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Human Collective Capacities

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Introduction

“Collective Intelligence is not an a priori condition but an a posteriori stage, it is the fruit of permanent training and learning. It is also a reflection of the humility of little steps: Individual progress benefits to the group, and the group becomes more favorable to new individual progress, and so on. One cannot master Collective Intelligence alone.”

Jean-Francois Noubel. The Transitioner

At the heart of this essay lies the question: from where does a human being know (epistemology) and do in order to develop the learning and collaborative capacities to co-create the conditions for Collective Intelligence,² and Collective Wise Action (CICWA)? If we look at this question from a multi-layered perspective of platform (human being and self), process (actions) and product (results), I propose the following:

The platform of any human being we might say is cognition and consciousness (that are embodied—that happen in language and emotions—that are biological and that happen in relationship with a particular tradition or cultural narrative); the process is the practices in all domains of care that we decide to care about in everyday living and relating; the product is the manifestation of a deeper level of connection and attention at that the same three layers of platform, process and product, therefore create a meta-

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² According to the Blog of Collective Intelligence (<http://www.community-intelligence.com/blogs/public/>): Collective intelligence is the capacity of human communities to evolve towards higher order complexity and harmony, through such innovation mechanisms as variation-feedback-selection, differentiation-integration-transformation, and competition-cooperation-coopetition

paradigmatic ripple of new and innovative possibilities. I find a good example the following reflection of a participant at the first [World Café](#) Research Conference: “If people in conversation are observing and reflecting on both the source and the direction of their attention (the inner and the inter-subjective space), and sharing those reflections, a spontaneous combustion of consciousness can occur. If so, collective self-reflexivity can lead to deeper, more fine-tuned sensing of reality, thus to wiser action.” One of the things I would like to integrate is the notion of “reality” linked with the proposal of Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana of (objectivity), it basically tells us that in the way we distinguish between phenomena and explanation is how we’ll go about doing, so if we asses that there is an objective reality (without parenthesis) that exist independent from the distinctions of an observer, then there is only one way, one objective reality. On the other hand we have the explanation of existence of an observer arising from his distinctions, therefore in (objectivity) in parenthesis many realities can co-exist. I relate this as well to Ross Ashby principle of “Requisite Variety” that refers to “understand the perspective of all stakeholders.” These are some of the underlying assumptions of CICWA In this paper we will explore a proposal for developing and maybe integrating different perspectives of the particular observer that we are, based mainly on the biology of cognition and loving, the discipline of ontological coaching, and Collective Intelligence within an integral perspective according to Ken Wilber’s All Quadrant All Level (AQAL) map. This paper also outlines some of my inquiries, and should be considered only a first exploration of these and of the proposal. What will be proposed are several pertinent questions, to be further explored, including but not limited to: Collective stages of development in order to support and hold the transition from Collective Intelligence to Collective Wise Action.

Collective Intelligence

But what do I mean when I am talking about Collective Wise Action? This in itself is part of the inquiry. I am able to say though that collective wise action means for me the expansion of knowing more about how we are constituted as living, human beings about how the cultural narratives we are born into, or what Heidegger would call thrownness-in-the-world, play a key aspect on how we hold our relationship to the world,

our communities, our organizations, and ourselves. At this very level is how we will privilege what we value and how we will go about knowing, doing and co-existing with planet and others.

A basic framework

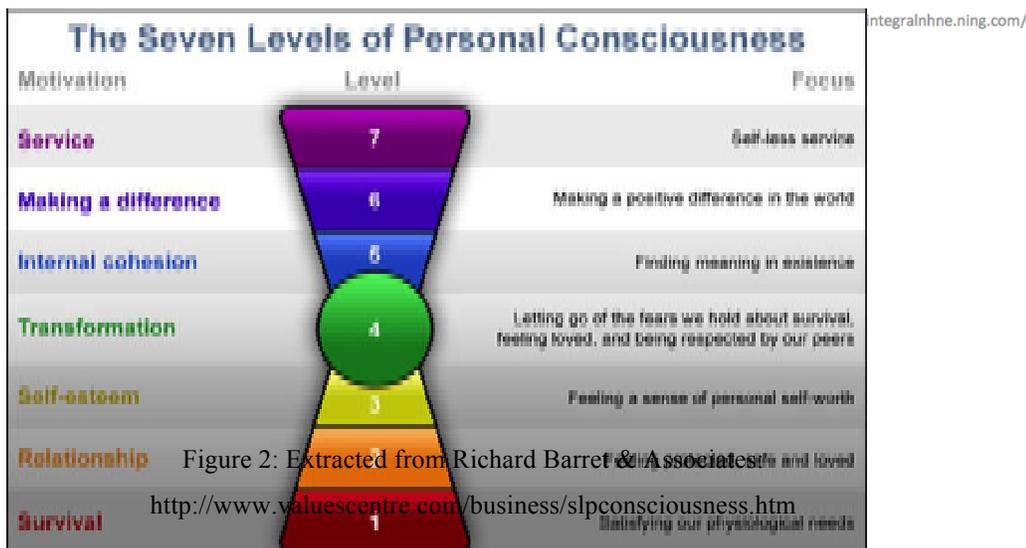
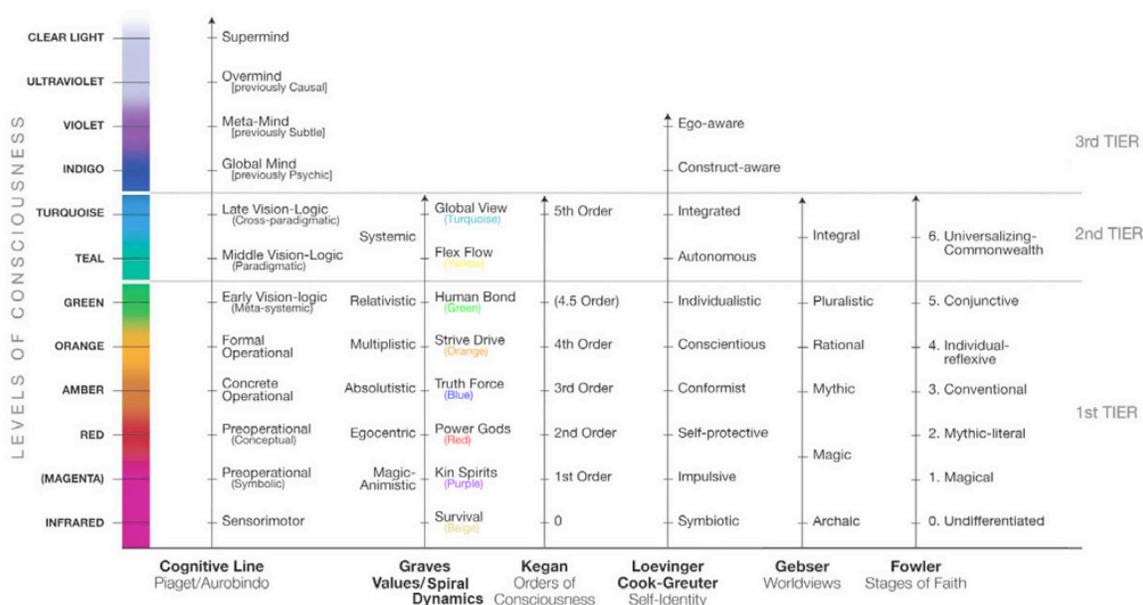
There are some very useful maps for assessing your own personal development; particularly relevant in this case the cartography is rich, some examples that I find useful are William Torbert’s “Action-Logics” (Figure 1), Robert Keegan’s “Orders of Consciousness”, Richard Barret’s seven levels of personal consciousness (Figure 3).. In the figures below we can see the different language around these developmental perspectives.

