



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

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Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid" From myth-making towards a "wisdom society"

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Introduction

The increasingly globalized communication society is paradoxically characterized by an increasing number of topics on which little or

nothing may be publicly said. Whilst many of these "zones of the unsaid" have existed in the past, their existence becomes all the more felt in an information-rich environment. They might be compared with the astronomical "black holes" which populate the galaxies.

The concern here is at what point an increase in the number of "zones of the unsaid" may completely undermine conventional hopes for global policy-making, world governance, and the implementation of strategic initiatives in response to global crises.

This concern builds on the experience of the author in profiling some 59,000 world problems (in the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, 1995) -- as perceived by the network of 63,000 international organizations (identified in the *Yearbook of International Organizations*, 2003). Many of these problems have also been considered unmentionable in the past -- and may continue to remain so. Note that those considered unmentionable by one constituency may not be so for another.

The following text comprises three sections. The first offers some examples of the "unsaid". The second discusses possible opportunities for navigating a strategic-space with a relatively high density of the "unsaid" -- and the circumvention of its dysfunctional effects in a knowledge-based society. This is seen as the basis for transforming a society grounded on myth-making through the media into a "wisdom society". The annex provides clues to further reflection in the light of extensive web resources on the variety of forms of the "unsaid". The contextual challenge for a "knowledge society" has been articulated in an earlier paper (*Coherent Policy-making Beyond the Information Barrier*, 1999) based on an earlier exploration of *Development beyond Science to Wisdom: Facilitating the emergence of configurative understanding in Councils of the Wise* (1979).

Examples of the "unsaid"

- **Over-population:** The manner in which the explosion in the world population and its implications for resources in the future has now been effectively designed off the international agenda and is no longer a matter for discussion for action. This is despite the fact that this increase is a prime driving force for many social and environmental problems.
- **Depletion of petroleum resources:** Denial of the rapidity of depletion of the resource on which modern civilization is built, and of the foreseeable consequences as the extraction of remaining reserves becomes more difficult and more expensive.
- **Substance abuse:** The pervasive extent of substance abuse is not a matter for extensive debate, the focus being rather, in the case of drugs, on inhibiting the process of manufacture and distribution from foreign countries rather than on the need felt by consumers -- as a result of the inadequacies of modern civilization.
- **Hidden agendas:** The ubiquity of unstated and hidden agendas that effectively render meaningless any explicit rational strategic initiative.
- **Withholding assistance:** The characteristic empty quality of firm commitments made to those in need (notably developing countries) knowing that such promises will be broken in due time. Also the extent to which assistance to those in need is not even offered.
- **Threat:** Failure to acknowledge publicly the high level of threat, coercion and political bullying associated with transactions in supposedly democratic societies
- **Over-selling:** The significant level of over-selling despite a track record of product and service failure (even in the case of complex systems) and its direct consequence for over-budget project completion and delay.
- **Over-optimism:** The extent to which official reports on problematic trends tend to be dangerously over-optimistic to avoid facing decision-makers with possibilities which they are unable to handle -- and which may increase anxiety in their constituencies.
- **Demonization:** The level of demonization deliberately cultivated in order to frame strategic opponents as completely unreasonable and unworthy of any attempt at meaningful dialogue.
- **Disparities in wealth and income:** The extent to which such disparities are only the subject of momentary and anecdotal comment that do not lead to substantive efforts to address them effectively.
- **Sexual disease:** The failure to acknowledge infection by sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, and the life-threatening consequences for others
- **Corruption in highest places:** The unacknowledged level of corruption in national government and intergovernmental organizations -- exemplified by the mass resignation of the European Commission under Jacques Santer and its subsequent challenges in dealing with fraud.
- **Criminal networks:** Denial of the extent and influence on public policy of international criminal networks
- **Apocalyptic scenarios:** Unstated influence of apocalyptic and biblical "End Times" scenarios on the strategic thinking of some world leaders.
- **Penal conditions:** The unacknowledged level of violence and humiliation within prisons, including male rape, and its tacit acceptance as an aspect of the punishment meted out by the law.
- **Sexual abuse by priests:** The extent of abuse (unacknowledged until recently) practiced by priests on parishioners and young people in their charge -- and the complicity of their superiors in failing to acknowledge this.
- **Unchallenged certainties:** The extent to which unsubstantiated certainties (of religions, scientific disciplines or ideologies) are promoted and inculcated, unchallenged -- possibly with the protection of civil liberties legislation.
- **Suppression of information:** Collusion in the prevention of dissemination of information on human rights abuses (eg Chechnya, Tibet, etc)
- **Animal processing for food:** Avoidance of information on the conditions of factory farms, animal transportation and slaughter, and associated food hygiene
- **Humiliation:** The extent of the unrecognized sense of humiliation forced upon the peoples of many developing countries by an arrogant industrialized world (cf Mahdi Elmandjra. *Humiliation à l'ère du méga-impérialisme*, 2003)
- **Collective incapacity of the wise:** The significant difficulty experienced by the "best and the brightest" to orchestrate their differences creatively and fruitfully in response to complex strategic challenges.

