



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

25 November 2013 | Draft

Civilization as a Global Configuration of Silences

Recognizing silence of a higher order

-- / --

Introduction

Modes of unsensing and unrecognition

Varieties of conspiracies of silence

Varieties of silences of the professions

Engaging with silence through other metaphors

Qualities of silence as variously appreciated

Confronting incommensurable forms of silence

Silence / Ignorance / Uncertainty as fundamentally interwoven?

Towards configuring silences globally

Dark energy of sustainability?

References

Introduction

This speculative exercise takes silence as its point of departure, following previous exploration of that theme (*Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid": from myth-making towards a "wisdom society"*, 2003). The concern here is whether the matters on which there is collective silence can be understood as being configured "globally" in some way -- such as to sustain civilization in an unsuspected manner. This approach contrasts with any assumption that civilization is primarily characterized by the pattern of what is openly and fruitfully said.

The concern is consistent with the argument of John Ralston Saul (*The Unconscious Civilization*, 1995), as noted previously (*Unthought as Cognitive Foundation of Global Civilization: implications of God, debt, overpopulation, waste, negligence, encroachment and death?* 2012). It is however even more pertinent in a period of widespread debate on the significance of the recent [disclosures regarding global electronic surveillance](#) -- especially with respect to the preceding silence in that regard. This is of course a feature of the silence regarding the global significance of the vast quantities of [information officially classified as secret by governments](#), the maze of secret international agreements, and a mysterious global network of military bases. How is global civilization expected to emerge and be governed with so many zones of silence?

Reference to silence however usefully challenges the easy assumption that avoidance of saying and openness is necessarily problematic -- especially given claims that the "silent majority" is characteristic of stable democracy. There is a further challenge from current initiatives in various democratic countries to enact legislation to silence dissent or protest, on the assumption that this enables effective governance, despite other possibilities (*Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011)..

Aside from this preference of Authority, silence is of course much valued in many settings, notably in some forms of dialogue. Silence on certain matters is highly recommended -- even framed as basic to civilized discourse. It can be central to the process of meditation and spiritual practice. There is therefore clearly a degree of uncertainty as to when silence is productive or highly unfruitful -- and for whom -- as is often only too evident.

Given such ambiguity, the question here is how any configuration of "silences" could be recognized as providing a coherence to sustainable civilization, despite the accumulation of issues so systematically ignored. Aspects of this concern figured in previous initiatives (*Map of Systemic Interdependencies None Dares Name*, 2011; *Mapping the Global Underground*, 2010; *Mind Map of Global Civilizational Collapse*, 2011). Are the many "world problems" profiled in the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* to be usefully explored as "zones of silence" -- as matters about which little is adequately said globally or for which representative voices go "unheard"?

Rather than being characterized by what is said or shown, the significance of official statements is now primarily characterized by what is not readily apparent. It is no longer what Authority says that is of as much concern as that on which it is silent -- however vociferously justified by questionable arguments (and any necessary false flag operations), as separately discussed (*Playing the Great*

Game with Intelligence: Authority versus the People, 2013). It has become difficult to establish the quality of truth in such declarations with any confidence. The sense of a conspiracy of silence has become an inspiration to [conspiracy theories](#) of every extreme.

In this context, there is a case for elucidating a common global framework for the destructive and constructive potentials of silence -- as implied by the remarkable summary made by Renée Gendron (*The Meanings of Silence during Conflict, Journal of Conflictology*, 2011).

With disclosures regarding the capacities of [remote sensing](#), notably through the visual capacity of global satellite imagery and drones, this argument can be extended to include other senses -- especially the "unsensing" implied by their metaphorical use in public discourse. The silence of the "unsaid" (and the "unheard" voices), would then encompass the "unseen" (issues?), the "unfelt" (pain?), the "unsmelt" (conditions?) and the "untasted" (lives?) -- all of which are beyond the capacities of remote sensing, metaphorical or otherwise. Ironically public discourse amongst politicians could now be caricatured as the remote insensitivity of droning Authority -- mirroring the preferred military options.

The argument concludes with experiments in indicative visual representation of the dynamic combining the complex relationships between the problematic forms of silence / ignorance / uncertainty with their constructive alternatives (silence / unknowing / confidence). These provide a basis for understanding the requirements for three dimensional configurations in representing a "global" dynamic suggestive of the nature of global civilization -- and of its sustainability..

Modes of unsensing and unrecognition

This argument depends to a high degree on the manner in which the senses are used metaphorically in discourse, as previously indicated (*Developing a Metaphorical Language for the Future*, 1994). It is therefore useful to note the various forms of recognition and its failure in those terms:

- **vision:** use of "vision" is most common in discourse regarding the future. Critics may variously express dismay that others cannot "see" the validity of alternative arguments and truths advanced as fundamental. Concern may be expressed with respect to those "unseen" -- "below the radar". Reference may be made to "blind spots" or simply to "blindness". Emphasis is readily placed on the correct "perspective". Fundamental breakthroughs in comprehension are typically expressed with reference to "light" -- as with "enlightenment" and "insight". The possibility of any complementary modality is deprecated (*Enlightening Endarkenment: selected web resources on the challenge to comprehension*, 2005).
- **touch:** use of "touch" is especially evident with respect to skill and the capacity to "touch" an audience -- and be "touched" by public concerns and suffering. Reference may be made to those "untouched" by the condition of others, perhaps expressed in terms of "unfeeling" -- and concern that the pain of others may be "unfelt". The need for such insensitivity may be justified with expressions such as "biting the bullet" and the need to "break eggs" in order to "make an omelette" -- exemplified with regard to much regretted "collateral damage".
- **hearing:** the capacity to "hear" is admired in discourse, if not esteemed as fundamental to comprehension of the other. References are made to the regrettable "deafness" of authorities to minority concerns -- to the voices of the "unheard". Leaders may consider it necessary to avoid "listening" to preoccupations which they esteem irrelevant to their priorities. This framing has been used with respect to climate change (Adam Corner, *Climate Science: why the world won't listen*, *New Scientist*, 26 September 2013).
- **smell:** use of "smell" is frequently made in public discourse with respect to detection of the "stench" of corruption in any form. Occasional use is made of the metaphor with respect to new initiatives -- as "smelling right" (or "fishy"). The metaphor is much valued in a public relations context -- as with the desirability of being "in good odour". Complicities of silence might well be framed through metaphors of smell.
- **taste:** use of "taste" is evident with reference to the context of discourse and the manner of any presentation. Insensitivity may be framed by use of "lacking taste" and "tasteless"

Neglecting and ignoring issues can be understood more generally through various combinations of these metaphors. Their combination may also be fundamental to more comprehensive strategic approaches (*Strategic Challenge of Polysensorial Knowledge: bringing the "elephant" into "focus"*, 2008).

Varieties of conspiracies of silence

There are many references to "[conspiracy of silence](#)", with some indication of any associated "culture of silence". This is understood to refer to a condition or matter which is known to exist, but by tacit communal unspoken consensus is not talked about or acknowledged. The phenomenon is recognized as dating from understandings of [taboo](#) in traditional societies. As an example, the assassination of John F. Kennedy has sustained the interest of conspiracy theorists (Daniel Schorr, *A Conspiracy of Silences*, *New Leader*, 76, November 1993) -- a theme currently widely reviewed in the media half a century later.

Silence is the focus of a valuable overview by Efrat Ben-Ze'ev and colleagues (*Shadows of War: a social history of silence in the Twentieth Century*, 2010) variously reviewed ([Andrew Polk](#), [Angus Mitchell](#), [Matthew B. Holmes](#))

The following examples of conspiracies of silence include many cited by *Wikipedia*:

- acknowledgement of [war crimes](#)
- breaches of human rights, such as [vanishing persons](#) and [torture](#)

- social conditions: [gang crime](#), [drugs](#) or other unlawful or disparaged activity.
- personal problems, potentially considered shameful by the culture at large
- [child abuse](#) in the [Church](#) or in [social services](#) accommodation. [Blue Code of Silence](#) - When police officers refuse to speak out against the crimes of fellow law enforcement.
- sexual or romantic relationships between two people ("[affairs](#)")
- [institutional racism](#); [institutional sexism](#)
- [persecution of Christians](#) by [national socialists](#) and [communists](#) in such countries as the [Soviet Union](#), [Mexico](#), [Germany](#) and [Spain](#) in the 1930s.
- avoidance of recognition of some problem in order to officially bury (hide) it and thus avoid accusations, investigations or liability.
- existence and extent of false flag operations (James F. Tracy ([False Flag Terror and Conspiracies of Silence](#), *Global Research*, 10 August 2012)
- collective indifference to suffering ([Indifference to the Suffering of Others: Occupying the moral high ground through doublespeak](#), 2013)
- suffering in silence on the part of the "voiceless": animals, prisoners, bullied, domestic abuse

It is intriguing to note how silence with regard to any matter may be deliberately disguised by some form of "noise", distraction or propaganda. Threats and disasters may be exploited for that purpose ([Destructive Weapons of Mass Distraction vs Distractive Weapons of Mass Destruction](#), 2003). Zones of silence may therefore not appear to be silent. Noise is used as camouflage. It is what they are silent about that is then necessarily not evident.

Given the manner in which disciplinary specialization is defined and enabled, it might be asked whether the viability of any such methodology -- according to its own evaluation -- is effectively dependent on what can be successfully ignored through its use. Is the viability of a scientific discipline dependent on what it can "pass over in silence" -- as illustrated by the issue of overpopulation ([Scientific Gerrymandering of Boundaries of Overpopulation Debate](#), 2012)?

Varieties of silences of the professions

Given their profession to know, it is useful to clarify the implication of the various recognized [professions](#) in any "complicity of silence". It is necessarily a challenge for any professional to handle the conflicting demands of:

- respecting the elements of a code of [professional ethics](#) necessary for the protection of the reputation and standards of the profession
- the [client confidentiality](#) expected with regard to the condition and requirements of any client
- ensuring discretion appropriate to cultivation of [competitive advantage](#) with respect to others in the profession (most notably with respect to risks taken)
- "closing ranks" with others of the profession in the event it is challenged for irresponsibility in any way
- discretion regarding secret requirements imposed on the profession (as by the security services or suppliers)
- withholding information which might undermine any of the above, including confidence of the client in any advice given

Given this complex of constraints, it is then useful to review the range of professions in the light of matters on which the professional is "silent" or may otherwise choose not to recognize (through any other metaphor of sensing).

