

journalists have previously been at a loss and have been driven to resort to inadequate and misleading metaphors. Charles Petit, writing in the *Knight Science Journalism Tracker* of January 7, 2014, gives a list of such metaphors. Here are some beauts:

A weaker polar vortex moving around the Arctic like a slowing spinning top, eventually falling over and blowing open the door to the Arctic freezer . . .

This big slug of deadly cryosphere air slipped its North Pole moorings, marauded across Canada, and swept through the eastern US . . .

When the winds weaken, the vortex can begin to wobble like a drunk on his fourth martini . . . in this case, nearly the entire polar vortex has tumbled southward . . .

Responsible journalists can do better.

Responsible journalists need to discuss systemic causation. Certainly when discussing global warming and its climate effects, and also when discussing other systemic effects—such as those of fracking, the privatization of education, the decline of unions, and so on.

Responsible journalists also need to discuss a devastating systemic effect on our economics, recently discovered but not brought into public discourse by the press: the systemic effect of the relationship between productive wealth and reinvestment wealth.

The version of systemic causation just discussed is designed to fit global warming phenomena. In addition, there are other forms of systemic causation that we will be discussing, for example, in the study of economics. But for our purposes in this book, the most important form of systemic causation concerns the brain itself. The phenomenon of reflexivity is a form of systemic causation. And the relationship between our politics and the concept of personhood is one of the hardest cases of systemic causation to get across to the public, especially to political pundits, policy makers, strategists, pollsters, and other political professionals.