Encompassing the "unsaid"

Regression to a mindset of myth

- **Mythical consciousness in the past:** One approach to the "unsaid" takes the form of regression to an earlier stage of human psycho-cultural history oriented to respond to diffuse and ill-formed threat. In that period the environment was believed to be densely populated with hostile, and possibly malignant, spirits and other forces articulated through myth. Such forces were primarily responsible for accidents, illness and death -- and terror of every kind. Some populations around the world remain in thrall to such beliefs -- and the need to assuage the hostile spirits and counter their efficacy. This is notably the case of those in the animist tradition and of their voodoo successors.

Those thriving in this environment succeeded in part through their capacity to embody the forces in credible mythical stories -- offering great explanatory power -- and to inspire fear in those who thwarted them, or in any way doubted their credibility. These powerful people are partly recognized as witchdoctors. They claim the ability to commune with the spirit world and to divine the intentions of its inhabitants.

Culturally, the possibility of magical intervention in governance continues to be celebrated through the involvement of Merlin in the Arthurian myth -- with its associated positive and negative dimensions. In the past century, aspects of this pagan world view were deliberately cultivated by the Nazi leadership using magical and esoteric practices. Indeed many features of the Nazi Party are considered to have been driven by this perspective including the orchestration of the mass rallies by [Albert Speer](#). Not since Augustus Caesar had there been such a total orchestration of technology, media, art and music for political purposes. Hitler himself was a member of the secret [Thule Society](#). [[more](#) | [more](#)].

Efforts have been made to distinguish between "black magic" in contrast with the "white magic" that many hope would prevail. For example current interest in shamanism focuses on its beneficial role, notably in healing. But there are continuing concerns, notably amongst conspiracy theorists, at "satanic" influence in government [[more](#)]. "Satan" is a descriptor used both by "jihadis" and "crusaders" against each other. Lt. Gen. William G. Boykin, US deputy undersecretary of defence for intelligence (responsible for tracking down key leaders of al-Qaeda) has said publicly in 2003 that he sees the war on terrorism as a clash between Judeo-Christian values and Satan -- has been defended by the White House for doing so [[more](#) | [more](#) | [more](#) | [more](#)].

- **Fear-mongering as a basis for power:** There is a case for reflecting on the position acquired and cultivated by George Bush and Tony Blair in relation to the above patterns. Both are highly focused on promoting a sense of fear in society as a means of ensuring that their populations, and the world community, continue to follow their leadership. George Bush, for example, has launched his 2004 election campaign stressing fear of terrorism -- keeping US citizens terrified is a key component of the re-election campaign (see Maureen Dowd. *A Cold, Clammy Hand* (*Guardian*, 25 November 2003). She notes that James Goody and Kenneth Weisbrode (*Financial Times*, November 2003) argue: "Fear has been used as a basis for curtailing freedom of expression and for questioning legal rights long taken for granted." (see also [Promoting a Singular Global Threat -- Terrorism: Strategy of choice for world governance](#), 2002)

Similarly, Tony Blair is intent on taking every advantage of the attack against the British Consulate in Istanbul (20 November 2003) to justify reinforcement of every possible security measure in the UK through a new civil contingencies law (updating the Emergency Powers Acts of 1920s and 1940s) -- irrespective of any human rights considerations (and in contravention of European conventions) and the inadequacy of safeguards against misuse of such powers [[more](#)].