The set of professions is not especially well-formed (see [Wikipedia List of Professions](#)) and may include or exclude some who are considered "[professional](#)" (or so frame themselves), blurring into the wider category of occupations (frequently claiming professional skills). The following table therefore includes (and tentatively clusters) some professions not included in the [Wikipedia](#) list.

	Trustworthiness?		Community?		Security?	Authority?
	Abuse of confidence of		Questionable complicity with		Irresponsible risk-taking (health/safety)	Non-transparency ("Wall of silence")
	client	public	suppliers	authorities		
Finance Accountants Actuaries Economists						
Business Bankers Directors Managers Marketing						
Construction Architects Engineers						
Health Dentists Nurses Pharmacists Physicians Physiotherapists Surgeons						
Psychosocial						

Clergy						
Psychologists						
Social workers						
Teachers						
Law and Order						
Lawyers						
Judiciary						
Politicians						
Military						
Security						
Analysts/Planners						
Statisticians						
Urban Planners						
Other						
Academics						
Scientists						

Rather than providing multiple details for the cells of the table, the possibility of doing so may be illustrated by the following:

- **scientists:** Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. M. Conway (*Merchants of Doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*, 2011)
- **bankers:** LIBOR scandal
- **corporations:** Jacky Law (*Big Pharma: how the world's biggest drug companies control illness*, 2006)
- **psychologists:** complicity with intelligence services in torture and abuse of security detainees (*Ethics Abandoned: Medical Professionalism and Detainee Abuse in the "War on Terror"*, 2013; Roy Eidelson and Stephen Soldz, *Hawaiian Mind Games: APA fiddles while psychology burns*, *Psychology Today*, 5 August 2013; Sarah Boseley, *CIA made doctors torture suspected terrorists after 9/11*, *The Guardian*, 4 November 2013).
- **clergy:** Catholic sex abuse cases
- **security services:** global surveillance disclosures by US/NSA and partners
- **physicians:** Jerome Kassirer (*On the Take: how medicine's complicity with big business can endanger your health*, 2005)
- **construction:** unsafe buildings deliberately constructed with substandard materials
- **economists:** complicity with formulation of unsustainable strategic policies
- **information:** insertion of backdoors into computer software

Essentially professions operate within a regime under which the guiding rule is effectively: ***If you want to continue in this business, and have a successful career, you had better keep quiet.*** This may be especially evident in the opportunity to do business with another party reputed for problematic behaviour. Business can then be successfully done, provided no mention is made of issues such as: infringements of human rights, dubious provenance, pollution, use of child labour, etc. (Tania Branigan, *Analysis: don't mention opium war -- or human rights*, *The Guardian*, 29 November 2013; Nicholas Watt, *David Cameron to distance Britain from Dalai Lama during China visit*, *The Guardian*, 30 November 2013).

Essentially trade trumps human rights, offering another sense of "silence is golden" -- consistent with the argument for banking secrecy and tax havens worldwide. The sustainable pursuit of a profession could then be seen as dependent on keeping quiet, with confidence inspired by confidentiality. A remarkably well documented case study is provided by George Monbiot (*The lies behind this transatlantic trade deal*, *The Guardian*, 2 December 2013). This deals with the plans to create **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership**, namely a EU-US single market to allow corporations to sue governments using secretive panels, bypassing courts and parliaments. As he notes, it involves -- to use the EU commission's chilling phrase -- the "*management of stakeholders, social media and transparency*". He concludes that "**Managing Transparency**" should be adopted as its motto. But his argument makes clear that "**Managing Silence**" might have been a better choice -- rather than depending on the vision metaphor. As increasingly understood, governance is the art of silencing dissent.

The dilemma for professionals is then one of sustaining public trust and client confidentiality when their lips are sealed (in more ways than one) regarding the nature of their systematic betrayal. Client confidentiality may constitute complicity in public malfeasance. As indicated by the examples cited, recent events suggest that there is every probability that professionals of every kind may well be untrustworthy to some degree -- and have no way of proving otherwise.

The professions are able to safeguard their own status by using the values of trustworthiness, community, security and authority to disguise any form of abuse and to justify its denial -- with the implication that it is any accuser who is necessarily at fault. The *Wikipedia typology of cover-ups* is of value in this respect. The ultimate defence is the expectation that others should believe in the honourability of the profession -- which it is inappropriate to impugn in any way. Of particular interest is the framing of problematic incidents as exceptional and isolated -- rather than as a possible indicator of unexamined systemic issues.

The dilemma is evident in that saying nothing may indeed be the most sensitive response to a situation -- about which "the less said the better". On the other hand this may contribute to the institutionalization of absence of negative feedback which would be vital to system governance in cybernetic terms -- a form of "silence" recognized by cybernetics.

Engaging with silence through other metaphors

The argument above has focused on "complicity" as the frame through which silence is experienced -- especially problematically, but not

necessarily so. Complicity as such is not a metaphor although it offers implications of complexity -- with silence experienced in terms of a complex, perhaps reminiscent of an [anechoic chamber](#).

Other metaphors cited in relation to silence are:

- **wall**: as in "wall of silence", most typically when confronting a complicity of silence. Curiously the "wall" echoes the physical closure of institutions to which the unauthorised are forbidden access, because of the secret nature of their preoccupations
- **code**: as in "code of silence", most typically as a behavioural requirement of those with higher levels of security clearance -- confirmed in some cases by signature (relating to "official secrets", or a [non-disclosure agreement](#)). Acceptance of the code may be associated with some form of ritual, as with secret societies or criminal organizations requiring that an "oath of silence" be appropriately sealed. Early forms of this are evident in student oaths in fraternity and sorority clubs.
- **way**: as in "way of silence", most typically as characteristic of a spiritual practice, possibly instigated by a solemn "vow of silence"
- **zone or place**: with reference to locations, possibly of spiritual significance, where silence is an obligation. Echoing the role of the sanctum sanctorum of temples, such places are now evident as secure installations within which secure communication is possible -- beyond the capacity for others to hear
- **circle**: as in "circle of silence", possibly with respect to a group bound together by secrecy

Further possibilities include occasional use of sphere, abyss, and labyrinth. Meteorological metaphors may include:

- the "fog of silence", as in relation to Fukushima
- the "silence in the eye of a hurricane"
- a "thunderous silence" with regard to many ominous indicators

The phrase "Ministry of Silence" is a common religious theme, notably as an invitation into creative prayer. Cynical reference may however be made to the transfer of untreated issues to an official "Ministry of Silence" (cf. [Spain: Study reveals that citizens' information requests meet with silence, evasion, and absurd answers](#), *Access Info Europe -- Press Release*, 1 October 2008). In a similar vein, reference may be made to an official "[Department of Silence](#)".

Use has long been made of the phrase "[silence is golden](#)" of which variants are believed to date back to Ancient Egypt. That recognition has been the subject of an extensive editorial ([Is Silence Golden? The Examiner](#), 8, 1993, 1). A "pregnant silence" may be recognized.

Reference is also made to "dead silence" or "deathly hush" -- to "silence of the dead", or "silence of the grave". [The Conversation Project](#) features a story on [Silence](#) (April 2013) citing an experience in the following terms: *He was my best friend, but I could not or did not know how to penetrate his deep silence about his illness and approaching death.* Some diseases may themselves be described as silent, namely a disease or other disorder that produces no clinically obvious signs or symptoms.

In a compilation of reflections on death ([Joanne Morra](#) (Ed.), *The Limits of Death: between philosophy and psychoanalysis*, 2000), Boris Belay (*Rigor mortis: the thirteen stations of philosophy's passion*) cites from the *Conferences on Un-Knowing* of [Georges Bataille](#), to the effect that:

When at the end of the tragedy, the hero, mired in crime, in violence, succumbs to violence, he himself can say: all the rest is silence. A tale told by an idiot, which means nothing. All the rest is silence... In other words, what tragedy teaches is silence, and silence is nothing if it does not, at least for a time, put an end to thought. Of course there is nothing to say about death. (pp. 200-201)

In this respect, especially challenging, and potentially significant to this argument, is the concluding work of [Carl Jung](#) (*The Red Book*, 2009). Its chief concern, according to a commentary by [James Hillman](#) and its editor [Sonu Shamdasani](#), is giving voice to the dead -- namely to history, to the actual dead, and to buried ideas (*Lament of the Dead: psychology after Jung's Red Book*, 2013). As with Jung, they see contemporary culture to be so forward looking, valuing novelty over reflection on the past, that ancestors are too often forgotten. They argue that if humanity does not deal with them -- "enabling them to speak" and "to be heard" -- their lament will continue to haunt us and foil our intents (see also: [Sanford L. Drob](#), *Reading The Red Book: an interpretive guide to C.G. Jung's Liber Novus*, 2012).

This seemingly obscure argument is consistent with that of [George Santayana](#): *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

The vast array of the dead, seemingly silenced, frames global civilization in a very particular way. There is a degree of interaction with that silence through commemoration, remembrance, and memorials, as partially discussed ([Enstoning in Memorials and Monuments](#), 2012). The "voices" of those so silenced can be "heard" -- paradoxically -- justifying the arguments of Jung and Santayana. The silent presence of the past offers a sense of what the living have died for -- whether human or otherwise -- giving depth to civilization. Their silence "speaks volumes".

Qualities of silence as variously appreciated

As noted above, reference to silence usefully challenges the easy assumption that avoidance of saying is necessarily problematic. Silence is of course much valued in many settings, as celebrated by the [Friends of Silence](#). It features prominently in official commemorative ceremonies as a [moment of silence](#).

The experience of silence may be cultivated in a variety of settings, most notably as a feature of the process of meditation and spiritual practice, possibly following a [vow of silence](#). (Gunilla Norris, *Inviting Silence: universal principles of meditation*, 2004; Sara Maitland,

A Book of Silence, 2008; Sabit Madaliev, *The Silence of the Sufi*, 2006).

Silence has been a feature of Christian [Quietism](#), historically a focus of controversy. Upheld as exemplary, silence is a primary characteristic of [Quaker meetings for worship](#) (see *Silence in Quaker Tradition*, 2005). This was a primary focus of the quietist movement Not as formal worship but as private reflection that nurtures the individual in the recognition of solitude, the characteristics of silence have been outlined as follows by Arthur O. Roberts (*Devotionals on Silence*), a Quaker author:

- fosters awe before the Almighty
- indicates submission to God
- provides a posture for worship
- provides freedom from noise and distraction
- condition for tranquility
- sets the stage for prayer
- signifies respect for others
- renews wonder at the world
- provides holy space
- prepares for effective social witness.

