

The coexistence of these two patterns of perceiving contemporary history also helps to explain the coexistence of two wildly different narrative threads that dominate discussion of higher education today, including many concerning the University of California. One thread expresses the generalized distrust of them as institutions because all institutions are corrupt, unfair, and bloated. They cater to spoiled faculty with high salaries, undeserved raises, and short hours; they hire too many pricey administrators; they are not run like a business; they are mired in bureaucracy; they are stuck in old models of teaching, failing to innovate with educational tools; and so on and so on. On the other hand—and here the California polling data are compelling—most parents desperately want their children to have access to these institutions, as do most of the children themselves. Americans consider it as a high privilege to be able to attend most American colleges and universities, and in the case of public ones very much fear any decline in accessibility and affordability.

This contradiction is too deep to be chalked up (as an educator would say) only to confusion, misinformation, or magical thinking, though all three are certainly present. The contradiction is deep because it arises from the challenge of recent events to belief in an historical pattern of progress, which has given rise to a beloved but now threatened narratives of progress. The collective problems of American society are far too numerous and interlocking to be solved through individual efforts. Yet there is no trust in collective effort, when all institutions are perceived as corrupt, ineffectual, or both. The perceived inability to create institutions that can be

trusted was a cause of the economic crisis. The crisis has reinforced this lack of trust, not as an aftermath but as a transformation of an economic crisis into a crisis of democracy.

History cannot continue as social progress without collective efforts. Are we doomed to see history transformed into a network of mutually reinforcing crises? The need to understand the pattern of history is much stronger than an opinion or mood. It forms the basis for a sense of predictability in life. This is a conservative instinct, in the pre-political sense, which is necessary for survival and adaptability in a world of loss and change. When the sense of predictability is fundamentally threatened, when it appears that history is not working the way it used to, individuals react intensely, if inconsistently. What the polling data rarely reveal is this intensity: for this qualitative research and interpretation are crucial, as well as attention to the aesthetic and narrative dimensions of accounts of contemporary history.<sup>41</sup>

### **Conclusion: The Sense of an Ending**

The time scale of history began to expand in the 19th century with archaeological and anthropological discoveries of what came to be called *prehistory* (a term introduced to common use by John Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times*, published in 1865). About the same time, the deep future of history began to be contemplated as scientific theories of entropy made it possible to imagine a distant "heat death" of the universe. History might be accelerating for the time being, but it began to appear that in the end--the far end--everything would run down and run out.<sup>42</sup> In both directions, universal history was assuming a time scale that no longer had a reasonable fit with the human history, especially not with the six millennia or so associated with Christian prophecy.

Since then, human history has even more lost its moorings compared to the universal time. While the discovery of "deep time" is one of the most exciting intellectual adventures of humankind, this excitement is not symmetrical in both directions.<sup>43</sup> For the future, at least, deep time becomes increasingly surreal and frightening. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, evidence of mysterious "dark energy" suggested that the expansion of space might continue to the point where galaxies would no longer be able to transmit their light to each other. Both past and future would fall beyond the edge of detection, and any sentient creatures that existed would be trapped in the cosmic equivalent of a silent grave.<sup>44</sup>

In his lectures (and subsequent book) on *The Sense of an Ending*, Frank Kermode emphasizes the importance of this expansion of time to modern literature. Any writer is speaking to fellow humans who find themselves—ourselves--in the "middest." We need to "sense" an ending and we also need it to "make sense." This is true both for our individual and for our collective stories, for it is always our ending that is in view when we think of history's end.<sup>45</sup> Once the scale of time gets beyond a length measurable in human generations, a new burden is put on literature to provide this sense.