SEVEN TYPES OF ACTION LOGIC

Type	Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunist	<i>Wins any way possible.</i> Self-oriented; manipulative; “might makes right.”	Good in emergencies and in pursuing sales.	Few people want to follow them for the long term.
Diplomat	<i>Avoids conflict.</i> Wants to belong; obeys group norms; doesn’t rock the boat.	Supportive glue on teams.	Can’t provide painful feedback or make the hard decisions needed to improve performance.
Expert	<i>Rules by logic and expertise.</i> Uses hard data to gain consensus and buy-in.	Good individual contributor.	Lacks emotional intelligence; lacks respect for those with less expertise.
Achiever	<i>Meets strategic goals.</i> Promotes teamwork; juggles managerial duties and responds to market demands to achieve goals.	Well suited to managerial work.	Inhibits thinking outside the box.
Individualist	<i>Operates in unconventional ways.</i> Ignores rules he/she regards as irrelevant.	Effective in venture and consulting roles.	Irritates colleagues and bosses by ignoring key organizational processes and people.
Strategist	<i>Generates organizational and personal change.</i> Highly collaborative; weaves visions with pragmatic, timely initiatives; challenges existing assumptions.	Generates transformations over the short and long term.	None
Alchemist	<i>Generates social transformations (e.g., Nelson Mandela).</i> Reinvents organizations in historically significant ways.	Leads societywide change.	None

HBR Article. Seven Transformations of Leadership by David Rooke and William R. Torbert , 2003.

Levels & Lines



The question at the beginning of this paper is a seed trying to emerge in the midst of my own inquiry of what does it mean to human and is completely in alignment with

my everyday doing and co-creating with others, hence collective. It is relevant to me because I believe that it is possible to create a new coherent trinity between epistemology -ontology- cosmology in the collective knowing if we are able to preserve and create a tradition and emotion³ of loving through out or co-existing.

Chaos shows that when diverse individuals self-organize, they are able to create highly adaptable and resilient formⁱ

What is the self-organizing process of a collective to come into collective wise action? What is the emotion behind it? How does a human being develop an epistemology, ontology and cosmology based on relationships and connections rather than fragmentation and individualism? What is the tradition that needs to be reflected upon?

I am proposing that self-development becomes a key element factor into our way-of-being in a collective and in organization. So how do we extend our capacity for self-inquiry? Particularly in the midst of institutional, social and planetary breakdowns? The challenge might seem much more gigantic due to our inherited tradition and language of dealing with complexity, change and paradox. So maybe re-assessing or re-framing our stories might be a simple and elegant step. I also believe that if we don't have these conversations and reflections we'll continue to do more of the same. We see this phenomenon of collective reflection everyday more, it should be noted that the presence of such individuals and collectives is on the rise, what Paul Ray calls Cultural Creatives and Václav Havel calls "the power of the powerless." Every day individuals are being inspired and inspiring others, exploring or recovering new ways of knowing, learning, understanding within the limitations and gifts that modernity and post-modernity have handed down us. "Looking at the world today, its great environmental problems and vast human suffering, it would seem that on one level or another we are each either part of the solution or part of the problem."ⁱⁱ Not to mention that these limits and gifts are in constant flux that seems to be completely transparent to us in culture: "The object of our time, therefore, is to figure out how to cultivate intricacy (not to give up on helping one another). We already have some clues. Intricacy is encouraged by education, empowerment, infrastructure, support networks, liberation and love. It grows best when fertilized and organized in circles with human faces and common-cause."ⁱⁱⁱ

³ Maturana explains emotion as a predisposition for action.

One notion that has been confirmed repeatedly upon the transformative course is that our current cosmology is not sufficient in the face of current global affairs. Therefore, in my opinion, a different discourse of knowing and understanding is required for personal and social transformation, one that addresses the totality of human experience. “Confusing having information with knowing has left out the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of knowing, plus the intuitive and spiritual aspects of our connection with the world.”^{iv} We must challenge our assumptions in their context, as completely as possible (a context that can appear unquestionable and *transparent*⁴ in our current epistemology, as a previous teacher calls it, an “epistemology of solitude,” because of our inability to tap into more creative and inclusive ways).