Unsayings is fundamental to forms of theology based on [apophatic discourse](#) (Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsayings*, 1994), as previously noted (*Being What You Want: problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?* 2008). Silence on certain matters is highly recommended -- even framed as basic to civilized discourse. The core study by [Ludwig Wittgenstein](#) (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1921) concludes with the much-cited phrase: *Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must pass over in silence.* The most fundamentally significant experiences of life may be those of which nothing can be said. Love, pain and wonder may only be experienced in silence.

Silence is central to consideration of conscience as a "still small voice" -- a voice through which God allegedly speaks (S. Michael Houdmann, *What does it mean that God speaks in a still small voice?* [GotQuestions.org](#); Pastor Pauley, *The Silent Voice of God*). [W. David Hall](#) argues:

I have shown that Ricoeur followed Heidegger in exploring conscience through the metaphor of the voice; conscience is the silent voice that comes from me, yet from beyond me. He then expanded upon this idea to include the voice of injunction to the self which comes from elsewhere. therefore the voice of conscience becomes a mediating structure between self-attestation and moral injunction. His reliance on this metaphor gives opportunity to explore the symbolic potency of the image of the voice in order to give some more determinate character to the phenomenon of conscience. (*Paul Ricoeur and the Poetic Imperative: the creative tension between love and justice*, 2008, p. 122).

The voice of conscience is the subject of a broad-ranging historical review by [Mika Ojakangas](#), (*The Voice of Conscience: a political genealogy of Western ethical experience*, 2013). Such considerations may be confronted with the desirability of a silent majority in a democracy -- with the further expectation that audiences should listen to leaders in silence (as in conferences and gatherings of every kind around the world, and even going silently to war without protest).

A valuable overview is provided by Paul Thoms (*The Sounds of Silence*, 2011) under the following headings:

- group uses of silence
- silence in the arts
- silence as a source of healing
- painful silences

Like many, Thoms notes with regret the disappearance of silence and reviews ways in which silence can be brought back into lives of people -- through religion, prayer (as the "language of silence"), yoga, and meditation. Value may be attached to "deep silence", as in a recent movie of life in a Carthusian monastery (*Into Great Silence*, 2005).

As noted for aesthetic purposes by Jennifer Mulcahy (*Sensing the Silence: Mary Kathleen*, 2008):

... the word silence is rarely used in isolation. It is usually preceded by a descriptive phrase, or adjective, which describes the essence of a particular place in time. The type of silence, and the way in which we interpret it, is dependent upon the type of energy or essence which pervades a particular place at a given moment. Thus, we have a series of descriptions of the different silences that we can recognise and with which we empathise.

As examples, Mulcahy notes:

- a resounding silence,
- a deathly silence,
- a respectful silence,
- an eerie silence,
- a complete silence,
- an awkward silence,
- a hushed silence,
- a profound silence,
- a contemplative silence, etc.

Mulcahy then continues:

When people are asked what silence means to them, the response is usually to do with the absence of intrusive noise, typically man made, whether it be the human voice or the everyday sounds of civilisation that is, tools, machinery, music, dogs barking, cats fighting etc. Complete silence, unless one is in a sound proof room, is somewhat elusive, more a concept than an experienced reality...

That the word silence is used in so many ways is indicative of people's acceptance and recognition of the different qualities of

silence and also acknowledgment of an individual's ability to interpret the different types of energy that permeate the variety of silences we encounter in our daily lives.

In addition to that of the Quaker tradition, silence is cultivated as a feature of some forms of dialogue, notably as promoted by [Steven M. Rosen](#) (with whom an exchange inspired this speculation). A particular example is the [Reciprocal Maieutic Approach](#) of [Danilo Dolci](#).

In the tradition of Judaism, the following qualities and textures of silence are distinguished, as summarized by R' Hillel Goelman (*The Torah of Silence*, 2000):

- a watchful / attentive silence
- a loud, bold, explicit silence
- a joyful silence
- a cowardly / humiliated silence
- a silence of pain and betrayal
- a silence of regret and shame
- a horrified silence
- a prayerful silence

That commentary notes:

As in the Torah, it seems that today both the voices of the adult world and the silences of the adult world effectively drown out both the voices and the silences of children.

Provocatively however, given the status of women in Judaism (and in many other religions), a similar point may be made with regard to the voices of women, as argued by [Elise Boulding](#) (*The Underside of History: a view of women through time*, 1976). A case of institutionalized silence? The point is more specifically argued by [Annette Iggulden](#) (*Women's Silence: in the space of words and images*, 2002):

This study investigates the way in which silence operates productively within and between the two modes of communication. I suggest that in the process of changing words into images or scripto-visual art-practice, the silence in women's lives can be articulated. I argue that women draw on the generative qualities of silence to create forms of speech that override the cultural constructions of gender which have placed them within the space of "mute" silence

Qualities of Silence

(Editorial, *The Examiner*, Launceston, 17 February 1951).

Pliny the Younger, a Roman writer of the first century, set down that the mind is nourished by silence and darkness. That Tacitus, the Roman historian of that era, was an intimate friend of this Pliny, may be written off as a rather apt coincidence, but inconsequential. Nearly a score of centuries later than the earthly sojourn of either of these great thinkers the question comes to mind-how much of mental nourishment is being withheld from mankind by blaring noise and garish light? ...

The silence of the wise is not usually constructive, though it has probably a preservative quality. To grasp a situation thoroughly and to know when the best interests are served by speech or silence - that is wisdom, the mental calibre required in the highest places of world thought if humanity is to progress to the heights ordained for it. "Give it an understanding but no tongue." Hamlet's request regarding the vision of his father's ghost, goes broadly and well with many a situation where speech would wreck good plans. It is the silence of conspiracy -- and conspiracy may be for good or evil...

It is a strange commentary on life today that, with the scientific endorsement of silence as an ingredient of well being, science itself is making possible the wrecking of silence by noise, sometimes one noise imposed on another, in the name of entertainment. Should the wise be silent in the din of the unwise?

Confronting incommensurable forms of silence

The argument above confronts the problematic and remedial qualities of silence -- and their implications at the global level in this period. The strange ambiguity of their mysterious complementarity evokes the question as to the nature of any possible global framework for such apparent incommensurability.

There is of course a degree of irony to the current argument of the intelligence services that secrecy of the highest order, and silence with regard to its nature, is vital to national security -- irrespective of its implications for global insecurity. This contrasts strangely with the significance associated with official moments of silence in which past strategic failures are commemorated in an evocation of gravitas. The argument of the security services offers a strange secular echo of that of any elite priesthood protective of the subtlest insights shared with the very few in the inner *sanctum sanctorum* of a temple.

As noted above, these contrasts have been most explicitly and succinctly evoked by [Renée Gendron](#) (*The Meanings of Silence during Conflict*, *Journal of Conflictology*, 2011), with the introductory comment that:

Silence is present in many conversations and, depending on the context, silence will have different effects and impacts on the nature of the conversation. Being able to better understand how silence impacts conflicts (both violent and non-violent), provides mediators with a better comprehension as to how to adjust the mediation process, where appropriate. Silence in the context of this article can mean two things. It can first mean a form of non-verbal communication in which neither of the parties speaks. Silence can also mean the ability of one party to stop a particular discussion. That is, one party is able to silence an issue, to avoid the matter being brought up and discussed.

Gendron distinguishes the two forms of silence under the following headings:

- **Problematic uses of silence:** These damage the relationship between the conflicting parties, possibly causing further disempowerment to any of them
 - silence in the case of mass trauma: where the nature of the experience cannot be readily expressed, and the opportunity to do so may therefore be denied, thus crippling for those who experienced it
 - silence in the context of power: offering many opportunities of ignoring a particular issue. Silence can be used as a tool of aggression. It negates the situation of those abused and oppressed and legitimates the action of those committing repression. Tactics include ignoring requests for discussion, refusal to answer direct questions, and intentionally delaying agreed actions. Not providing sufficient information can have destructive effects on an individual or a group.

- **Constructive uses of silence:** These enhance and strengthen communication between the parties, even constituting a turning point in a conflictual relationship, although cultures may respond differently (whether positively or negatively) to this opportunity -- with the meaning of silence depending on the context:.
 - silence in the context of mediation: as offering a time for reflection, especially with regard to issues as yet inadequately expressed
 - silence, emotional intelligence and mediation: enabling individuals to generate or emulate vivid emotions to facilitate judgements and memories concerning complex feelings.
 - process specific aspects of intergenerational conflicts: whereby emerging information enables mutually acceptable resolutions to be recognized
 - active listening: through which a determination is made of of the kind of silence that is being experienced as a guide to perceptive mediation

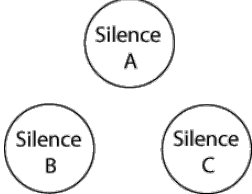
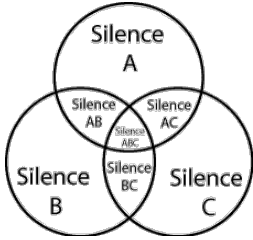
Gendron's overview focuses primarily on interpersonal and group conflicts. Its application to silence at the global level -- and to complications of silence -- merits consideration. Of particular relevance is the collaboration of Gendron with Christie Husted who found corporate crime to be a complex dynamic of system-level processes, personality traits, macro-environmental, and social influences, requiring a holistic approach (*Systematic Differentiation Between Dark and Light Leaders: Is a Corporate Criminal Profile Possible?* 2008).

There the term **organi-cultural deviance** was defined to explain social, situational and environmental factors giving rise to corporate crime. As the title implies, this could offer a way of reframing the ambiguous status of professions, as noted above -- provocatively to be understood as at least complicit with a deviant corporate culture (Renée Gendron, and Claire Husted., *Socialization of Individuals into Deviant Corporate Culture*, American Association of Behavioral and Social Sciences), 2011)

Silence / Ignorance / Uncertainty as fundamentally interwoven?

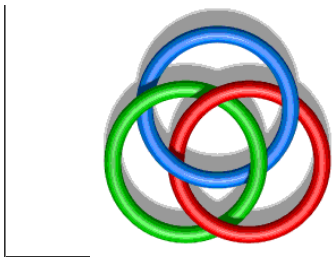
In order to develop the argument further regarding silence, extensive use of imagery can be made, as suggested in the above-mentioned study by Annette Iggulden (*Women's Silence: in the space of words and images*, 2002). This is consistent with a quest for aids to comprehension of complexity, as previously argued (*In Quest of Mnemonic Catalysts -- for comprehension of complex psychosocial dynamics*, 2007).

At its simplest, the relationship between zones of silence can be represented by the following.