- **Unproven chains of evidence:** But, in both cases, as with the witchdoctors, the chains of evidence substantiating their stories about "al-Qaida terrorists" are never exposed to public scrutiny, criticism or independent evaluation. And this is despite their false claims, based on secret evidence, regarding the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and links between "Saddam Hussein" and "al-Qaida" -- on which they both requested the trust of their populations. Doubters are offered as evidence further bombings and horrendous loss of life -- but no hard evidence of the role of "al-Qaida", "Osama bin Laden" or "Saddam Hussein" is offered for public scrutiny. Under the circumstances, the justification in terms of "reasons of national security" bears an uncanny resemblance to the disputed reasons offered by witchdoctors and psychics whose claims fail to stand up to rigorous scrutiny by scientifically trained sceptics.

It was the rational era that sought verifiable chains of cause and effect that diminished the credibility of the stories of witchdoctors and their fearsome hold on their populations. Whether it was a case of witchdoctors manipulating their own gullible agents to act on their behalf, skilled use of "special effects" and sleight of hand, or verbal manipulation of their audiences through charisma and "shock and awe" -- in the final analysis the zones of influence of witchdoctors were severely reduced. The powerful world of the spirits, with its terrifying inhabitants, was neutralized in the "civilized world".

George Bush and Tony Blair continue to claim to be receiving strong messages concerning the shadowy invisible world of terrorists that are bent on annihilating that civilized world. But it is most curious that it is their own professional intelligence agencies who have expressed most doubt concerning the interpretation made by the White House and Downing Street of the information received. As affirmed by [Ray McGovern](#), co-founder of the [Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity](#) (USA): "No President has lied so baldly and so often and so demonstrably" (*Independent on Sunday*, 9 November 2003).

- **Re-activating the mythical past:** To what extent then is it Bush and Blair themselves, through their private fears, who are seeking to draw the world community back into a pre-rational state of permanent fear -- in order to preserve their respective power bases? As deeply believing Christians, it is a supreme irony that they should feel most comfortable in assiduously

cultivating a pre-rational mindset which Christian missionaries did much to neutralize over past centuries.

On the other hand, as some argue, is it precisely their desire to force the world to act out the biblical "End Times" and Apocalyptic scenarios of the final battle of Good vs Evil that is the evangelical Christian hope for closure in the near future? It is indeed the case that Bush and Blair are very close to those who seek to activate this scenario.

It is of course a travesty of that story, and an indication of the depths of the fundamental unbelief of the "good guys", that the "bad guys" in the drama -- "Saddam Hussein" and "Osama bin Laden" -- had to be secretly promoted and funded (if not trained) as agents of the USA. This is in no way to deny the existence of groups -- such as "al-Qaida" -- hostile to the Christian agenda as articulated by Bush and Blair, whether or not the evidence for their significance is more substantive than that for the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

As the saying goes, "being paranoid does not mean that no one is really out to get you". But reactivating fear of a "bogeyman" in every public place and in every form of public transportation, is simply to reignite the fears of earliest childhood -- notably as practiced by the cruelest of parents who enjoy terrorizing the vulnerable. It is a symptom of personal insecurity in leaders (for whom "help" might tactfully be sought). It is not an act of maturity and bears no relation to values upheld by Christians. Or is it the case that the kind of Christianity they represent desperately needs Evil -- and ever more of it -- to sustain its self-esteem and sense of righteousness?

