



# Mood of Optimism in Climate Policy?

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*BI*

# Chapter in *Festschrift*

- In the 70 years since Second World War wide swings in public mood about the prospects of humanity
  - *V-Day – Hunger Winter*
  - *Hiroshima – and United Nations*
  - *Population Bomb – and Green Revolution*
  - *Decolonization and Arms Race*
  - *Tragedy of Commons – Limits to Growth*
- Change in strategy
  - *Attitudes – or institutions?*
  - *Collective action – or aggregate actions?*

# Have only 10 minutes, so

- Tell the history of the world
- Lay out the whole Earth system
- Place of Jørgen Randers in both

# How do humans interact with nature

- Natural forces determine human fate
  - Forces unpredictable, violent, unmanageable
  - So adapt – catch as catch can



But *Homo Sapiens* wants to  
control the forces of nature



# First: Control by magic

- Manage nature by placating Gods
  - See omens, read signs, fathom auguries
  - *Sacrifices* *Offerings*



# But: Nature's little helper: Regularity

- Cyclicity
  - Day and night
  - Seasons – calendars
- From regularity to foresight



# Circular heaven



# The orbit of the sun





# Yet never full control by foresight

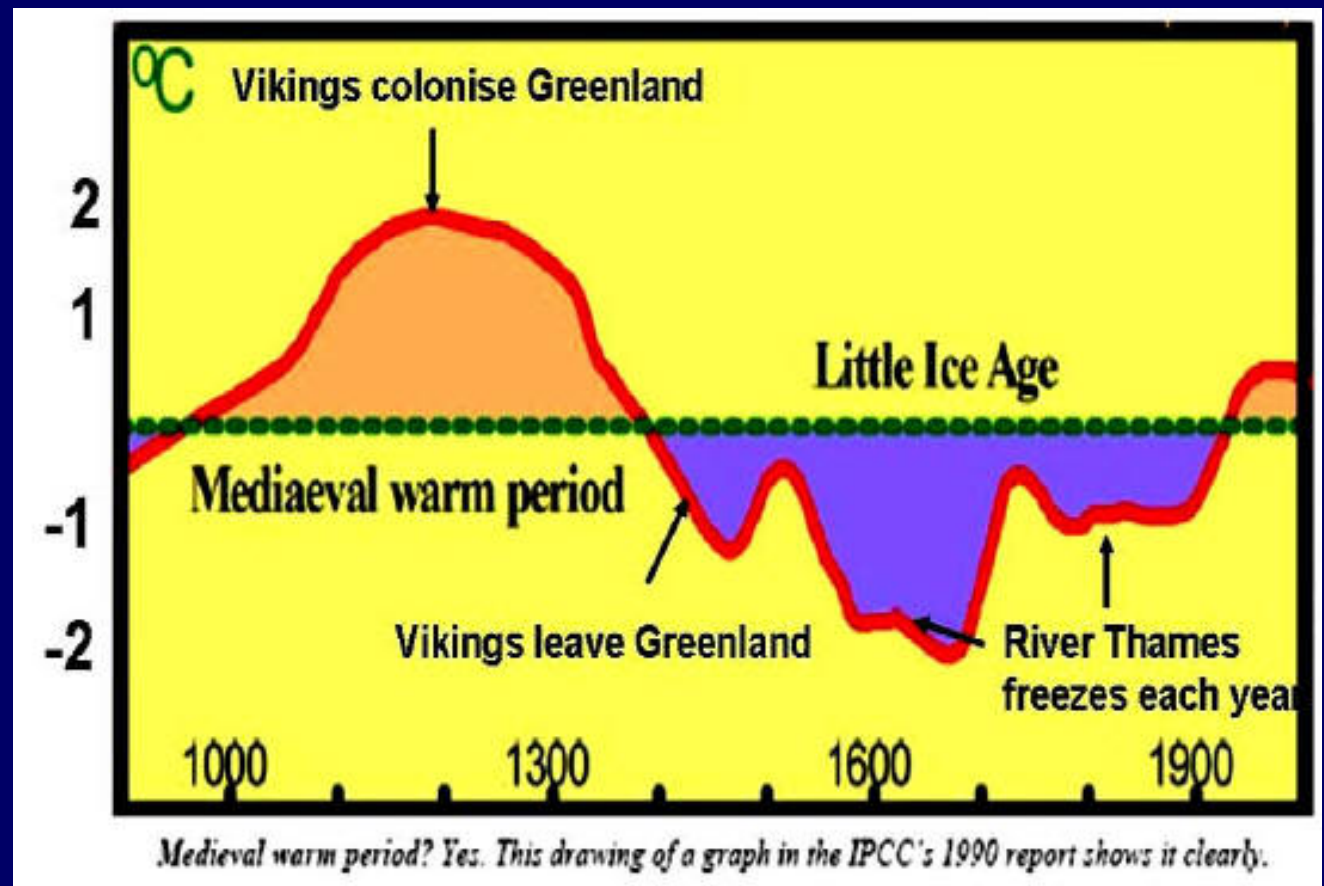
- Floods



# Famines, hunger



# Climate Change: Little Ice Age



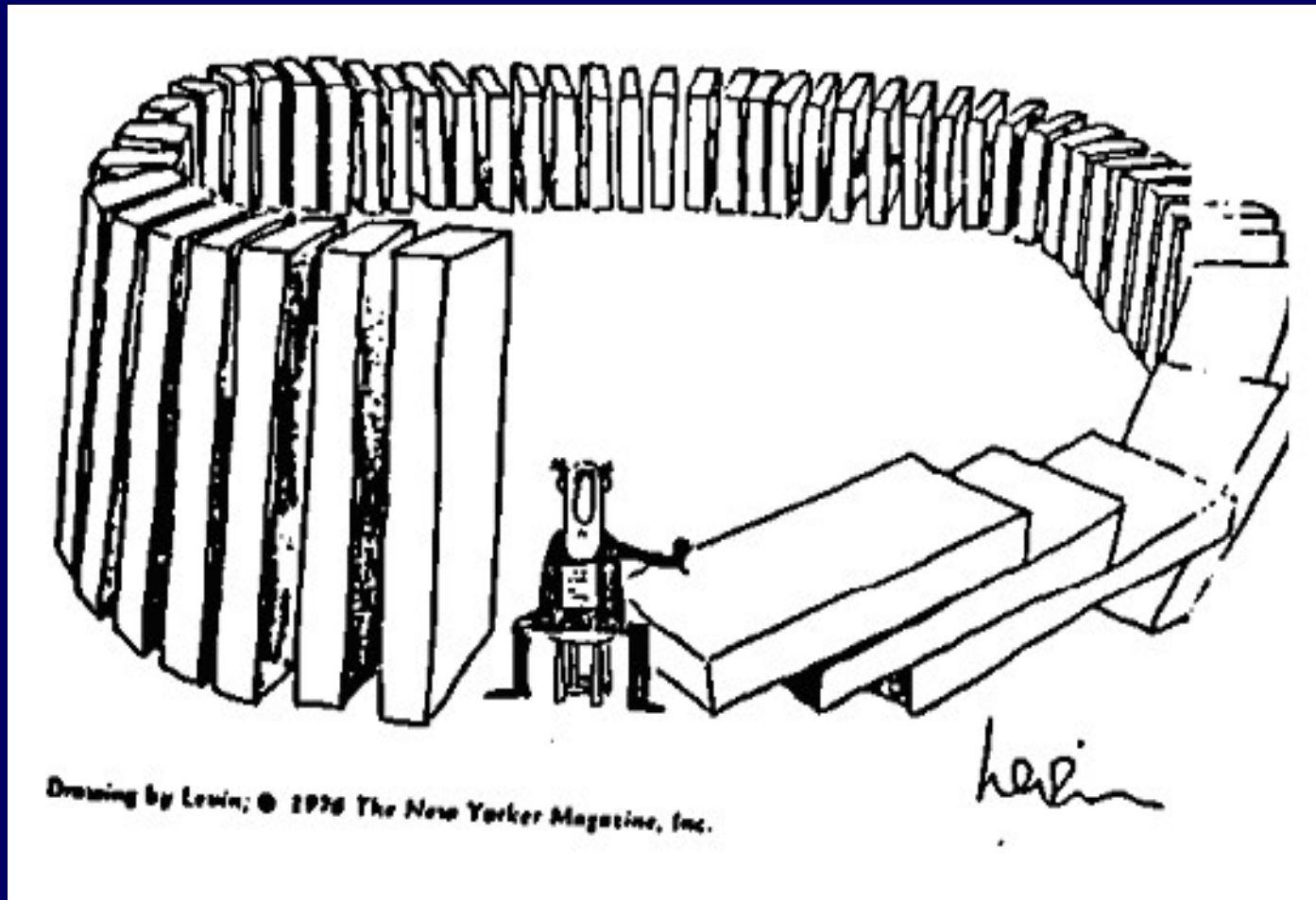
# Yet from regularity to insight – and to intervention !