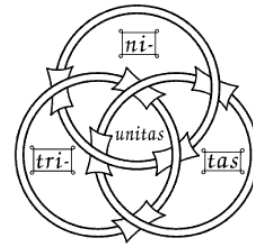
Spatial representation of zones of silence		
	<p>In the image on the left, the distinct zones of silence are isolated from one another.</p> <p>In the image on the right, the zones of silence are understood as variously overlapping as in a standard Venn diagram-- engendering more complex forms AB or ABC. This bears some relationship to the so-called fish-scale model of interdisciplinarity</p>	

Rather than the use above of zones of space as indicative of zones of silence, the following images make use of the complexity of interlocking **Borromean rings**. Their interlocking offers an indication of the sensed complexity of complications of silence. The Borromean rings/knots are a focus of the psychoanalytic approach of **Jacques Lacan**.

Borromean rings (images reproduced from <i>Wikipedia</i>)		



Borromean rings are variously used in symbolism. That on the right is a symbol of the Christian Trinity, from a 13th-century manuscript.



The challenge of integration beyond any binary clash is admirably clarified using the mathematics of **q-analysis** as developed by Ron Atkin (*Multidimensional Man; can man live in 3-dimensional space?*, 1981), as separately summarized (*Comprehension: Social organization determined by incommunicability of insights*). Atkin illustrates the challenge of comprehension in relation to experience "within" the geometry of a triangle -- especially with regard to the perspective necessary to comprehend the geometry of the triangle as a whole.

The perceptual significance of this approach is well-illustrated by visual sensitivity to colours resulting from the three primary hues (red, green and blue). These may be represented on a simple triangle (below left). Here the vertices (O-simplexes) represent the primary hues, the sides are twofold combinations (1-simplexes), and the combination of the three hues makes the central white (2-simplex). A suggested equivalent of Atkin's triangle is presented here (below right), based on sound, as might be suggestive of the challenge of recognition of silence of a higher order (however that might be understood)

Vision-Light variant	Codification of relative orders	Sound-Silence variant
	<p>0-dimension: Red, Green or Blue</p> <p>1-dimension: Yellow (=Red/Green) Purple (=Red/Blue); or Turquoise (=Blue/Green)</p> <p>2-dimension: White (=Red/Green/Blue)</p>	

The **Euler spiral** (spiro, clothoid or Cornu spiral) is a curve whose curvature changes linearly with its curve length. Such spirals are widely used as transition curves in railroad/highway engineering for connecting and transiting the geometry between a tangent and a circular curve. This suggests a degree of potential relevance to the challenge of smooth transition from "in-the-box" to "out-of-the-box" thinking -- and possibly from silence of a "lower order" to one of a "higher order".

Such spirals also have applications to diffraction computations in optics -- suggesting a degree of potential relevance to the widespread use of "vision" metaphors in policy-making. The relevance to issues of governance is discussed separately as offering a means of engaging with a silent "underworld" about which little is said (*Designing Global Self-governance for the Future: patterns of dynamic integration of the netherworld*, 2010; *Mapping the Global Underground*, 2010).

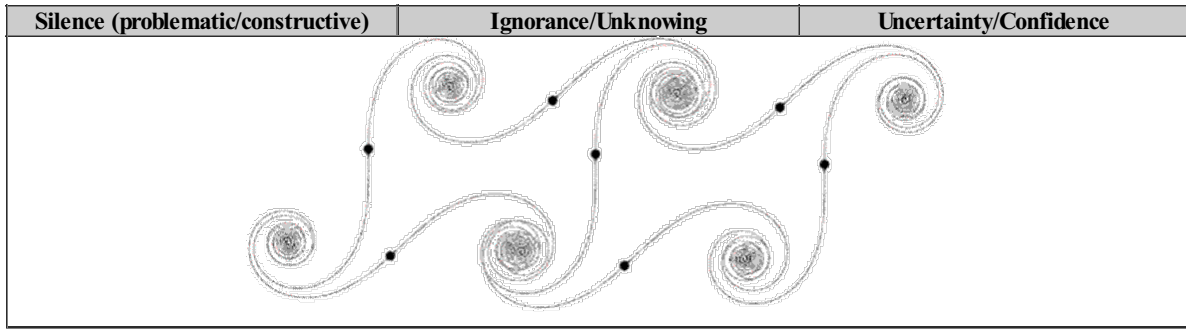
Euler's spiral or Clothoid Screen shots from an interactive representation	Hypercycle ? <i>Principia Cybernetica</i>

Following its use in the left hand images above (as a suggested "pathway" between levels of silence), the form of the Euler spiral can be used to suggest a more complex relationship between the problematic and constructive forms of silence, ignorance, and uncertainty (as suggested below). In its problematic form, silence can readily be understood as giving rise to ignorance, thereby undermining confidence. However, in its more constructive form, silence may instead elicit a valuable mode of unknowing which may allay uncertainty and engender a subtle form of existential confidence:

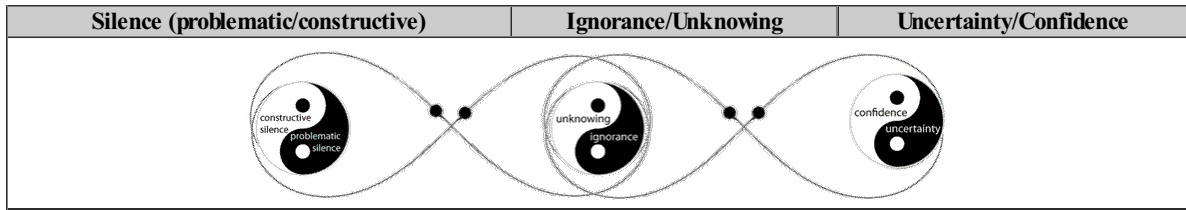
- problematic: silence > ignorance > uncertainty
- constructive: silence > unknowing > confidence

This twofold triadic relationship is indicative of a complex dynamic -- potentially fundamental to any global configuration and consistent

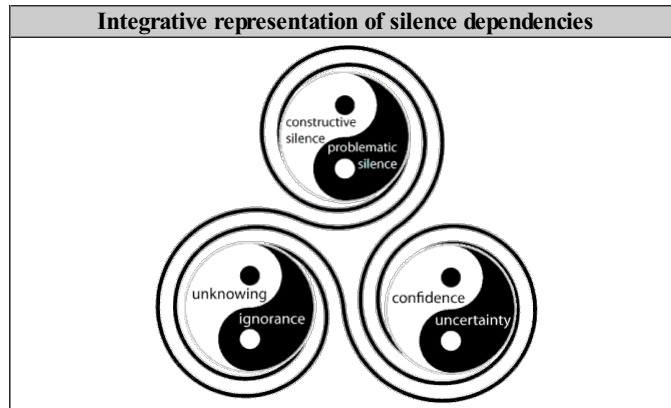
with a previous argument (*Triangulation of Incommensurable Concepts for Global Configuration*, 2011).



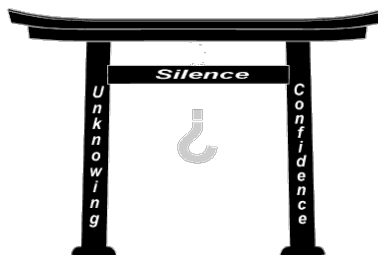
The complexity implied by the above pattern of relationships can be fruitfully embedded in the traditional dynamics associated with the [Tao symbol](#), as shown below.



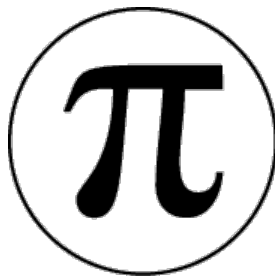
The pattern above can be further consolidated (image below) using one variant of the traditional European [triple spiral \(triskelion\)](#), of which there are also Asian variants, including the Japanese [Mitsudomoe](#), the Tibetan Buddhist [Gankyil](#), and the Korean [Sam Taegeuk](#). The following image suggests a way of interweaving these multiple possibilities -- using a combination of the traditional Tao symbol superimposed on the triple spiral.



Another suggestive configuration uses the traditional symbolism of the gateway offering entry to a sacred space. There are many forms of symbolic gateway in Asia, as with the [pailou](#) of China and the [torana](#) of India. In Japan these are known as [torii](#), of which there are many variants. The ambiguity between the problematic and constructive alternatives is indicated in the image below by use of a simple animation. Such gateways may well stand in isolation in the countryside leading "nowhere". As such they recall the Zen classic -- [The Gateless Gate](#) -- a compilation of [koans](#). Leading "nowhere", they are now appropriate symbols for the future as many experience it (*Going Nowhere through Not-knowing Where to Go*, 2013; *Way Round Cognitive Ground Zero and Pointlessness? Embodying the geometry of fundamental cognitive dynamics*, 2012).



Given the following development of the argument with respect to globality, it is mnemonically appropriate that the sign most closely associate with mathematical insight into its nature should be the [pi sign](#) -- resembling the [torii](#) in significant respects.



Its fundamental role with respect to comprehension of the circle anticipates its role with respect to any spherical sense of globality. The sense in which the latter is "finite but unbounded" echoes significance associated with the *torii* as a "gateless gate" and the questions that this raises. It has been proposed that the [observable universe](#) is finite but unbounded.

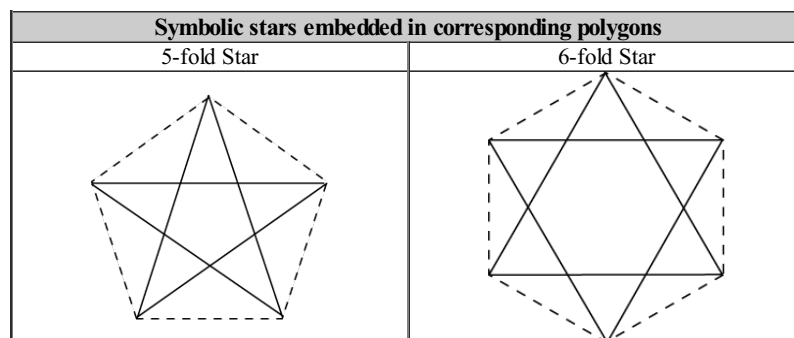
Towards configuring silences globally

The argument above offers various two-dimensional representations suggestive of systemic relations assumed to be fundamental to comprehension of the dependencies of silence / ignorance / uncertainty in a global knowledge-based civilization. Presented that way in two dimensions any more global, integrative comprehension (requiring representation in a third dimension) is necessarily **implicit** rather than **explicit**.