The same is true for history. The "story" of history does not have to be a "grand" narrative, or even a narrative or "story" at all in the usual sense of the word. But what history unavoidably has

in common with fiction is pattern, sequence, organization. The most quantitative and data-driven historical research still implies pattern, because its basic questions imply shape and order: what changes and what continues over time. A phenomenological study of our historical lifeworld has to address the question of “what comes after,” for the “content” of a lifeworld includes not only countless daily material interactions but also such unavoidable speculations about the meaning of it all. A crucial dimension of a lifeworld is its horizon. There is always an edge to it, and a constant, strong human desire is to look beyond the edge. In this sense, the transcendent is always part of a lifeworld

Kermode reminds us that human story lines have typically included three alternatives: salvation, endless cycles, and destruction. All of these arguably have a place in contemporary concepts of history. The prospect of salvation is evident both in religious versions of the rapture, or Second Coming, or similar visions in other faiths. It is also present in the secular vision of progress, which posits a happy if far-off goal to which history moves. The time of everlasting cycles, which Kermode names *aevum*, is that of generation after generation of human beings learning from, imitating, repeating the preceding one, in a form of duration that is not immortal but is still lasting—the generative cycle in which creatures (not only human ones) perpetuate their kind in their own kind of eternity.<sup>46</sup> In a world where progress seems to be generating crisis, the vision of everlasting cycles has been revived in the concept of *sustainability*.

And then there is destruction, in its religious version of apocalypse and secular version of a convergent, culminating crisis. In Kermode’s analysis crisis is no longer imminent—on the historical horizon—but immanent. Crisis has invaded and become caught up with ongoing history:

...the older, sharply predictive apocalypse, with its precise identification, has been blurred; eschatology is stretched over the whole of history, the End is present at every moment....<sup>47</sup>

As crises multiply and converge, crisis-as-episode begins to evolve into crisis-as-final-destruction-of-the-lifeworld. The far horizon of history draws nigh. Each particular crisis begins to forebode the larger end.

Nothing is more routine than a crisis of capitalism. They all have their unique features, and they are all devastating in human terms—but nothing is more predictable, and in intellectual terms they are even boring, in the sense that each one only reminds us yet again how capitalism works and how it is so prone to not working. Why did we should pay special attention to this crisis? Why set up a special group to explore its implications?

I propose that our less-than-conscious motivation for doing so was “a sense of the ending”: a sense that this crisis is not routine, but one of many whose reinforcing interactions that are reshaping the historical lifeworld. We know that human empire, like earlier more limited empires, will not last forever. The balance between current rates of human population growth and resource use, on the one hand, and planetary resources, on the other, is unsustainable. Yet the scenario of sustainability does not seem present and real. The scenarios that are much more

plausible are daunting and frightening: climate change, nuclear warfare, pandemics, scrambles for water and food

That is because such scenarios are already part of our historical lifeworld. Rather than suggesting a future apocalypse, they embody a rolling apocalypse. We already live with images of the end: blown-off mountaintops in West Virginia, dried-up marshes in southern Iraq, knocked-down neighborhoods in Beijing, disappearing waterfalls, bugs, domesticated species, and undomesticated ones. It is no longer only “untamed savages” and “untrodden wilderness “ to which we bid farewell. All these and many other more ordinary things are disappearing in a rising tide of loss.<sup>48</sup>

We do not have to wait for the last fish in the ocean to disappear, nor the last tree in the rain forests to be felled, to imagine their disappearance. We do not have to imagine that Berkeley will disappear as a great university to mourn the passing of a Berkeley distinctive for scholarly excellence in combination with a public mission supported by an idealistic Master Plan. These features of the world are disappearing as we watch. The end is here and now and all around us. Human empire is a new historical space and also a new historical time, suspended between change and eternity, a time where the end of time is integrated into the present. Time goes on, but it constantly reenacting its end.<sup>49</sup> Crisis is no longer a sharply defined episode nor a final cataclysm. It is an indwelling condition, containing its own aftermath, which increasingly dominates the historical lifeworld.

In such a world, the language of fiction is not a distraction but an irreplaceable source of insight into cultural manifestations of historical change—not superficial but fundamental change. When the novelist Haruki Murakami tells us that the fiction he writes “is itself undergoing a perceptible transformation,” because it is being assimilated differently by Western readers who no longer find chaos unreal, he is presenting powerful evidence of cultural change. When he challenges us to “coin new words in tune with the breath of that change,” he is speaking to everyone, scholars very much included.<sup>50</sup>

Which brings us to the ending—of this essay—by considering one more example of the role of imaginative literature in expressing “the sense of an ending” for human history. This is the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, hailed upon its publication as a work of “magical realism” and now existing in a world where the conjunction of these two words no longer seems illogical. The hundred years of solitude--a compressed history of civilization--take place in the fictitious town of Macondo, modeled after the author’s home in Colombia.