It is unfortunate that the youth called upon to fight against Evil in Iraq have had it defined for them by a continuing diet of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* -- that justifies their righteous lack of compunction in slaughtering civilians. For those leading them, Evil was previously defined for them by the archetypal "bad guys" from the cowboy "bad lands" of the West.

The challenge of "terrorism" -- as a symptom of systematic neglect and marginalization, and a failure of dialogue -- calls for subtler approaches worthy of the most mature achievements of humanity (see *Transforming the Encounter with Terrorism*, 2002).

Incommunicability

The mathematician Ron Atkin has addressed the issue of formally analyzing incommunicability in social contexts (1972, 1974, 1976, 1977) -- most accessibly in *Multidimensional man: Can man live in 3-dimensional space?* (1981). The relevance of these insights to an understanding of the psychology of operating in complex communication spaces, with much that is "unsaid", is given separately (see *Comprehension: social organization determined by incommunicability of insights*)

Negative capability

The poet John Keats articulated (in 1817) the concept of negative capability: "being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason". Robert French (*'Negative Capability', 'Dispersal' and the Containment of Emotion*) explains it in psychoanalytic terms as the quality of attention as:

This state of mind depends on our 'Negative Capability', that is, on our capacity for thinking and feeling, for learning and containment, for abstention and indifference. Without the quality of attention made possible by this 'capability', any amount of insight 'from a psychoanalytic perspective' is in danger of remaining irritatingly indigestible or aridly intellectual.

Global strategic implications

Coherent governance: At what stage does the coherence of the strategic and planning process of international, national and regional governance become critically lacking in credibility to those whose support is required? This stage might be termed the **"Emperor's New Clothes Threshold"**.

Up to that point there is sufficient coherence to governance to sustain the credibility of an ideological line. Beyond it, the number of "zones of the unsaid" is so great that their overlap and fusion results in irreversible fragmentation of the social fabric and the processes of governance. The coherence of globality is lost -- there are too many holes, of too great a size, in the block of "gruyère" to sustain its integrity (see . Distant, and longer-term, perspectives become impossible. In astronomical terms again, the "dark matter" obscures the healthy viable processes. The "Dark Riders" are free to roam (see *The "Dark Riders" of Social Change: a challenge for any Fellowship of the Ring*, 2002).

Engendering authenticity: As argued elsewhere, Bush and Blair are to be praised for having given credibility to "regime change" -- even though they fail to recognize where it is needed most (see *Crusading from Washing-Town to Bag-Dad: Pre-emptive regime change as the key to sustainable development*, 2002). Like the suicide bombers, they might also be praised for having shifted the debate of the international community from decades of arid futility to a focus on existential and transcendental values -- even though their actions (as in Guantanamo Bay) belie their rhetoric. This focus will indeed give expression to some of the organic immediacy of the neglected mythic consciousness -- but without a need for bogeymen and evil spirits.

The irresponsibility and duplicity of their initiatives have indeed served to evoke an unprecedented degree of authenticity amongst thinking people worldwide (see *Evoking Authenticity: through polyhedral global configuration of local paradoxes*, 2003), heralding the emergence of a new humanity (see *Authentic Grokking: Emergence of Homo conjugens*, 2003). It is this which will provide the catalyst and template for a new style of global policy-making (see *Coherent Policy-making Beyond the Information Barrier*, 1999) inherently

capable of discerning *non-sequiturs* in specious arguments and *faulty chains of reasoning*.

Reframing hegemony: The question is how is their disastrous hegemonic strategic initiative to be successfully reframed -- given the level of denial promoted by the world's only superpower (see also *Strategic denial: reframing the unknown*). For a surrealist inspired by the tale of the *Emperor's New Clothes*, the current imperial mindset would preferably be reframed and dissipated as the first genuinely global joke.

However, in the light of the highest insights of such as a Sufi or a master of eastern martial arts, the art may be to benefit from the engendered global mindset and frame it otherwise. By reintroducing a mythic dimension, the tendency to over-design and over-explicate a global strategy according to the sterile -- and unfruitful -- rational models of past decades may be avoided. The "unsaid" may thus be appropriately positioned at the centre of global strategic thinking -- rectifying the unfortunate effort to focus such thinking on a distorted exclusivist understanding of Christian values.