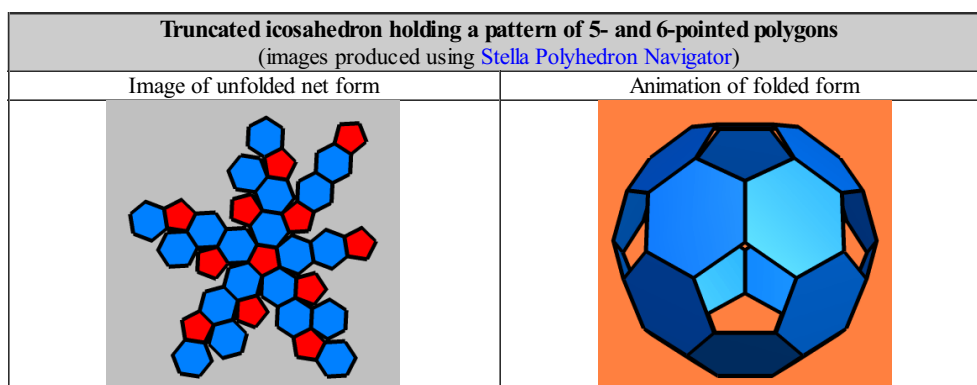
Folding a two-dimensional pattern of symbols into spherical form: A further step in the visual argument can be taken by considering how a two-dimensional pattern of "silences" might be fruitfully wrapped or folded into global form in three dimensions. A variant of this possibility was considered by addressing the impossibility of mapping together in two dimensions the contrasting star symbols of Judaism and Islam -- 6-pointed and 5-pointed respectively. The geometrical tiling problem can however be resolved in three dimensions, as argued and illustrated separately (*Middle East Peace Potential through Dynamics in Spherical Geometry: engendering connectivity from incommensurable 5-fold and 6-fold conceptual frameworks*, 2012).

The point to be stressed is the manner in which the star symbols are used to reinforce two-dimensional modes of comprehension whose incompatibilities are curiously associated with the only too evident territorial conflicts. With respect to the argument regarding silence, a case could be made that each star is indicative of a mode of silence of a higher order -- represented inadequately and implicitly in two dimensions.

Of particular interest in respecting these contrasting understandings of a **higher order** of silence is the sense in which -- in a two-dimensional modality -- each can be assumed to frame the other as representative of silence of a **lower order**. There is therefore a complex dynamic in which "White" is framed as "Black", and vice versa, as separately discussed in detail (*Interplay of black and white in the Greater Game*, 2013). This constitutes a form of mirroring -- as might be expected.



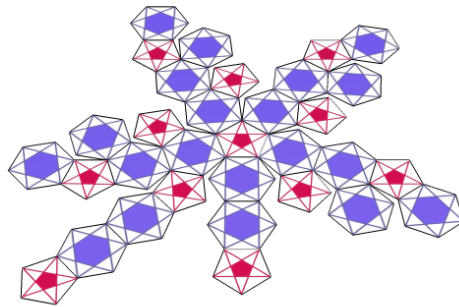
Combinations of the above forms can be presented as a two-dimensional pattern (left image below) -- then folded into a global form (right image below).



The animation below shows stages in the folding of the variegated 5-star and 6-star pattern into a global form. It is the spherical form

which implies a silence of a higher order through which their differences are potentially "resolved" -- whatever that may mean as a challenge to comprehension for a global knowledge-based civilization. It suggests a fundamental (or transcendent) comprehension which does not readily lend itself to articulation, as tentatively discussed separately (*Unthought as Cognitive Foundation of Global Civilization*, 2012).

Animation of the process of folding (and unfolding) a truncated icosahedron
(generated using [Stella Polyhedron Navigator](#))



Balls as a significant vehicle of global silence: As illustrated below, it could be said that there is an immense irony to the fact that the relationship between 5- and 6-pointed symbols of such controversial significance should be "resolved" through the form of a football. This is unique in being the focus of much attentive game-playing worldwide -- across the ideological, religious, cultural, educational and ethnic boundaries by which global civilization is otherwise divided. In contrast to any two-dimensional exercise in representing global civilization, the ball acquires special additional significance through the dynamics of play. Through its ready recognition by all classes of society, it merits careful consideration as a reflection of the complex dynamics of global civilization -- and potentially the most appropriate representation of it..



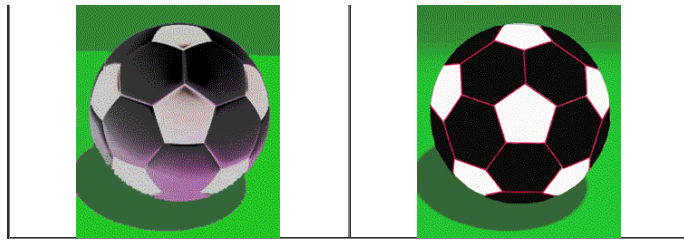
However the images above also point to alternative interpretations of that representation with its 12 pentagonal faces coloured black and its 20 hexagonal faces coloured white. The images suggest the question as to whether there are footballs in which the 12 pentagonal faces are white and the 20 hexagonal faces are black. A quick check in Google images reveals no such alternative. Why not? Is the football appropriate to global civilization one in which the colours alternate?

The argument above regarding the alternation between colours (*Interplay of black and white in the Greater Game*, 2013) was made within the context of a discussion of a new variant of the game played by the great powers of the world (*Playing the Great Game with Intelligence: Authority versus the People*, 2013). The original form of such international *realpolitik* in Central Asia was known as **The Great Game**, now recognized as **The New Great Game** -- in process of reframing as *noopolitik*. It is highly appropriate to implications of this argument that football should also be recognized and promoted worldwide as "the great game".

That a representation of global civilization should acquire its significance to the world through the process of play suggests that conceptual exploration of that significance may need to be considered dynamically rather than statically -- through "serious" playful interaction, as may be variously discussed (*Dynamic Transformation of Static Reporting of Global Processes*, 2013; *Humour and Play-Fullness: essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity*, 2005; *Playfully Changing the Prevailing Climate of Opinion: climate change as focal metaphor of effective global governance*, 2005; *Enacting Transformative Integral Thinking through Playful Elegance*, 2010).

In that spirit, the following are quick experiments in alternative colour codings -- to highlight the sense of unfamiliarity they offer.

Inverting the colours in the above image	Recolouring the above image
--	-----------------------------

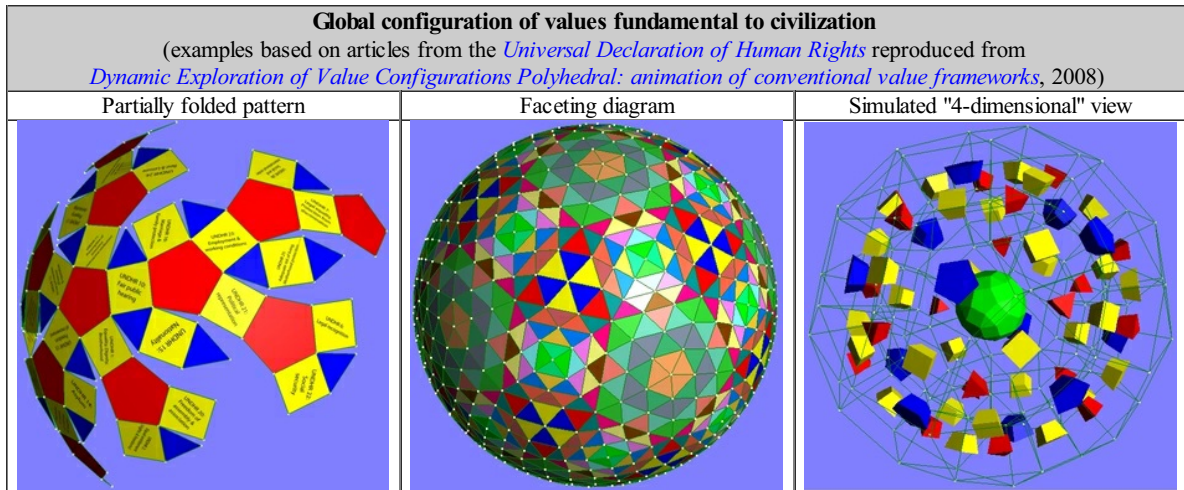


Any alternation between the pattern of colours enables the ball to be recognized as the focus for a range of currently "unspoken" questions -- as a potentially valuable configuration of silences:

- why is the football design effectively restricted to a single black-and-white pattern:
 - is this an indication of conceptual "lock-in" -- of restriction to "in-the-box" thinking, or a single pattern of discourse?
 - does it reflect the fact that football is primarily a "men's game" -- in a global civilization?
 - why not use balls of alternate colour pattern -- in the two halves of a game (for example)?
- how significant is the black colouration of the pentagonal forms:
 - so appropriate to the dubious role of the Pentagon in the pattern of global silence?
 - so appropriate to the manner in which Islam is framed by cultures more closely identified with the white-coloured hexagonal form?
- are the 12 black-coloured forms indicative of a 12-fold pattern of silences -- inadequate or "lost" modes of expression, as separately argued (*Enabling a 12-fold Pattern of Systemic Dialogue for Governance*, 2010)?
- what "qualities of silence" might be suggestively inscribed on the 32 polygons -- whether understood problematically or constructively as the experience of civilization?
- to what extent are the 12 pentagons and 20 hexagons indicative of a particular strange alliance -- regarding what is not being said?
- given the typically noisy context in which the game is played, how does this relate to any higher order of silence -- possibly as the ultimate symbol of systemic neglect through the distraction the game enables?

As a design challenge, it is appropriate to note that some premium-grade 32-panel [footballs](#) use non-regular polygons to give a closer approximation to sphericity. It might be asked why less universally-played ball games, such as basketball, use other simpler designs.

It is intriguing that the focus should be placed on a singular polyhedral pattern when there are so many others that are spherically symmetrical, as separately explored (*Towards Polyhedral Global Governance: complexifying oversimplistic strategic metaphors*, 2008; *Polyhedral Pattern Language: software facilitation of emergence, representation and transformation of psycho-social organization*, 2008; *Configuring Global Governance Groups: experimental visualization of possible integrative relationships*, 2008). Many are potentially capable of holding a greater variety of any combination of "silence/ignorance/uncertainty" -- especially where there is alternation between what each represents globally. Possibilities are illustrated below.