Macondo is also the code name of the site of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig that exploded in April 2010. (Such code names are routinely used by oil and gas companies for offshore prospects early in the exploration effort, both to guard secrecy before sale and later to provide a conveniently memorable name.)<sup>51</sup> As we know, that story ended in loss of human life, still uncalculated loss of non-human life and support systems, and only a temporary interruption of off-shore drilling, in an aftermath that simply continues the crisis.

Garcia Marquez's story ends with a gale roaring through the cursed village of Macondo, a "fearful whirlwind" in which the last survivor of the calamity is "deciphering [the instant that he lived] as he lived it, prophesying himself in the act of deciphering...as if he were looking into a speaking mirror," which includes his own approaching death, with no "second opportunity" for himself or for that world.<sup>52</sup> In our work here in Lisbon, we decipher our time as we live it, prophesying as we decipher, while all too aware that the end is all around us.

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<sup>1</sup>Simon Johnson, "The Quiet Coup." *The Atlantic* (May 2009).

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/05/the-quiet-coup/7364/>

See also Simon Johnson, and James Kwak, *Thirteen Bankers: The Wall Street Takeover and the Next Financial Meltdown* (New York: Pantheon, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1958).

<sup>3</sup> Robin Hoey, "Staff Assembly digests chancellor's stark campus update," Berkeley NewsCenter (May 25, 2011); Louis Freedberg, "Chancellor: UC Berkeley morphing into federal university," California Watch Daily Report (Feb. 23, 2011); Chancellor Birgeneau's Fall 2011 Welcome and State of the Campus Message (26 August 2011, accessed 9 September 2011)

<http://cio.chance.berkeley.edu/chancellor/Birgeneau/ChancellorBirgeneausFall2011WelcomeandStateoftheCampusMessage.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Clark Kerr, *The Gold and the Blue, A Personal Memoir of the University of California, 1949-1967* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001-2003).

<sup>5</sup> Referring to the Regents' Meeting of 18 November, 2009. Telephone conversation (15 June 2011) with Robert J. Birgeneau (Chancellor, University of California at Berkeley).

<sup>6</sup> Matt Krupnick, "Protesters shut down Free Speech Movement tribute," *Contra Costa Times*, Dec. 3, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Freedberg; Hoey; Chancellor's Message (16 June 2011, accessed 21 June 2011).

<http://newscenter.berkeley.edu/2011/06/16/chancellor-responds-to-gov-browns-budget-veto/>

Also Chancellor's Fall 2011 Welcome and State of the Campus Message.

<sup>8</sup> Freedberg; Hoey.

<sup>9</sup> Chancellor's message (16 June 2011)

<sup>10</sup>Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, Sonja Petek, and Nicole Willcoxon, PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Higher Education (November 2010), accessed 18 August 2011

<http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=963>

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Also telephone conversation (17 August 2011) with Jason Simon (Director, Marketing and Communications Services, Office of the President, University of California),

<sup>11</sup> Don Peck, "Can the Middle Class Be Saved?," *The Atlantic*, Vol. 308, No. 3 (September 2011): 63. See my comments on disasters as revelations in Williams, "A Technological World We Can Live In," *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (January 2002)

<sup>12</sup>"If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what must be done remains undone; if this remains undone, morals and art will deteriorate; if justice goes astray, the people will stand about in helpless confusion. Hence there must be no arbitrariness in what is said. This matters above everything." From *The Analects of Confucius*, Book 13, Verse 3 (James R. Ware, translator, 1980).  
[http://www.analects-ink.com/mission/Confucius\\_Rectification.html](http://www.analects-ink.com/mission/Confucius_Rectification.html)  
(accessed 3 March 2011)

