Communication with Whom, about What, Where and Why?

Reframing the potential of dialogue

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A variety of recent communication issues, seemingly unrelated, brought into focus a whole pattern of communication questions that they evoked. This is therefore an exercise in relating these questions in the light of those instances to highlight the challenges for future dialogue. To what end is another matter -- to which reference is made in conclusion.

Communication issues

E-mail lists: Like many I am on a number of e-mail lists. How I got on to them I do not necessarily recall -- although I am free to unsubscribe. I am happy to scan the subject lines and may occasionally open some. I salute the energy of those who make such information available. I no longer use such lists to inform people of new papers on my site. The papers are too varied in focus to make the assumption that people even need to consider whether they are of possible interest. There are of course web facilities to ensure information on updates to a home page -- where my new papers are systematically listed.

Solicitation for funds: I have also been solicited for funding support for several such lists, as well as for related web initiatives. It is clear that those involved are operating under tight budgetary constraints. The amounts requested are not large. The causes are indeed worthy. But whilst my own funds are limited compared to many, I would rather pay the amount requested not to have to navigate the fund transfer processes -- which never seem to work as advertised.

On the other hand over the past months I have myself solicited for funds to upgrade a visualization software package. I have been reasonably successful by indicating my own contribution of funds to the enterprise -- just as the developer contributed time in excess of funding received.

Solicitation for link exchange: I have also been solicited to engage in link exchange between my website and others. Typically this is from sites with only the remotest relevance in my eyes. I ignore them. My website is complicated enough without including a pattern of links of that kind. Similarly I do not seek such mention on other sites.

Solicitation for social networking linkage: Several such systems (such as LinkedIn), in which friends and colleagues are involved, automatically solicit my participation -- despite my specific protests to the central office (which typically does not receive communications of that kind). Why would I want my network of contacts to be transparent -- possibly without their full approval? Why would I want to observe the pattern of contacts of others? Is this an instance of competitive linking -- even of a form of voyeurism?
there no sensitivity to cultural preferences? The Dutch are renowned for considering closed curtains to be unsociable. Is social networking built on Dutch cultural assumptions?

Where does the assumption come from that such communication is beneficial for all? Is the pattern, as with any small community, that such communication is taken to define normality? Is there no place for those who do not particularly desire such communication -- perhaps a LinkedOut social networking system?

**Solicitation for chatting:** Some of my contacts would prefer to chat or phone. This can be embarrassing when they have little interest in what I might have communicated in other modes. What might be evoked in such exchanges?

**Invitation to visit a website:** Many e-mails suggest the merit of visiting a website, or accessing a document. I do the same. What is it that determines whether one has the time or inclination to explore, to delay doing so, or to avoid doing so -- even when encouraged to do so through a valued recommendation? Who can afford the time to pursue such links systematically? Who is simply put off by the quantity of such possibilities and the daunting prospect of the reading that it may represent? Is there a notion of “a link too far” like the book and film *A Bridge Too Far*? Increasingly the vast array of websites endeavouring to attract interest is coming to resemble (from a systemic perspective) a field of wildflowers competing by every means to attract insects as pollinators. What strategy do I adopt in response to this opportunity? Why would I endeavour to promote access to my own website?

**Participative conferencing lists:** There are some lists on which I am free, like others, to submit comment. Such a facility has now existed for decades. I have experimented with various ways of communicating through them. My sense is that one can contribute one’s best thoughts and find them quickly lost in the process. There are of course various well-known irritants -- of which one may oneself be a source. Recently on one list, many participants found the communications of others to be invasive and asked to be dropped from the list. Others pleaded for a "moderated list" -- raising interesting questions about the nature of any "moderated democracy" -- as it might emerge for the same reasons. There are also interesting questions about whether communications solicited in this way are in fact distributed -- or rather are simply suppressed. And who would know?

**Feedback solicitation:** Many institutionalized authorities, including public broadcasting facilities, explicitly invite feedback and claim to be soliciting it for due consideration. Efforts to engage with such systems quickly reveal that they are subject to unspecified filtration processes. Interesting examples in my own case have been recent efforts to offer suggestions regarding reframing the challenge of the Irish "No" vote -- suppressed for reasons analogous to those criticized by those campaigning against EU inability to "listen". A similar pattern was evident in the case of efforts to communicate with the Mayor of London regarding options in the face of its major housing crisis and the necessity to rezone portions of the "green belt". Despite assurances by such authorities, notably the EU, it would seem that their main objective is to be able to demonstrate instances of feedback (even if prefabricated, as in the case of the BBC phone-in scandals of 2007), but to avoid any systematic intelligent processing of feedback as a means of eliciting unforeseen suggestions.

**Solicitation for contributions to Wiki-style projects:** Beyond invitations to visit a website and feedback solicitation, there are now an increasing number of initiatives seeking to engage people in the process of building up the content of online Wiki-style directories -- typically on constrained budgets. Although such initiatives are admirable, their very number, and the degree of overlap and competition between them, raise questions as to why one would devote energy and time to one rather than the other. More problematic is when any such initiative is promoted by particular institutions as a mean of laying claim to democratic engagement and as a means of framing the content to reflect particular agendas -- and deliberately destabilizing other less biased initiatives.

**Solicitation for participation in events:** There are indeed some challenging themes that merit collective communication. Many of those solicited for such events -- in the light of their experience -- have participated in numerous analogous events over past years (if not decades). It would seem, in the light of a recent instance, that either it is assumed that nothing is to be learnt from past inadequacies or else -- as affirmed in the instance in question -- it is explicitly assumed that the participants have all learnt all that it is needed to enable a more fruitful gathering. Such argument is reinforced by the intention to make use of a facilitator of "considerable experience" and insight into processes to ensure convergence. Faced with any problematic consequences -- as in this instance -- a common pattern is to repeat assertions that fruitful developments cannot be expected from a single event, learning about each other was fruitful, the next event will be better, etc. All concerned tend then to exhibit a degree of commitment to claiming the event had been a success -- especially given the financial and psychic resources they have allocated to their participation.

**Solicited contributions to an event:** My preferred pattern is to articulate a written contribution (as extensively as seems fruitful), with a view to making it accessible later via my website. Hardcopies can be handed out to those who may be interested at the event (or left on a display stand). But any (necessarily brief) verbal contribution is best supported by a slide presentation -- or a movie. This avoids "reading" a paper and leaves everyone free to explore further as they will. Web dissemination ensures that the effort of preparing the contribution is then not wasted. Curiously, and often in contrast to the expressed desires of the organizers, the collective efforts for the event are not disseminated in any coherent form, if at all. How effective is the collective communication, at such events, and of the outcome? Should one expect more? Who might expect more?