Configuring around the "unsaid": The coherence of the complementary global strategic initiatives of the future may then derive from their configuration in relation to the "unsaid". The functionality is admirably illustrated by an image from a classical Taoist poem:

Thirty spokes meet in the hub. Where the wheel isn't is where it's useful. Hollowed out, clay makes a pot. Where the pot's not is where it's useful. Cut doors and windows to make a room. Where the room isn't, there's room for you. So the profit in what is is in the use of what isn't. (*Tao Te Ching* interpretation by Ursula Le Guin)

Given the explicit importance of such poetry to the governance of the vast Chinese empires of the past, and the value of poetry to many western statesmen of recent centuries, there is a case for exploring the value of such insights to strategic thinking (see *Poetry-making and Policy-making: Arranging a Marriage between Beauty and the Beast*, 1993) in providing a new grounding for such strategic thinking (see *Enhancing the Quality of Knowing through Integration of East-West metaphors*, 2000).

A global approach, centred more insightfully on the "unsayable", would then create a new framework to sustain the dialogue between those of radically different perspective -- the missing dialogue that is now being transformed into frustrated acts of indiscriminate suicidal violence and its indiscriminate violent suppression. This calls for recognition of a neglected understanding of "global" -- too easily framed in terms of movement of goods and services (see *Future Generation through Global Conversation: in quest of collective well-being through conversation in the present moment*, 1997).

Governance through metaphor: This further suggests that reflection on governance of the future "information society", or "knowledge society" -- supported by the future *semantic web* -- might fruitfully be framed in terms of enhancing the movement of meaning through metaphor. As discussed elsewhere, with respect to "*governance through metaphor*", governance then becomes fundamentally the process of ensuring the emergence and movement of such "guiding" metaphor-models through an information society, as well as their embodiment in organizational form (see *Governance through enhancing the movement of meaning*; and *Being Other Wise Clues to the dynamics of a meaningfully sustainable lifestyle*, 1998).

For Philippe Quéau (*Growing the Global Good*, 1998) as Director of UNESCO's Information and Informatics Division:

Global regulation is indeed needed in many areas as we have seen. But above all, we need to find a new meaning to our collective action. We need to formulate a higher and wiser vision of what we are aiming at, as citizens of our global society. We need new mental tools to help us think global. Too much data is just noise. Information is not knowledge and even less wisdom. We need meaning not just information tools. We need wisdom. Proliferation of information will not add one minute to a day. In the information overflow, we are not necessarily doing any better than before. On the contrary, we may simply lose touch with reality, and lose the human touch. Information flood is a serious challenge, requiring discipline, distance and scepticism. We will need cognitive skills of awareness, perception, reasoning, and common sense judgement.

Towards a "wisdom society": The contrast of such concerns with the current framing of the issues of the "information society" and e-governance as a transformation of the service model (see UN *World Summit on the Information Society*, 2003) -- even when extended to the development of collaborative knowledge-based or *collective intelligence* processes -- suggests the need to reflect on the nature of *wisdom* essential to governance, and the emergence of a "wisdom society". This has been variously envisaged by bodies such as the *Institute of Noetic Sciences*, the *Co-Intelligence Institute*, George Pór's *Community Intelligence*, or the Fetzer *Collective Wisdom Initiative*:

- *Toward a Wisdom Society: An Interview with James Botkin*, 2002;
- Roar Bjonnes. *Towards a Wisdom Based Society*, 2000;
- Jay Earley. *Envisioning a Wisdom Society*, Arlington Institute, 2002).
- Henryk Skolimowski. *Information: Yes, But Where Has All Our Wisdom Gone?* *The Ecologist*, Vol. 14, No. 5-6, 1984
- Doug Fulcher. *The Blooming of Wisdom: The Seeds of the Wisdom Society*
- John McClellan. *Envisioning Learning Societies Across Multiple Dimensions*
- John Wood. *Real estate and the virtual farm* (Embodied Knowledge and Virtual Space Conference) 1995
- Barry Wolfer. *Wisdom Society vision*
- Co-Intelligence Institute. *Wisdom Society Survey Results*, 2002
- Copthorne Macdonald. *Toward Wisdom*. 1993
- George Pór. *Designing for the Emergence of a Global-scale Collective Intelligence*. 2001
- *Wisdom and requisite variety*. *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, 1995