So, what type of learning is required for certain possibilities to be available for a specific observer⁵ in the midst of a tetra-evolutionary paradigm? “If the conditions that support ordinary consciousness are altered past some critical point...the system will slide into a new pattern, represented by a different attractor with its own basin.”^v How do we inhabit a pattern of the Beautiful, the Good and the True?⁶

A vista of the observer that we are

The biology of cognition arises in the process of accepting that cognition is a biological phenomenon, and that it has to be explained as such. To do so entails asking the question, how do we do what we do as observers while we operate as living systems? Accepting such a question entails accepting all questions about how do we do what we do as living systems and as human beings. But it also entails that any explanatory answer that we may propose must be embedded in the understanding that living systems are structure determined systems, and that all that happens in them, to them, or with them, must happen in their continuous realization as structure determined systems.

Humberto R. Maturana and Sima Nisis de Rezepka

My first proposal for generating the conditions for CICWA emergence is abstracted from the work of Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana and his work on the Biology of Cognition (in particular, his findings in the understanding of perception, which led him to

⁴ Refers to Heidegger’s concept of “transparency,” whatever is so familiar that we are not aware of its presence.

⁵ The notion of The Observer is central to Humberto Maturana’s work in the biology of cognition.

⁶ The ancient Greeks called the three spheres of ethics, science and art the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

a theory of living systems, cognition and language) and of Loving. A set of distinctions were clarified by his theory, including those regarding: the observer, structural determinism, perturbations, structural coupling, the nervous system, languaging and emotioning, cognition, distinctions, consensual domains.

For now, I will focus on the Observer and its structure. “According to Maturana, perception and, more generally, cognition do not *represent* an external reality, but rather *specify* one through the nervous system’s process of circular organization.”^{vi} Simply embodying the observer that we are in a theory of living systems brings forth a new Kosmology.⁷ “In the emerging theory of living systems the process of life –the continual embodiment of an autopoietic pattern of organization in a dissipative structure –is identified with cognition, the process of knowing. This implies a radically new concept of mind, which is perhaps the most revolutionary and most exciting aspect of this theory, as it promises finally to overcome the Cartesian division between mind and matter.”^{vii} And as David Peat and John Briggs point out: “Chaos theory shifts perspective and allows us to appreciate the fact that biology is full of *coevolution* and *cooperation*.”

So what happens when we change our explanation on how the world appears to us? And what type of possibilities we have as a biological system explained within a different tradition of living systems in itself? “Perception in other words, must be studied from the inside rather than the outside- looking at the properties of the nervous system as a generator of phenomena, rather than as a filter on the mapping of reality.”^{viii} What happens when we realize that our commonsense epistemology, based on the subject/object paradigm, no longer applies to how we inter-act in and with the world? “Often enough, habits of mind, the supposed certainties of our “knowledge” about the world, produce distortions and deceptions about reality. More important, the opinions and facts that constitute our conditioning may end up obscuring a deeper authenticity and “truth” about our individual experience of being in the world.”^{ix}

The proposal of Maturana’s observer then is that the phenomena of perception is an internal rather than external event, as it happens inside the nervous system and becomes apparent and has existence for that specific observer. As Maturana would elegantly put it,

⁷ Kos•mos n. The multidimensional totality of manifest reality –spanning material, biological, psychological, psychic, and spiritual domains.

“everything said, is said by someone.” In this understanding we step outside our blinding scientific commonsense and leave behind the idea that *“This is how things are,”* because we can begin to think instead that *“This is the way the world discloses itself to me.”*^x What are the consequences of this understanding in our relationships with others? Could this be a major catalyst in our shift toward collective intelligence and collective wise action?

In my way of thinking, this profound epistemological shift that I’ve been talking about in the particular observer also implies a shift in our response-ability and accountability in self, culture and nature. Does this shift hold us in a possibility for being and doing in higher stages of consciousness? My answer is yes. And in this way of knowing that we know, a different ecology of being in relationship appears. “Learning is a transformation in living together. We tend to think of learning in terms of acquisition of information--this is not what it is. It is a transformation in living together, a transformation of doings in a process of doing things together with others.”^{xi}

Languaging Beings

“With language, social behavior was freed from the rigidity of genetic programming and became adaptable to changing circumstances. In the evolving neocortex of humans, capacities for manual dexterity and tool use were joined with capacities for analytic perception, language, and socialization.”

(E. Laszlo p.128, 1996)

As human observers we are linguistic beings. Heidegger said that “language is the house of being,” and Maturana also dived profoundly into this topic, pointing out that the individual human being is social and the social human being is individual. In coining the term “languaging” what Maturana did was turn the noun into a verb, focusing on language as a process rather than a product or thing. “Languaging is something humans do every day as they go about getting things done to fulfill their background commitment to take care of their concerns. Languaging is a fundamental human process –as fundamental as breathing, eating and sleeping...In other words, to live in language means to bring about what constitutes the world. Language has a profound, subtle, and often invisible, power. It is the basic technology of human possibility.”^{xii}

“Language is a manner of living together in the flow of recursive coordinations of

consensual behaviors, and it is our living in language as the particular kind of bipedal primates that we are, that makes us human. Or, in other words, we exist as human beings in the flow of consensual coordinations of consensual coordinations of behavior that language is. As such, language is a flow in recursive coordinations of behaviours, that takes place through the actual structural operation of our interactions, and involves the dynamics of structural changes in the participants that follows a course in each of them contingent on every moment in the flow of the recursive coordinations of behavior in which they participate.”^{xiii}

We live in language as fish live in the water. What does that imply in terms of the particular power of language over how we construct our reality? Or how we observe the world (individually and collectively)? Or how we generate meaning? And in terms of the way we coordinate actions with others?

How does this understanding of language augment our capacity as individuals for collective intelligence and collective wise action?

My interpretation is that this is a major breakthrough in the consciousness of consciousness of the social individuals that we are, and in this self-awareness our actions, intrinsically related to our co-evolution, can come from impeccability in our relational or interpersonal intelligence. “Self-organized systems composed of individuals, like the termites, contain varying levels of complexity. Each level has evolved its own “rules”. Individual and paired termite behavior follows one set of rules, collective behavior follows another.”^{xiv} As social and individual beings that self-organize themselves in a chaotic environment, “a new collective intelligence emerges, an open system, unpredictable from anything one could have expected by observing the individuals acting in isolation.”^{xv}

Emotioning Beings

The heart has reasons that reason knows nothing about.

