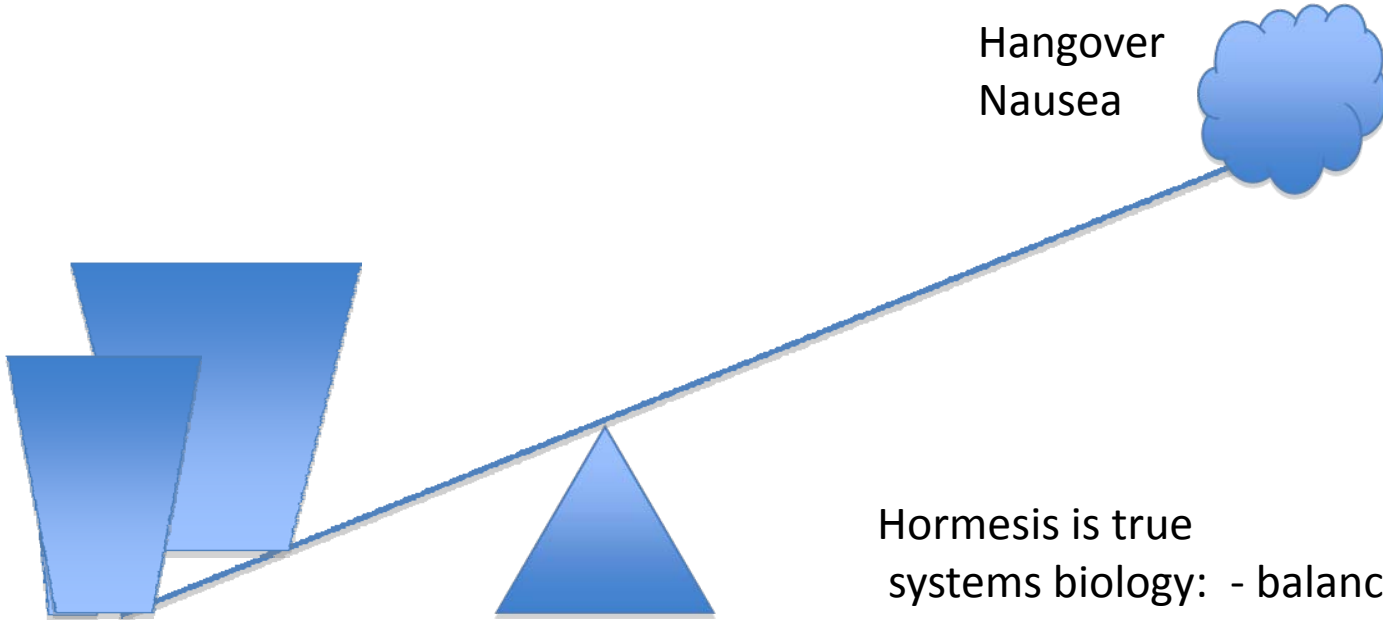


Public Policy and Hormesis

Colin Seymour

McMaster University

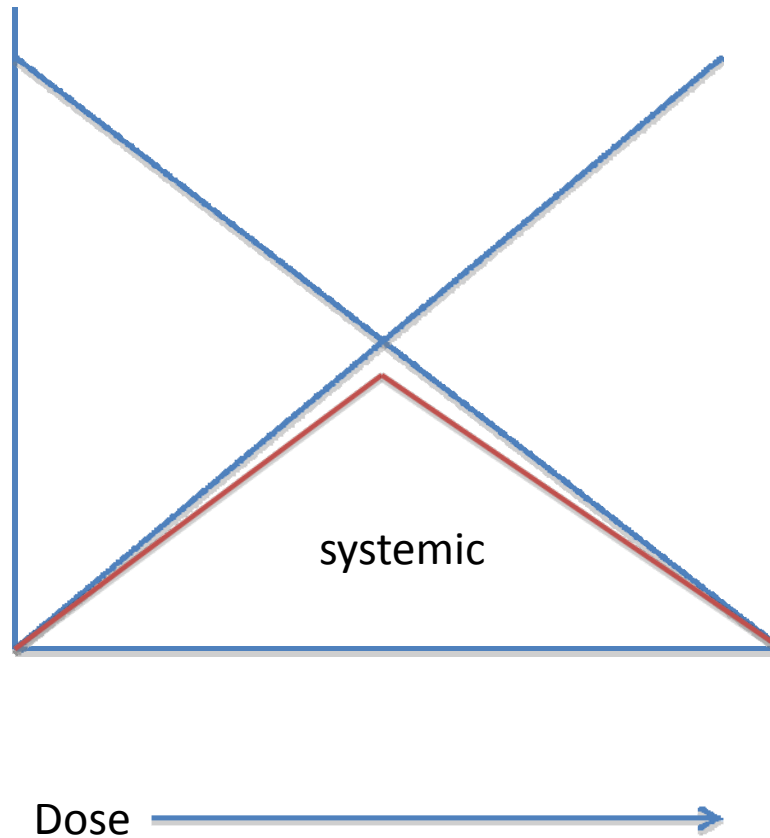
beer



Hangover
Nausea

Hormesis is true
systems biology: - balance of
the system

Substance doesn't change but effects do



If there is a hormetic response, there is more than one mode of action

Public policy

- “Whether it is fox hunting, smoking, adoption agencies or microchips in rubbish bins, we are a society that is increasingly intolerant, repressive, regulated and untrusting and, in consequence, we have officials who are dictatorial, interfering, and untrustworthy”.
- Neil Addison BL
- Director: Thomas More: Legal Center

The Dangers of Intolerance

- When I first wrote the abstract for this talk I was thinking in terms of 9/11 being a defining moment.
- I now think it may not be the causa causans, that the response may be more important, and that the response is symptomatic of the erection of boundaries around the world