<sup>13</sup> **1841** *Times* 11 May 5/1 It may disappoint the crisis-mongers to hear us say so. **1896** *Westm. Gaz.* 23 June 3/1 All the aspects of a crisis night. **1898** *Ibid.* 4 Jan. 2/2 A Tory Government was 'crisis proof'. **1898** *Ibid.* 26 Mar. 5/1 The 'crisis'-less years of the late Liberal Government. **1898** *Ibid.* 24 June 2/3 The Near and not the Far East..was the crisis-centre. **1900** *Ibid.* 11 May 2/2 A crisis-avoiding peace-compelling Government. **1903** *Ibid.* 3 Jan. 2/3 A Crisis Fund, amounting to nearly two millions. **1938** E. WAUGH in *Tablet* 23 July 112/1 The crisis-minded always maintain that the problems of their particular decade are unique and insuperable. **1938** *Punch* 10 Aug. 163/1 How many of these people are crisis-conscious? **1939** WYNDHAM LEWIS *Let.* 5 Oct. (1963) 266 In the crisis-days prior to the war. **1940** W. EMPSON *Gathering Storm* 65 The point is to join up the crisis-feeling to what can be felt all the time in normal life. **1960** *Times* 24 Oct. (Financial Rev.) p. viii/6 Switzerland..has been a normal haven for 'crisis' money. **1965** H. KAHN *On Escalation* xiii. 245 Crisis-management problems.

<http://www.oed.com.libproxy.mit.edu/view/Entry/44539?redirectedFrom=crisis#> (accessed 3 March 2011)

<sup>14</sup> a1658 J. Cleveland *To T. C.* 22 Rash Lover speak what Pleasure hath Thy Spring in such an Aftermath!  
1851 H. Coleridge *Ess. & Marginalia* II. 13 The aftermath of the great rebellion.  
1878 *Masque of Poets* 135, I am one that hath Lived long and gathered in Life's aftermath.  
1946 W. S. Churchill *Victory* 5 The life and strength of Britain · · will be tested to the full, not only in the war but in the aftermath of war.  
1958 M. L. King *Stride toward Freedom* vi. 102 The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.  
1960 C. Day Lewis *Buried Day* ii. 41, I remember, too, its aftermath—the *triste*, enervated feeling which the cold kiss of the dew spreads through one's whole body.  
1979 A. Storr *Art of Psychotherapy* x. 107 Depression is sometimes an immediate aftermath of completing a piece of work.

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1981 *Times* 31 July 2/5 The aftermath of the wedding seemed to mean different things to different people. Princess Anne confessed · · to having ‘a slight hangover from a very enjoyable wedding’.

<http://www.oed.com.libproxy.mit.edu/view/Entry/3696?redirectedFrom=aftermath#> (accessed 3 March 2011). The Hersey reference is not included in the OED summary.

<sup>15</sup> “It is one of the surest indexes of a mature and developed jurisprudence not to make a fortress out of the dictionary,” Judge Hand wrote in a 1945 decision, “but to remember that statutes always have some purpose or object to accomplish, whose sympathetic and imaginative discovery is the surest guide to their meaning.” Adam Liptak, “Justices Turning More Frequently to Dictionary, and Not Just for Big Words,” *The New York Times* (June 12, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Leo Marx, “*Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept*,” in *Technology and Culture*, Volume 51, Number 3 (July 2010): 561-577.

<sup>17</sup> Peter S. Goodman, NYT Nov. 8, 2009, *The New York Times*, News of the Week in Review, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Gordon Brown, “Connecting the Dots: Take Back the Future,” *Newsweek* (May 23 and 30, 2011), 7.

<sup>19</sup> Peter A. Diamond, “When a Nobel Prize Isn’t Enough,” *The New York Times* (June 6, 2011), A19.

<sup>20</sup> Oct. 17, 2010, *The New York Times*, News of the Week in Review, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Authorized text, shorter edition, by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks and Philip D. Zelikow (Aug 8, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Joel Meyerowitz, *Aftermath: World Trade Center Archive* (Phaidon Press, 2006) and John Botte, *Aftermath: Unseen 9/11 Photos by a New York City Cop* (Collins Design, 2006)

<sup>23</sup> Lydia Polgreen, *The New York Times*, Nov. 11, 2010, F1.

<sup>24</sup> James Carroll, “Amid disaster, community,” *The Boston Globe* (May 23, 2011),..A9.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/26/world/europe/26volcano.html?hp> David Jolly, “Volcanic Ash closes airports in Berlin and other German Cities,” *The New York Times* (25 May 2011) quoting Olivier Jankovec, European director of Airports Council International.

<sup>26</sup> Floyd Norris, “Japan’s Meltdown and the Global Economy’s,” *The New York Times* (18 March 2011).