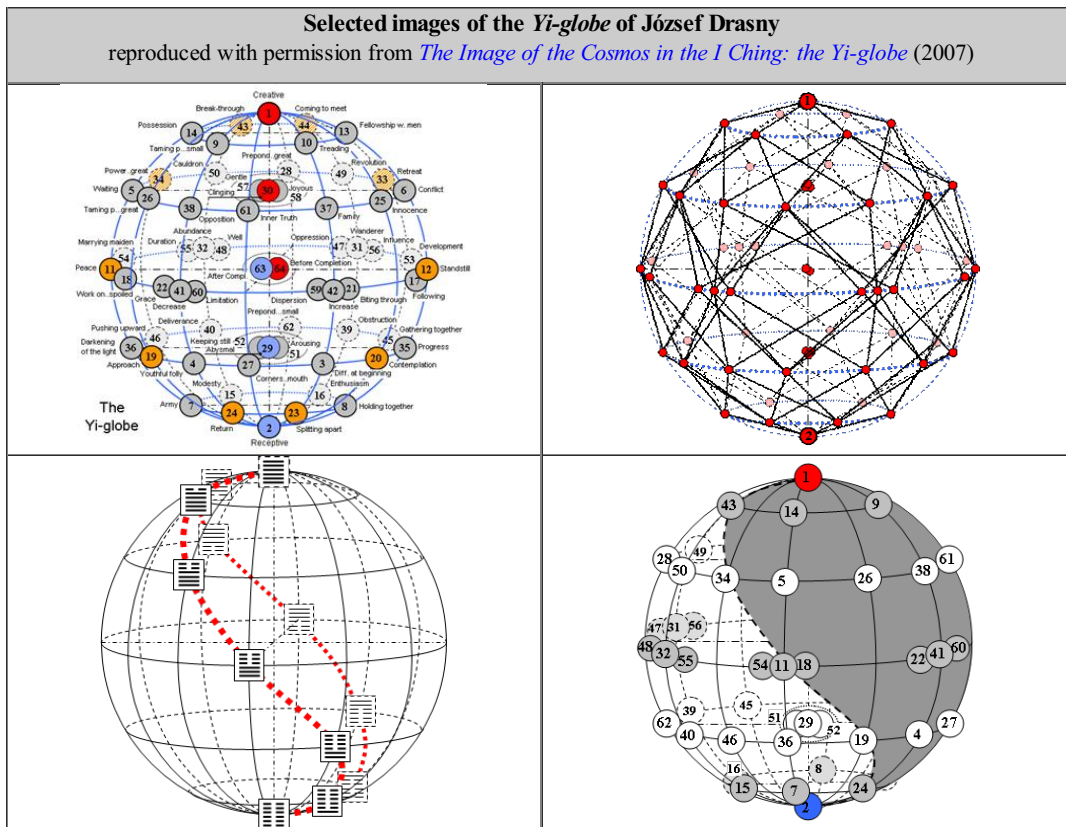


Mapping conditions of change into spherical form: A seemingly quite different approach can be taken in the light of the classical coding of conditions of change in the Chinese *Yi Jing* (*I Ching*). The question is whether there are insights to be gleaned regarding silence from some such configuration. As an exploratory exercise, the **twofold set** of *problematic/constructive* modalities of the **threefold set** of *silence/ignorance/uncertainty* might be represented by the classical combination of [trigrams](#), perhaps as follows -- using the unbroken lines to signify "constructive", and the broken lines to signify "problematic" (for example).

Use of trigram encoding to distinguish patterns of constructive versus destructive								
Silence (+/-)	☰	☷	☱	☶	☲	☵	☴	☳
Ignorance (+/-)	☰	☷	☱	☶	☲	☵	☴	☳
Uncertainty (+/-)	☰	☷	☱	☶	☲	☵	☴	☳

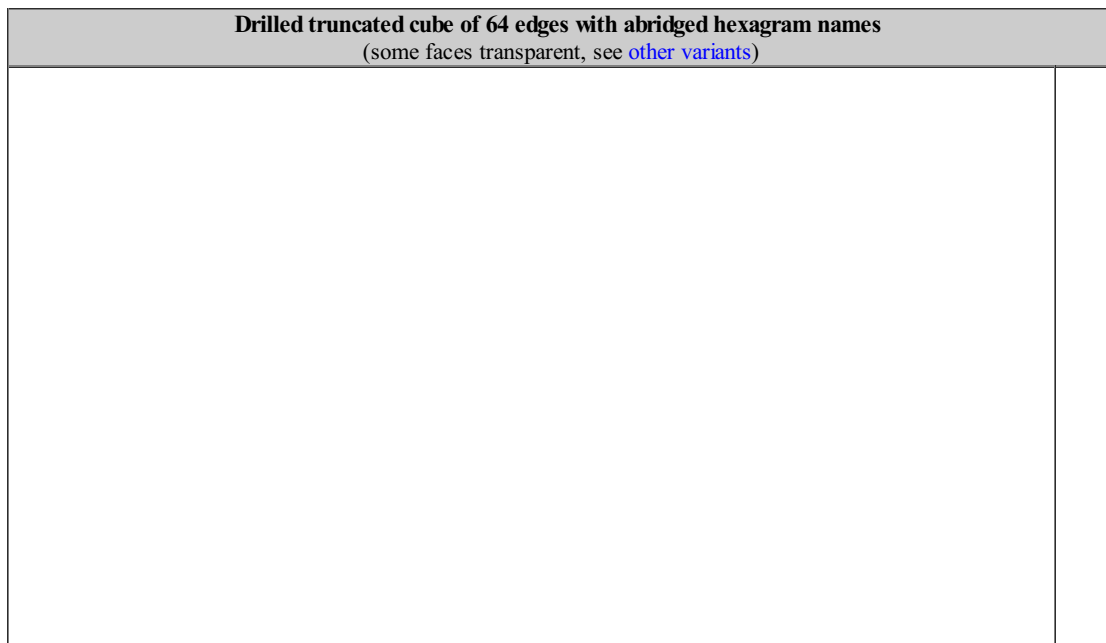
Some such articulation offers useful pointers to the ambiguities of the relationship which each of the eight conditions then characterizes in a knowledge-based civilization. The argument can be taken a stage further through combining any of the eight with each other to

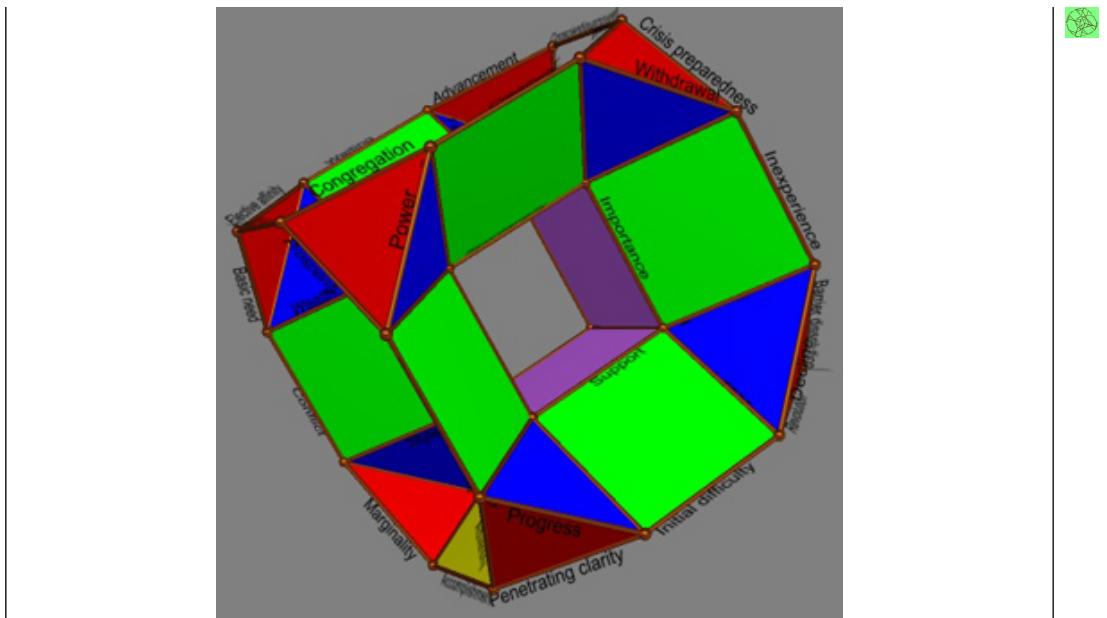
constitute the 64 hexagrams encoding the range of possible decision situations -- with one set of eight framing the condition for the individual (decision-maker), with the second the condition for the collective. It is these which could then be configured globally as indicative of global civilization. One approach to such configuration is that of [József Drasny](#), as indicated below (with the numbers indicative of the standard sequence of the hexagrams from 1 to 64).



These images point to the possibility of a correspondence between the spherical organization of conditions of change and the more familiar understanding of how the Earth, as a globe, is exposed to light and darkness. The approach is however especially useful in offering a way of switching from light/dark to their metaphorical equivalents based on sound. It is suggestive of ways of configuring contrasting qualities of silence whilst implying a more central understanding of "higher order". It is instructive to consider the traditional decision-making dilemmas of the 64 conditions of change as implying "moments of silence" in anticipation of the decision taken. Any such "strategic silence" can be understood as corresponding to the "creative silence" of the artist protective of emerging insight.

Curiously, with respect to the previous case regarding the 32 polygonal panels of the football, the 64 hexagrams could be associated with a "dynamic high-tech football" whose colours alternated between black and white -- giving 2x32 possibilities. It is otherwise quite problematic to associate the 64 conditions of change distinctively with any such a form. One unique possibility is the drilled truncated cube with 64 edges onto which those conditions can be mapped, as discussed separately ([Enabling Wisdom Dynamically within Intertwined Tori: requisite resonance in global knowledge architecture](#), 2012).





Appropriate to this argument, this form is closely related to the [cube-connected cycles](#) used as a [network topology](#) in [parallel computing](#).

Dark energy of sustainability?

Any concern for the nature of "global civilization" calls for radical thinking at a time when there is increasing concern at the possibility of the collapse of that civilization (Roy Scranton, *Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene*, *The New York Times*, 10 November 2013; Samuel Scheffle, *The Importance of the Afterlife -- Seriously*, *The New York Times*, 21 September 2013; Dave Pollard, *Why We Cannot Save the World, How to Save the World*, 18 September 2012; Robert Jensen, *Rationally Speaking, We Are All Apocalyptic Now*, *Countercurrents.org*, 9 February 2013; Richard Smith, *Sleepwalking to Extinction: capitalism and the destruction of life and earth*, *Information ClearingHouse*, 16 November 2013).