**Solicited contributions to a journal:** Journal publishing, whether hardcopy or electronic, is much challenged by web facilities. Many journals are only available in hardcopy. Many electronically abstracted articles are only available under subscription. Is this an effective mode of communication except for those ensconced within those gated conceptual communities? On the other hand, despite willingness on all sides, it is my (recent) experience that a contribution to a peer reviewed journal can mean a 6-9 month publishing cycle -- from when an "unpublished" version is circulated to colleagues via the web. Is this a useful lag time in a rapidly evolving communication world? Finally there is the vexed question of copyright associated with such journals, where typically authors are expected to sign over copyright to the publishers. My pattern is to challenge this in order to ensure a coherent collection of my papers on one site. A renowned author in the social sciences, who recently died, has almost nothing accessible on the web -- all published under copyright. Is that a creative contribution to a developing knowledge society?
Trustworthiness and truth: Past weeks have seen the vigorous claims and counter-claims made from a Georgian and from a Russian perspective -- with the case for each party being vigorously supported through the media by separate public relations consultants based in Brussels. Various "truths" have been advanced and denied in the UN Security Council -- itself tortured by its uncritical acceptance of the untruthful testimony of US Secretary of State Colin Powell on 5th February 2003. Comparisons with Kosovo have been made and questioned as entirely irrelevant and inappropriate. The undeclared agendas of the USA through NATO have been posited and denied. Every perspective is defended by some appropriate authority as reasonable and truthful -- in contrast with the news management said to be characterized by other perspectives. What expectation is there for what used to be considered the merits of truth in a context dominated by half truths?

Triumph of "feel good" governance: In a remarkable comment, Madeleine Bunting (Why we cannot expect any response in government to rational argument, The Guardian, 25 August 2008) argues (citing the case of the UK Tory party "zombie politics"):  

The requirement for a politician was a set of emotional skills communicable on screen that could establish empathy, give reassurance and be likable. Politics for the electorate had become a grazing zone in which to seek individual emotional satisfaction - the need to dislike as much as the need to like. It is the ultimate failure of a distinct public sphere, now submerged in a clamour of private personal need.

She highlights the manner in which the key to communication success is the capacity to express concern, however bereft of concrete policy considerations. This highlights the questionable value at this time of rational articulation as was supposedly considered relevant to effective governance. The argument is conformed by an analysis of the campaign positions of Barack Obama and John McCain, as made by George Lakoff (Don't Think of a Maverick! 2008) who offers valuable insights into the disadvantage in relating to the electorate through focusing on policy "issues" rather than of engendering "frames".

This perspective is confirmed by Sharon Begley (Heard Any Good Stories Lately? Newsweek, 13 September 2008):

What's new is that the circumstances of this election have conspired to push people away from the reason- and knowledge-based system of decision-making and more down the competing emotion-based one. The latter is more ancient and has, throughout the course of human evolution, "assured our survival and brought us to where we are" .... In addition, brain circuitry is such that emotion can override reason much more easily than vice-versa

Indicators, warnings and concerns: Increasingly a multitude of indications are disseminated regarding current and emergent issues. Such is the number it is unclear who is expected to respond, how and with what degree of urgency. It has been termed a "crisis of crises". More problematic still is the manner in which issues may be promoted primarily as a means of attracting support and resources for the agendas of the promoter -- without any credible means of distinguishing between genuine crises and those cultivated in this way. This may be as true of "terrorism" as it is of "global warming" (Promoting a Singular Global Threat -- Terrorism: strategy of choice for world governance, 2002). Typically there is little concern for the manner in which such issues are interrelated, as documented elsewhere (Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential).

Challenge to produce confirmatory data: In contrast to the previous point, the recent period has been witness to every kind of claim regarding climate change, the quality of evidence in support of it and the dubious dynamics amongst those committed to various positions. Arguably it is not any rational evidence that is proving meaningful but rather the sight of flooded towns in developed countries (as opposed to the irrelevance of flooding or drought in other countries). Technical "geoengineering" solutions to climate change are however seriously advanced without any capacity to produce proof that they will not have highly regrettable side effects.

Non-destructive experiments are however rejected because of the lack of capacity to demonstrate their value. I have however just received the announcement of an OECD-sponsored High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Accra, 2008) in further quest for an "aid-free" world (Ramesh Jaura, Towards an 'Aid-Free' World?). This reminds me of the experience of the representative of a development group active (without external aid) in thousands of villages. She made the point that at an analogous event donors were not interested in her experience because she was not a "recipient", and recipients did not want to talk to her because they wanted funds from "donors". At the same time it is authoritatively claimed that "no stone is being left unturned" in the quest for "new thinking". What is to be learnt from such communication experience?

Optimism and positivism (whatever the circumstances): Despite the curious challenges of the times, I have been exposed over the past period to the case made for being "positive" as opposed to being "negative" -- necessarily made without any problematic self-criticism, as might otherwise be considered appropriate (Being Positive Avoiding Negativity: management challenge of positive vs negative, 2005). I am now interestingly challenged by the invitation of a friend to attend his keynote speech to a society devoted to optimism. Clearly, should I even consider attending, it would be appropriate to avoid questioning the argument made -- since questioning itself becomes evidence of inappropriate pessimism and negativity. Is it the case that such contexts are designed, consciously or unconsciously, to avoid any exposure to doubt?

Whilst there is validity to the concern of optimists with "doom-mongering", little is said of the dangers of "hope-mongering" -- notably enhanced by public relations hype. Could it be said that the subprime financial disaster was a consequence of hope-mongering through mis-selling by agents of the financial system -- exploiting the hopes of those seeking homes without adequate resources? Given the embodiment of collective confidence in the banking system, might such a fundamental abuse of confidence symptomatic of abuses of hope in other areas -- perhaps religion in a period in which faith is promoted as vital to governance?

As someone with years of experience promoting and implementing projects, any accusation of "negativity" typically means a perceived failure to agree with the accusing party -- agreement is perceived as being "positive". A final accolade, just received, concerned "a very
stirring analytical piece" by myself regarding an intentional community -- framing me as "the last person on earth who could be accused of easy enthusiasms". Of course on a larger scale any disagreement is readily framed as being problematically "anti" the view so questioned -- with little perspective on the resulting process of non-dialogue (Guidelines for Critical Dialogue between Worldviews, 2006).

**Quest for alternative modes:** Such challenging contexts -- where rational argument, trustworthiness, proof and truth are all increasingly questionable as a threat to feel-good coherence -- raise the question of what other modes of communication might fruitfully be explored? I have experimented with satirical provocation including the use of a prose poetic form (Celebrating the Value of Deadly Problems Worldwide: planetary salvation in an era of inept global governance?, 2008; Nos Morituri Te Salutamus Salute of Iraqi Citizens to the Coalition of the Willing, 2003) as well as extolling the merits of humour and playfulness (Humour and Play-Fullness: essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity, 2005).

I have also long been a promoter of visualization as a means of providing coherent understanding of complexity, especially that sustained by the dynamics of polarization (Computer-aided Visualization of Psycho-social Structures: peace as an evolving balance of conceptual and organizational relationships, 1971). In such a context, some of my own current experiments in visualization (at my own expense) are frustrated by the lack of access to a minimum level of guidance in use of scalable vector graphics to highlight relationships between the fundamental symbols driving faith-based conflict (Dynamic Exploration of Value Configurations: interrelating traditional cultural symbols through animation, 2008). But why bemoan the fact?

In an effort to demonstrate the value of related visualization techniques, I reframed in a movie the programme themes and keynote speakers of a conference of the International Peace Research Association (Leuven, 2008). Ironically, through some administrative confusion, I did not get to participate in the event (despite going to the registration desk) -- but the movie can be downloaded (Polyhedral Conference Representation as a Catalyst for Innovation: polyhedral animation of IPRA 2008).