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- <sup>27</sup> David Leonhardt, “Spillonomics: Underestimating Risk,” *The New York Times* (May 31, 2011).
- <sup>28</sup> Peter S. Goodman, “A Spill Into the Psyche,” *The New York Times* (July 18, 2010), News of the Week in Review, 1.
- <sup>29</sup> Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970), preface, xxiv.
- <sup>30</sup> Charles Perrow, *Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technologies* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).
- <sup>31</sup> Rosalind Williams, “An Historian’s View,” in *The Network Society: A Cross Cultural Perspective*, ed. Manuel Castells (Edward Elgar, 2004); also Williams, “Cultural Origins and Environmental Implications of Large Technological Systems,” *Science in Context*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1993): 377-403.
- <sup>32</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006); Friedman, *The World is Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution and How It Can Renew America* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008); Friedman, “The Earth is Full,” *The New York Times* (June 7, 2011), opinion page.
- <sup>33</sup> Foucault directly addresses the question of order in history in *Order*, Part II, Chap. 7, “The Limits of Representation,” Section I, The Age of History, pp. 217-221. See also Part II, Chapter 10, “The Human Sciences,” Section IV, History, 367-73.
- <sup>34</sup> Foucault, *Order*, Foreword to the English edition, xiv.
- <sup>35</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, Gesammelte Werke Bd. VI (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976 [1936]), 50-51. I am grateful to Daniela Helbig for the citation and translation.
- <sup>36</sup> For commentary on Husserl and phenomenology, see David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 40-41, and Donn Welton, “World,” in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy Supplement*, ed. D. Borcher (Macmillan Reference, 1996), 303.
- <sup>37</sup> Donald M. Lowe, *History of Bourgeois Perception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1-12, citing both Foucault’s *The Order of Things* and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, especially *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. C. Smith (London, 1962), esp. Preface.
- <sup>38</sup> Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams, an Autobiography* (Boston, New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918).
- <sup>39</sup> J.R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000).

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<sup>40</sup>Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The Peasants of Languedoc* (published in French in 1968, and in English translation in 1976); review by Anne E.C. McCants, "There and Back Again: The Great Agrarian Cycle Revisited," EH.Net Economic History Services, Dec. 12, 2002  
<http://eh.net/bookreviews/library/mccants>

Also Pamela O. Long, "The *Annales* and the History of Technology," *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (January 2005): 177-186.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Marris, *Loss and Change* [London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1974 (rev. ed. 1986)]. On the intensity of economic passions, see Bruno Latour and Vincent Antonin Lépinay, *The Science of Passionate Interests: An Introduction to Gabriel Tarde's Economic Anthropology* (Prickly Paradigm Press, 2008), and Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), 359-374

<sup>42</sup> Crosbie Smith, *The Science of Energy: a Cultural History of Energy Physics in Victorian Britain* (London: Althone, 1998); also Stephen Brush, "Thermodynamics and History: Science and Culture in the 19th Century," *The Graduate Journal*, vol. 7 (1967): 467-565.

<sup>43</sup> Williams, *Notes on the Underground* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990), Chap. 2, "Excavations I: Digging Down to the Truth," 22-50.

<sup>44</sup> Brian Greene, "Darkness on the Edge of the Universe," *The New York Times* (Jan. 16, 2011), opinion page.

<sup>45</sup> Frank Kermode, *The Sense of An Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction with a New Epilogue* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000 [1966]).

<sup>46</sup> Kermode, *Sense*, 79 (I am paraphrasing). For more on *aevem* see also Chapter III, "World without End or Beginning," 67-89.

<sup>47</sup> Kermode, *Sense*, 26.

<sup>48</sup> I am alluding here to the last paragraphs of Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Penguin, 1992),. p. 414.

<sup>49</sup> I am alluding to themes in Kermode, *Sense*, *passim*.

<sup>50</sup> Haruki Murakami, "Reality A and Reality B," *The New York Times* (November 29, 2010), opinion page.

<sup>51</sup>(Mississippi Canyon Block 252, abbreviated MC252), located in the United States Exclusive Economic Zone of the Gulf of Mexico (accessed 15 May 2011)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macondo\\_Prospect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macondo_Prospect)

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<sup>52</sup>Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991 [first pub. 1967], 422.