- Intentionality harnessing causality
  - *Improve on nature by action on it*
    - *Agriculture*
    - *Industry*
    - *Energy*
- *Causes for pessimism:*

# The problem: Complexity

- Side effects
  - Do  $A \rightarrow B$
  - *But also unleashes  $\rightarrow C$ ,*
  - *$\rightarrow D...$*
  - *Unforeseen: Inadvertently – but irrevocably*
- Delayed impact
  - time bombs
- Could go blindly over the brink...

# Complexity: Long and delayed effects





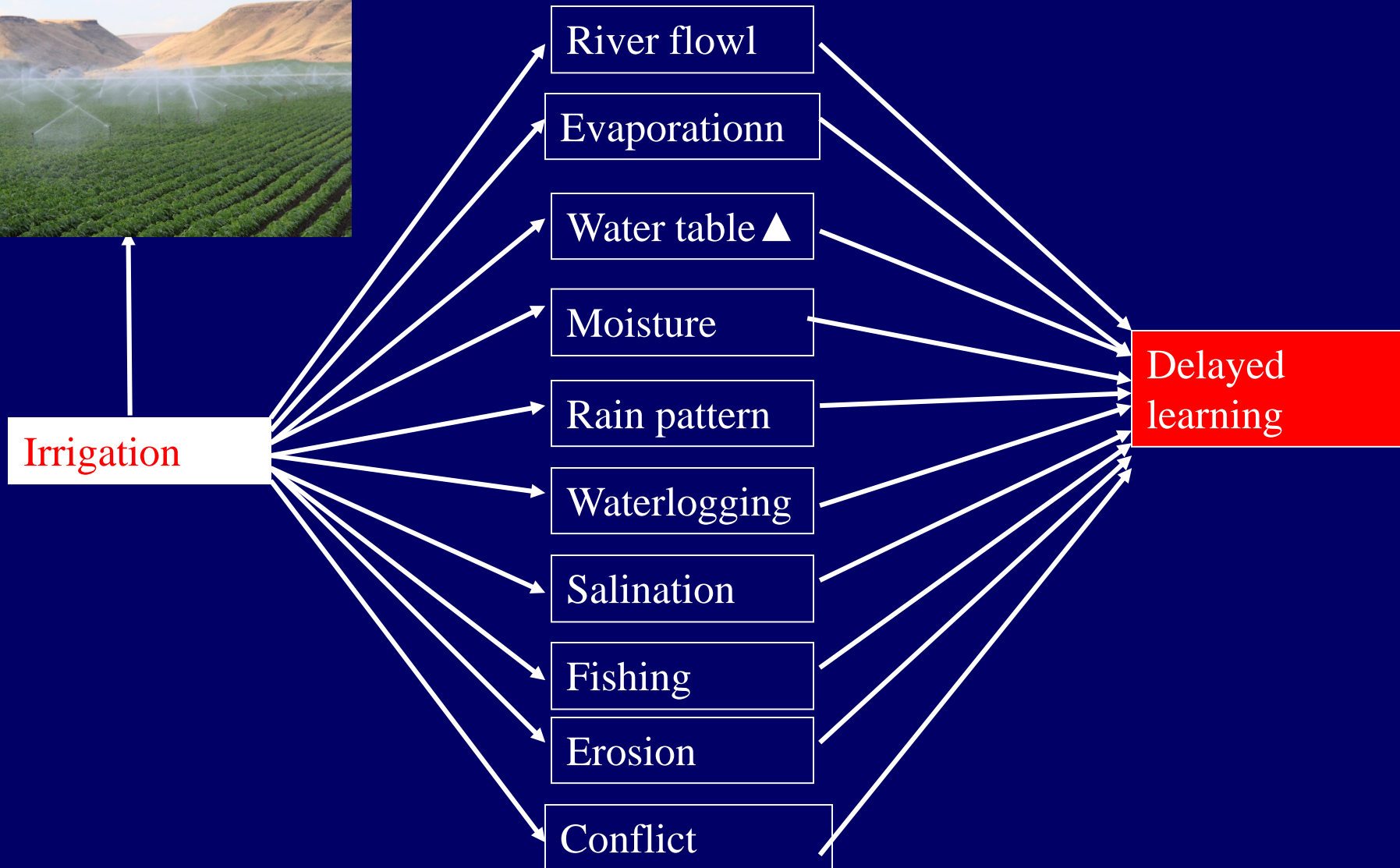


# Intention of Irrigation

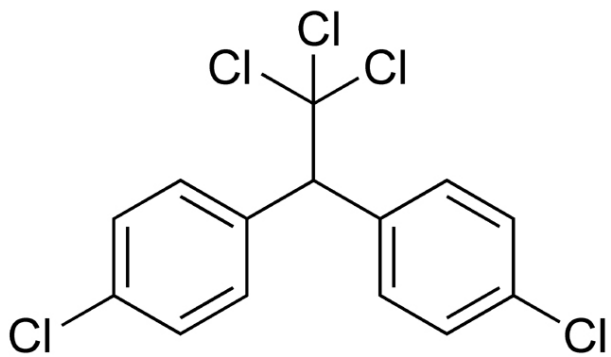
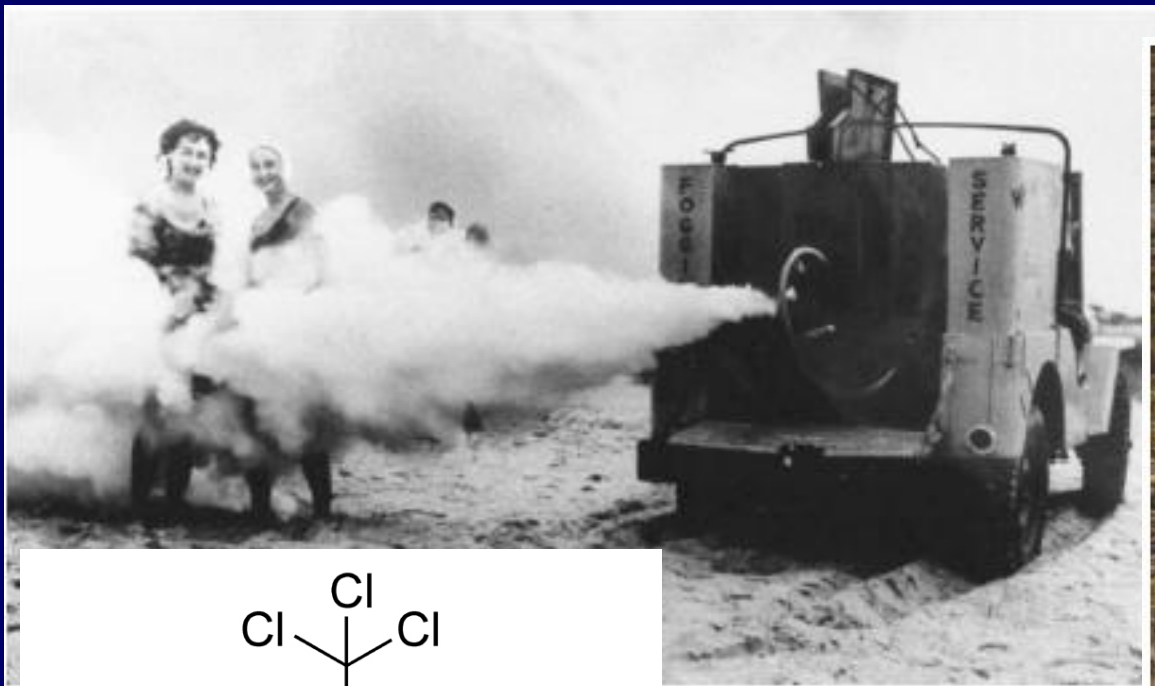