Pascal

Though we live in a constant flow of emotions, very few of us acknowledge or understand what possibilities are available to us (or not) as emotional beings. “Many people believe that emotions stand in opposition to rational thought, but scientific evidence suggests the opposite. While emotions can overwhelm your rationality, you

cannot be rational without being emotional. Emotions predate thoughts in the evolution of the human species and our personal development. The neurobiologist Antonio Damasio points out that rationality depends upon a deeper system of regulation that consist largely of emotions and feelings.”^{xvi}

What are the emotions that we need as individual human beings in order to increase our collective intelligence and our collective wise actions? What are the emotional competencies that are required for dealing successfully in our social being in order to avoid “emotional kidnappings”? What is the level of emotional intelligence? What are the practices required for emotional mastery? According to Fred Kofman, there are five basic competencies for working with emotions: self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-regulation, self-inquiry, and self-expression. In the WE space, he parallels these competencies with five skills for working with other people’s emotions: recognition, acknowledgement, influence, inquiry, and listening.

“Emotions constitute the grounding of our relational living, and as we become what we become in our living with others, we live in our emotions the configuration of emotioning that we create as we live with those with whom we live. Therefore, the world that we happen to create as growing children, and which we expand and transform as adults, we create in the context of our living with others, as the ground that operates as a historical reference for our self and social knowledge. So, it is possible to say that we learn as children, the emotioning of the community in which we live, and transform or conserve it through the particular flow of emotioning that we happen to live in our singular individual lives.”

For Maturana emotions are predispositions for action, and therefore certain spaces of possibilities are open or closed depending on the emotions we are in. Heidegger speaking about moods, saying that they are a "making possible to direct oneself towards something."

Emotions held over a period of time can turn into moods. Most of the moods we live in, although deeply rooted, are transparent to us. This means that they are a very important part of how we interpret our reality without us really noticing them. Heidegger also said, of the importance of moods in how we interpret our existence, that “the foundation of any interpretation is an act of understanding, which is always accompanied

by a state-of-mind, or, in other words, which has a mood.”^{xvii}

Integral development and learning

Humans seemed condemned to meaning, condemned to find value, depth, care, concern, worth, significance to their everyday existence.

Ken Wilber, Marriage of Sense and Soul. ix.

Most of what has been stated so far has been with the awareness that our current paradigm (a Cartesian, fragmentalistic, individualistic, mechanical worldview) is in my opinion being challenged more and more every day, in a big part, by how flat a portrait that worldview has toward the universe, not to mention the challenges we are facing in the current state of the world (climate change, water, governance, poverty, power structures, etc.). As Jean Francois Noubel stated, “The main stakes for humanity are not hunger, poverty, sustainability, peace, healthcare, education, economy, natural resources or a host of other issues but our capability to build new social organizations that are able to provide solutions. Our main stake is Collective Intelligence.”^{xviii} I believe that in addition to Collective Intelligence we also need Collective Wisdom and Collective Consciousness in order for this shift is to happen.

I believe that in the face of these breakdowns a shift in consciousness and major breakthroughs are possible as well.

Writing this paper, in the context of transformative studies, my observer has shifted (once again) into a deeper level of integral consciousness that seems every day more uncertain and at once more at peace with this uncertainty. A deep listening is being nourished and a different understanding of my Self has pulled me towards my *right placement* in the universe, which at this very moment, is writing this paper. In this explanation of my experience I am truly grateful for what seems to me a new understanding of Evolution in its different in- and unfoldings.

I have experienced how chaos theory, evolution (in its many forms) and human consciousness (in its many forms) are the pillars of a new personal and social DNA that is emerging as we speak. In the midst of this emergence, many maps of human knowing, learning and development are being offered. We have talked about the map of The Observer and its most fundamental notion: that we are languaging and emotioning beings who have a specific structure that lets us act in spaces of possibilities, depending on the structure resulting of our history; in other words, our “Way of Being.” (See Figure 3.)

“The expression “Way of Being” should not be equated with behavior...it refers to how we are at any point in time, and in particular refers to how we are observing or perceiving the world.”^{xix} What allows us to learn in the observer that we are is completely related to the plasticity of our nervous system. We can shift from the metaphysical paradigm, in which we are predetermined in our beingness, and move into a more Heraclitan paradigm of constant becoming.

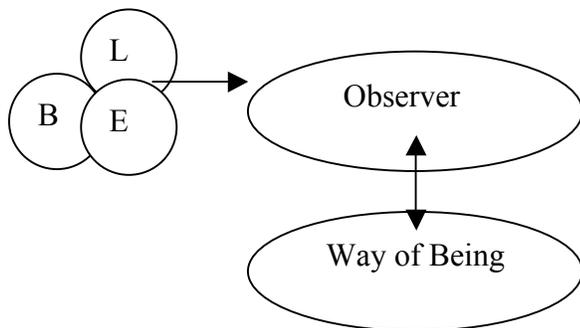


Figure 3. Adapted from diagrams in Coaching to the Human Soul by Alan Sieler.

My next suggestion is that we are not merely flat and one-dimensional observers, but are in fact composed of many layers in our being. Therefore the next component to the map would be that we are Integral Observers (see Figure 4).