Two earlier exercise also note relevant references (*Mind Map of Global Civilizational Collapse: why nothing is happening in response to global challenges*, 2011; *Recognizing the Psychosocial Boundaries of Remedial Action: constraints on ensuring a safe operating space for humanity*, 2009). Given the reservations expressed above regarding the vision metaphor, of notably relevance is the title of that of Karen Cerulo (*Never Saw It Coming: cultural challenges to envisioning the worst*, 2006), in contrast with that of Adam Corner (*Climate Science: why the world won't listen*, *New Scientist*, 26 September 2013), and the argument of Jared Diamond (*Collapse: how societies choose to fail or survive*, Viking Press, 2005).

Isomorphism: One approach is to question the possible understanding of anything that can be considered "global" -- for which geometry offers various indications (*Metaphorical Geometry in Quest of Globality -- in response to global governance challenges*, 2009; *Psychosocial Implication of Without Within: enjoying going solar for oneself*, 2013). Any approach could be guided by the original inspiration of [general systems research](#) regarding [isomorphism](#) between systems of any scale.

Shape of the noosphere: Given the continuing concern of cosmologists with the [shape of the universe](#), it might then be asked how questions regarding the "shape of global civilization" might be formulated -- especially with respect to a knowledge-based civilization. The theme has been variously addressed to a limited degree (Farida Nezhmetdinova, *Global Challenges and Globalization of Bioethics*, *Croatian Medical Journal*, 2013; *The Shape of Civilization excerpt from Rodney Collin's Theory of Celestial Influence*, 1997). The remarkable explorations of cosmologists regarding shape merit consideration (as noted separately, *Mnemonic clues to configuration and containment of meaningful identity*, 2013) in discussing *Eliciting a Universe of Meaning within a global information society of fragmenting knowledge and relationships* (2013).

What might be understood to be the "shape of the [noosphere](#)" -- in a period when consideration is now given to [noopolitik](#)? What part might silence/ignorance/uncertainty play?

According to Phillip J. Cunningham: *Teilhard was convinced that the shape of the noosphere's future would be determined by those developments he saw taking place in the Europe and the U.S. (Teilhard de Chardin and the Noosphere, CMC Magazine, March 1997)*. By contrast, as argued from an aesthetic perspective:

The term 'noosphere' was realized by Russian scientist [Vladimir Vernadsky](#), who used it to describe the sphere of human thought. The shape of the noosphere is indefinite, asymmetrical, malingering. Though we take the economy of informational and linguistic exchange for granted, the structure of this immaterial psycho-'sphere' is not only formed, but determined by its anomalies. (*Noospheria*, Anobium Literary, 2012)

For [Nicolas Curien](#):

Teilhard, who "saw" the noosphere as a kind of biofilm, surrounding the atmosphere, would today be most astonished to "discover his invention" under the appearance of a spider's web named Internet, made of routers and optical fibers. In his vision,

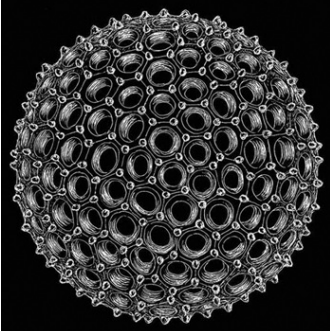
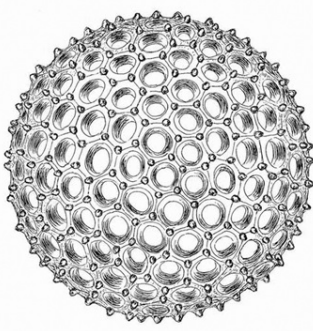
he certainly missed the physical shape of the noosphere but he was perfectly relevant as regards its function: bringing human brains together into a "collective mind". (*The Theory of Reflexivity Facing and Backing Regulatory Practice through the Mirror of Digital Development*, European University Institute, 13-14 September 2013)

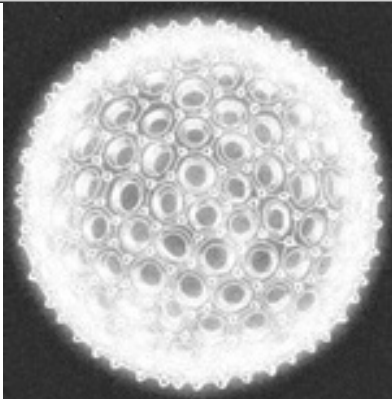
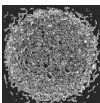


Dark energy: As noted by *Wikipedia*, in physical cosmology and astronomy, **dark energy** is a hypothetical form of energy that permeates all of space and tends to accelerate the expansion of the universe. It currently offers the most accepted hypothesis to explain observations that indicate that the universe is expanding at an accelerating rate. Based on the standard model of cosmology, the total mass-energy of the universe contains 4.9% ordinary matter, 26.8% **dark matter** and 68.3% dark energy. Many things about the nature of dark energy remain matters of speculation.

This suggests the speculative question as to **what might be the "dark energy" of an expanding global civilization** -- as indicated by accelerating expansion of the global population and of global knowledge. Given that so much is unknown about dark energy, there is an argument for assuming that in the case of a human knowledge-based society it is based on ignorance in some special way -- necessarily difficult to comprehend.

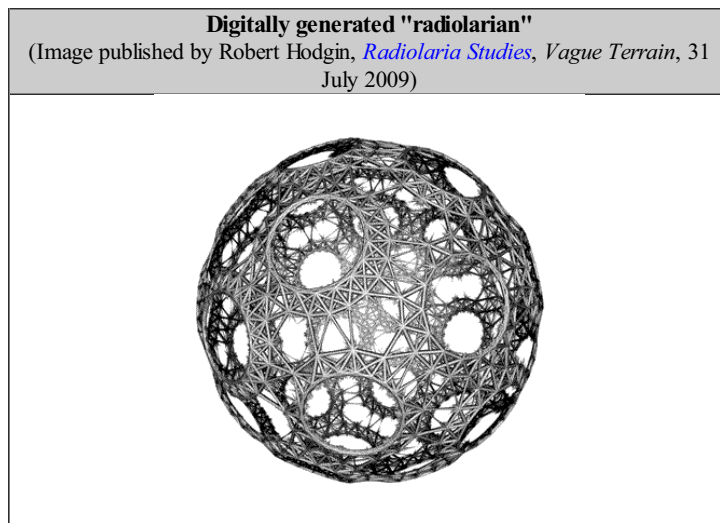
Dark sound: Ironically, with respect to the theme of silence, a case has now been made by cosmologists for recognition of "dark sound" as fundamental to further understanding of the universe (Francis-Yan Cyr-Racine, et al., *Constraints on Large-Scale Dark Acoustic Oscillations from Cosmology*, 2013), as separately discussed (Adam Becker, *Eavesdropping on dark sound shrinks the shadow universe*, *New Scientist*, 07 November 2013). Why is the choice of metaphor considered appropriate? Is there then some form of a "shadow civilization" to be recognized -- an "underworld" or "netherworld" (as mentioned above)?

Ignorance: Whether ignorance is understood in its problematic sense, or as the "unknowing" highlighted by mystics (as in *The Cloud of Unknowing*), the possibility would appear to merit particular attention -- as indicated by the recognition increasingly accorded to its significance (Stuart Firestein, *Ignorance: how it drives science*, 2012; Nicholas Rescher, *Ignorance: on the wider implications of deficient knowledge*, 2009). Understanding the "noosphere" as the "universe" of a global-knowledge-based civilization, suggests the provocative possibility of setting any exploration of it within a "university of ignorance", as separately argued (*University of Ignorance: engaging with nothing, the unknown, the incomprehensible, and the unsaid*, 2013). As one means of gaining understanding of the "shape" of that universe, speculative use was made there of some of the simplest sustainable microorganisms -- **radiolaria** -- given the general systems inspiration regarding isomorphism. The following imagery, with its associated animation, is derived from that exploration.

Indicative representation of a University of Ignorance as a pattern of resonance between cognitive extremes Using the radiolarian <i>Aulonia hexagona</i> , whose morphology was extensively studied by Ernst Haeckel (image derived from a study by Christina Brodie, prior to modification for illustrative purposes)	
areas as domains of ignorance (dark holes) connecting network as knowledge (thin light links) ignorance as a background to a configuration of knowledge	areas as fields of knowledge (light holes) connecting network as barriers (thin dark links) knowledge as a background to a configuration of ignorance
	

Animation indicating the intermediary conditions in the alternation between the above extremes (tentative) (click for separate animation [2MB gif] with 64 contrasting images, including the following)			
			
Images for the animation were generated using filter effect options of Photoshop to modify the 2 extreme images, thereby suggesting an array of contrasting relationships between knowledge and ignorance (NB: Such an animation could benefit from greater aesthetic skills with respect to composition and pace)			

The geometry of radiolarians has been an inspiration to digital artists, such as those associated with the journal *Vague Terrain*, including the following image, for which a commentary is provided by the author.



A fruitful question relates to the capacity of radiolaria in engendering such forms -- and their necessary sustainability, even at that scale. Could the organization and "shape" of global civilization benefit from such systemically sensitive design? More provocative is the sense in which such "unseen" organisms (of which few have heard) imply a configuration of silences. In terms of the mystical tradition of Buddhism, this offers an image of the "emptiness of form"

Possession: One potentially valuable lead to the nature of dark energy -- and its sustaining function in global civilization -- is through the inexpressible sense of possession, irrespective of how any allusions may be made to what is held to be possessed, as separately discussed (*Property "possession" and ownership*; *Questionable claims to possession*; and *Possession of a sense of place*):

- silence associated with possession -- especially by the possessor
- blindness encouraged by possession -- especially in the possessor
- tastelessness as inferred in some forms of possession
- unfeelingness engendered by possession -- as inferred by others
- inodorous assumed as a consequence of possession -- no stench bo

Thoughtlessness and indifference: The concern may indeed be framed in terms of the unconsciousness recognized by psychoanalysis. There is however the possibility that it could be brought more sharply into focus through consideration of thoughtlessness and the unthought, as noted above (*Unthought as Cognitive Foundation of Global Civilization: implications of God, debt, overpopulation, waste, negligence, encroachment and death?* 2012; *Indifference to the Suffering of Others: occupying the moral high ground through doublespeak*, 2013).

Global systemic neglect: Another angle might be offered by the nature of unquestioning attitudes in the face of systemic neglect, as separately explored (*Strategic Implications of 12 Unasked Questions in Response to Disaster*, 2013; *Lipoproblems: Developing a Strategy Omitting a Key Problem -- the systemic challenge of climate change and resource issues*, 2009; *Scientific Gerrymandering of Boundaries of Overpopulation Debate*, 2012).