Irrigation

# Impacts of Irrigation:



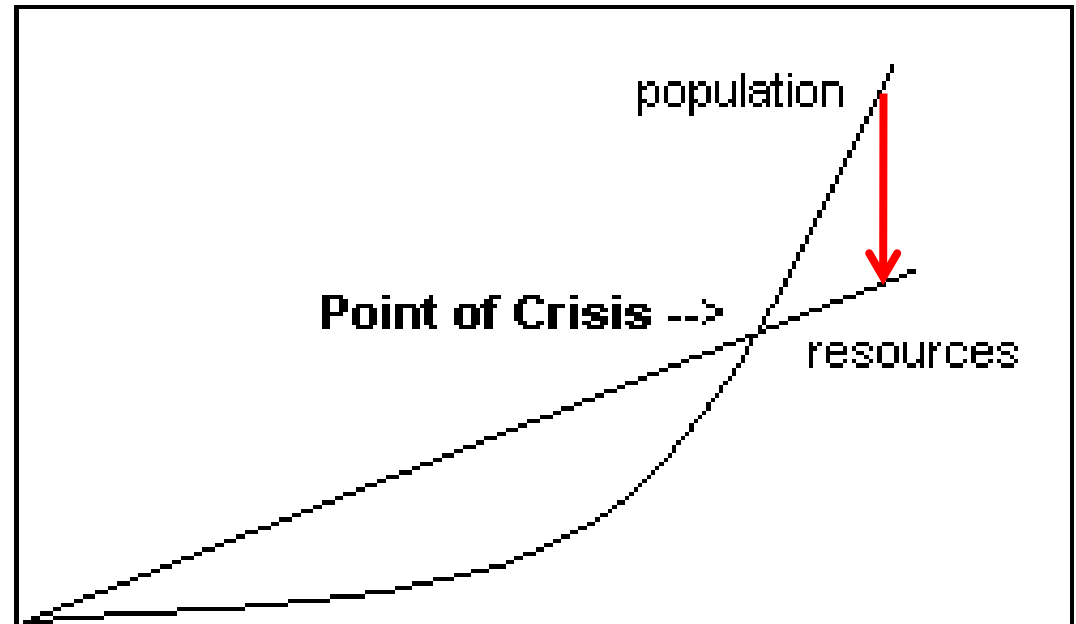
# Complexity: DDT & Silent Spring



# Complexity means the desire for welfare can defeat its purpose

- E.g. family insurance: Offspring:
  - And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein. *King James Bible Genesis 1:28*