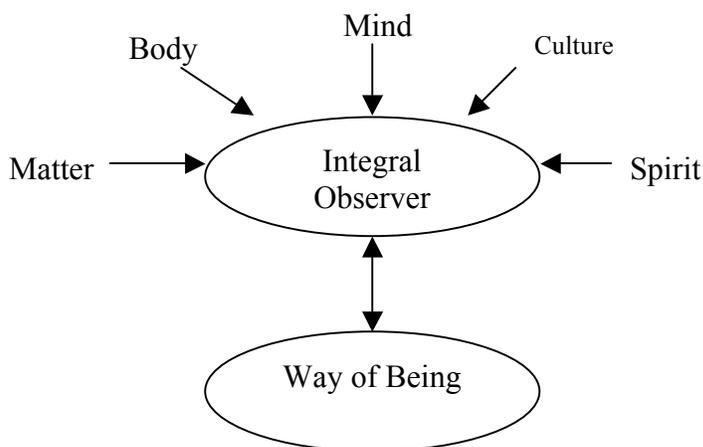


Figure 4. Adapted from Sieler.

We can observe how we observe ourselves with an integral perspective that lets us honor and grow in all our complexity. In Wilber’s words, “Even if we possessed the perfect

integral map of the Kosmos, a map that was completely all-inclusive and unerringly holistic, that map itself would not transform people. We don't just need a map; we need ways to change the mapmaker." I believe that Wilber's AQAL map is an all-inclusive map and can certainly be used for framing my inquiry. So far it has helped me with my own personal practice and has been a wonderful introduction to deeper realities. I would add that we need ways to change the *way of being* of the mapmaker (see Figure 5).

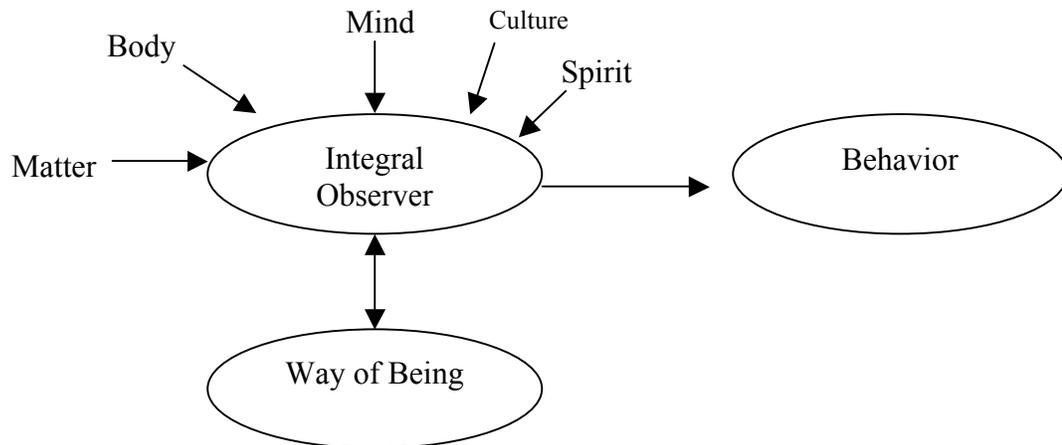


Figure 5. Adapted from Sieler.

As Georg Feuerstein points out: “If we believe in the rebirth of our civilization...then clearly this renaissance must begin in the chambers of our own hearts.”

In a recent publication made by the Institute of Noetic Science,^{xx} they came up with some interesting questions in the section of personal transformation, the questions are:

- What is transformation?
- What catalyzes transformation?
- What sustains it?
- How does an understanding of transformation help us to create a deeper and more life-enhancing way of being?

In their model of transformation there is a clear relationship with the previous concepts and maps we have been referring to. “Transformation is not so much a change of the person but a change in perspective. It is a profound shift in our human experience of consciousness that results in long-lasting alterations in worldview –how one experiences and relates to oneself, others, culture, nature and the divine.”

What is the commitment we need to make in order to evolve on a transformative path? In the report they talk about fertilizers that cultivate our personal transformation, a transformation driven by intention, choice and will.

So what are the transformative practices we can pursue? Whatever practices we choose, the research suggests three common elements for a successful evolving. These are: intention, attention and repetition. “Over time, transformation becomes less about seeking peak spiritual experiences and more about embodying living virtues such as truth, goodness, beauty, love, kindness, compassion, generosity, and service.”

In my own experience the practice that has been useful in my personal transformation is the Integral Life Practice developed by the Integral Institute. The format and practices in the basic core modules or lines of development are cognitive (their suggestion is basically AQAL theory), spiritual and meditative, body (3-body practice) and shadow, and have been useful for an anchor practice. I have been combining it with different practices particularly in the spiritual-meditative practice such as Holosync (now very much endorsed by I-I) and other Zen meditation practices. In the body module, I’ve been supplementing the ILP practice with ashtanga and hatha yoga practices, and in the cognitive, many texts and books regarding my different interests related to transformation. The shadow module is the least attractive to me as it has been difficult for to grasp. I am still open to other shadow work practices and continuing to understand the their proposed 3-2-1 shadow work method. I would like to explore other auxiliary modules, as they call them, and I would also like to see more information regarding these modules coming from the Integral Institute, meaning that they are holding them in an integral framework.

According to the Collective Intelligence framework there are certain talents, practices and knowledge that should be developed at the individual level:

- Behavioral and relational intelligence (listening attention, compassion, non-judgment, etc.), all part of the art of dialogue (David Bohm)
- Mental models (that bring objects-link into play) such as projects and creative will
- Practice of an Art (discipline, expertise, science, know-how, critical sense, art, etc...)
- Being, in turns, learner and trainer (principle of learning communities)
- Gift economy (whatever you take or give, it is always done with an awareness of the

collective level)

- Personal development: meditation, breathing techniques, yoga, etc...
- Ethics, values
- Mental models, systemic thinking
- Deep knowledge of dynamic principles of Collective Intelligence
- Mastering and harmonizing of those technologies that serve these objectives

There are some aspects of this list that definitely fall within the realm of an integral life practice. I believe there is a need (and certainly a possibility) to design or customize a kit that will prepare an individual in core personal domains (UL-UR) as well as a chance to add on practices for (LL) for Collective Intelligence Wisdom and Consciousness.

Ontological Coaching: A path for transformative learning

Man as an observer is becoming alienated from himself as a being. Today we may know immeasurably more than our ancestors did, and yet, it seems they knew something more essential, something that escapes us. This is certainly true of nature and ourselves. The more thoroughly we understand our organs and their functions, their internal structure and the biochemical reactions that take place in them, the more it seems we fail to grasp the spirit, purpose and meaning of the whole system that they create together and the experiences we have as our unique selves.