...I would respectfully suggest that the current enthusiasm for 'knowledge-based' companies may cloud our perception of an even more important development -- a development that is only just starting to stir the consciousness of the management community; a dawning realisation that the successful organisation of the future will need to be wisdom-based. By 'wisdom' I refer to a capacity to discern what is appropriate in a given situation; to see things as they really are; to make a true measure of people and events. Wise people are economical and accurate in their assessment of circumstances and are able to ensure that facts and processes are applied in ways relevant to the particular circumstances. Rather than being carried away by technique, those with wisdom exercise judgement based on a mixture of experience and mature reflection.

Organisations lacking wisdom are prone to a predictable range of ills. For example, they are easily seduced by the latest fad - applying novel management or production techniques without critically assessing their relevance. They are like people who combine intellectual brilliance with a complete lack of common sense. Blinded by science, they disregard all warning signs and press on until disappearing over the precipice of experience....

People with wisdom are alive to the vagaries of ethical decision-making. Drawing on a type of experience that cannot be learned, they avoid the error of trying to make each new situation fit within a pre-defined set of categories. And so it is with organisations, too. Wisdom-based organisations will not walk blindly into ethical death-traps.

It took the poet T.S. Eliot (*The Rock*) to pose the question:

Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information? [\[more\]](#)

How indeed is the interface between "wisdom", "knowledge" and "information" to be ensured in a computer-enhanced environment (see *Development beyond Science to Wisdom: Facilitating the emergence of configurative understanding in Councils of the Wise*, 1979; Gene Bellinger, et al. *Data, Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom*) when vital distinctions are easily lost in the new enthusiasm for "knowledge management" and its commercial possibilities [\[more | more | more | more | more\]](#).

Ironically it would appear that the US Air Force has focused most attentively on an understanding of that interface in the study by the Air Force University (*Air Force 2025*) -- perhaps to be more wisely understood in the light of Iraq. But perhaps the supreme irony lies in the fact that Wisdom™ is a trade mark of Arthur Andersen (see *Modelling knowledge with Wisdom™*, 1999; [more](#)) for a "knowledge modelling" tool that was applied in the EU ESPRIT (Information Technologies Programme) project KARE (Knowledge Acquisition and sharing for Requirements Engineering) completed in 2001 -- although clearly such tools were not sufficient to provide the "wisdom" to prevent Arthur Andersen from being implicated in the Enron accounting scandal of 2002, and duly convicted [\[more | more\]](#). Financial subterfuge, although an example of the "unsaid" in knowledge management, is clearly not an example of wisdom.

Just as the "information society" is needed to undergird the "knowledge society", it is the latter that will provide the foundation for the processes of a "wisdom society" through which the challenges and dilemmas of global governance can be wisely handled. The assumption that the "wisdom free" processes envisaged for an "information society" (or for a "knowledge society") are adequate to the challenge of global governance have been totally undermined by the disastrous information and knowledge handling associated with governmental policies in response to Iraq. A study of the European Parliament's Directorate General for Research only comments in passing on whether the information society can be transformed into a wisdom society (*Cultural Diversity and the Information Society Policy Options and Technological Issues Final Study*, 2001).

But, given that "information society" and "knowledge society" are increasingly in use as code to disguise narrowly focused agendas of particular vested interests, any preoccupation with "wisdom society" should embody processes which correct for tendencies to coopt the vision in the service of restrictive, self-serving agendas -- however well-meaning. As with efforts to displace "information society" by hyped-up visions of a "knowledge society" on international agendas, it becomes apparent that through such conflation each quickly tends to mean less than the aspirations and vision of what people would want to project onto them.