# E.g. Malthusian Curse,



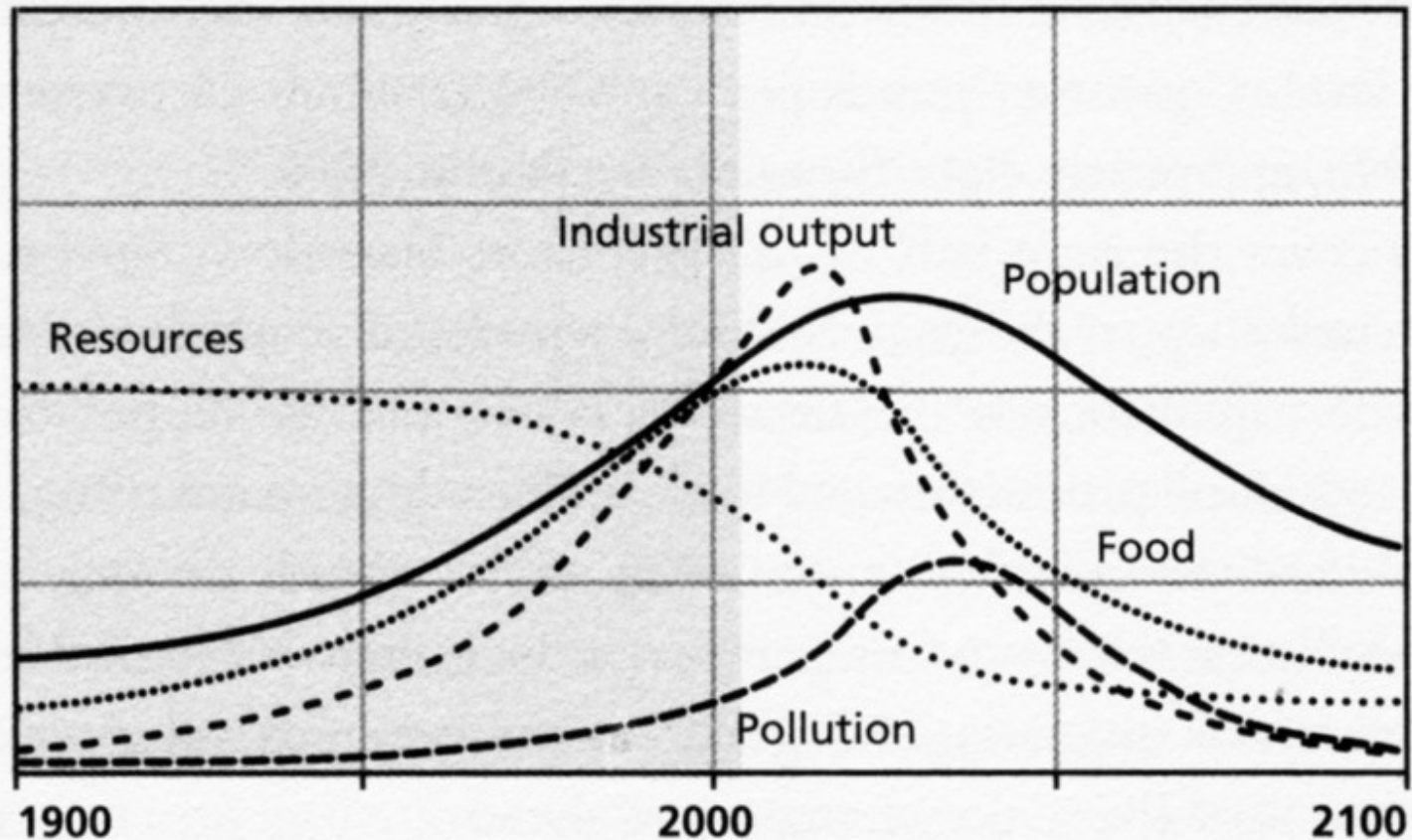
**Malthus' Basic Theory**



...or:



State of the World



# Problem: Mentalities?

- Ecologically illiterate politicians
  - *Even when literate, still politicians!*
- Problem *mindset and mentalities*
  - *Leaders unsuited to problems face*
- To break mentalities must change organizations!

