

1125-AC-3050 **Ben Fusaro*** (fusaro@math.fsu.edu). *Humanistic Conceit, Unintended Consequences and Collapse*. Preliminary report.

This element of conceit is suggested by the Challenger disaster, or reading an article such as “Averting a post-antibiotic apocalypse” (Science News, 10 JUN’16), or the collapse of a 150 year research effort by linguists to explain why human language is so different from (i.e., superior to) the communication systems of the rest of the animal kingdom. This conceit distorts modeling by underestimating the probabilities of dangerous events, overestimating the benefits and minimizing the costs in trade-offs, etc. We are not immune to this. In 2013, the AMS Notices printed several letters in which E.O. Wilson, an outstanding biologist/ecologist, is stigmatized as someone who doesn’t understand mathematics or its uses. He might not be able to solve a PDE, but anyone who understands complex system at his level must be doing some modeling and clear thinking. This issue of conceit is a challenge to practitioners/teachers of modeling. More examples, and some predictions of conceit-driven collapses, will be provided. (Received September 20, 2016)