Vaclav Havel

An emerging practice of personal and social transformational has now been recognized in a new understanding of human beings and human interaction, or in other words in our inter-beingness. This art of ontological coaching, a transdisciplinary art, is composed by other worldviews that support the birth of a new epistemology and cosmology. It stems from major developments in the biology of cognition, philosophy of language and existential philosophy, and the key concepts forming its basis are Humberto Maturana's work on cognition, in particular the notions of distinction and of the human beings as a human observers; John Searle, Ludwig Wittgenstein and John L. Austin's speech act theory; and Martin Heidegger's notion of "Dasein." The connections between these pieces were made apparent by Fernando Flores in what he termed the "Network of

Commitments,” producing a new understanding of language and communication and were later developed by Julio Olalla and Rafael Echeverría, author of “Ontology of Language,” as the basis for the new field of knowledge that is ontological coaching. “One way we define ontological coaching is a practice that facilitates the emergence of new possibilities in the personal and/or professional life of an individual (or group) by making him aware of his participation in the construction and co-creation of the reality he perceives.”^{xxi}

One of the inherent characteristics of this discipline is the concern for unifying our internal and our external Selves. This unified or integral Self, or Observer, consists of a basic coherence of language, emotions and body. At the center of this intersection our way of being appears. In this interpretation, possible ontological conversations are available that shift the observer that we are in our history and structure.

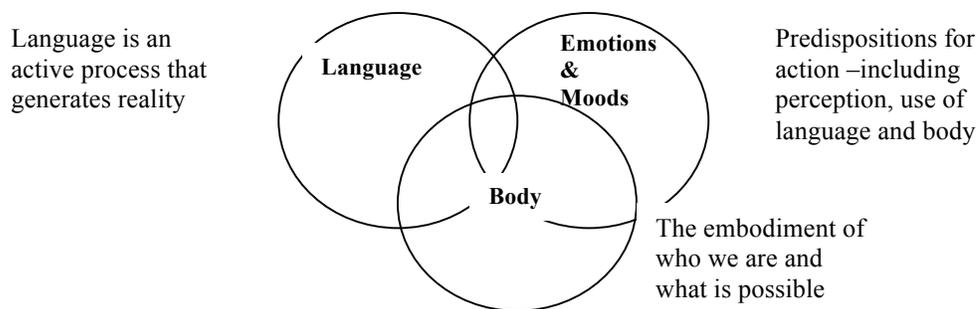


Figure 6. Adapted from Sieler

This is a powerful way of observing how we learn as the observers that we are, as Maturana points out in the notion of structural determinism, wherein our nervous systems are not fixed or unchanging, but rather have plasticity, therefore allowing us as living systems who continually learn, adapt and change. In this space, a new type of learning is possible. “Ontological coaching addresses the concern for more effective action while also addressing the concerns of the human soul that are mostly left out in our learning practices today.”^{xxii}

We have previously talked about how human beings are languaging and emotioning beings, and about our “Way of Being”. There is coherence within our body as well that holds this way of being in the observer that we are. Therefore we say that the

basic coherence of any observer is manifested in these three domains: Language, Emotions and Body.

“Transformational learning, the goal of ontological coaching, is a shift in our coherence that allows the emergence of a new *observer*, one who is able to embrace the mystery of life, aware of the power and limits of conceptual learning, and capable of foreseeing new actions and producing unprecedented results, while caring equally for personal and collective concerns”.^{xxiii}

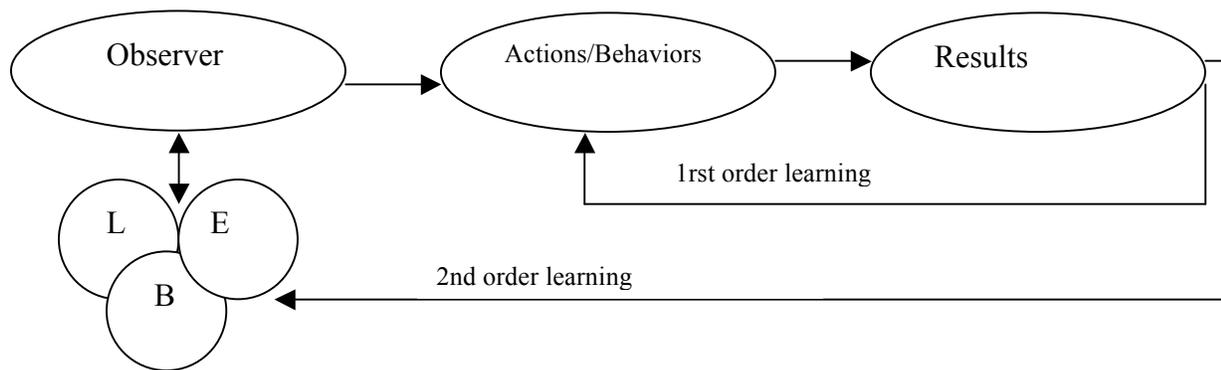


Figure 7. Adapted from Sieler

Our way of being has to do with the observer that we are. When we become different observers, life obtains a different meaning. How we observe determines what we see as problems, possibilities and solutions. To observe is to interpret, thus we live in worlds of interpretation.

In Figure 7 we are observers of our actions/behaviors and of how they impact our results or outcomes. First-Order learning is mostly focused on the development of strategies, abilities and skills, and while ontological coaching does not focus on this type of learning, it does support it.

As R.D. Laing comments on the relationship between observing and change, “The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And because we fail to notice *that* we fail to notice, there is little we can do to change until we notice how failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds.” In Second-Order learning we are observers of how we observe and notice how we notice, this is the essence of an ontological model of learning.

The common themes and elements in ontological coaching are:

1. Interpretation structures – observing physiology and body posture
2. Language and linguistic rigor – including basic linguistic acts.