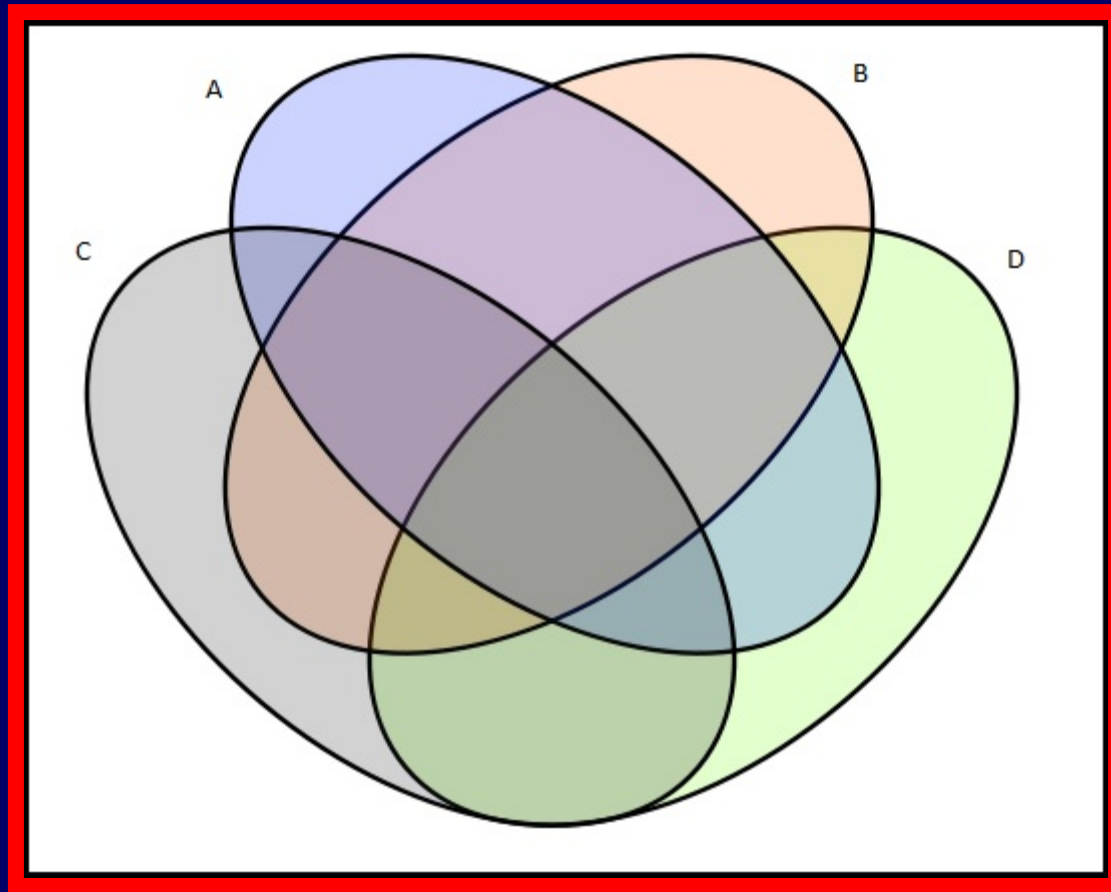


# Problem: Institutions?

- Solutions not technical (alone)
- Incentive systems wrong
  - *Global ecology – national political systems*
- *Scope of problems vs. range of institutions*
  - *Cannot internalize externalities*
- Systemic:
  - Solutions overcome by system of government!

# Mismatch:

*Scope of problems vs. range of institutions*  
*Cannot just run own affairs!*



# Two complex systems – the ecological and the political– more tightly interwoven

- Crises in one spill over to the other
- *Politics in the 21st century will increasingly consist in understanding, meeting and mastering complexity*
- *Where human effects are both directly societal and indirectly ecological*
- *The coming confluence of crises!*