**Modes and communication preferences:** Implicit in many of the above issues, but seldom explicitly discussed, is the fact that people have different communication preferences and tolerances. There are those who prefer (or tolerate):

- long(er) speeches or video presentations (especially by known authorities, reducing any level of doubt regarding their value)
- long(er) papers, provided they are not read and can be scanned to determine whether any parts are worth reading in more detail (which is my bias)
- long(er) conversations, one-on-one or in groups, which may or may not have any substantive focus but which may indeed contribute to bonding between the parties
- structued and facilitated dialogue according to some approved method, preferably conducted by an experienced facilitator

Other preferences and issues add to these:

- preferences for face-to-face communications whether physically or through video link
- preferences for communications enhanced by music, song or other aesthetic content
- (mono)linguistic preferences
- preferences for electronic communications, with the convenience of delayed and selective response

**Comprehension and insight communication:** Implicit in the above would appear to be issues of how whatever is understood as "insight" and "knowledge" gets communicated and how such communication and "insight" is distinct from how bonds get formed between the engaged in this process. These issues can be reduced to questions of how succinctly insight can be expressed. Here again there are preferences:

- for a linear text, however structured and illustrated, the develops an argument. The issue here is the length of the text, whether it is seen as "too long", in preference to its basic point being made in an abstract or even a sentence -- explaining the title.
- for a mind map or some equivalent. Here the issue is how complex it is considered acceptable for the map to be
- for sonification, namely conversion to sound patterns, if the argument lends itself to this transformation (Convertor from Text to Poetry, Song or Music Computer-assisted aesthetic enhancement of treaties, declarations and agreements, 2007)
- a single quote or pithy thought, perhaps a generative metaphor

In the absence of adequate mapping or sonification, My bias is text of any length -- provided I can skip from sub-heading to sub-heading (as given in this document). I also favour providing links to other resources on my own site, or others, as a means of assisting those intrigued by the argument at that point. Others are frustrated by these approaches, especially if they feel some obligation to read all the text sequentially (and, heaven forbid, follow all links) -- if they read it at all.

A major point made in the communication process -- and the search for the succinct -- is "lack of time".

However, as the following debate indicates, highlighted by the Financial Times, the length is but one of the arguments put forward for the ineffective communicability of any text.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Clive Cookson and Andrew Jack, Science Stifled?: why peer review is under pressure, Financial Times, 12 June 2008</th>
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<tr>
<td>Drummond Rennie, Journal of the American Medical Association, 1986; November, 256(27), pp. 2391-92 (cited by Cookson and Jack)</td>
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<tr>
<td>There seems to be no study too fragmented, no hypothesis too trivial, no literature too biased or too egotistical, no design too warped, no methodology too bungled, no presentation of results too inaccurate, too obscure, and too contradictory, no analysis</td>
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of incommensurability, the various contributions are to be found. This suggests that the challenge little has been achieved over many years in fruitfully fragmented condition of global knowledge and communication, Integrative insight

Reframing the challenge of communication

Taking advantage of the development of content management systems (such as Drupal), a further approach is to segment a greater range of texts into separately accessible linked documents within Drupal (Transforming Static Websites into Mobile "Wizdomes": enabling change through intertwining dynamic and configurative metaphors, 2007).

Persuasion and exhortation: There is a curious assumption that communication is intimately associated with a commitment to persuading an other of a new insight -- indeed of convincing them of the superior merits of that insight, however presumptuous that sense of superiority may be considered to be. This is the very essence of marketing communications, especially in a competitive environment. The fact that this issue applies to this document itself provides a basis for the following argument.

Many communications have a sense of exhortation, whether to believe in something (possibly through conversion to a cause), to support a cause through signing a petition or demonstrating appropriately ("standing up to be counted"), or to change behaviour in some way (as with respect to environmental challenges).

Listening: Many communications require no response other than the willingness to listen to the person who is communicating. It is engagement in the process of listening that is required -- and may be demanding of attention in "quality time" -- as a special form of acknowledgement of the identity of the other.

Protection of identity: The invasive nature of electronic communication, and the enthusiasm of those who endeavour to engage in unsolicited communication, results in constant exposure to the threat of use of one's mail address by others for purposes of spamming. For many with relatively common names (e.g. John Smith) there is a major issue of how to distinguish oneself electronically from others of that name. Acquisition of a new e-mail address may make it easy for anyone to seemingly appropriate one's name and/or address through some slight modification. In this sense many communications of dubious content or intent may apparently be initiated in one's name without one's knowledge.

Communication with the past: In addition to communicating with my own past, through an effort to bring order to an array of papers from which some larger meaning is presumably to be derived, I have recently discovered an extensive account of my father's past that had never been published -- now adapted for the web. My father spent many years of his professional life in the Western Desert as part of the air force presence prior to and during WWII -- extensively recognized on the web without my knowledge.

Both cases raise issues of how to represent the past, however direct one's association with it. A phenomenon that will rapidly achieve increasing prominence in an electronic environment is how those with published texts will ensure their preservation. What happens to a personal website once the person dies or becomes incompetent? Who might be motivated to maintain them, given the limited mandate and motivation of institutional environments constantly threatened by budget cuts? Will such as Google or Amazon develop an "electronic cemetery" where such commemoration will be facilitated? Will they offer "electronic embalming" services, in anticipation of the possibility of mind uploading into a Second Life? Will the distant future excavate Silicon Valley and its electronic burial sites (such as the Wayback Machine) as a Valley of the Kings of the 21st century? How does one engage with macrohistory in the present (Engaging Macrohistory through the Present Moment, 2004)

Communication with other entities: It is easily forgotten our readily people engage in communication processes with a whole spectrum of other entities. This is most evident in communication with pets and domesticated animals. This may extend to forms of communication with animals in the wild. Some talk to plants in their gardens or to trees. This corresponds to a traditional relationship with totemic species. Communication may be extended to disembodied entities whether through processes framed as prayer or channelling. Some may feel a sense of communication with nature as a whole ("Human Intercourse" "Intercourse with Nature" and "Intercourse with the Other", 2007). The possibility of communicating with extraterrestrials also offers a powerful metaphor of the challenge of communicating with "aliens" in human society (Communicating with Aliens: the Psychological Dimension of Dialogue, 2000).

Of course, encountering someone walking alone in apparent conversation, those poorly informed of the wonders of modern technology would be unable to determine whether they were communicating with spirits, talking to themselves, or employing a portable phone.

Integrative insight: Most intriguing is the variety of theoretical models claimed as key to integrative insight in response to the otherwise fragmented condition of global knowledge and communication, as described elsewhere (Integrative Knowledge and Transdisciplinarity Project Overview). Despite the potentially vital importance of such interrelationship to coherent policy-making, it is however striking how little has been achieved over many years in fruitfully interrelating these perspectives. Much so-called interdisciplinarity is now usefully to be caricatured by the German term Buchbindersynthese -- in which the main integrating factor is the binding of the publication in which the various contributions are to be found. This suggests that the challenge needs be framed in an entirely different way to take account of incommensurability (Using Disagreements for Superordinate Frame Configuration, 1992).
Robert Rosen (*Limitations of scientific knowledge*, 1996) points out that science arbitrarily restricts itself to the mathematics of convergent series, whereas emergence and life in general appear to display divergent processes, that scientific convention disallows being studied. The challenge is well illustrated by the credulity of correspondences between disparate domains (*Theories of Correspondences - and potential equivalences between them in thinking*, 2007).