Solar mirroring of global civilization? From a general systems perspective, there is a degree of charm to reflection on the possibility of a form of mirroring between the shape and dynamics of the Sun and that of civilization -- if only for mnemonic purposes. There is of course a very long tradition relating the Sun to civilization through the *solar deity* of a culture and a period. Visually the images above of radiolaria are suggestive in this respect -- given the implied dynamics from which those forms emerged.

Especially intriguing to any such mirroring is the controversial research on the relationship between *sunspot cycles* and human behaviour, as summarized by James Borges (*Sunspots and Human Behavior*, *Journal of Borderland Research*, LVI, 2000, 1). This notes the early work of A. L. Tchijevsky (aka Alexander Chizhevsky) in studying the history from 500 BC to 1922 AD of mass human movement over centuries (in 72 countries) as compared with the solar cycle. The summary notes more recent research on his "Index of Mass Human Excitability".

Curiously, in relation to the argument above, metaphorical use is made of "silence" in describing phases in that cycle (*Manic Magnetosphere, Silent Sun, Earth Changes and the Pole Shift*, 16 April 2013; *Silent Sun upsets scientist's calculations*, *The Times of India*, 3 April 2009; Clive Cookson, *The Silent Sun's Uncertain Course*, *Financial Times*, 1 October 2008). Contrasting metaphorical use is extensively made of "roaring" in describing experience of the Sun. Also curious is the recognition of the "emission" of *solar flares* in active regions around the *sunspots*, where intense magnetic fields penetrate the photosphere linking the solar corona to the solar interior. The challenge of global warming is of course also characterized by reference to "emissions" -- offering other psychosocial connotations (*Sins of Hot Air Emission, Omission, Commission and Promission: the political challenge of responding to global crises*, 2009).

References

- Ron Atkin. *Multidimensional Man; can man live in 3-dimensional space?* Penguin, 1981
- James Bamford. *Body of Secrets: anatomy of the ultra-secret National Security Agency.* Anchor Books, 2002
- Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio and Jay Winter (Eds.). *Shadows of War: a social history of silence in the Twentieth Century.* Cambridge University Press, 2010 [[review](#)].
- Wendell Berry. *The Way of Ignorance -- and other essays.* Shoemaker and Hoard, 2005
- Michael L. Birkel. *Silence and Witness: the Quaker Tradition.* Orbis Books, 2004
- Elise Boulding. *The Underside of History: a view of women through time.* Halsted, 1976
- Peter Carruthers. Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* 2011 [[text](#)].
- Karen A. Cerulo. *Never Saw It Coming: cultural challenges to envisioning the worst.* University of Chicago Press, 2006
- Richard Cottrell. *Gladio: NATO's Dagger at the Heart of Europe.* Progressive Press, 2012.
- Bruce Davis. *Monastery Without Walls: daily life in the silence.* Celestial Arts, 1990.
- Michael Day. *Conspiracies of Silence.* *New Scientist*, 18 July 1998 [[abstract](#)]
- Jared Diamond. *Collapse: how societies choose to fail or survive.* Viking Press, 2005
- Sanford L. Drob. *Reading The Red Book: an interpretive guide to C.G. Jung's Liber Novus.* Spring Journal, 2012
- Patrick Leigh Fermor and Karen Armstrong. *A Time to Keep Silence.* New York Review Books Classics, 2007
- Stuart Firestein. *Ignorance: how it drives science.* Oxford University Press, 2012 [[summary](#)]
- Daniele Ganser. *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and terrorism in Western Europe.* Routledge, 2005 [[review](#)]
- Renée Gendron. *The Meanings of Silence during Conflict.* *Journal of Conflictology*, 2, 2011, 1 [[text](#)]
- Renée Gendron and Claire Husted:
- Socialization of Individuals into Deviant Corporate Culture. *Perspectives* (American Association of Behavioral and Social Sciences), 2011, 14 [[text](#)]
 - Using Gang and Cult Typologies to Understand Corporate Crimes. *Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 2011
- Alice Borchard Greene. *The Philosophy of Silence.* Richard R. Smith, 1940
- W. David Hall. *Paul Ricoeur and the Poetic Imperative: the creative tension between love and justice,* SUNY Press, 2008
- Soren Hallden. *The Strategy of Ignorance: from decision logic to evolutionary epistemology.* Coronet Books, 1986
- E. Hart and J. Hazelgrove. *Understanding the Organisational Context for Adverse events in the Health Services: the role of cultural censorship.* *Quality in Health Care*, 10, 2001, 4, pp. 257-262 [[abstract](#)]
- Stewart Hase. *Workplace Bullying: blowing the whistle on conspiracies of silence.* Reading Bumos and Entrails, 10 January 2011 [[text](#)]
- James Hillman and Sonu Shamdasani. *Lament of the Dead: psychology after Jung's Red Book.* W. W. Norton, 2013
- Mark Hobart (Ed.). *An Anthropological Critique of Development: the growth of ignorance.* Routledge, 1993
- Jasper Hopkins. *Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance: a translation and an appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia.* Banning Press, 1985
- Christie Husted. *Systematic Differentiation Between Dark and Light Leaders: is a corporate criminal profile possible?* Capella University, 2008
- Terence W. Hutchison. *Knowledge and Ignorance in Economics.* University of Chicago Press, 1979
- Annette Iggulden. *Women's Silence: in the space of words and images.* Deakin University, 2002 [[text](#)]
- Fred Inglis:
- *The Management of Ignorance: a political theory of curriculum.* Blackwell Publishers, 1987
 - *The Management of Ignorance: a curricular critique.* Blackwell Publishers, 1985
- William Johnston. *The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing: a modern interpretation.* Books on Demand, 1975
- Carl Jung. *The Red Book.* W. W. Norton, 2009
- Neil M. Kay. *The Emergent Firm: knowledge, ignorance and surprise in economic organization.* Saint Martin's Press, 1984
- Stephen Kurtz. *The Art of Unknowing: dimensions of openness in analytic therapy.* Aronson Jason, 1989.
- Alex Lickerman. *The Art of Silence: how the use of silence can make you powerful and charismatic.* *Psychology Today*, 21 July 2013 [[text](#)]
- Richard Landes. *Public Secrets and Conspiracies of Silence: how French media reported riots taking place in Paris on June 20th.* The

Augean Stables, 22 June 2010 [\[text\]](#)

Kent Lloyd, Diane Ramsey and Sven Groennings. Knowledge Revolution for All Americans: winning the war against ignorance: Empowering Public Schools. 77p.

Brian J. Loasby. Choice, Complexity, and Ignorance: an inquiry into economic theory and the practice of decision-making. Books on Demand, 1976

Sabit Madaliev. The Silence of the Sufi. Autumn Books, 2006

Sara Maitland. A Book of Silence. Granta, 2008 [\[summary\]](#)

Andrew Martin. The Knowledge of Ignorance. Cambridge University Press, 1985

Davide Melodia. The Lord of Silence [\[text\]](#)

Joanne Morra (Ed.). The Limits of Death: between philosophy and psychoanalysis. Manchester University Press, 2000

Jennifer Mulcahy. Sensing the Silence: Mary Kathleen. James Cook University, 2008 [\[text\]](#)

Mark S. Muldoon. Silence Revisited: taking the sight out of auditory qualities. *Review of Metaphysics*, 50, 1996, 2, pp. 275-298 [\[text\]](#)

Gunilla Norris. Inviting Silence: universal principles of meditation. Bluebridge, 2004

Mika Ojakangas. The Voice of Conscience: a political genealogy of Western ethical experience. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013

Olu Ojedokun. The Ruse of the 'Rule of Law' and the Conspiracies of Silence. *Village Square*, 3 June 2008 [\[text\]](#)

Craig C. Pinder and Karen P. Harlos. Employee Silence: quiescence and acquiescence as responses to perceived injustice. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 20, 2001, pp. 331-369 [\[abstract\]](#)

F. Poyatos. Nonverbal Communication across Disciplines: paralanguage, kinesics, silence, personal and environmental interaction. John Benjamins, 2002

Roger Pulvers. 'Conspiracies of silence' feign sympathies largely unfelt. *The Japan Times*, 16 April 2006 [\[text\]](#)

Nicholas Rescher:

- Ignorance: on the wider implications of deficient knowledge. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009
- Unknowability: an inquiry into the limits of knowledge. Lexington Books, 2009

Tom Rothschild. Listening for the Voice of God: silence in Quaker worship. 2007 [\[text\]](#)

Robert Sardello. Silence: the mystery of wholeness. North Atlantic Books, 2011

John Ralston Saul. The Unconscious Civilization. Free Press, 1995

Andreas Schamanek. Taxonomies of the Unknown: a compilation with references of some classifications, systematics and other orders of what is not known. [\[text\]](#)

Daniel Schorr:

- A Conspiracy of Silences. *New Leader*, 76, November 1993 [\[text\]](#)
- Conspiracies of Silence. *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 April 2003 [\[text\]](#)

G. Schwan. Politics and Guilt: the destructive power of silence. University of Nebraska, 2001

Michael A. Sells. Mystical Languages of Unsayings. University of Chicago Press, 1994

G. L. S. Shackle. The Bounds of Unknowledge. In: J. Wiseman (Ed.), *Beyond Positive Economics*, St Martin's Press, 1983.

Michael Smithson. Ignorance and Uncertainty: emerging paradigms. Springer-Verlag, 1989

Paul Thoms. The Sounds of Silence. Hamilton Round Table Club, 22 February 2011 [\[text\]](#)

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir. How to Exit the Conspiracy of Silence? *East European Politics and Societies*, 25, 2011, 1, pp. 129-152 (Social Sciences Facing the Polish-Jewish Relations) [\[abstract\]](#)

Emmanuel K. Twesigye. The Global Human Problem: ignorance, hate, injustice and violence. Peter Lang, 1988

Peter Unger. Ignorance: A Case for Scepticism. Oxford University Press, 1975.

Henk van de Bunt. Walls of Secrecy and Silence: the Madoff case and cartels in the construction industry. *Criminology and Public Policy*, 9, 2010, 3, pp. 435-491 [\[abstract\]](#)

R. Wajnryb. Silence: how tragedy shapes talk. Allen and Unwin, 2001

Patrick Wilson. Public Knowledge, Private Ignorance: toward a library and information policy. Greenwood Press, 1977

Eviatar Zerubavel. The Elephant in the Room: silence and denial in everyday life. Oxford University Press, 2008 [\[summary / review\]](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

For further updates on this site, [subscribe here](#)