Some Varieties of Wisdom (with constraints on their computerization)		
	Individual (knowing - cognitive)	Collective (enacting - behavioural)
Generic (timeless)	Wisdom of the enlightened individual (aphorisms, koans, gurus, etc) <i>[Possibility of aphorism ("sacred") knowledge-base, without insight into its significance]</i>	Wisdom of the enlightened community (collaborative / collective intelligence, collective wisdom, etc) <i>[Possibility of computer-mediated learning environment, but without integration of other forms of wisdom]</i>
Situational (time-bound)	Wisdom of the enlightened "hands-on" practitioner ("know-how", fix-it engineer, "best practice", etc) <i>[Possibility of "best-practice"</i>	Wisdom of the enlightened "people person" (street-wise, facilitator, charismatic, etc) <i>[Possibility of action guidelines and training modules but without</i>

<i>knowledge-base, without insight into its applicability]</i>	<i>sense of how to internalize them]</i>
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It is perhaps worth distinguishing some flavours of "wisdom" as in the table above -- identifying the constraints on enhancing access to each variety through computer-mediated communication:

- **Generic-Individual:** There are many aphorism collections, increasingly providing for computer-mediated access, possibly together with sacred writings from which they may derive (notably through the variety of "wisdom schools"). This material might indeed be organized "knowledgeably" (beyond the facility of [web-based concordances](#)) and linked to knowledge bases on strategies and problems (as in the case of the [Human Values](#) module of the online *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*) -- but whilst the aphorism may embody the wisdom, the wisdom is not necessarily meaningful through reading the aphorism, and cannot necessarily be readily communicated. Such wisdom may be challenged as to the relevance of integrating that of the other types.
- **Situational-Individual:** There are many "best practice" knowledge bases for dealing with material challenges (as with the [Global Strategies and Solutions](#) module of the online *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*). The challenge, as with any recipe, lies in the wisdom of when to apply which recipe and how to make it work in practice. Situational success in the moment may obscure the existence of challenges addressed in principle by aphorism-type wisdom.
- **Situational-Collective:** There are a number of guidelines to group facilitation (and animation) that are susceptible to adaptation as computer-enhanced training modules, whether with respect to the practice of non-violence, community facilitation, or otherwise. Perhaps the most comprehensive is the *International Facilitator's Companion* (1998). Again there is a difference between absorbing "the knowledge" through training and the wisdom of engaging meaningfully with a group in practice. This may be undertaken whilst imbued with aphorism-type wisdom, but this too may not translate into action that is credible to others. Similarly the people skills may not ensure the integration of the "best practice" wisdom into group projects.
- **Generic-Collective:** Emphasis may be placed on the emergent wisdom of collective learning processes as enhanced by groupware facilities. Whilst there are many groupware packages to enhance collaborative work, few recognize or emphasize the wisdom dimension (those initiated by [George Pór](#) being one exception). The challenge of participant-oriented environments is how to integrate them with the other forms of wisdom. Excessive facilitation in the light of people-skills and training insights may inhibit processes of emergence and learning. Whilst individual participants may be imbued with aphorism-type wisdom, this may not engage or constrain others. And, although individuals may access "best practice" wisdom, its discipline may be antithetical to the collective group process. Reference can usefully be made to sustaining such wisdom emergence through special metaphor-enhanced languages (as explored in research on [appreciative inquiry](#) and [generative metaphor](#) in [organizational discourse](#)). Arrays of interconnected traditional stories embodying community wisdom, and lending themselves to knowledgeable computer-mediated organization, can be seen in this light (eg Buddhist *Jataka tales*, Sanskrit *Panchatantra*, etc)

The classic aphorism-type wisdom that points to the essence of the challenge of reflection on any "wisdom society" -- capable of interrelating the various forms of wisdom -- is the following:

"The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name"

References in Annex on *Varieties of the "unsaid" in sustaining psycho-social community*



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