**Reality of "apartness" and mutual indifference:** Typically the above-mentioned integrative insights are offered and promoted by alpha males who, for that reason, are quite averse to any significant dialogue with each other that might question the integrity and the superiority of their particular system. Characteristically they refuse to be present on the same panel, even if they attend the same meeting. This dynamic, and its highly problematic consequences, is necessarily rarely discussed and never studied (*Epistemological Challenge of Cognitive Body Odour: exploring the underside of dialogue*, 2006; *Varieties of the "unsaid" in sustaining psycho-social community*, 2003).

A related factor is the extent to which those interested in one theme or approach may well be indifferent to many others -- which they see as irrelevant or even nonsensical. This may be the case with regard to academic disciplines, political priorities or cultural preferences.

Any integrative perspectives in an emerging global knowledge society are therefore increasingly associated with what are effectively "gated communities" (*Dynamically Gated Conceptual Communities: emergent patterns of isolation within knowledge society*, 2004; *Sustaining the Coherence of Dialogue through Apartness: patterns of systematic configuration of entities through hypertext*, 1997). These may soon take the form of closed virtual worlds -- cognitive members-only analogues to *Second Life*.

In the absence of doubt, what capacity is there for dialogue? In the absence of dialogue, what capacity is there for learning and development? Is it then up to the ordinary individual to use more modest means to interrelate the threads and shards of fragmented knowledge upheld by specialists?

More intriguing, given the exponential increase in the quantity of information, and the very different knowledge bases from which people develop the integrative perspectives they find adequate and appropriate, is the sense in which "communication" comes to be better characterized by that between distinct species. The need and nature of their relationship then becomes questionable and open to the creativity of each. This gives validity, for some, to the cognitive embodiment of the disparate features of the knowledge universe -- creative exercises in enactivating and "re-membering" the "pattern that connects" (*Walking Elven Pathways: enactivating the pattern that connects*, 2006; *Being the Universe: a Metaphoric Frontier*, 1999; *Conditions of Objective, Subjective and Embodied Cognition: nomemonic systems for mnemonic coding of complexity*, 2007).

**Case for "everyday wisdom" through philosophy?:** An argument by Julian Baggini (*Everyday Wisdom*, *The Guardian*, 2 September 2008) explores whether a new series of practical philosophy books on serious intellectual theory can provide the key to happiness, personal fulfilment and the art of living for everyone. The question is whether philosophy should rediscover its historic mission to help people to live better and more contented lives. Curiously this echoes the emphases (above) on "feel good" politics, the question of trustworthiness, and the degree of "truth" considered appropriate. Given the eternal strife between philosophical systems as explored by Nicholas Rescher (*The Strife of Systems: an essay on the grounds and implications of philosophical diversity*, 1985 ), it may be wondered how any integrative perspective is to emerge (a challenge noted above) -- if such is in any way a requirement other than for conceptually gated communities.

**Alienation:** A chance exposure on BBC World to a recent presentation by David Wright-Neville (Global Terrorism Research Centre, at Monash University, Australia) of a model of the emergence of terrorism as a consequence of alienation, makes a startling point about communication (*Social and Cultural Violence in the Twenty First Century: Globalisation's New Challenge*, 2008). His argument necessarily focuses on the experienced difficulty of communication increasing a sense of isolation to the point where those so isolated tend to associate preferentially amongst themselves -- framing their reality in an "us and them" scenario, as in "gated communities". It is a natural step for "us" to recognize the manner in which "them" constitute a threat -- and therefore to justify violence in self-defence.

The "us and them" logic was however precisely that used to justify the Coalition of the Willing in its "war on terrorism". The challenge of Wright-Neville's model is that the challenges to communication of many specialized interests -- the extent to which they are "not heard" by larger society (especially in any democracy) -- gives them a sense of alienation also. In fact it could be argued that any interest group, whether faith-based or not, is drawn down this path. Some may indeed then feel that sanctions against non-believers or apostates are appropriate, as is notably the case with some sects.

The distinction might be made between physical violence and other forms of violence -- considered "less harmful". However, as argued by Johan Galtung:

> Personal violence is for the amateur in dominance, structural violence is the tool of the professional. The amateur who wants to dominate uses guns, the professional uses social structure... (*Some basic assumptions of peace thinking*, Oslo, International Peace Research Institute, 1969.)

Galtung has gone on to articulate the concept of **cultural violence**. Wright-Neville uses both terms. The question is then what forms of alienation, and what forms of response to it, should be seen as associated with "terrorism" (*Varieties of Terrorism -- extended to the experience of the terrorized*, 2004). Given the conflation of dissension, extremism and terrorism, how extremist can one be without now being subject to anti-terrorist sanctions? How then should any form of "extremism" be framed as problematic in a rapidly evolving knowledge society (*Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism: "rooting for" normalization vs. "rooting out" extremism*, 2005). Others point to "spiritual violence" as potentially of even subtler form -- in a class similar to "spiritual pollution".

The argument that physical violence is less harmful leads to a potentially dangerous misunderstanding. In some cultures saving one's identity may be far more important than saving one's own skin. This is why concern with "respect" is of primordial importance in gang
cultures. Arguably the "incomprehensible" willingness of insurgents to sacrifice their own lives -- irrespective of any harm to others -- could be more fruitfully understood in this light.

**Remedial capacity indicators**: In contrast to the conventional indicators regarding crises, as mentioned above, there is a case for focusing on "remedial capacity" indicators. These would complement the emphasis on warnings and clarify the capacity, if any, to act usefully and constructively in response to such warnings, as discussed elsewhere (Remedial Capacity Indicators Versus Performance Indicators, 1981).

Of related interest is the manner in which remedial strategies are constrained by proprietary products or metaphors (Future Coping Strategies: beyond the constraints of proprietary metaphors, 1992).

**Censorship, spin and paranoia**: The politicization of the internet, the manner in which it is used and abused, the "remedial" measures legally required of service providers, the incidence of electronic surveillance, together with the filtering packages necessary to exclude unwanted communications or content, repeatedly raise issues about what communications get through under what conditions -- and why. Under the circumstances there is clearly no clarity on these challenges or the degree of concern that is appropriate. These give rise to increasing warnings about the consequent breakdown of the internet as an open communication context, notably through deliberate filtration by search engines and service providers -- under various pressures. The situation and the uncertainty will in all probability become more problematic, possibly with efforts to "groom" populations in a manner analogous to intensive farming and echoing inculcation of dogma in the past.