The Dangers of Intolerance

- The Burning of Anneken Hendriks
- Amsterdam 1571



The Dangers of Belief

- St Thomas
- Fights the desire to believe

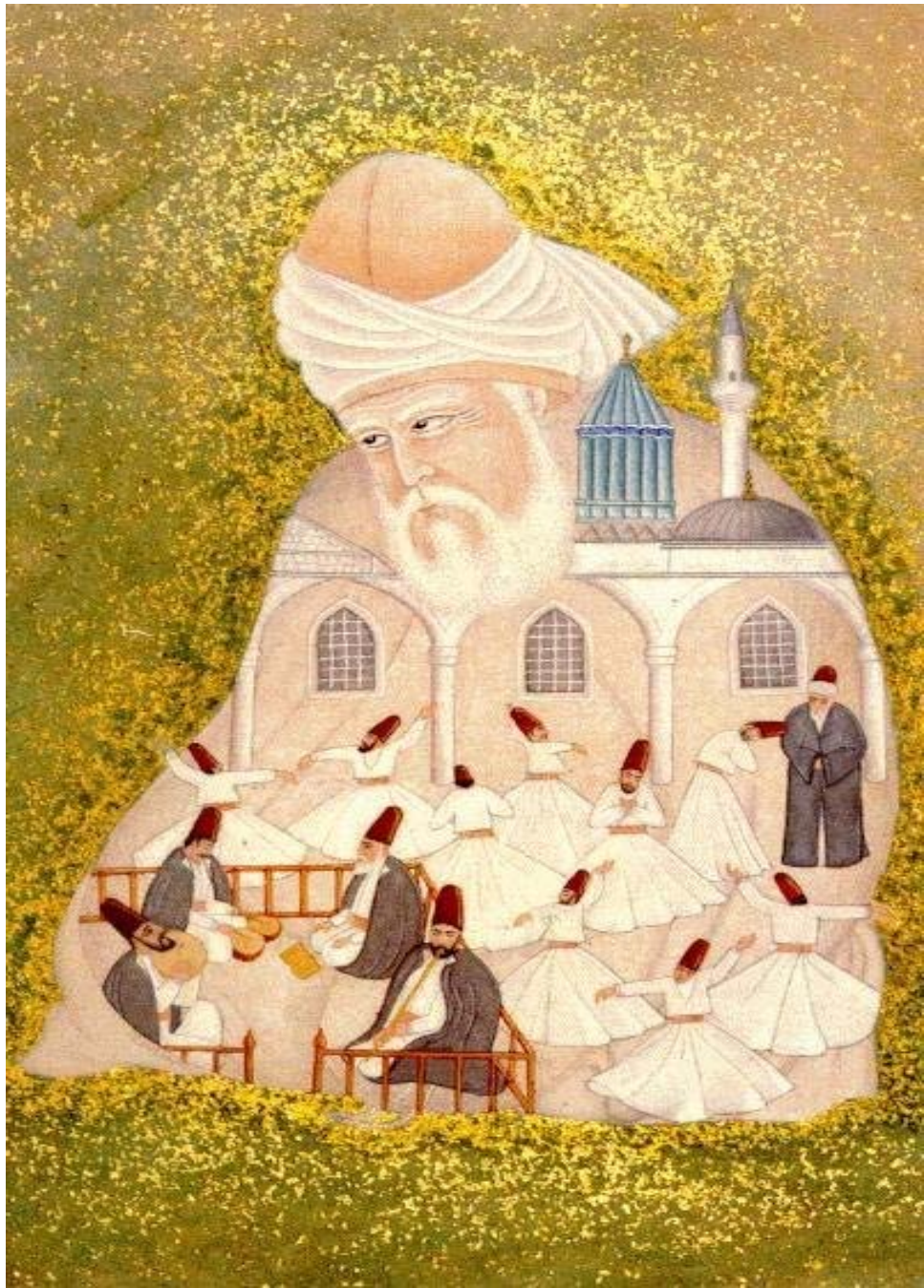


Allegory

- A story, poem or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one

Rumi

- Born 30th September 1207
- Died 17th December 1273
- C13th Poet, Jurist, Theologian, Sufi Mystic
- Born in Persia (now Tajikistan)



Fear of nuclear power is out of all proportion to the actual risks

- Pollution from coal-fired power plants is responsible for more than 100,000 deaths per year, whereas the crisis at Fukushima is unlikely to kill a single person
- Melanie Windridge, Guardian

King James Bible

- And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ?
- Matthew 7:3

I call a lie : wanting not to see something
one does see, wanting not to see
something as one sees it.... The most
common lie is the lie one tells to oneself,
lying to other is relatively the exception.

Friedrich Nietzsche

The Anti Christ

The lure of the ostrich



Insurance

--An ingenious modern game of chance in which the player is permitted to enjoy the comfortable conviction that he is beating the table.

Ambrose Bierce

Government

- Doesn't like a fully informed electorate
- (Look at the ridiculous assertions about Wikileaks)
- The best weapon of a dictatorship is secrecy, but the best weapon of a democracy should be the weapon of openness

Autonomy

- It's my life – I make the decisions :
- Smoking is bad for you
- Drinking is bad for you
- Radiation is bad for you
- Cocaine is bad for you
- Seatbelts are good for you
- Helmets on cycles are good for you

Simplistic Thinking

- Essential to prevent information overload
- “No time to Think”
- Easier to cope with black and white than nuances of grey.

Shifting Boundaries



“A definition is the enclosing of a wilderness of ideas within a wall of words”

Samuel Butler

1835-1902

Apparent paradox

The opposite of a fact is falsehood, but the opposite of one profound truth may very well be another profound truth. [Niels Bohr](#)

Rabindranath Tagore.

I have on my table a violin string.
It is free to move in any direction I like.
If I twist one end, it responds; it is free

But it is not free to sing.

So I take it and fix it into my violin.

I bind it, and when it is bound,
It is free for the first time to sing.

Birth of an idea