The Six Linguistic Acts^{xxiv} (drawn from the work of Fernando Flores and John Searle) include:

- 1. Telling people how things are** - making **declarations** - writing reports - making presentations to expand other people's understanding of what is and what's possible as a precursor of change.
- 2. Getting other people to do things** - making **requests** to get a desired change in people or circumstances or outcomes.
- 3. Committing ourselves to do things** - making **promises** - accepting responsibility to do something to contribute to a desired change.
- 4. Expressing feelings and attitudes** - making **assessments** - opinions, assumptions and judgements in the hope of changing others.
- 5. Directing others to change** - making **assertions** - backed by data or authority to bring about a different reality or a desired future for them.
- 6. Doing something to help others** - making **offers** of support in the hope that it will get them to change.

All six actions are tools arising from Speech Act Theory. You can use them to make your conversations purposeful and get commitment from others, to change things for the better. These linguistic tools are therefore vital in achieving improvements in performance, leadership for change, and healthy self-esteem. The fascinating thing is that we cannot *not* use them, so it is therefore vital that we understand how to apply them well in our conversations.

We get results through our interactions with others and this requires effective communications skills. We simply cannot create anything without engaging in these linguistic acts.

3. Distinctions in listening and speaking – conversational typology

The basic types of conversation are:

1. Conversations of personal judgments
2. Conversations for possible actions
3. Conversations for coordinating actions

4. Conversations for possible conversations
4. Creating the present from a viewpoint of the future by creating timelines
5. Creating new behaviors and attitudes, through stories and narratives
6. Increasing competence in managing emotions to accomplish new results

Part of my training in the past year has been very much related to a profound process of self-observation and has been consistent with a solid theoretical framework, mostly based on Ontology of Language, which incorporates the theories, perspectives, methodologies mentioned at the beginning of this section. The first part had to do more with creating the theoretical framework, guided by a coach. We had weekly meetings and guides with specific integral reflections within our own structure and history. During this process we reflected on and challenged our old coherence and our way of being (which, in some domain, had been limiting itself). We were digging into the type of observer that we had been through our master judgments, moods and historical discourses.

In the second half of the training we were mostly focused on the emotional realm. Throughout the course of the year we had to present the topics we were studying to others, and so we were engaged not only in processes of reflecting and writing, but also of teaching.

The last part of my training was mostly focused on the methodology per se of ontological coaching, where the focus was on the dynamics of ontological conversations and the distinctions learned earlier in the practice. The idea of this program was to give the coach the basic distinctions for ontological coaching.

The three basic postulates of Ontology of Language are:

1. We interpret human beings as linguistic beings
2. We interpret language as generative
3. We interpret that human beings are recreated in and through language

I believe that ontological coaching is a powerful catalyst for a new discourse in learning space that can support integral individual development.

I am convinced that this learning discourse strives to address the whole spectrum of human experience, looking in from multiple perspectives as pointed out by Olalla using the Integral approach:

Personal perspective (UL): Our interpretations, emotions, soul, spirit, grounded in individual, internal criteria of who we want to become - to learn is to alter the observer we have been. It is the creation of a new relationship with the world or a new way to be part of it, and to master spiritual practices and explore new domains of reflection.

Behavioral perspective (UR): Grounded in the external, individual criteria of action, to learn is to engage in practices that will allow us to do something, to take some action that we were not able to take before.

Social Perspective: Grounded in a collective, external criterion of action, to learn is to engage in practices that will allow us to interact with others in ways we were unable to before.

Cultural perspective (LL): Grounded in a collective, internal criterion, to learn is to develop a new common worldview - a new, shared set of interpretations.

The vista for this type of learning in my opinion is that it facilitates our transition as individuals and collectives to moods such as acceptance, gratefulness and courage in the midst of our transformation. This type of learning also encourages the feminine in our ways of knowing and encourages us to move from a knowledge base to a wisdom base.

Another approach I want to pursue is the incorporation of other states of consciousness such as dreaming and deep sleep into the formation and practices for ontological learning and transformation, but this subject is matter of another reflection, that I am very excited to follow-up.

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^{xxiv} Extracted by The Change Zone Newsletter Volume 1 number 3:

<http://www.ontological-coaching.co.uk/info/resources.htm>

Appendix A

Collective Intelligence: definition proposal

Collective intelligence is the capability for a group to collaborate in order to achieve goals in a complex context.

Note

Capital letters (Collective Intelligence) will be used when we speak about the literal entity that emerges from the group, or when CI is described as a science?. Small letters (collective intelligence) will be kept when only the phenomenon is mentioned. Thus Collective Intelligence of a group is the fruit of its collective intelligence.

Discussion

This formulation gives a fundamental place to desiring and visualizing the future. Thus Collective Intelligence is not reduced to an only and unique emerging property directed by some "invisible hand", to quote Adam Smith's expression. The desire for and anticipation of a future feedforward loop?, and the mastering of such practice requires an instantaneous relation with the past via a feedback loop?. Time and loops are key.

"collaboration" is also a key word, it is one of the absolute conditions for Collective Intelligence.

The word "capability" implicitly says that it can evolve, this underlines mastery of a practice.

This definition is technology independent and rather places us in the governance technicity.

<http://thetransitioner.org/wen/tiki-index.php?page=Collective+Intelligence>

Appendix B

Collective Wisdom

Proposed definition

Collective Wisdom is the capability for a group of people to manifest wisdom and operate from it at a collective level. Participants are individually and collectively inspired and guided by the Divine Source (or whatever they want to name it).

A group of wise individuals doesn't necessarily operate wisely. Collective Wisdom can only be reached at the condition that Collective Intelligence is already manifesting.

Discussion

This definition takes into account the 2 sides of the spiritual journey, that is:

* the ascending experience: from the multiple to the Oneness, the Great Source, the Divine Intention that gives birth to all the material world, in its immense diversity and infinite forms. Every object, every living being, every form is the manifestation of this Divine One that embraces everything. As Ken Wilber points it, it can be referred as the male side of God, Shiva, Eros, the vacuity, the Yang, the masculine side of the Great Spirit.