To the extent that very large proportions of information considered significant are in fact "classified" (or "shredded"), for that reason, or held as "commercial secrets", it is understandable that it is quite problematic to envisage a communication process through which objective consideration can be given to its implications in a democratic society. As with the universal prevalence of "dark matter" and "dark energy" hypothesized by astrophysicists, it is therefore appropriate to explore strategies based on what is "hidden" -- the "unsaid" (Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid" From myth-making towards a "wisdom society", 2003) and the fruitfulness of "endarkenment" (Enlightening Endarkenment: selected web resources on the challenge to comprehension, 2005).

In this sense it is appropriate to ask what role is played by effective censorship of studies relating to the world problematic. A case in point is that pioneered by the Club of Rome in 1972. As shown by Graham Turner (A Comparison of the Lomits to Growth with Thirty Years of Reality, CSIRO 2007), the original study provoked many criticisms which falsely stated its conclusions in order to discredit it. Despite the repeated substantiation of its conclusions, including warnings of overshoot and collapse, recommendations of fundamental changes of policy and behaviour for sustainability have not been taken up.

**Motivation**: In considering how the challenge of communication might be reframed, there is clearly an interplay between a range of "dimensions". These include: learning and cultivating interests (potentially requiring web access), promoting interests and achieving impact (recognizing the diversity of preoccupations and promoters of them), promoting learning (recognizing the presumption associated with this process), seeking financial resources (in support of favoured agendas), competing with other uses of resources (recognizing that either party may be misguided), eliciting appreciation (whether as reinforcement or resource in a competitive environment), cultivating contacts (recognizing the increasingly competitive nature of this process), celebrating one's own past engagement (and the associated illusions), assisting others faced with comparable challenges (notably through potentially illusory process of communicating with the future).

The validity of such dimensions is in each case "questionable". Despite their complementarity, they might also be seen through a communication analogue to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This might provide a context for the implications of entelechy (Entelechy: actuality vs future potential, 2001).

Of particular significance is whether such dimensions can be "curled up" in an experiential analogue to that envisaged as fundamental to the structure of the physical universe -- and how such considerations might then reframe the quality of communication (Musings on Information of Higher Quality, 1996; Enhancing the Quality of Knowing through Integration of East-West metaphors, 2000). A notion of "curled up" might also be related to the implications of cognitive embodiment (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Philosophy In The Flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to western thought, 1999) -- especially in the light of potential implications for species maturity (Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criterion of species maturity?, 2008). Curiously the process of "curling up", folding up a mind map, then bears morphological similarities to that of the closing of petals -- as in the traditionally symbolic lotus flower.

Also of potential significance would then be whether communication of "higher quality" could be understood as strongly multivalent as suggested by Magoroh Maruyama (Polycocular Vision or Subunderstanding? Organization Studies, 25, 2004, pp. 467-480). Communication constrained by a plurality of "valences" suggests, through that metaphor, a way of reframing communication through a form of periodic table (Tuning a Periodic Table of Religions, Epistemologies and Spirituality -- including the sciences and other belief systems, 2007).

Possibilities have been elegantly articulated by Gregory Bateson (Steps to an Ecology of Mind: collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology, 1972; Angels Fear: towards an epistemology of the sacred, 1988):

> We social scientists would do well to hold back our eagerness to control that which we so imperfectly understand. The fact of our imperfect understanding should not be allowed to feed our anxiety and so increase the need to control. Rather our studies could be inspired by a more ancient, but today less honoured, motive: a curiosity about the world of which we are a part. The rewards of such work are not power but beauty.
Seemingly missing from this emphasis, given the tragic suffering of many, is the nature of what might be understood as the "terrible beauty" of the drama of life -- calling for a much more challenging mode of understanding (Celebrating the Value of Deadly Problems Worldwide: planetary salvation in an era of inept global governance? 2008; Thinking in Terror: refocusing the interreligious challenge from "Thinking after Terror", 2005).

Attention span: The challenge of information overload and information underuse is increasingly recognized -- notably as a past programme of the United Nations University. At its simplest few have the time, or the priorities, permitting them to explore information that others might consider of relevance. This is notably the case with those in positions of authority to whom larger amounts of information are addressed. Even when a minimum of time can be accorded to non-immediate priorities, it is necessarily not sufficient to comprehend the intention or significance attached to it by its formulator. In practice this means that people rely on information channelled to them by others with whom they already share a perspective, thereby excluding information that might challenge that perspective.

Science, specifically in the mathematics of group theory, now accepts the validity of proofs of theorems that requires hundreds of pages to articulate, even thousands (Mark Ronan, Symmetry and the Monster: one of the greatest quests of mathematics, 2006). This suggests a challenge to collective attention span with respect to the complexity of the psychosocial challenges with which communication in a knowledge society is faced (Potential Psychosocial Significance of Monstrous Moonshine: an exceptional form of symmetry as a Rosetta stone for cognitive frameworks, 2007). The challenge is exemplified by the financial crash at the time of writing, as noted by Nils Pratley, The day the ticking time bombs went off, The Guardian, 16 September 2008): If this is the death of Wall Street as we know it, the tombstone will read: killed by complexity. Are there global issues and insights that require "thousands of pages" to articulate?

There is therefore a strong case, already widely recognized, for packaging insight in new and more compact ways -- preserving its complexity -- so that it "travels better" through communication space. This is evident in the efficiency with which jokes, images, video clips and songs already travel the internet. The implications for governance have yet to be fully explored (A Singable Earth Charter, EU Constitution or Global Ethic? 2006; Aesthetics of Governance in the Year 2490, 1990).

Of vital importance in such circumstances would seem to be the discovery of mnemonic aids to mitigate against the erosion of collective memory (In Quest of Mnemonic Catalysts -- for comprehension of complex psychosocial dynamics, 2007; Societal Learning and the Erosion of Collective Memory, 1980). To the extent that this is held to be the function of a "keynote speech", it is appropriate to note how challenged people are to hear the "music" which the many such speeches are supposedly designed to elicit.

Insight capture: There is clearly a real challenge to the enhancement of the process of insight capture, whether for an individual, for a group, or for society as a whole. This is most evident in the obsolete processes of a meeting whose inefficiencies are disguised by use of flip charts (white boards) and various forms of recording -- which merely displace the challenge of cognitive engagement with a volume of content that typically exceeds the normal attention span, notably when in other contexts. Especially challenging is the manner in which communications (like this one) can take the form of "mind dumps" from which the essential insight is difficult to extract. The future may see their electronic records as analogous to the village middens assiduously explored by archaeologists -- offering the challenge of "mining" them as argued by Susantha Goonatilake (Toward a Global Science: mining civilizational knowledge, 1999) or through some alternative to comprehensively invasive electronic surveillance (From ECHELON to NOLEHCE: enabling a strategic conversion to a faith-based global brain, 2007).

Alternatively these traces might more fruitfully be metaphorically upgraded to "compost heaps" or even to the "fewmets" of the Questing Beast of collective intelligence. Especially challenging is the difficulty of dissociating such productivity from the "publish or perish syndrome" I communicate (more), therefore I am (more). Potentially more worrying is the sense in which information is becoming dissociated from significance -- whatever that may mean in relation to knowledge or wisdom.