# Key problem

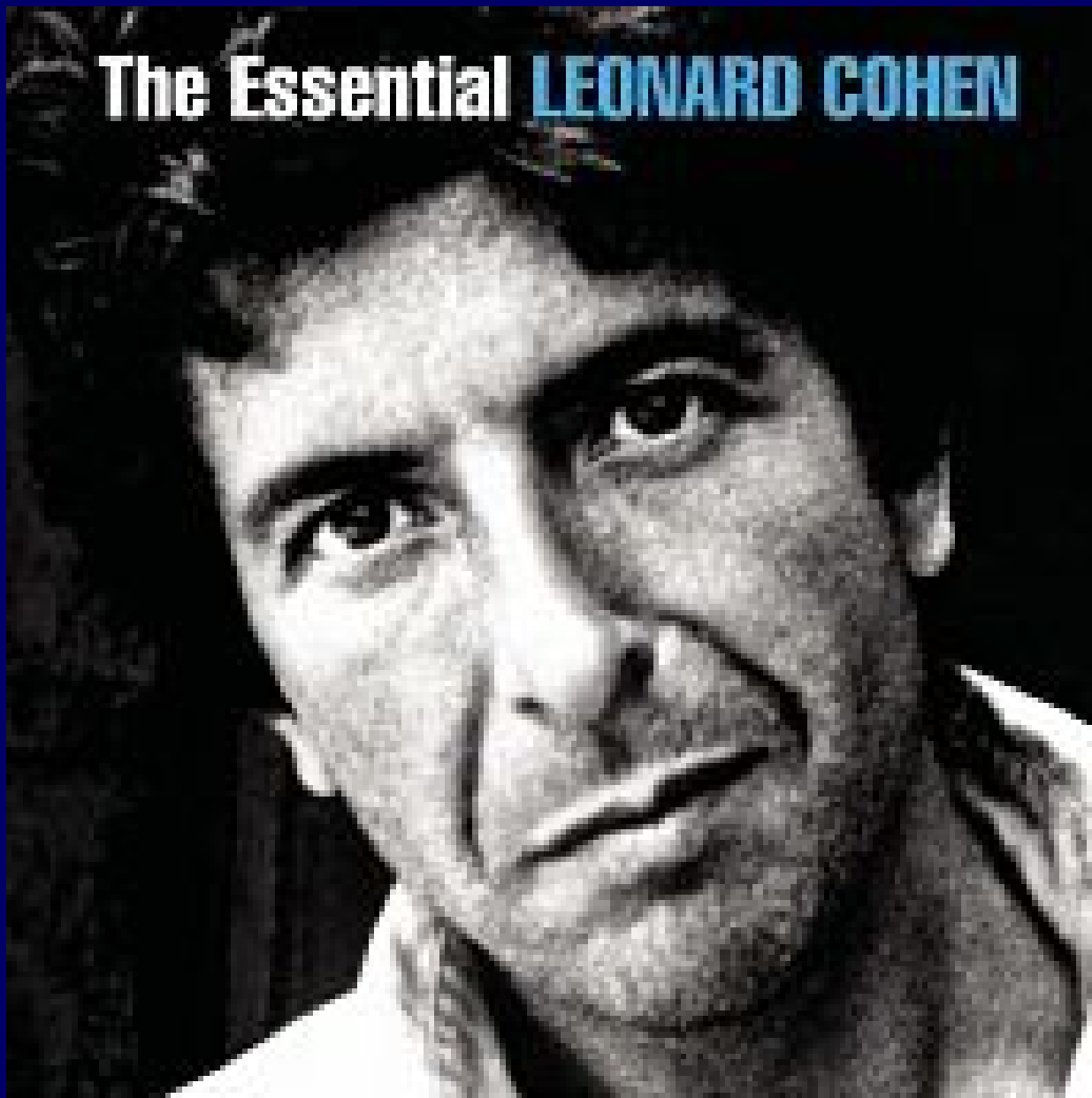
- Climate erodes national boundaries
- System dynamics: Units and interactions
  - *The nation, the corporation*
  - *The competition*
    - *Economic: Capitalism*
    - *Political: Democracy*
- Cannot shut climate out and cannot cope within present institutions

# The role(s) of Randers

- Pandora: Opening the box of knowledge
- Cassandra – «I told you so»
- Prometheus: Punished for stealing the fire

# The Essential Randers

# The Essential LEONARD COHEN



*Climate pessimist*

# The Essential JØRGEN RANDERS





# Cohen/Randers

- They sentenced me to twenty years of boredom for trying to change the system from within.  
I'm coming now, I'm coming to reward them.  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.

- They sentenced me to ~~twenty~~ 40 years of boredom for trying to change the system from within.  
I'm coming now, I'm coming to reward them.  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.

*I'm guided by a signal in the heavens.*

*I'm guided by the birthmark on my skin.*

*I'm guided by the beauty of our weapons.*

*First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.*

# Randers/Prometheus at the cliff of Kazbek