* the descending experience: from the Great One to the multiple. The experience of the Divine resides in each object, form, phenomenon, living being because they are the embodiment, the incarnation of the Great Mystery. As Ken Wilber points it, it can be referred as the Goddess, Shakti, Agape, the form, the Yin, the feminine side of the Great Spirit.

Appendix C

The 12 tenets of Global Collective Intelligence

It begins with the 7 tenets of the original collective intelligence (the one that we naturally know in small groups).

1. An emerging whole: each jazz band, sports team, working team has its own personality, a style, a spirit to which we refer as if they were an individuality. When we emphasize the success, the quality and the unity of a group, it is another way to express the fact that this Whole appears so obviously.
2. A 'holoptical' space: the spatial proximity gives each participant a complete and ever updated perception of this Whole. Each player, thanks to his/her experience and expertise, refers to it to anticipate his/her actions, adjust them and coordinates them with the actions of the others. Therefore there is an unceasing round trip, a feedback loop that works like a mirror between the individual level and the collective one. We define holopticism as this set of properties, that is the 'horizontal' transparency (perception of the other participants), and the 'vertical' communication with the emerging Whole. In the examples above, the conditions of holopticism are given by physical 3D space; our natural organic senses then serve as interfaces. The role of a coach, or an external observer, consists in encouraging the conditions for holopticism.
3. A social contract: whether it is musical harmony, game rules, or work legislation, the group is shaped around a social contract, tacit or explicit, objective or subjective, that is accepted and staged by each participant. The social contract is not only about values and rules of the group, but also the means of its self-perpetuation.
4. A polymorphic architecture: the mapping of relationships is continuously updated depending on circumstances, proficiency, perceptions, tasks to accomplish, or relational rules based on the social contract. It gets strongly magnetized around talents or expertise. Then each expert, as recognized by the group, takes the lead one after the other to act according to needs. In a sport team for instance, the right-winger becomes the leader when the ball comes into his space, but it can happen that he becomes the goalkeeper when the situation requires it.
5. A circulating object-link: as Pierre Lévy explains so well in a paper called *Collective Intelligence and its objects* (1994), "The players use the ball simultaneously as an index that turns between individual subjects, as a vector that allows everyone to design

everyone, and as the main object, the dynamic link of the collective subject. We shall consider the ball as a prototype of the linking-object, the collective intelligence catalyzing object". Melody, ball, objective, or 'objective' of the meeting, no doubt that original collective intelligence gets built upon convergence of individualities toward a collectively pursued object, whether or not the object is a physical or symbolic one (a project for instance). When they belong in symbolic space, it is an absolute necessity that these objects must be clearly identified and united in their number and quality by each participant of the group, otherwise this leads to some of those fuzzy situations that all of us have already painfully experienced.

6. A learning organization: the learning process not only operates at the individual level, but it also involves the existence of a social process that takes charge of mistakes, and integrates and transforms them into shared cognitive objects. It enhances the development of the relational intelligence, what we learn for ourselves is useful for others.

7. A gift economy: in the competition-economy, the one we know today, we pick something for ourselves in exchange for compensation, most often money. In the gift economy, we give first, then we receive once the community has increased its wealth. Raising our children, taking care of the elderly, giving our sweat to a sports team, being involved in an NGO, or helping each other in the neighborhood are examples that demonstrate that the gift economy is the absolute base of social life. This is so obvious that we are generally unaware of it. Could any community be sustainable in the long run if it relied on the dynamics of individual sacrifice? In the gift economy, each participant finds a strong individual advantage that motivates him to give the best of himself. The gift economy organizes the convergence between individual and collective levels.

Emerging whole, holopticism, social contract, polymorphic social architecture, circulating objects-link, learning organization, or gift economy, here are the main qualities that we will find in all communities in which original collective intelligence is at work. Each characteristic is all at once the cause and the consequence of the other characteristics. None can be taken separately. The more they are developed and coordinated, the more the community is able to evolve and create the future in complex, unexpected and uncertain contexts.

Then it continues with 5 additional tenets to evolve to a higher level of complexity: a global Collective Intelligence.

8. A sufficient currency: the gift economy does not need to be regulated by accounting processes at the scale of small groups. When it comes to large groups of people, a monetary information system becomes necessary. 'Monetary' here is defined in the way it acts as a medium of exchange and store of value. Thus we are exploring the role of circulating currencies, not scarce, but sufficient and available in real time.

9. Standards and norms: just like with pyramidal intelligence, standards and norms remain indispensable to organize the cohesion and the degree of permeability and

interoperability of large communities. But in the case of global Collective Intelligence, they are issued from ascending emergence processes. Their function aims at maximizing the interoperability and the capability to build functional, ever more complex sets rather than seeking hegemonies in competition contexts.

10. An information system: by playing a role in all the properties listed here, it is used to organize and optimize the symbolic space shared by the community. It interconnects our senses via more and more powerful and extended interfaces, it builds and presents digestible synthesis, it processes complex calculus, simulations and anticipations that neither our senses nor our intelligence are able to achieve, it organizes and indexes the collective memory, it counts monetary transactions, it applies the social contract, and it rebuilds artificial holo-optical spaces where being in proximity is not sufficient anymore, it puts people in relation with one another according to polymorphism's needs, and it connects us to cyberspace.

11. A permanent interpenetration with cyberspace: no community today can pretend to be smart if no exchange dynamics is at work within cyberspace. There we find the most advanced knowledge, the most fulfilling experiences, and the best practices. Then it is our turn to deliver our experience, to link with others, etc... and doing so we give resonance to this echo chamber of humanity.

12. Personal development: the mutation toward Collective Intelligence at a large scale cannot happen without a profound individual and societal transformation. We enter into the inner sphere, into the spiritual work linked with our very own existence. We don't have the space to cover this immense topic here which, in any case, leads back to each person's individual journey.

<http://www.thetransitioner.org/wen/tiki-index.php?page=12%20tenets%20of%20Global%20Collective%20Intelligence>