It is in this respect that open processes like Wikipedia have many lessons (despite their deficiencies). However, although a widely acknowledged "proof of concept", that case succeeds because of its effort to deal with factual information. Efforts to elaborate analogous processes to handle possibilities, notably remedial possibilities (analogous to the original Bulletin of Peace Proposals), are rare. They have not been explored and promoted by the kinds of international institutions that claim to be in desperate search for "new thinking" and remedies to intractable problems (Towards a Web Framework for Synthesis in Dialogue:- insight capture from the flow of conference interventions, 1996). Systems documenting "best practice" might be considered an exception, but these focus on what has been implemented and not on what might be implemented -- or whose feasibility merits the kind of discussion which the Wikipedia process allows and encourages for factual entries.

Importance vs Exportance: The above issues of motivation, attention span and insight capture relate closely to the significance of "importance" usefully understood as the process of importing significance through communication processes. It is however curious how society has associated the term "importance", even "import", with what is termed "importation" in economics. But, although equivalent importance is attached by economics to the complementary export process, and to the dynamics of import-export, no equivalent significance is seemingly attached to anything that might be understood as "exportance".

Recognition of importance, and of being important, is fundamental to the dynamics of society. It implies a form of absorption of significance and a re-cognition on the part of others through which one is transformed into "somebody". It might however be argued that a form of "trade balance" is typically ensured in the communication process by exporting what is then recognized as arrogance -- somewhat analogous to "dumping" of inferior products in trade terms -- onto others thereby judged to be "nobodies". This is then the typical outcome of processing of incoming significance. Missing is the nature of a higher quality export -- perhaps through which others are creatively re-cognized -- as is traditionally highly valued in some who may be distinguished as "humble" and especially sensitive to recognizing the importance of others, possibly through recognizing themselves in those others.

The dynamics of importing and exporting significance have been discussed elsewhere in relation to the central role of nothingness and...
emptiness and the significance attached to "happening" and "mattering" (Import of Nothingness and Emptiness through Happening and Mattering, 2008). As is effectively recognized, the focus on "happening" in communication terms might be compared to the instant gratification sought in fast food as a source of nutrition -- in contrast to the appreciation accorded to slow food.

Implantation and Outformation: It is readily assumed that explanation and information will continue to be framed in the conventional manner developed during the course of the 20th century. There are however spatial metaphors implicit in that understanding, whether the shift is "out of the plane" implicit in "ex-planation", or the importing of "in-formation" through which concepts are formed (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, 1980).

There is a case for considering alternative metaphors in each case. To what extent might cognition and communication be a question of getting "into the plane" of reality -- as suggested by a contrasting neologism like "im-planation"? This dynamic might be said to be sensed in common phrases like "getting into it" or "getting one's head into it". Similarly there is a sense in which creativity involves the forming of external reality as implied by "out-formation". Indeed the implication that education is a process of "in-forming" people, forming their cognitive frameworks, can usefully be understood as complemented by a process through which learning also involves acquiring the capacity to (re)form the sensed reality -- creatively detecting a pattern that connects what is sensed -- namely a process of "out-formation".

From echoes of communication to ecologies of communication: The above context might be characterized by overexposure to communication bombardment, complicity in that process, anxieties about what is successful communication, and ignorance of other matters (the "unsaid") that might be considered vital. The "dark matter" and "dark energy" mentioned above might indeed be considered as analogous to the unfathomable challenge of "hearts and minds" which scientifically inspired invisiveness has been unable to dominate.

Rather than regretting and bemoaning the ignorance cultivated in the "unconscious" society identified by John Ralston Saul (The Unconscious Civilization, 1995), there is perhaps a case for transformatively reframing such central "unknowing" as recognized in apophatic discourse, whether or not the focus is theological (Being What You Want: problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?, 2008). As Gregory Bateson (Naven, 1936) concluded from studying religious ritual, whose significance had no conscious explanation and where competing behaviour patterns could push people to extremes (as with the arms race and sadomasochism), corrective influences would very probably be doing their work unacknowledged. In fact, he hypothesized, it might be important that people remained unaware of what was happening. This might be vital to the collective functioning of what he described as an ecology of mind (Steps to an Ecology of Mind, 1972).

Analogous to the astrophysical case, the role of a central "nothingness" in psychosocial systems merits further consideration as discussed elsewhere (Import of Nothingness and Emptiness through Happening and Mattering, 2008). This is consistent with the classical insight of Lao Tzu (Tao Te Ching): "Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub. It is the centre hole that makes it useful...Therefore profit comes from what is there; usefulness from what is not there". Within the ecology so enabled, such an undefined centre is presumably intimately related to what has been termed within the latter tradition the "circulation of the light" (The Secret of the Golden Flower).

Being right: Much of the communication process is a means of confirming that one is "right" -- or more right than others and as right as those whom one respects. This typically implies that those with whom one disagrees are necessarily wrong and would be well advised to agree in order also to be right. This binary situation has been extensively explored by Edward de Bono (I Am Right, You Are Wrong: New Renaissance: From Rock Logic to Water Logic, 1990) with a view to a more fruitful mode of communication. Intimately related to this process is the need to convince others who are wrong that they should change their convictions. Converting people in this way may even be considered an obligation for those associated with some belief systems or disciplines.

Especially interesting is how one positions oneself and others with respect to whatever matter on which one is held to be wrong. A fruitful metaphor is provided by any assertion on one part of the globe that "it is day" whilst in direct communication with someone, on the "opposite side" of the globe, who asserts that "no, it is night". What is the topology of the surface in communication space on which people so variously agree and disagree -- each having a sense of being right and insulted by the implication (contrary to their senses) that they are held to be wrong by others (presumably completely misguided)?

Critical thinking: The case for critical thinking in response to spurious argument has been repeatedly made (Web resources: Critical thinking vs. Specious arguments, 2001). This is a necessary corrective to such phenomena as "sino thinking", groupthink and premature conceptual closure (William Greenway, Chalcedonian reason and the demon of closure, 2004) -- as reinforced by the narrow focus on hype and positive thinking noted above.

Nature of communication space

The disparate concerns above raise the question of the nature of the cognitive "space" in which they emerge. Is it possible that the future will understand this space in ways that are currently totally unforeseen -- as might be said of present understanding of global communication in comparison with that of centuries past?

What might be the dimensions, characteristics or cognitive "feel" of such a space? More specifically, what are the pointers with which I can work towards some such understanding?

- **questions:** There is something fundamental to the nature and experience of questioning. This merits more attention to the set of WH-questions (who, where, why, what, when, how, which). How (etc.) do they function as gatekeepers and midwives to future potential? Why (etc.) are they so fundamental to communication with others? What (etc.) is so important about answers? (Am I Question or Answer? 2006; Engaging with Questions of Higher Order: cognitive vigilance required for higher degrees of twistedness, 2004)
• identity: What is so special about a sense of identity, of cultivating it, of affirming it in communication? Identity with respect to whom?

• others: What is this sense of "other" with whom one engages, notably in communication? Why (etc.) is it so distinct and problematic? ("Human Intercourse": "Intercourse with Nature" and "Intercourse with the Other", 2007).

• disagreement: What is the curious need for agreement -- and the corresponding aggressivity (or despair) to those with whom one disagrees, or from those who claim to disagree? How best to focus one's disagreement with those who appear to inhibiting the emergence of more appropriate understanding -- as one understands it? Could disagreement be used more meaningfully? (Using Disagreements for Superordinate Frame Configuration, 1992)

• persuasion: Why the need to persuade and convince others of an understanding that seems currently of significance? Why the assumption that they need to benefit from such insight in comparison with that with which they are seemingly satisfied?

• cognitive catastrophes: What is the strange discontinuity and hubris associated with misunderstanding of any form, but notably polarization and radical opposition? (Conformality of 7 WH-questions to 7 Elementary Catastrophes: an exploration of potential psychosocial implications, 2006)

• closure and convergence: Why the continuing expectation of cognitive closure, reconciliation and resolution of differences -- typically presented as "win-win" solutions? What forms of coherence might be expected in communication from embracing divergence rather than convergence? (Sustaining the Coherence of Dialogue through Apartness: patterns of systematic configuration of entities through hypertext, 1997; Coherent Policy-making Beyond the Information Barrier, 1999)

• dynamics: If the challenges to communication are not readily resolved through some static model, how is one to encompass the complexities of a process approach to a dynamic situation? (Psychology of Sustainability: embodying cyclic environmental processes, 2002)

• developmental direction: What is the sense of the direction towards which one's learning is developing -- from which a greater sense of one's own identity emerges? Where is it pointing and why? How is this to be reconciled with any cyclic sense of returning to (re)discover the significance of where one is now? To what extent is one "chasing after one's own tail"? (Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psycheically" defined, 2007)

• configuration: Rather than a single linear direction of development and learning, to what extent is it a question of a multiplicity of interlocking cycles of learning? But how are they to be understood as configured, weaving together, or forming a connecting pattern -- beyond any "matrix"? (Spherical Configuration of Interlocking Roundtables: internet enhancement of global self-organization through patterns of dialogue, 1998; Council of the Whys: emergent wisdom through configuration of why-question dynamics, 2006; Beyond the Matrix: becoming other wise, 2007)

• endless explication: What is this need to endlessly articulate understandings of how things (unfortunately) are and of how they (beneficially) ought to be? Is a sense of configuration a fruitful constraint that can channel such explication and shift attention to a more fruitful level of focus?

• self-reflexivity and mirroring: To what extent is communication with others a surrogate for unrecognized discourse with oneself -- a mirroring of processes within one's understanding over which one cannot yet recognize ownership and responsibility? As with a failure to recycle the products one uses, is this a failure to "recycle" knowledge and information one uses in some way - - thereby effectively "dumping" it into the environment and onto 'others'? (My Reflecting Mirror World: making my World Summit on Sustainable Development worthwhile, 2002; Consciously Self-reflexive Global Initiatives Renaissance zones, complex adaptive systems, and third order organizations, 2007; Being the Universe: a Metaphoric Frontier: co-existent immanence of evolutionary phases, 1999)

• aesthetics and engagement: In contrast with linear explication, how does aesthetics "re-member" a vital connecting configuration enabling meaningful psychoactive engagement -- bridging between oneself and others? But why does aesthetic communication then offer a corresponding set of traps for the unwary? (Aesthetic Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue as Exemplified by Meditation, 1997)

• strange attractor: Notably through a subtle elegance, perhaps echoing intimations of lost archetypal knowledge, what is the sense of transcendent harmony that is the "strange attractor" for faith, hope and belief, whether scientific or otherwise? What is the "strange repulsor" from whom one is so anxious to distance oneself? (Human Values as Strange Attractors Coevolution of classes of governance principles, 1993)

• time: How unfruitfully biased is the conventional understanding of time in terms of which so much of life is organized? Are there other ways of understanding time as a context for more meaningful communication? How meaningful and illusory is any communication with the future? (Future Generation through Global Conversation: in quest of collective well-being through conversation in the present moment, 1997; Presenting the Future, 2001; Engaging Macrohistory through the Present Moment, 2004; Minding the Future: a thought experiment on presenting new information, 1980).
• **wisdom keepers:** Who are the wisdom keepers and where are they? Why are those who claim to be so seemingly less wise in practice (especially in their communications with each other) then one would expect them to be? How are they related to the silo thinkers in the mighty towers of their respective disciplines? ([Evaluating Synthesis Initiatives and their Sustaining Dialogues, 2000; The Idiom of the Wisdom Society: embodying time as the heartland of humanity, 2003; Being Other Wise: clues to the dynamics of a meaningfully sustainable lifestyle, 1998])

• **ignorance:** What is it that I am so critically ignorant or unaware of, perhaps despite repeated exposure to relevant insight? Does this condemn me to a "slough of despond" -- of those who have not yet "got it" in the eyes of the truly wise? How meaningful is the degree to which others perceive me as knowing "more" in a manner similar to my own perception of others knowing "more"? But what is it that those who do know "more" are unaware of -- that seemingly undermines their ability to communicate more effectively, notably with each other?

• **higher quality of knowing:** How is one to appreciate, from one's limited condition, any "higher" quality of knowing to which one might aspire? Or is it precisely in the extent to which it is as much "lower" as "higher" that the secret of future communication lies? (Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criterion of species maturity? 2008; (Authentic Grokking: emergence of Homo conjugens, 2003; Enhancing the Quality of Knowing through Integration of East-West metaphors, 2000; Musing on Information of a Higher Quality, 1996)

### Clues for future understanding of communication space

Explorations by others, indicative (for me) of how this understanding may be engendered and supported, include:

• **Integrative initiatives:** Whilst there are a number of highly insightful integrative initiatives, they are typically weak in their appreciation of each other or of the implication of their contrasting appeals to different constituencies. A striking exception is the work of Jennifer Gidley ([The Evolution of Consciousness as a Planetary Imperative: an integration of integral views. Integral Review, 5, 2007]) who points to, and compares, a range of authors that highlight the need for "new thinking" and the inadequacy of old methodologies. She highlights the need for the form of postformal discourse.

• **Cognitive geometry:** The potential of unforeseen cognitive configurations has been fruitfully articulated by R. Buckminster Fuller (Synergetics: Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking, 1975/1979) and Arthur M. Young (Geometry of Meaning, 1976). The topological implications for comprehension of complexity have been explored by Ron Atkin ([Combinatorial Connectivities in Social Systems: an application of simplicial complex structures to the study of large organizations, 1977; Multidimensional Man; can man live in 3-dimensional space? 1981]) as summarized elsewhere ([Social organization determined by incommunicability of insights]). Unfortunately the cognitive implications of advances in understanding of network topology have been limited, despite a degree of appreciation for their relevance to social geometry as discussed elsewhere ([Polyhedral Empowerment of Networks through Symmetry: psycho-social implications for organization and global governance, 2008; Topology of Valuing: psychodynamics of collective engagement with polyhedral value configurations, 2008; Hyperaction through Hypercomprehension and Hyperdrive necessary complement to proliferation of hypermedia in hypersociety, 2006]).

• **Visualization of complexity:** Given the tremendous computer-enhanced media capacities, there is clearly much scope for imaginative reconfiguration of complexity as an aid to comprehension and learning. ([Preliminary NetMap Studies of Databases on Questions, World Problems, Global Strategies, and Values, 2006; Generating a Million Questions from UA Databases: Problems, Strategies, Values, 2006; Mapping Songlines of the Noosphere, 2006]). This may be accompanied by sonification of some kind

• **Engaging with abundance:** Authors such as Steven M. Rosen ([Topologies of the Flesh: a multidimensional exploration of the lifeworld, 2006; Dimensions of Apeiron: a topological phenomenology of space, time, and individuation, 2004]) highlight the manner in which the richness of psychosocial engagement with the world has been completely undermined by formal discourse -- an "eclipse of the lifeworld" in his terms. Ironically, in a period of sensitivity to the challenges of "resources" and "energy", this view is echoed by other authors with respect to such a lost sense of "abundance" ([Paul Feyerabend, Conquest of Abundance: a tale of abstraction versus the richness of being, 1999; Sallie McFague, Life Abundant: rethinking theology and economy for a planet in peril, 2000; David Abram, The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world, 1997])

• **Surface of expression:** The implication for articulation of more appropriate understanding through "writing" text on more complex topological surfaces has been admirably articulated by Michael Schiltz ([Form and Medium: a mathematical reconstruction. Image & Narrative, 6, 2003]) in relation to the calculus of indications of George Spencer-Brown ([Laws of Form, 1969/1994]). Schiltz notes that form/medium is "the image for systemic connectivity and concatenation", as described by Humberto Maturana and Francesco Varela. Schiltz argues that the conventional use of a planar surface for writing means that, at this point in the text, both author and reader are ready to be coned into the assumption of a plane writing surface without question. He demonstrates that this is not unquestionable and that use of a toroidal surface, for example, leads to other understandings of truth and connectivity, as discussed elsewhere ([Comprehension of Requisite Variety for Sustainable Psychosocial Dynamics: transforming a matrix classification onto intertwined tori, 2006]).

• **Self-reflexivity:** A significant effort to bring some of these disparate threads into focus is the necessarily radical approach of Melanie Claire Purcell ([Towards ANEWERA: Alternative Non Entropic Worldview Epistemological Resolution Analysis, 2007]).
opportunities, insights are systematically gathered from society as crowdsourcing.

An interesting concrete initiative that has the potential of responding in domestic violence, betrayed by the development of conventional communication "charged" with an historical memory goes beyond the simplistic.

**Conclusion**

The pattern which connects is a meta-pattern. It is a pattern of patterns. It is that meta-pattern which defines the vast system of which it was only grasping the vast system of which it was only.

The curious nature of Bateson's "epistemological" approach was that it prevented him from proposing remedies to the problems he identified. His thinking contained a kind of catch-22: the conscious mind, his own included, was of its nature incapable of grasping the vast system of which it was only a very small and far from representative part; hence any major intervention to "solve" a given problem would always be ill-informed and inadvisable. The only possible solution would be a radical change in our way of thinking, or even our way of knowing, a new (or ancient) mindset in which conscious purpose would be viewed as only a minor and rather suspect part of mental life.

Given the fundamental role of the unknown, epitomized by "dark matter", "dark energy" and "classified" information, it is curious that the role played by the "hidden" in the viability of those biological processes of which one is not conscious -- and would be totally unable to consciously manage -- is not seen as suggestive of the fundamental role of "unknowing" in psychosocial processes. As intimated by Bateson, essential remedial processes in society may need to be of a nature in which conscious awareness does not interfere -- highlighting the importance of new forms of apophatic discourse (Being What You Want: problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?, 2008). Failure to do so may indeed break the "pattern that connects" as identified by Bateson:

The pattern which connects is a meta-pattern. It is a pattern of patterns. It is that meta-pattern which defines the vast generalization that, indeed, it is patterns which connect. (Mind and Nature: a necessary unity, 1979).

**Conclusion**

The challenge for the future remains one of engendering a new kind of "space" of discourse for essentially estranged perspectives. This goes beyond the simplistic conventional preoccupation of "facilitators" and therapists to create a "safe place". The estrangement is "charged" with an historical memory of abuse that appropriately recalls the abuse of archetypal "others". These have typically been betrayed by the development of conventional communication processes -- "successful" at their expense. It is the "success" of these processes that is now in question as evident in the degree of alienation and the violence which it is engendering, whether in the form of domestic violence, urban violence, ethnic violence, or the "clash of civilizations" -- all of which may be variously framed as "terrorism".

An interesting concrete initiative that has the potential of responding in many ways to the above challenges is web-enhanced **crowdsourcing** (Jeff Howe, Crowdsourcing: why the power of the crowd is driving the future of business, 2008) -- through which insights are systematically gathered from society as a whole. Whereas this is currently envisaged to enable new commercial opportunities, it also has the potential of responding to the systemic inadequacies of the feedback processes identified above, especially if
the primary focus is placed on insights and possibilities rather than on factual information. One global endeavour in this direction was the compilation of profiles of problems and remedial strategies, as conceived and proposed by international bodies of every kind, incorporated into an Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential.

A contrast might be usefully made with the preoccupations of security and intelligence-focused information systems (purportedly in response to potential terrorism) -- seeking, in their most extreme forms, total control of communication processes and the internet. Whereas this framing implicitly assumes that creative insight in society should be effectively restricted to those under contract to such authorities -- in a curious perversion of the Precautionary Principle -- as yet to be explored is the gathering and integration of insight in an open-source mode. Pointers in that direction are tagging systems (such as the social bookmarking of Delicious) and the capacity of search engines (such as Dogpile) to gather information via other search engines. The technical challenges lie in how best to gather, filter, interrelate and highlight disparate insights from the effectively marginalized, without further marginalizing them -- a realistic test being the future possibility of detecting the insights of those such as Srinivasa Ramanujan (Minding the Future: a thought experiment on presenting new information, 1980). Ironically the approach is analogous to that of a hypothetical transformation of the epitome of questionable intelligence gathering (From ECHELON to NOLEHCE: enabling a strategic conversion to a faith-based global brain, 2007).

The space -- however it may be articulated with mathematical insight into hyper-reality -- is the formal context for the postformal pattern of relationships required for the emerging knowledge society. What is now understood as "violence" will presumably be integrated into the fabric of this space as a necessarily "unusual" or "extraordinary" mode of existential relationship -- however "terrifying". A fruitful metaphor descriptive of this global communication space might be found in present familiarity with daily portrayals of "global weather"and the supporting infrastructure through which it is updated -- reframed however (through the pun) as "global whether", indicative of the dynamics of the psychosocial decision-making conflicts that are currently only evident through their local symptoms.

In this light, the above articulation therefore constitutes one reflection of current inadequacy: a relatively lengthy text, conventionally structured with bullet points. This very structure fails to reflect the clues noted -- which point onward -- therefore rendering the articulation suspect according to its own terms. Like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the communication issues highlighted intimate the existence of a more comprehensive framework. This might indeed be understood as some paradoxical topology like the Klein bottle -- where the paradox exemplifies the challenge to conventional simplistic thinking. However, through failure to comprehend the pattern that connects the communication issues will continue to be engendered and sustained. It can only be surmised that, from a future perspective, present communication styles will be seen as analogous to the cumbersomeness deprecated in prehistoric fauna.

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